

A RECORD OF THE SCENE DESIGN FOR  
THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES

CREATIVE PROJECT REPORT

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For the Degree of

Master of ARTS  
in Theatre Arts

By

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To Connie



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## INTRODUCTION

When The House of Blue Leaves was assigned to me as my Creative Project at the end of the Spring, 1992 semester, I had never heard of the play, nor did I have more than a nodding acquaintance with the show's director, Jay Jennings. I had heard stories from students who had worked with Mr. Jennings in the past, and, to be honest, I felt somewhat apprehensive about working with such a visually demanding director. My fears were put to rest from our first production meeting. His visual metaphors were so concise and well established, his imagery so vivid, that I had no difficulty whatsoever in taking up the thread of imagination he provided and expanding those ideas toward the development of the play's environment. He encouraged and appreciated my insights into the characters and circumstances of the script, and allowed me to play a large part in setting the direction in which the production was developed.

This report documents the development of the stage scenery for The House of Blue Leaves. Chapter I begins an examination and interpretation of the script. Chapter II chronicles the creative process itself, from the initial research, through the development of the design, and concludes with the designer's analysis and drawings.



The construction process is addressed in chapter III. The fabrication of the individual units of the set are explained and special problems are discussed. Painting techniques are examined in chapter IV. The final chapter contains evaluations of the production. The first is a self evaluation, followed by S.W.T. faculty evaluations. Appendices of related material are included in the back of the book.



## CHAPTER 1

### DEMANDS OF THE SCRIPT

Research is the foundation of a coherent, thoughtful design. The subject of the research for this design was John Guare's The House of Blue Leaves. Research began by gaining a thorough familiarity with the script. Several readings were done in an effort to glean as much information as possible about the characters, their lives, and their environment. The following short synopsis reflects the overall impression of the play and gives general information as to the environmental requirements of the production. A brief analysis of the script and its characters follows the synopsis.

#### Dramatic Action And Scenic Requirements

As the Prologue opens, the audience is introduced to Artie Shaughnessy, a little man with big dreams. He believes that his song writing ability will lift him out of his common, dreary existence and propel him to fame and fortune as a composer of Hollywood movie scores. As the show opens, he is playing his songs on an old out of tune piano to a less than receptive audience at the El Dorado Bar and Grill. His



lyrics are trite and simplistic, and the music is blatantly plagiarized, but he seems to be blissfully unaware of these facts as he sings with all his heart. Artie becomes irritated with his audience's lack of attention. He chides the audience while repeatedly asking for a blue spotlight, but the audience continues to ignore him, and his request for a spotlight is never acknowledged.

The set requirements for the Prologue are sparse but important. The piano and bench are the most crucial elements of the scene. Some indication of locale should be provided as well. Artie's precious stack of sheet music completes the physical environment.

Ronnie, Artie's eighteen year old son, is serving in the military with a great future ahead of him. At least that is what Artie believes. Actually, Ronnie is A.W.O.L. and, as Act I opens, is seen sneaking into the apartment from the fire escape. He manages to duck into his room just as Bunny begins beating on the door to wake up Artie, who is sleeping on the couch. Bunny is Artie's mistress who lives in the apartment downstairs. The Pope is traveling through Queens today and she wants to make sure she and Artie have good seats to watch his procession. The Pope, in Bunny's mind, has the power to bless all of their hopes and dreams and make them real with little more than a glance. Artie and Bunny discuss their dreams. The first dream is to institutionalize



Bananas, Artie's crazy wife. They then plan to get married and move to California where a childhood friend of Artie's, Billy Einhorn, is a successful movie producer. Artie believes that as soon as he can get to California, Billy will use his music in "The Movies". Artie, however, is hesitant to call his "friend". After Bunny finally persuades Artie to make the phone call to Billy, the Pope appears on the T.V. Artie tries to get Bananas to kiss the screen so she'll be healed, giving him the peace of mind to leave her. He soon becomes impatient, however, and instead pushes her away from the set so that he can kiss the screen himself. Bunny insists that they go to the parade before it's too late. Artie invites Bananas against Bunny's wishes, gathers his sheet music to be blessed, and the trio exit through the front door. Ronnie comes out of his bedroom, where he has been hiding, walks down stage and stares at the audience as the lights dim for the intermission break.

The set requirements for act I consist of Artie and Bananas' apartment in Sunnyside, Queens. A front door entrance, two bedroom doors, a large bay window and a kitchen form the major components of this apartment. Some type of burglar or jewelers bars have been placed across the windows in order to keep Bananas from escaping, as she has in the past. Artie's piano and sheet music must be somewhere in the room. A television set is near the couch, and the



accumulation of eighteen years of existence are evident around the dwelling.

Act II, scene one, opens with Ronnie staring at the audience. No time has elapsed during the intermission. He begins to pack a homemade bomb into a gift box. After explaining what a rotten childhood he had, Ronnie states that he is going to blow up the Pope in order to get the attention he deserves. He disappears back into his room just as Artie is returning from viewing the papal procession. Moments after Artie arrives, Corrina Stroller knocks on the door. She is Billy Einhorn's girlfriend, and was sent by Billy to deliver a token gift of liquor and flowers to Artie. Bunny arrives and recognizes Corrina from one of Billy's movies. Three nuns appear on the fire escape as Artie is playing his songs for Corrina. They accidentally got locked out on the roof while trying to see the Pope. Artie lets them into the apartment to watch the television coverage. Ronnie emerges from his room and announces to his father that he is leaving to go blow up the Pope. Corrina decides to leave to catch her plane, saying, much to Artie's dismay, that she and Billy are going to Australia for two years. She also says that she has two tickets to the Pope's Mass, and does anyone want them? Ronnie lunges for the tickets, but is intercepted by the nuns. As they fight for the tickets, two military policemen and two asylum attendants enter the apartment. The



military police are looking for Ronnie because he is A.W.O.L. The asylum attendants, who have come to pick up Bananas and take her to the insane asylum, grab Bunny by mistake and carry her away. Ronnie leads the chase out into the elevator, where the bomb explodes, killing Corrina and two of the nuns. Ronnie survives and is arrested and carried away by the military police. Everyone else is unconscious on the apartment floor. Bananas, who has been hiding in her room, walks in with a vacuum hose draped over her shoulder and begins "cleaning" her house.

The set for the second act remains exactly as it was before, with Ronnie staring at the audience. Several new properties are introduced during the action that are important to the advancement of the plot in scene one of the second act, such as the bomb that Ronnie is building, the tickets to the Pope's mass, and a straitjacket to restrain Bunny as the asylum attendants carry her away. The piano is used fairly extensively during this scene, and the fire escape provides an entrance for the three nuns.

At the beginning of scene two, Billy has arrived at the Shaughnessy household and is grieving openly for Corrina. Artie half-heartedly tries to console him. Bananas enters and is a little more successful. Bunny, after gaining her release from the asylum, comes back to the apartment where she meets Billy. They fall in love and leave together



for Hollywood. Artie and Bananas are left alone in the apartment. Artie is in shock after watching his dreams crumble. Bananas, in the manner of a dog, attempts to gain affection from her husband. He raises her up to her full height and kisses her passionately, but slowly his hands grip her throat and begin to squeeze the life from her. As the realization of what he has done comes over him, attendants from the asylum appear to carry him away as blue leaves fall gently from above.

Scene two of Act II opens the day after the explosion in the apartment. Billy Einhorn, having been notified of Corrina's death, has had time to fly from Los Angeles to New York, yet the apartment is still in a shambles from the explosion. No new properties or scenic elements are introduced in this final segment of the play, with the exception of the blue leaves fluttering to the ground as Artie kneels over his dead wife, and a straitjacket in which Artie can be restrained and removed by the attendants.

#### Analysis of Characters and Environment

The play takes place in Sunnyside, Queens, one of the five boroughs of New York City. It is a time of great anticipation and desperate hope because the Pope will pass through Queens that very day. Specific references are made to the weather. It is very cold, "freezing", according to



Bunny Flingus, with "breath coming out of everyone's mouth like cartoon balloons" (Guare 1972, 8). The date is October 4th, 1965.

