Highlighting the Work of Future Designers

AFI 2020 PRODUCTION DESIGN SHOWCASE

BY JOSEPH T. GARRITY, AFI HEAD OF PRODUCTION DESIGN, AND ERNIE MARJORAM, SENIOR LECTURER

The culmination of the AFI Production Design program each school year is the AFI Showcase, where current and graduating students present their design work to the professional world.

At the American Film Institute Conservatory, the first-year curriculum includes three short film production exercises that are written, produced, directed, designed, shot and edited by Conservatory fellows. Each design fellow collaborates on three of these “cycle” exercises as Production Designer and three more where they serve as the Art Director. The second year of the Production Design program focuses on creating an original thesis film that is festival–ready. In addition to production experience, fellows develop their Art Department skills by completing theoretical “paper” projects, where they design, document and present five sets from scripts of
their choice. These projects span several classes, where the fellows pick up a full range of analog and digital skills.

We are grateful to the professional design community for their continued support, and especially want to thank Production Designers Dan Bishop, Melanie Jones, Keith Cunningham, Rick Carter, Doug Meerdink, Sarah Greenwood and set decorator Katie Spencer, who generously shared their wisdom and experience with the fellows as virtual guest speakers during the year.

The current public health concern here in LA has forced the live presentation of AFI Conservatory’s annual Production Design Showcase to be postponed. During these COVID restrictions, the work normally presented each June at a live event on the AFI soundstage is taking the form of a virtual design show, available through the AFI Production Design Showcase website: https://conservatory.afi.com/production-design-showcase/. When it is safe to do so, the AFI Conservatory will invite the professional community to join us on campus to explore in greater detail the designs of the 2020 graduating class and the work of the first-year designers as they move into their second year.

It is worth noting that for the first time in the Conservatory’s history, the fellows completed a substantial portion of their curriculum remotely. The AFI faculty is proud of the way they rose to this unique challenge, remained professional and delivered their best work under difficult circumstances. We are pleased to present the following examples of our talented fellows’ work.

Haven Kim
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW
HAVEN J. KIM IS A FIRST-GENERATION KOREAN-AMERICAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER, BORN IN SOUTH KOREA AND RAISED IN VIRGINIA. HAVEN BEGAN HER CAREER WORKING ON SEVERAL NYU TISCH GRADUATE FILMS IN NYC. SHE WORKED IN THE ART DEPARTMENTS OF TWO SOUTH KOREAN FILMS, AND HAS WORKED AS AN ART DEPARTMENT AND SET DECORATION DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT ON RON HOWARD’S HILBILLY ELEGY. HAVEN GRADUATED FROM THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN WITH A BFA IN PAINTING.

F. BOUND, CONTEMPORARY MIAMI. INTERIOR CEASAR’S APARTMENT, NIGHT. SKETCHUP MODEL DIGITALLY RENDERED AND FINISHED IN PHOTOSHOP.
Yiming Zhao
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

YIMING ZHAO, BORN AND RAISED IN BEIJING, IS A GRADUATE FROM LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY WITH A BA IN FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION, AS WELL AS MINORS IN PHILOSOPHY AND ECONOMICS. FINDING HER PASSION IN VISUAL DESIGN AS AN UNDERGRAD, YIMING PURSUED PRODUCTION DESIGN AT AFI CONSERVATORY. THE NARRATIVE FILMS SHE DESIGNED HAVE BEEN SELECTED AND SCREENED AT NUMEROUS FILM FESTIVALS IN THE US AND INTERNATIONALLY, INCLUDING THE DGA STUDENT AWARDS AND LA SHORTS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.

A. FOLDING BEIJING. THIRD WORLD NEIGHBORHOOD, MODELED IN SKETCHUP, RENDERED IN PODIUM AND PHOTOSHOP.

B. ELEVATOR LOBBY ISOMETRIC VIEW OF AN UNDERGROUND VAULT. MODELED AND RENDERED IN RHINO.

C. FOLDING BEIJING. VECTORWORKS PLAN.

Simon Gao
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

TIANHAO GAO (SIMON) IS A RECENT GRADUATE WHO HOLDS A BA IN ART AND DESIGN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS. BORN AND RAISED IN BEIJING, CHINA, HE STUDIED IN THE UK IN 2014 AND DISCOVERED AN INTEREST IN ART AND FILM. DURING HIS TIME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, HE SPECIALIZED IN PRACTICAL ART WITH A KEEN FOCUS ON SCULPTURE AND SCENIC DESIGN. HIS RESEARCH AREA MAINLY INvolVES ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND THE SOCIAL-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ART PRACTICE.