The Shaughnessy's have lived in the small garden apartment for eighteen years. When they first arrived at their new home in 1947 the atmosphere was one of hope and optimism. Ronnie, their son, was born that year as if to underscore this joyous attitude that followed America's victorious participation in World War II. Queens itself was built upon a similar wave of hope and optimism during the 1920's as a comfortable stop-over on the road to prosperity and the American Dream. Time and reality served to erode and chip away these dreams and ideals. Promises never materialized. Queens, the "comfortable stop-over," became an inescapable trap to its once hopeful inhabitants. Its polish and luster slowly transformed into an environment of graffiti and decay. The characters' personal lives and inner environment followed a similar path. Artie and Bananas's marriage has lost any meaning it once held. Bananas has withdrawn into the safe, responsibility-free world of insanity. Ronnie, already a disappointment to the unreasonably high ideals of his family, has joined the military seeking a sense of purpose and direction. Unfortunately, Ronnie has problems dealing with authority figures due to Artie's unrealistic build-up of his son's ego.



The mood of society also helped to fan the flames of Ronnie's discontent. The nation was embroiled in conflict and political turmoil. The wave of optimism and hope that the country had experienced during the Kennedy years of the early sixties was crushed. This dark period of American history began with an assassin's bullet, and culminated in an unpopular war coupled with unpopular political decisions. Faith in the American government was eroding rapidly, and people were searching frantically to replace the symbol of hope that they lost on November 22, 1963, with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Artie Shaughnessy works as a zoo-keeper, a low grade New York City employee. His salary is the only house-hold income, and provides for little more than the necessities of life. He is not totally impoverished, however. Perhaps a better description would be lower-middle class rather than upper-lower class. Artie's social life is limited to home; caring for an insane woman, and work; caring for monkeys. Artie's employer sent him to a health club where he met Bunny. Even his treasured night-club appearances are disappointments he must deal with in isolation. His "closest friend" is a man who lives three thousand miles away and with whom he hasn't had contact in years.

Artie is not the only character in the script whose existence is isolated. Everyone involved in the play lives



in some form of isolation. Some exist in a self-imposed isolation, others live with the isolation of city life or the isolation of authority and career.

The Shaughnessy's are of Irish Catholic heritage, but are devout only when convenient, or when they might have something to gain. The Pope is traveling through Queens on the day of the action of the play. Through sheer proximity the Pontiff provides a convenient vessel in which to place all of their hopes and dreams. They believe every wish will be magically transformed into a wonderful reality merely by his presence.

The characters are constantly opting for any substitution that allows them to avoid real emotion or commitment. This theme of substituting an imitation for the genuine article is touched upon throughout the script. Bunny and Artie began their affair by mistaking physical passion for love. They believe that a new life together in Los Angeles will nullify all the old problems and prevent any future ones.

The night before the main action of the play Artie performed his "original" compositions at the El Dorado Club Bar and Grill. It was a night of too much disappointment, too much beer, and ended with him sleeping on the couch as usual. He's not sure he can remember the last night he spent with Bananas in the same bedroom. As soon as Bunny enters



the apartment to wake him up, Artie begins to lose control of his environment, never to regain control throughout the course of the play. He is a weak, spineless man who is easily led by Bunny's more forceful personality. He is easily led by just about anyone's personality, as he lacks any real personality or will of his own.

The central idea of the play revolves around the characters' basically selfish natures. They all desperately need something from the others, whether it's love, acceptance, acknowledgment, or security. None of the characters, however, are capable of giving anything of themselves. This sets up a vicious cycle of desire/rejection that plays a major factor in Artie's fall at the end of the play.

#### Meaning of the Title

The "House of Blue Leaves" is a direct reference to the asylum in which Artie plans to leave Bananas. While visiting the grounds of the institution, he saw what he at first believed to be a strangely beautiful tree filled with blue leaves. At that moment it began to rain, and Artie ran to the shimmering tree seeking shelter. Then, as he watched, thousands of birds, whose plumage created the illusion of blue leaves, abandoned the tree, leaving it bare and desolate. The birds flew to another lifeless tree, filling



it with the illusion of magical life, and leaving Artie standing in the rain. This metaphor of the blue leaves parallels Artie's life of broken dreams and his fruitless pursuit of the elusive "Blue Bird of Happiness." In a wider view it serves to illustrate the pervasive theme of American life of the period, a theme of disillusionment and betrayed trust.

#### Philosophical Statements in the Play

The script was the ultimate authority in the development of the design for The House of Blue Leaves. The words that the playwright places in the mouths of the characters shape the world of those characters. Not only is the physical world so defined, but, more importantly, the mental and emotional world of the characters as well. The statements below opened a window on the psyche of the characters that was essential in my exploration of their inner environment. The quotes are followed by personal insights derived from each remark.

BUNNY: Lock yourself up against history, get drowned by the whole tide of human events. . . .The greatest tide in the history of the world is coming in today, so don't get your feet wet (Guare 1972, 8).

This statement acts as an unwitting warning foreshadowing the play's tragedy. In a more direct vein, Artie is being chastised for letting the world pass him by.



BUNNY: Breath's coming out of everybody's mouth like a balloon in a cartoon (Guare 1972, 8).

This underscores the unreality of the play. Their existence is within a cartoon world.

BUNNY: I haven't seen so many people, Artie, so excited since the premiere of Cleopatra. It's that big (Guare 1972, 9).

She's confusing the fantasy world of the movies with events in real life. This is another example of the imitation/genuine reversal.

BUNNY: O'Ryan, the Irish constellation. . . . I held my autograph book up and let Jupiter shine on it. Jupiter, Venus, and Mars . . . . He's (Orion) the hunter and he's pulling his arrow back so tight in the sky. . . (Guare 1972, 10).

Orion is the hunter, a man who knows what he wants and how to get it. This is diametrically opposed to Artie's personality. The "Irishization" of the constellation Orion amplifies this comparison.

The autograph book symbolizes false and broken dreams, the imitation in lieu of the genuine. Bunny's evocation of the pagan Roman gods juxtaposed to the Pope's visit adds a fickle quality to her character. She'll pay homage to anyone who might be in a position to help her.

BUNNY: When famous people go to sleep at night, it's us they dream of, Artie. The famous ones - they're the real people. We're the creatures of their dreams. You're the dream, I'm the dream (Guare 1972, 10).

Here Bunny once again supports the unreality and absurdity of their lives. She is also confirming their



failures while at the same time absolving herself from the responsibility of them; a dream is not responsible for itself, the dreamer is.

BUNNY: Miss Henshaw's saving us this divine place right by the cemetery so the Pope will have to slow down (Guare 1972, 12).

The dead are taking precedence over the living. Artie may as well be dead, or is, in effect, dead already. One of his next lines is "Nothing worse than cold dirt." This is another allusion to the grave.

BUNNY: Your Holiness, marry us - the hell with peace to the world - bring peace to us (Guare 1972, 13).

This illustrates the basic selfish interests of all the characters, not just Bunny.

BUNNY: Oh, Artie, tables turn (Guare 1972, 13).

Tables can turn both ways. Everyone in the script is betrayed by someone else, and they are all betrayed by themselves.

ARTIE: I'm making a scrapbook of all the foods you tell me you know how to cook and then I go through the magazines and cut out pictures of what it must look like (Guare 1972, 15).

Artie and Bunny have replaced the act of making love with the act of eating. They have taken this substitution to the point where pre-marital and adulterous sex is acceptable, but for Bunny to cook for Artie before marriage is morally wrong. But even this false morality is based upon basic selfishness. Artie keeps requesting eggs, or some variation



thereof, as a symbol of desire for rebirth.

BUNNY: I'll pour you cornflakes (Guare 1972, 18).

As soon as Bananas makes her presence known, Bunny, sensing competition, however weak, is willing to compromise even this false morality to hold on to Artie.

ARTIE: You're a tease Bunny, and that's the worst thing to be (Guare 1972, 18).

Artie has been teased all of his life by his family, his friends, advertising campaigns, his government.

BANANAS: Let the animals come out (Guare 1972, 20).

Bananas desires a total catharsis, to be cleansed and to start over.

BANANAS: Come back to bed (Guare 1972, 21).

Bananas is asking Artie to come back to their old life and love her again.

ARTIE: The Pope takes one look at you . . . he'll make the biggest U-turn you ever saw right back to Rome . . . (Ronnie) stopped his glass limo and I stepped into the bubble, but you didn't . . . . Your own son denied you (Guare 1972, 22).

The above quote reflects Artie's attempted justification of his planned institutionalization of Bananas. It also depicts his petty nature. She hasn't done anything specific to blame her for, so he attacks her with, and in, his dreams. These dreams are as solid as reality for Artie, reiterating the theme of substituting the imitation for the genuine. This attack serves to build up Artie in his own eyes, but he's really tearing Bananas down to his level. He



has nothing in his life to make him special.

BANANAS: I like being animals. You know why? I never heard of a famous animal (Guare 1972, 24).

Bananas is tired of empty, broken dreams. She would rather live with what little she has, not waste away dreaming about what she can't have. Being an animal is also an effort to gain Artie's love and attention.

BUNNY: I am not taking insults from a sick person. A healthy person can call me anything they want (Guare 1972, 26).

This is another clue to Bunny's low self-esteem. She needs someone to whom she can feel superior.

BANANAS: I can't see anything (Guare 1972, 28).

Bananas is so morally and emotionally confused that she can't see the implications of what is going on around her.

ARTIE: . . . There was a tree with blue leaves in the rain (Guare 1972, 28).

Artie's illusions failed to shelter him from his reality.

BANANAS: Did you read in the paper about the bull in Madrid who fought so well they didn't let him die (Guare 1972, 29).

Bananas identifies strongly with this image. It is reminiscent of the bound Prometheus having his liver devoured by vultures during the day, only to have it grow back at night so that the cycle can continue. She is tortured continuously by both her husband and her disease, yet she lingers on.



BUNNY: I never read the book because the title is so beautiful there's no need to read the book: Man does. Woman is (Guare 1972, 32).

Once again, the artificial replaces the genuine. The title is a substitute for the text. The title itself justifies her philosophy of life and defines her approach to relationships.

### Mood of the Script

Both the independent actions of the individual characters and the overall action of the plot seem to suggest a pervading sense of selfishness. This selfishness in turn breeds isolation. Each character only thinks about how the given situations can benefit him or her. Even Bananas, who seems the most selfless of all, craves attention from Artie for her own security and peace of mind. Nothing can live in a vacuum. Like the terrified, lonely creature of Edvard Munch's The Scream (see 114), each of these characters is slowly withering and dying in the vacuum of their own lives. This is a very dark world.

Pain and anger are also expressed through the character's dialogue. They lash out at each other in response to attacks, both real and imagined. All of the characters, with the possible exception of Billy Einhorn, feel that life has cheated them. Striking out through this fog of negative emotion, they target the most convenient



receptacle for their anger, the people closest to them.

When I mentally superimposed these dark moods of pain, selfishness, and betrayal over the image of Artie standing under the jagged silhouette of a bare tree seeking shelter on the grounds of the insane asylum, the whole idea came to life. The visual metaphor suggested to me by this mental image was one of a dying tree in a dank, dark, primordial forest. A musty, moist, decomposing environment is the perfect accent to the malignancy of the character's interrelationships. The house itself becomes a living thing, clinging precariously, yet tenaciously to life. The rotting, organic structure of the walls physically exhibit the festering wounds and infected scars inflicted by the characters upon themselves and upon each other. This is not a healthy organism, but, much like Bananas, it never seems to die.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE DESIGN PROCESS

#### Research and Development of the Idea

The first time I read through the script I was looking for an overriding image. This image came in small bits and pieces. The first thing I was sure of was that it was jagged. I came to this determination by doing a series of thumbnail sketches, no bigger than an inch or so square, that concentrated on the basic line of the set. The jagged line suggested the shattered dreams of the characters' lives, almost providing a road map chronicling the fractured, aimless paths they followed in search of those dreams (see 24). Upon further study, the darkness of the script was another factor that impressed me. The characters claw and attack each other at every opportunity, trapped in a cycle of verbal and mental abuse.

The next phase of my exploration into the world of Artie Shaughnessy took me back to the library. Using clues from the script, I managed to locate Artie's house within a matter of blocks (see 107). From there, it was relatively easy to research the different types of housing prevalent in the



area. I settled on a third story brownstone in Sunnyside, Queens (see 109).

The interior posed a much more challenging problem. I had already decided, through consultation with the director and my own vision of the script, that the set would not be totally realistic. For this reason I limited my research on realistic interiors in favor of more abstract designs, looking for mood more than anything else. I devoured books and images ranging from the Great Masters to the photography of Man Ray. My basic research method at this point was to find sections of books with lots of pictures and flip through them one by one until something caught my eye. Sheer volume was the objective. The broader the scope of reference, the more possibilities have the opportunity to unfold themselves.

Some of the more useful research has been included in Appendix D. Period photographs taken in the Borough of Queens (particularly Sunnyside, Queens) were extremely useful in understanding what it must have been like to live in that area in the early nineteen-sixties. A map of Queens from the late nineteen-sixties was an interesting discovery. I was able to trace the Pope's route through Queens on his trek from LaGuardia International Airport to the United Nations Building in Manhattan. Artie's apartment is located between the Calvary Cemetery and the New Calvary Cemetery near the



Queens Midtown Expressway (see 107).

The zoo bars were more difficult to research. Most of today's zoological gardens prefer a "wild and free" approach to their publicity photographs. Photographs of caged animals are evidently taboo in today's society. Ironically, photographs of caged inmates and asylum patients were easier to find, and worked just as well for my purposes (see 111).

Leaf gobos, which are metal disks with patterns cut into them to throw identifiable shadows, inspired the concept of the branches suspended above the set (see 112). These silhouetted branches sparked the bubble analogy discussed later in this report. The last two figures in Appendix D are of Matthias Grunewald's The Crucifixion and Edvard Munch's The Scream (see 113 and 114). Grunewald's work was the model for the bloody crucifix wired to the zoo bars (see 36), while Munch's The Scream suggested not only the painting technique used for the ceiling, but represented the overall mood of the play.

It was during this stage that I began to realize what a strong metaphor Artie's description of the grounds of the insane asylum afforded. The most obvious parallel is that both the asylum, and Artie's home, house crazy people. On a more cerebral level, the analogy between Artie's experience at the asylum and his lifelong pursuit of happiness through his dreams becomes apparent. Artie's vision of his dreams is



represented by the tree with shimmering blue leaves as seen through the dismal rain and cold of his life. As he seeks shelter under his "dream tree" he realizes that what he had thought to be leaves were actually blue birds. This rather obvious symbol of happiness then departs, leaving Artie just as cold and wet as he had been before, under the bare skeleton of what had been his dreams.

Once the script was thoroughly studied and the research was compiled, I began to develop mental pictures of the setting for the play. The research and analysis I had gathered began to slowly unfold into a solid concept, but concepts, until they have an identity in the physical world, are as insubstantial as smoke. I began to see the action taking place under this jagged silhouette of Artie's life.

#### Sketches and Preliminary Model

The sketches began, as mentioned above, as tiny thumbnails to establish the overall line. These sketches can be seen on page 24. Once the basic metaphor was agreed upon with the director, it was time to coalesce the threads of research and information I had gathered into a cohesive design. After a number of experimental drawings I began to feel restricted with the medium and wanted to explore the space in three dimensions. It was time to start a model.