D. BASEMENT SET FROM DONNIE BRASCO.

E. THE DAY OF THE LOCUST INTERIOR SOUNDSTAGE, PALACE OF VERSAILLES, HAND-DRAWN SKETCH OVER A SKETCHUP MODEL RENDERED IN PODIUM AND PHOTOSHOP.

Kelsi Howard
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

KELSI DREW HOWARD GRADUATED FROM HOWARD UNIVERSITY WITH A BA IN ARCHITECTURE. HER UNDERGRADUATE THESIS, A PLACE FOR BLACK CINEMA TREASURES, WON THREE GOLD MEDALS IN DESIGN. AFTER GRADUATING, SHE WORKED AS A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT ON THE FILM THE WEDDING YEAR (2019) AND THE TV SHOW SINGLE PARENTS ON ABC. KELSI HAS HER OWN ART COMPANY THAT SELLS SKATEBOARDS AND PRINTS OF HER ORIGINAL PAINTINGS AT KELSIDREWDESIGNSHOP.COM.
Brontë Campbell  
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

BRONTE CAMPBELL IS A GRADUATE OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY WITH A BA IN MEDIA ARTS. SINCE HER GRADUATION IN 2016, SHE HAS DESIGNED VARIOUS COMMERCIALS, SHORT FILMS AND HAS WORKED IN THE ART DEPARTMENTS OF SEVERAL PRODUCTIONS, INCLUDING STUDIO C, ANDI MACK, THE NIGHT CLERK AND THE CW’S THE OUTPOST. SHE WAS THE SET DECORATOR FOR THE HALLMARK CHANNEL’S ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS AND HAS JUST FINISHED AN MFA AT THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE.

A. SOME FORTUNATE FUTURE DAY. ATTIC WORKSHOP. MODELED IN SKETCHUP, RENDERED IN PODIUM, DETAILED IN PHOTOSHOP.

B. EXTERIOR FLOATING CASTLE. MODELED AND RENDERED IN RHINO, DETAILED IN PHOTOSHOP.

C. THE THIEF LORD. STELLA MOVIE THEATER AUDITORIUM. HAND DRAWN, COLORED IN PHOTOSHOP.

D. THE CORPSE BRIDE. CHURCH INTERIOR. SKETCHUP MODEL RENDERED IN PODIUM AND PHOTOSHOP.

E. ALIEN BATTLESHIP. WHITE MODEL.

F. TEMPLE. RENDERED RHINO MODEL.

Xi Chen Chou  
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

XI CHOU STUDIED SCENIC DESIGN FOR FIVE YEARS AT THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF CHINESE THEATER ARTS IN BEIJING, CHINA. HER EDUCATION MADE HER A STRONG VISUAL STORYTELLER, PROFICIENT IN CHINESE CULTURE AND FINE ARTS. SHE THEN SPENT THREE YEARS COMPLETING AN MFA IN SCENIC DESIGN AT CAL ARTS. AFTER JOINING THE ART DEPARTMENT FOR THE SHORT FILM LUNA WITH WB, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH FILM. THE NEXT TWO YEARS AT AFI PREPARED HER TO STEP INTO THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD OF FILM. HER DREAM IS TO CREATE STUNNING DESIGNS FOR FILMS, ESPECIALLY IN CHINA.
**Rhea Solanki**
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

Rhea graduated with honors from Arizona State University, earning a BA in Theater Design and Production, and a minor in Digital Culture. She is inspired by captivating stories and is passionate about world building. Before pursuing her MFA at AFI, she worked on several theater productions. She interned at the VFX company SouthBayFX and worked as a digital media designer. In film most recently, she designed Huge Fan, and was Art Director on Harana and Til Life Do Us Part, all of which are currently making the Festival rounds.

**XIYU LIN**
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

XiYu Lin graduated with honors from China Academy of Arts with a BA in Exhibition Design. Before she came to the United States to pursue her MFA at AFI, she worked as a Scene Designer and a Freelance Artist. She designed scenery for several museums in China. Her artwork has been shown in the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai and Zhejiang Art Museum. Her film work has been screened and selected for film festivals, including Sundance.
Taylor Liyucan Chen  
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

Taylor Liyucan Chen is a graduate of Boston University with a BS in Film and TV Production and minor in Sociology. She experienced different positions in film production in her undergraduate studies, and decided to pursue a career in production design. After graduating, she worked in China and started her career as an Art Director in TV commercial production.