The skeletal aspects of the silhouetted tree still



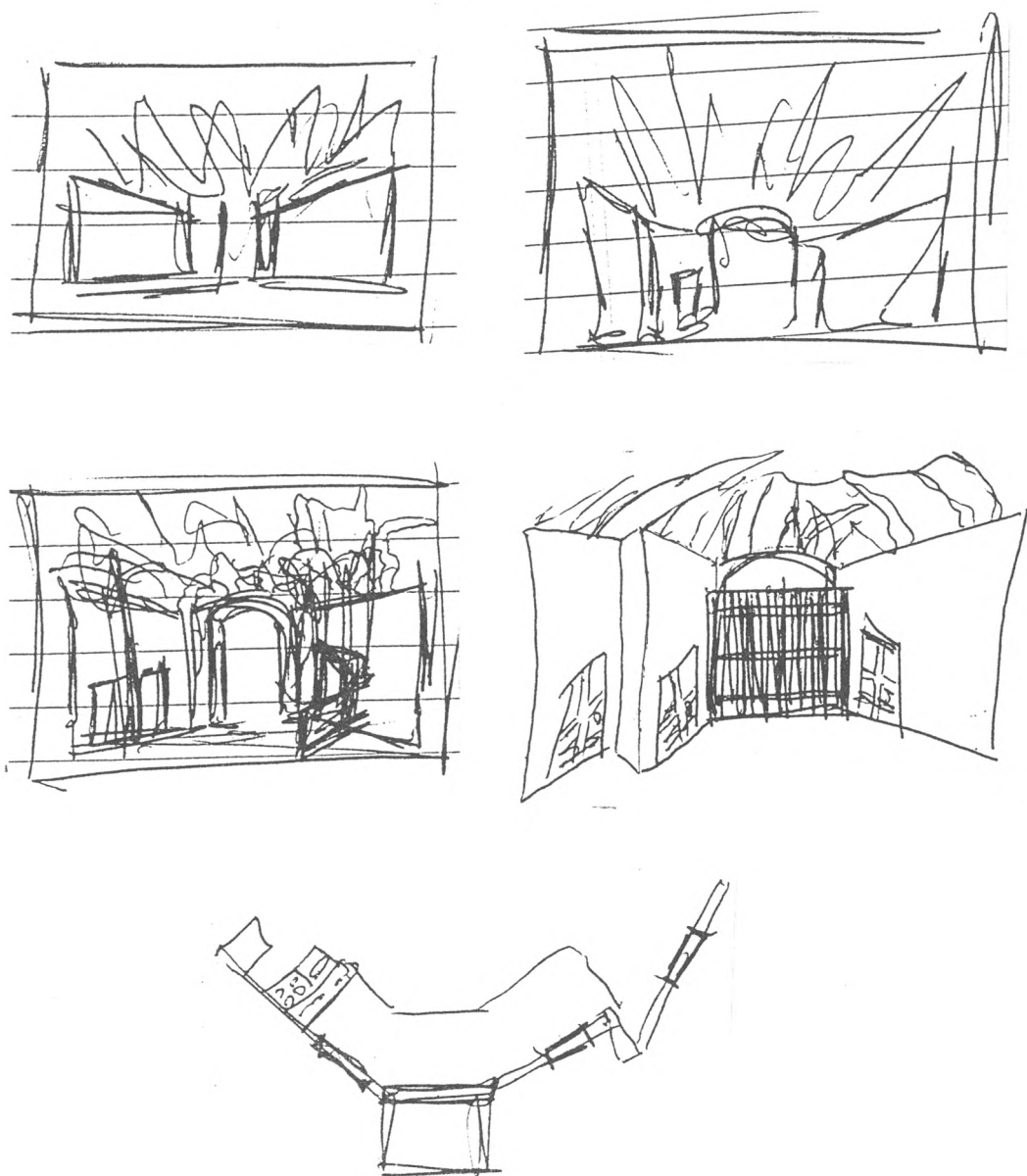


Fig. 1. Selected Thumbnail Sketches



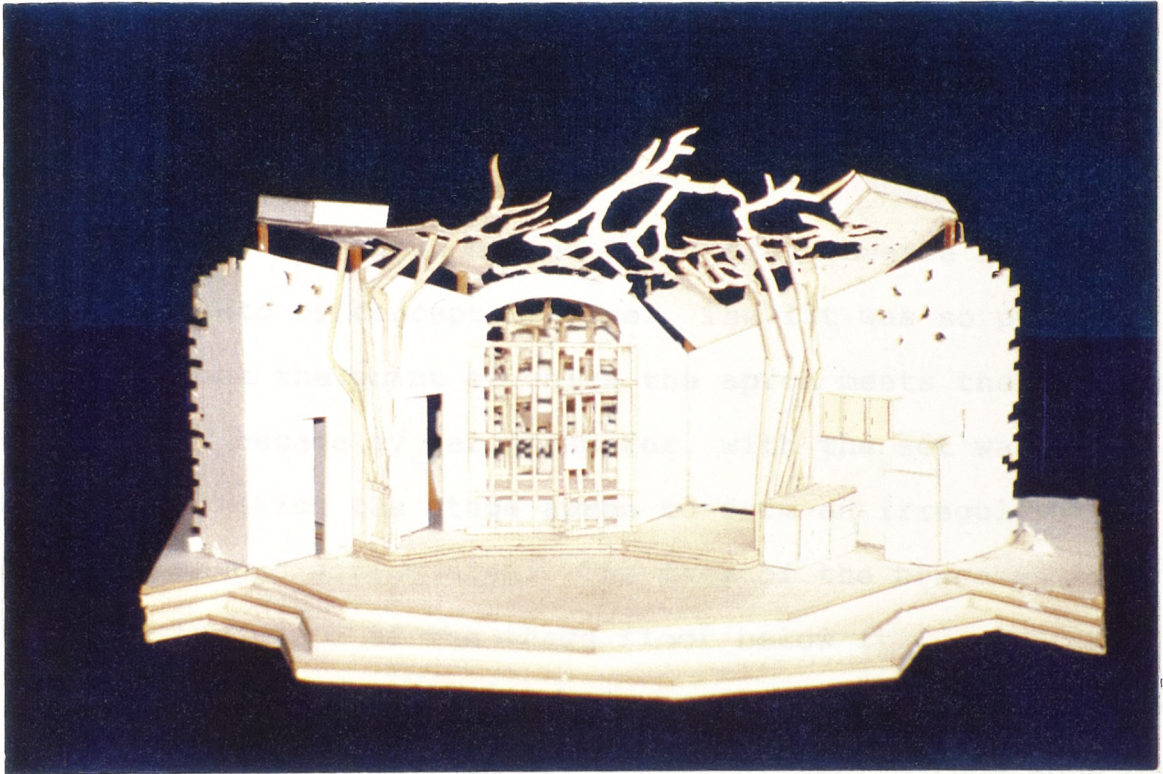


Fig. 2. Preliminary Model  
(Photograph by Marc Vetterick)



intrigued me greatly, but at the same time the action required a solid footing in the actual physical environment of Artie's apartment. This approach led me to combine the two locales in a literal fashion. Working with Foam-Core and matte board, in one-quarter-inch scale, I began shaping the world of The House of Blue Leaves. The resulting preliminary model can be found on page 25.

The existing apron of the University Theatre Stage fit perfectly into my concept of line. The fit was so perfect, in fact, that the point at which the apron meets the original stage front became my set parameter, with the set walls roughly mimicking the stage apron to form an irregular, football shaped acting area. The mass of the branches even mimicked the shape of the stage floor below it.

Realizing that the bay window was the central element of the room, I placed it just off center at the upstage edge of the acting area. The irregular line of the upper walls, as well as the archway above it, were arranged to emphasize the window to an even greater extent.

Instead of jeweler's bars, or the more conventional burglar bars across the opening of the arch, it made more sense to me within the context of the script to use zoo bars. Artie, as a zoo-keeper, would have ready access to such materials. The implied action of Artie "installing" the bars by insanely beating holes in the wall through which to chain



the bars to the archway frame gives a history, and even a balance, to the insanity of the two characters.

To introduce the organic elements of the asylum grounds, I started at "ground zero", a point in the center of the acting area, where the apartment is quite normal. However, the farther away from that point you travel, particularly up or down stage, the more organic the environment becomes. Spindles on either side of the set aid in this mutation, as the roof transforms into the stark silhouette of the bare tree on the asylum grounds. Through layers of crosses formed by the zoo bars, window frames, and fire escape rails two sixteen-foot-tall leaves are seen against a black background.

Wall placement inside the apartment was arrived at chiefly through consideration of the importance of the various entrances and exits on the set. The director felt that Banana's bedroom door was an extremely important element, so I began by placing it in the up stage right portion of the acting area. This is an extremely strong point for an entrance due to the training of the western eye to gather information in a left to right fashion, as if reading. By elevating the doorway on the rear platform it acquired an even greater prominence.

The logical location for Ronnie's room was of course in close proximity to Banana's room. I did not want the proximity to link the two rooms, therefore the two



characters, too closely. A sense of separation and alienation was achieved by placing the son's room on the lower level, breaking the wall with a one-foot jog, and offsetting the planes of the two walls. The stage right spindles also assisted in this separation. From this point the location of the kitchen and entry fell into place. A bar unit was placed between the front door and the kitchen to separate the areas and to afford more space for the sink and stove. Spindles were added to balance the spindles between the mother and son's rooms. A non-functional closet was positioned on the only remaining wall, with the piano placed in front of it to instill the feeling of chaos and crowding in the small apartment.

The initial concept of a floating ceiling and irregular brick returns on either side of the set came about during the construction of the white model, as well as the idea of the glowing leaf cut-outs on the upper wall, but these elements weren't developed to their full potential until the final model.

The white model was invaluable in organizing the general components of the design. Working in a scale of  $1/4" = 1'-0"$  forced me to concentrate on the basic line and arrangement of the gross elements comprising the set. Once these parameters were established in the form of the smaller model, I reproduced the structure in a  $1/2" = 1'-0"$  scale model.



Adjustments and corrections were performed as needed. The brick wall profiles were more clearly defined in this process, as well as other problems such as the spindle/roof junction and necessary adjustments to the acting area. The larger scale of the second model made it possible to develop the details of the room and of the characters' lives that gave the space its identity. This second model eventually evolved into the finished design.

#### Color Model and Finished Design

For this production the color model was the true essence of the design. Everything done before was preparation, everything done after was reproduction. This was by far the most creative and artistic stage of the process. Using the research amassed earlier as a guide, I attempted to sculpt form from empty space in an effort to define the environment of the characters.

The model stage base was made from stacked layers of one-quarter-inch plywood. The primary material for the model itself was matte board. Also utilized was balsa wood, wire, beads, paper, cotton, chain, a variety of found objects, and commercially available modeling supplies. Both acrylic paints and watercolors were used to paint the model.

Once the basic set was reconstructed in the larger scale, I began developing this environment. The first



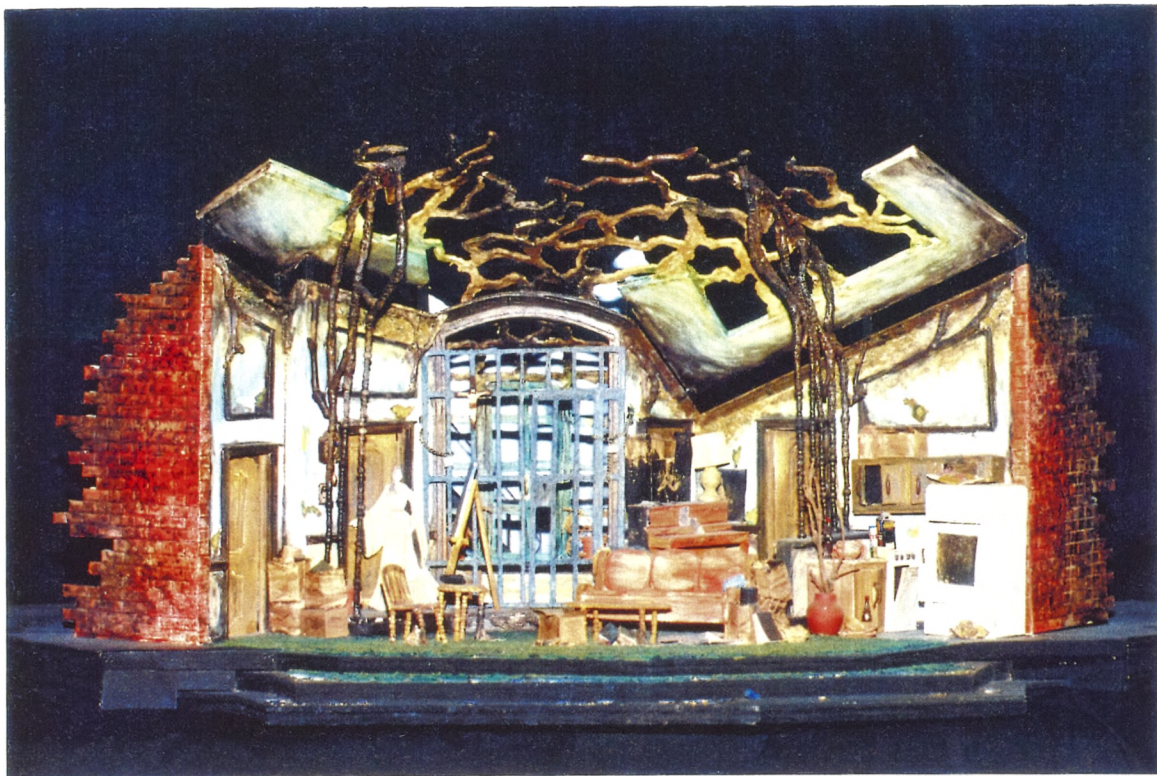


Fig. 3. Color Model  
(Photo by Marc Vetterick)



priority was the ceiling. Points had to be selected at which the metamorphosis from architecture to tree could take place. The most logical places for this to occur were where the architecture most closely shares the elements of line and form with the tree. The muntins and mullions of the window and the spindles positioned at either end of the platform seemed like the best candidates. The spindles, being the most similar to tree limbs, were relatively easy to envision transforming into limbs. The window was slightly more complex. The analogy that helped me to see the transformation process was that of bubbles breaking at the surface of the water. If each pane of glass is pictured as an individual bubble rising toward the surface, the analogy becomes clear. The farther upward the bubbles rise, the more they distort and distend. When they reach the top the bubbles burst, freeing the tree limbs to loom over the set. I wasn't as concerned about a gradual transformation at the point the limbs and ceiling meet. If everything is in transition, there is no solid point of reference for the viewer. The hard lines of the ceiling give a sense of weight while emphasizing the architectural aspects of the design. They also delineate interesting shapes that help focus the audience's eye back to the action. The gap between the ceiling and walls increases the unreality of the setting and illustrates the fragmentation of Artie's life.



It was at this point I realized the ceiling needed something to mirror and balance it. In a fashion similar to the limbs of the ceiling, the carpet began to break apart into bubbles (see 33). But instead of bursting, the floor bubbles solidify into blue leaves scattered around the edge of the apron as if scattered at the foot of a dead tree.

Now that the top and bottom parameters of the space were established, attention needed to be paid to the extreme right and left edges of the set. Heavy brick returns were placed at these points to pin down the set visually. The dirty red brick also introduces an urban feel -- not the crowded vibrancy of city life, but rather the lifeless desolation of an abandoned and neglected city block. The upstage edges of the walls were broken and staggered to reflect the jagged line of the limbs spanning the ceiling. Oversized bricks were incorporated to add to the oppressive weight as well as to the unreality of the set. The zoo bars were exaggerated as well, serving to visually tie the brick returns into the main body of the set. The entire structure was then isolated in a black void to increase the sense of emptiness.

The fire escape used for the nuns' entrance presented some special problems, but nothing as bad as I had first imagined. Due to the fractured nature of the upper structure, I had feared masking of the fire escape would be difficult, but because the set was placed in a black void, a



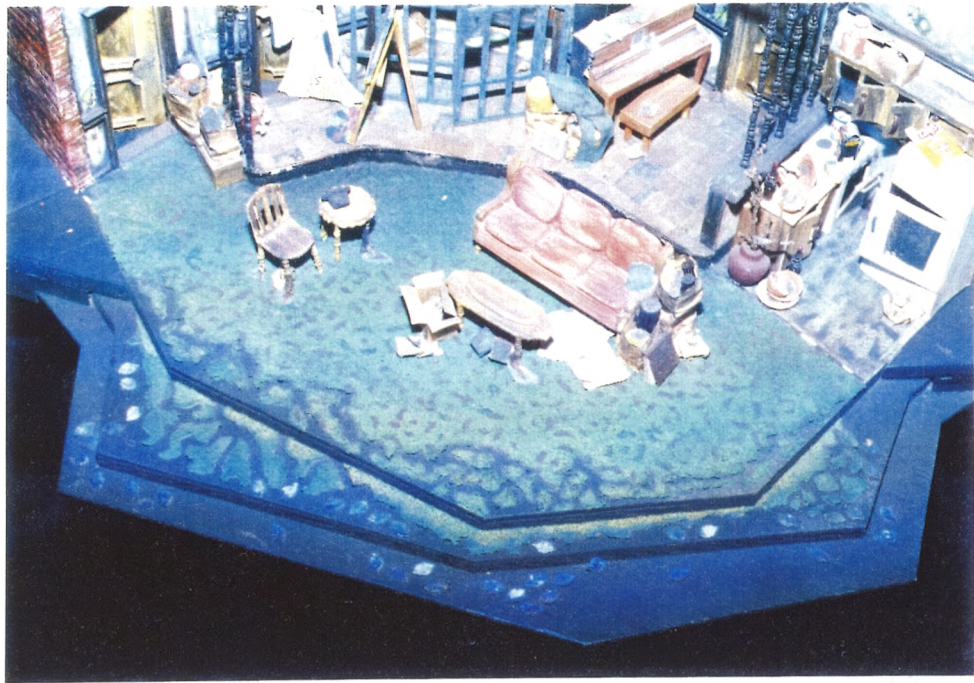


Fig. 4. Model Detail, Floor Pattern  
(Photo by Marc Vetterick)



few strategically placed black walls resolved the problem nicely. The only visible portions of the escape were those silhouetted directly in front of the leaf unit (see 35), creating an interesting effect of line and shape when layered visually with the window frame and the zoo bars (see 36). The rest of the fire escape unit disappeared into the blackness.