Marc de Bertier  
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

Born in Italy and raised in France, Marc moved to the U.S. to attend Chapman University and get a BFA in Film Production with an emphasis in Production Design. Before enrolling in AFI, he worked as an Art Department Assistant on season one of the Sony/Showtime series Black Monday, as Set Designer for Amazon’s reality series Making the Cut and as Production Designer on independent, low-budget shorts and features.

Richard Tian You  
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

Recently graduated from American Film Institute in Los Angeles, Richard Tian You continues to pursue his career in the Art Department. He earned a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in Architecture from Beijing University of Technology. Prior to coming to AFI, he worked on several TV shows and feature films. He has explored different genres in the short films he designed and Art Directed for AFI. Coming from an Architecture background, world creating and building sets has always been his passion in filmmaking.

A. MULLHOLLAND DRIVE. KEYFRAME RENDERING OF THE RYAN ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCER’S LOUNGE.

B. LEGEND, INTERIOR BLIND BEGGAR PUB, NIGHT. MODELED IN SKETCHUP, RENDERED IN PODIUM, ENHANCED IN PHOTOSHOP.

C. TEINTSIN MYSTIC. EVIL LAIN’S SECRET LAIR IN 1920S TIETSEN, CHINA. RENDERED IN PHOTOSHOP.

D. AMSTERDAM HOUSE FAÇADES. DRAFTED ELEVATION.

E. DRACULA’S CASTLE. PHOTOSHOP COMPOSITE.
Minolae Jain  
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

MINOLAE IS A GRADUATE FROM LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, SINGAPORE, WITH A BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS.) IN INTERIOR DESIGN. ORIGINALLY FROM INDIA, SHE IS A SCIENCE STUDENT WITH A FLAIR FOR ARTS AND MANAGEMENT. SHE HAS INTERNED IN THE ART DEPARTMENT FOR HBO'S DOCUSERIES MCMILLIONS AND HAS BEEN THE PRODUCTION DESIGNER ON THE INDEPENDENT SHORT BECOMING EDDIE, ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHERS AT AFI. AS AN INNATELY CURIOUS BEING, SHE OBSERVES DETAILS AND Notices THE EXTRAORDINARY IN THE ORDINARY.

A. THE FERMI PARADOX IS OUR BUSINESS MODEL. SHIP CONTROL CENTER. DRAWN IN ILLUSTRATOR, RENDERED IN PHOTOSHOP.

B. TEMPLE ALTAR. MODELED AND RENDERED IN RHINO.

C. ANARKALI. COLUMN DETAIL DRAFTED IN VECTORWORKS.

Marina Perez Ramirez  
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

BORN AND RAISED IN BARCELONA, SPAIN, MARINA GRADUATED FROM POMPEU FABRA UNIVERSITY WITH A BACHELOR IN FILM STUDIES WHICH ENDED IN A SCHOLARSHIP TO UCLA. SINCE SHE FINISHED HER STUDIES, SHE HAS FOCUSED HER PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN ART DIRECTION AND SET DECORATION, WORKING ON A HUGE RANGE OF PROJECTS, COMBINING FASHION, ADVERTISING AND FILM. SHE DESIGNED THE SPANISH ACADEMY WINNER WATERMELON JUICE, WINNING THE BEST SHORT FILM AWARD IN 2019. SHE IS A CURRENT FELLOW AT THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE THANKS TO HER LA CAIXA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP.

D. INTERIORM TENEMENT APARTMENT NEW YORK, 1957. HAND DRAWING PAINTED WITH WATERCOLOR AND PHOTOSHOP.

E. GHOST WORLD, ENID’S DAYDREAM ONE, HAND AND DIGITAL RENDER IN PHOTOSHOP.

Marian Wood  
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

MARIAN GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS WITH A BACHELOR IN INTERIOR DESIGN (BID). HER WORK CO-FOUNDING A WEDDING VIDEOGRAPHY BUSINESS, CREATING SCULPTURAL DISPLAYS FOR THE FASHION COMPANY ANTHROPOLOGIE, AND DESIGNING MANY THEATRE STAGE PLAYS GAVE HER THE LOVE FOR WORKING HANDS-ON IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS. SHE HAS ASSISTED IN PREVISUALIZATION ON A HANDFUL OF PRODUCTIONS, MOST NOTABLY, WITH DIRECTOR JEREMY SAULNIE OF HBO’S TRUE DETECTIVE, WHICH FURTHERED HER ASPIRATIONS TO WORK IN NARRATIVE FILM.
RACHEL GRADUATED WITH HONORS FROM DREXEL UNIVERSITY, WITH A BS IN INTERIOR DESIGN AND A MINOR IN FILM STUDIES. WHILE THERE, SHE WORKED ON SEVERAL SENIOR THESSES IN THE ART DEPARTMENT, AS WELL AS BEING PRODUCTION DESIGNER ON THE STUDENT-PRODUCED TELEVISION SHOW OFF CAMPUS, WHICH WON A NATAS MID-ATLANTIC EMMY AWARD FOR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY STUDENT PRODUCTION—LONGFORM. SINCE JOINING THE AFI COMMUNITY, SHE HAS ALSO JOINED THE SDSA, AFTER REALIZING HER LOVE OF SET DECORATION.

SHI MIN YONG GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE WITH A BA (HONS.) IN SPATIAL DESIGN. BEFORE AFI, SHE WORKED FOR FOUR YEARS AS A COMMERCIAL INTERIOR DESIGNER FROM CONCEPTUALIZATION TO DESIGN DEVELOPMENT, TENDER BIDDING AND SITE SUPERVISION. YONG HAS BEEN A PRODUCTION DESIGNER AND WORKED IN THE ART DEPARTMENT FOR VARIOUS SHORT FILM PRODUCTIONS.
Caroline Grebner  
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW  
CAROLINE IS A GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO WITH A BS IN ARCHITECTURE AND MINORS IN ART HISTORY AND MOVING IMAGE ARTS. POST-GRADUATION, SHE HAS ACTED AS A SCENIC PAINTER AND SET DESIGNER FOR VARIOUS SMALL THEATER COMPANIES IN CHICAGO. IN FILM, SHE HAS ACTED AS BOTH PRODUCTION DESIGNER AND ART DIRECTOR ON NUMEROUS SHORTS. MOST RECENTLY, SHE WAS ART DIRECTOR FOR BECOMING EDDIE AND HUGE FAN WHICH ARE BOTH MAKING THE FESTIVAL ROUNDS.  

A. THE DEMON KING. HANS ALLISTER’S FAMILY APARTMENT, CONCEPT ILLUSTRATION DRAWN AND RENDERED IN PHOTOSHOP.  

B. GODS AND MONSTERS, JAMES WHALE’S BEDROOM AND WWI TRENCH, PAPER AND MUSEUM BOARD WHITE MODEL.  

C. DEVIL IN THE WHITE CITY, H.H. HOLMES’ BASEMENT, CONCEPT SKETCH DRAWN WITH PENCIL AND PAPER.  

Evan Xiner Hong  
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW  
EVAN GRADUATED FROM BOSTON UNIVERSITY WITH A BA IN FILM PRODUCTION. BEFORE ATTENDING THE AFI CONSERVATORY, SHE WORKED AS A MAKEUP ARTIST, A MEDIA MANAGER AND A HOST AT A RADIO STATION IN BOSTON. SHE ALSO WORKED IN THE ART DEPARTMENT ON A COMMERCIAL FOR INTEL AND A SHORT FILM FOR REFINERY29.  

D. THEREMED HOTEL ROOM IN KUSHIRO. LINE DRAWING FINISHED IN PHOTOSHOP  

E. BALLROOM. MODELED AND RENDERED IN RHINO.  

F. SMALL TOWN BARBERSHOP MODELED IN SKETCHUP AND RENDERED IN Podium.
**Ika Zhao**  
**FIRST-YEAR FELLOW**

Born in China, Ika moved to the US for high school. She graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, where she focused on interior architecture and adaptive reuse. Her passion for film and story brings her into the film industry, where she wants to pursue a professional career as a production designer.

**Zero Zhang**  
**FIRST-YEAR FELLOW**

Zirao (Zero) graduated from Zhejiang University in China with a Bachelor’s degree in Architecture. She has studied in Helsinki, London and Ithaca, NY, exploring the culture and technologies of spatial design on varied scales. Zero also worked for Heibai, a local drama troupe, as a stage photographer and as a scenic designer on *Orphan of Zhao*, *Twelfth Night* and the *Marriage of Figaro*.