Now that the major structure of the set was in position, the room needed to be filled with both the physical furniture of Artie and Banana's environment, and clues to the psychological "furniture" littering Artie and Banana's minds. Placement of the physical furniture was pretty straight forward, using the criteria of logical room arrangement, visibility to the audience, and available space. The playwright notes that the couple have lived in the apartment for eighteen years, never quite settling into their environment. To illustrate this point the apartment is littered with bags and boxes full of the useless baggage of their lives. The kitchen is a mess, but not the kind of mess created in the preparation of a large, sumptuous meal. This is a place where cans are opened and bland single serving meals are heated. The characters themselves are living in a transitory, deteriorating state. The model was dressed appropriately to reflect this chaos. Boxes and litter were arranged in the apartment and the kitchen was cluttered with



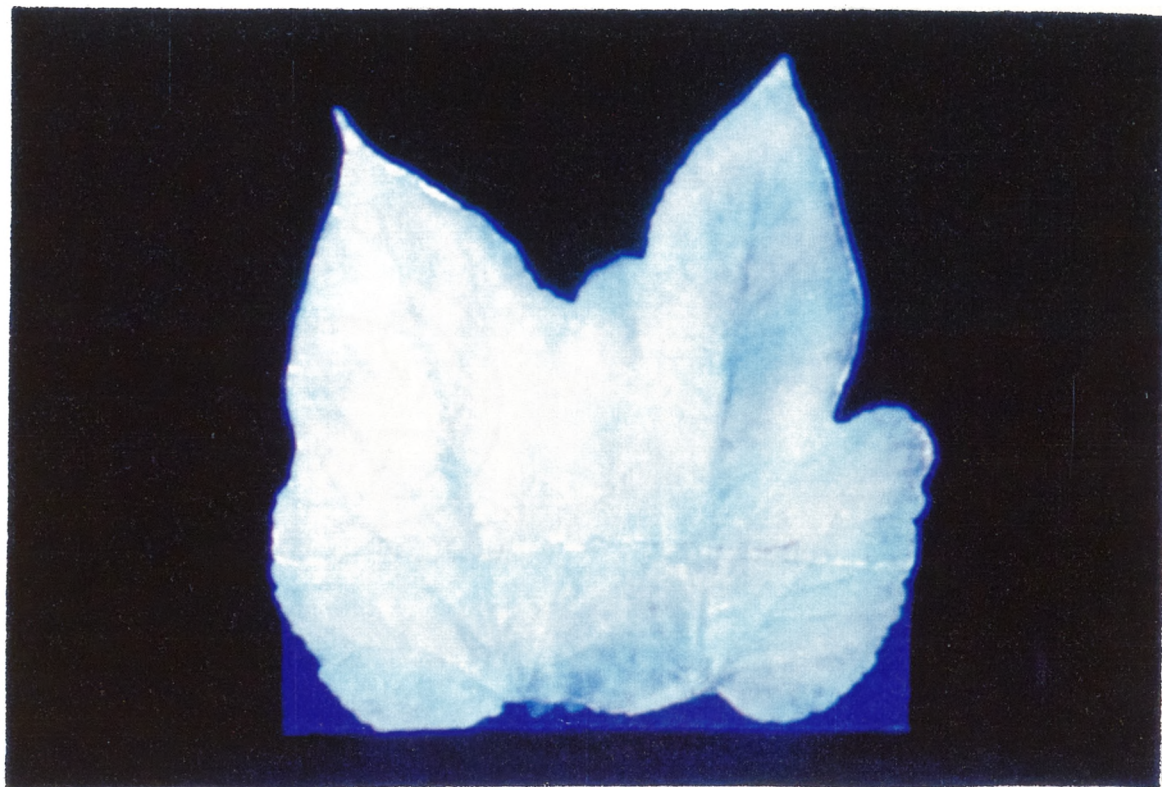


Fig. 5. Model Detail, Leaf Unit  
(Photo by Marc Vetterick)





Fig. 6. Model Detail,  
Window as Seen Through Zoo Bars  
(Photo by Marc Vetterick)



food wrappers, cans, and dirty dishes.

Posters of actors and animals were added to illustrate Artie's relationships with what he considers the good life. He wants to rub elbows with the stars, yet the closest he can manage is to skin his elbows while rubbing stains from the floor of the gorilla exhibit. He is as far removed from stardom as a monkey is from a Homo sapien. These posters define Artie's territory: his piano, his kitchen, and his front door. The front door is important because Artie believes that he alone has control of who enters and exits. This is a metaphor of the control Artie believes he has over himself and the people in his life. Artie never had control of anything, of course, but the front door is one of the first areas of his domain where he knowingly loses control, with the rest of his life soon following.

A cuckoo clock was placed above Ronnie's photograph as a rather blatant clue to his dominant personality trait. The hands are sprung in a cartoon fashion, with the cuckoo itself sprawled out on its extended perch and its tongue hanging out of its mouth.

A bloody crucifix is wired to the zoo bars above Bananas' area. This is one of the most universal symbols in the history of mankind, depicting unimaginable pain and suffering. It also represents eternal hope and love. The location of the crucifix above Bananas' territory reflects





Fig. 7. Model Detail, Kitchen  
Fig. 8. Model Detail, Piano by Front Door  
(Photo by Marc Vetterick)



these traits within her.

The walls of the apartment were unusually tall due to the irregular line of the top of the set. Panel moulding was added to the upper walls of the model both to fill the empty space and to provide a frame through which the "leaf/eyes" could be displayed. The panels were trapezoidal, following the contours of their individual walls at a distance of one foot from the bricks, cornice, and doorways. This offered an excellent opportunity to add branches between these and the cornice, helping to reemphasize the metamorphosis of the design and giving it a more even appearance. These frames also presented the perfect vantage from which to display the leaf cut-outs originally conceived in the white model. These cut-outs were patterned after actual leaves, the same two leaves used to construct the leaf unit at the rear of the design. The idea was for the leaves to remain invisible to the audience until the end of the play. These "angry leaves/accusing eyes" glare down at Artie as he murders his wife, while six or eight blue leaves flutter to the ground.

The color scheme is also based on the asylum metaphor which shaped the scenery. The green carpet corresponds with the green lawn, the walls with the dismal blue of the rainy skies, and the green, yellow and brown of the roof/limbs reflect the organic nature of the tree. This organic nature was taken to its extreme by the sickly green and yellow



coloration applied to the wall wherever the wallpaper is peeled back or torn. This symbolizes the gangrenous, festering wounds that Artie and Bananas have inflicted on each other over the years. The orange couch placed at the center of the acting area visually pulls in the orange of the brick returns, effectively unifying the set and providing a stark contrast to the light blue of the walls and backing unit.

I had made it a point to keep the director fully informed of my progress and concepts during the development of the design. The two of us held numerous informal meetings, not to mention scheduled production meetings, to discuss concepts and share ideas. Even so, the director seemed pleasantly surprised with the finished results. The presentation of the model to the rest of the production team occurred at the end of June. It was very well received by everyone involved. Because of the unusually early production schedule, the director was able to work with the model for more than a month before casting the production.

#### Designer's Analysis and Drawings

Upon completion of the color model, I began preparing designer's drawings working from the model. The computer aided drafting program, or CAD program, utilized to draft the design was Microstation 2.4, developed by Microsoft, 1991.