**BORN AND RAISED IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA, MOLLY GRADUATED FROM AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN 2016 WITH A BA IN FILM AND MEDIA ARTS AND A MINOR IN STUDIO ART. WHILE AT AU, SHE WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN THE THEATER, BUILDING SETS AND HELPING TO RUN SHOWS. SHE HAS WORKED AS A PRODUCTION DESIGNER, ART DIRECTOR, PROP MASTER, CARPENTER, SET DRESSER AND ART PA ON A VARIETY OF FEATURES, SHORTS, COMMERCIALS AND MUSIC VIDEOS.**

**A. HOTEL LOBBY FROM THE YIDDISH POLICEMAN’S UNION, MODELED IN SKETCHUP, RENDERED IN PODIUM, FINISHED IN PHOTOSHOP.**

**B. CIVIL WAR ERA HOTEL CONVERTED INTO A UNION ARMY HOSPITAL, PENCIL AND MARKER ILLUSTRATION, FINISHED IN PHOTOSHOP.**

**C. OCCULT THRILLER TREEHOUSE, MODELED AND RENDERED IN RHINO, FINISHED IN PHOTOSHOP.**

**D. BIRDMAN, INTERIOR DRESSING ROOM, MODELED IN SKETCHUP, RENDERED IN PODIUM AND PHOTOSHOP.**

**E. ALL THAT JAZZ, INT: HALLUCINATORY STAGE MODELED IN RHINO & SKETCHUP, RENDERED IN PODIUM, ILLUSTRATED IN PROCREATE.**

**Molly Moses**  
**SECOND-YEAR FELLOW**

Born in China, Ika moved to the US for high school. She graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, where she focused on interior architecture and adaptive reuse. Her passion for film and story brings her into the film industry, where she wants to pursue a professional career as a production designer.

**BORN IN CHINA, IKA MOVED TO THE US FOR HIGH SCHOOL. SHE GRADUATED FROM THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN, WHERE SHE FOCUSED ON INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND ADAPTIVE REUSE. HER PASSION FOR FILM AND STORY BRINGS HER INTO THE FILM INDUSTRY, WHERE SHE WANTS TO PURSUE A PROFESSIONAL CAREER AS A PRODUCTION DESIGNER.**
Esmé Jackson
SECOND-YEAR FELLOW

ESMÉ RECEIVED HER BACHELOR’S IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO. SHE FULFILLED HER LIBERAL ARTS CREDITS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK, WHERE SHE STUDIED FILM AND ANTHROPOLOGY. POST-GRADUATION, ESMÉ WORKED AS A PROJECT MANAGER FOR A SET SHOP SPECIALIZING IN TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS. SHE STARTED DESIGNING HER OWN SHORTS AND WORKED IN THE ART DEPARTMENT OF ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK.

A. HANSEL AND GRETEL, EXTERIOR WITCH’S HOUSE. PHOTOSHOP.
B. BRAVE NEW WORLD, INTERIOR FERTILIZATION CENTER. VECTORWORKS, SKETCHUP RENDER.
C. HANSEL AND GRETEL, EXTERIOR WITCH’S HOUSE. WHITE MODEL.

Rachel Johnson
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

RACHEL GRADUATED FROM AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY, WHERE SHE RECEIVED HER BFA IN VISUAL ART, WITH AN EMPHASIS IN SCULPTURE, AND A MINOR IN FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION. SHE HAS WORKED IN THE ART DEPARTMENT ON SEVERAL INDEPENDENT FILMS AND MUSIC VIDEO PRODUCTIONS OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS.

D. KEYFRAME OF THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER IN THE YEAR 2030.
E. TRUMBO: INTERIOR, CRAFTSMAN HOME, LOS ANGELES 1958. MODELED IN SKETCHUP, RENDERED WITH PODIUM AND FINISHED IN PHOTOSHOP.

Kato Lawton
FIRST-YEAR FELLOW

KATO LAWTON IS A 3RD-GENERATION CALIFORNIAN FROM OAKLAND. SHE HAS A BACKGROUND IN THEATER AND EVENT PRODUCTION AND OWNED AN ART AND DESIGN BUSINESS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL FOR PRODUCTION DESIGN. KATO GRADUATED FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO WITH A BFA IN PAINTING AND SCIENTIFIC ILLUSTRATION.