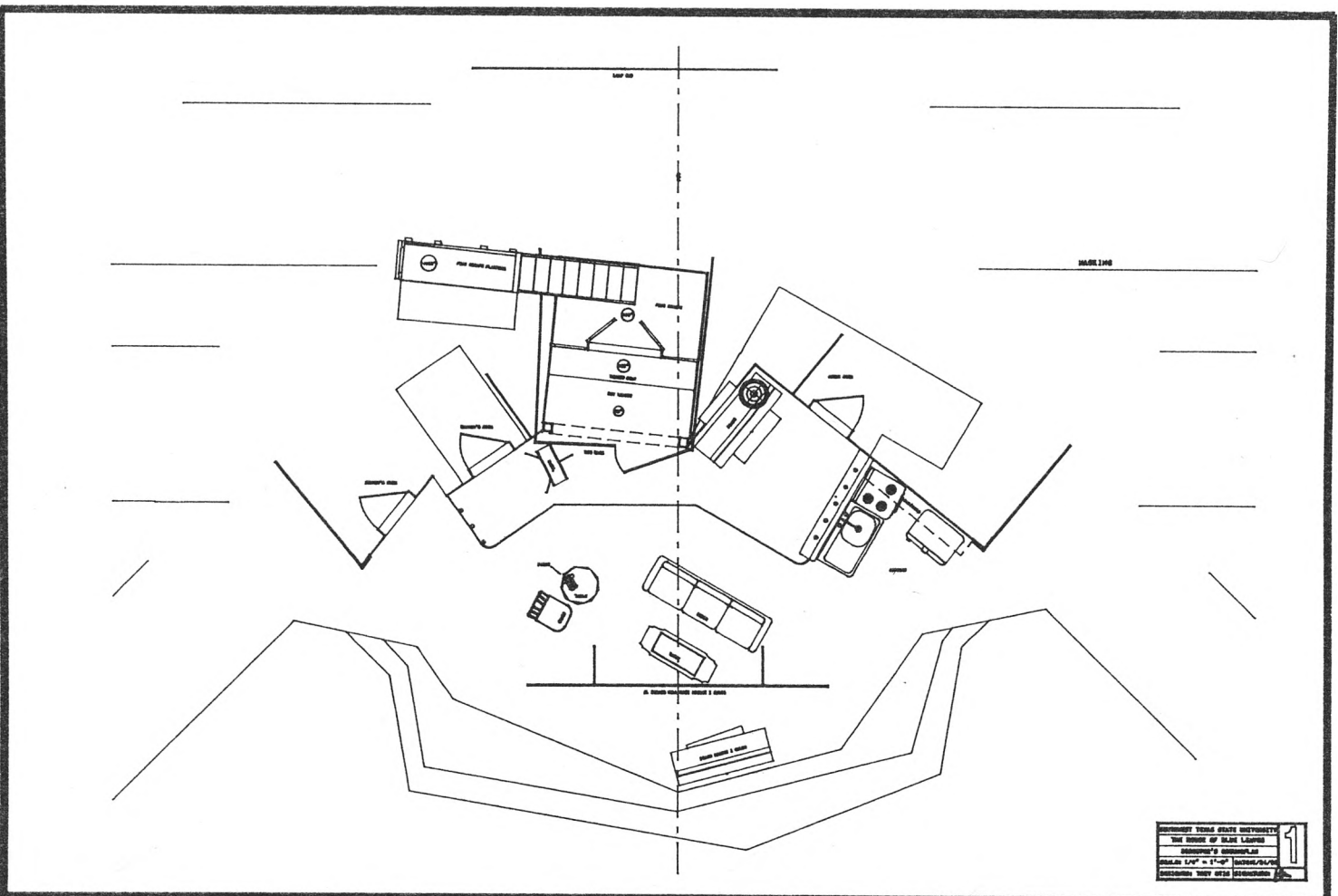


It was run on an IBM clone system with digitizer command. Because of the nature of the CAD program, drawings were laid out in full size in the "cyber-space" of the computer screen. The plotter, which produces the hard copies of the drawings, has the ability to reproduce the plates in any scale. Most drawings were originally plotted in a scale of  $1/2" = 1'-0"$ , but have been plotted much smaller for this report.

The crowded nature of the set required the removal of the roof and window units from the model in order to make accurate measurements. Once this was done, simple placement of the walls and furniture was fairly elementary. X,Y grid coordinates were employed using the plaster and proscenium lines for the X,Y axis of the grid. The elevations were measured and reproduced on paper in a similar manner.

The drawings comprise fifteen figures. The first two of these drawings are both ground plans. Figure number 9 is the director's ground plan, shown on page 42. This plan includes all wall and platform positions, as well as platform heights, portals, stairs, and masking. Also shown are the positions of the furniture and set pieces for both the prologue and for the main body of the show. The second drawing is the technical groundplan. Platforms and walls are the only components of the set shown in this drawing. The purpose of this drawing is to accurately position the set in relation







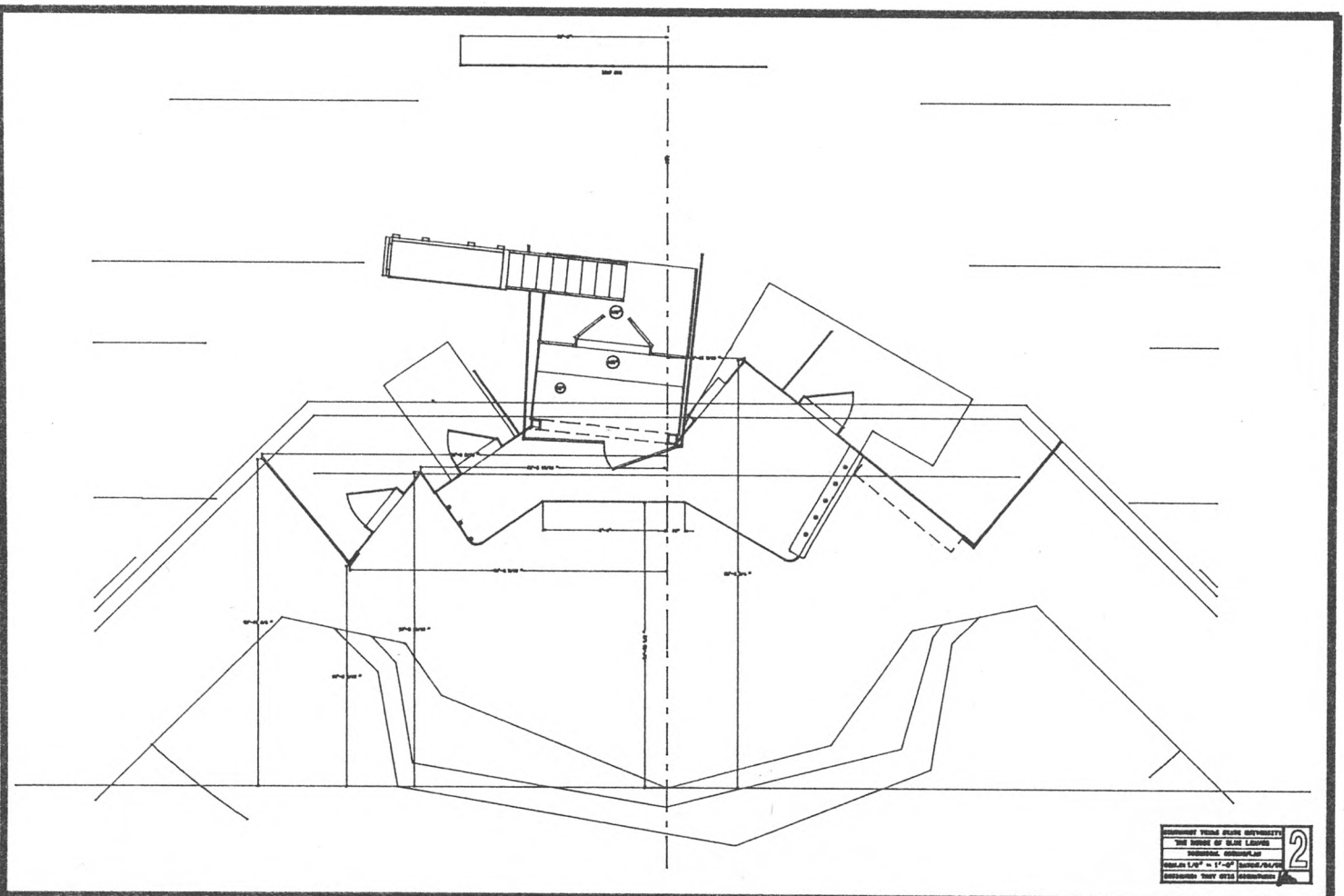




Fig. 11. Elevation, Stage Left Wall Units

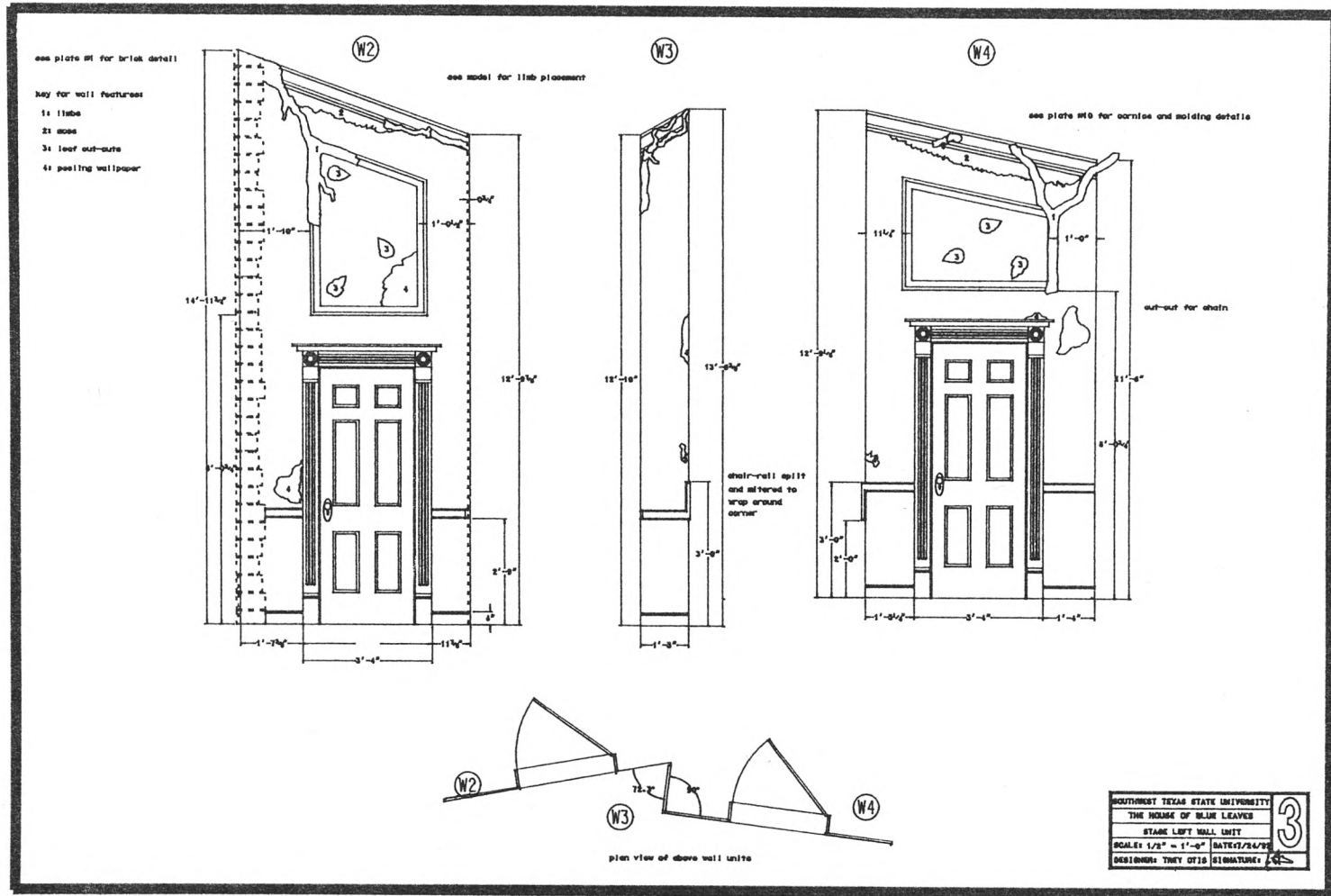
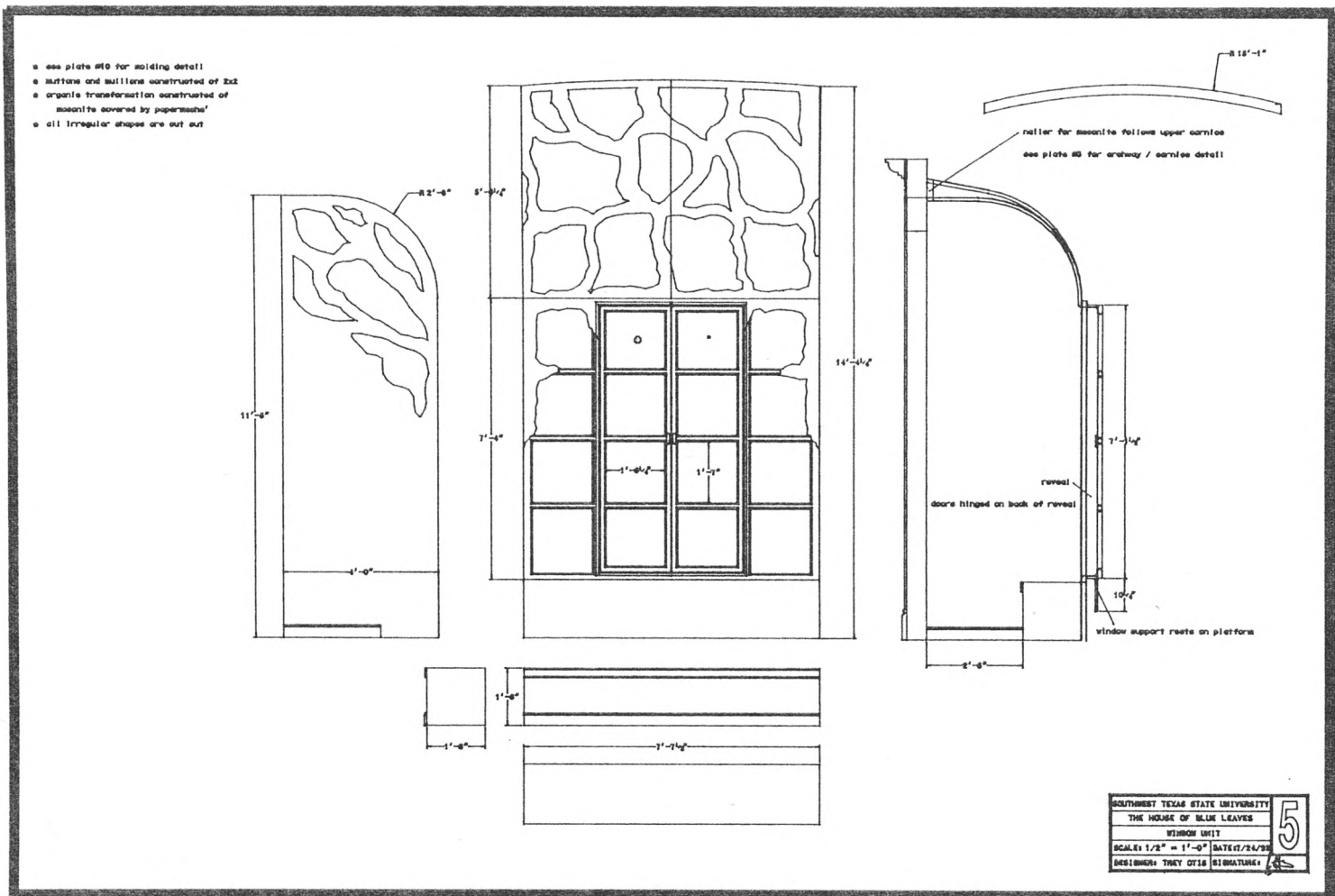








Fig. 13. Elevation, Window Unit





Architectural drawings for "The House of Blue Leaves" showing window details and a zoo bar grid.

**Window Details (Left):**

- W5:** A side elevation of a window unit. It features a curved top with a radius of  $R 12'-1"$ . A note indicates: "nailer for upper window flite behind arch cornice top of window unit attaches to nailer". The unit is shown with a vertical frame and a horizontal base.
- W8:** A side elevation of a window unit, similar to W5 but with a different profile.

**Zoo Bar Grid (Right):**

- A plan view of a zoo bar grid. The grid is composed of vertical bars and horizontal crossbars.
- Dimensions:**
  - Overall width:  $8'-0\frac{1}{2}"$
  - Overall height:  $10'-0"$
  - Vertical spacing between crossbars:  $2'-0\frac{1}{2}"$  (repeated four times).
  - Horizontal spacing between vertical bars:  $1\frac{1}{4}"$  (repeated four times).
  - Right side offset:  $8\frac{1}{2}"$  and  $8"$ .
- Note:** "Zoo bars constructed of 1" tubular steel rod"

**Table:**

SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY	
THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES	
ARCH / ZOO BARS	
SCALE: $1/8" = 1'-0"$	DATE: 2/24/95
DESIGNER: TREY OTIS	SIGNATURE:

**Page Number:** 6



Fig. 15. Elevation, Fire Escape Unit

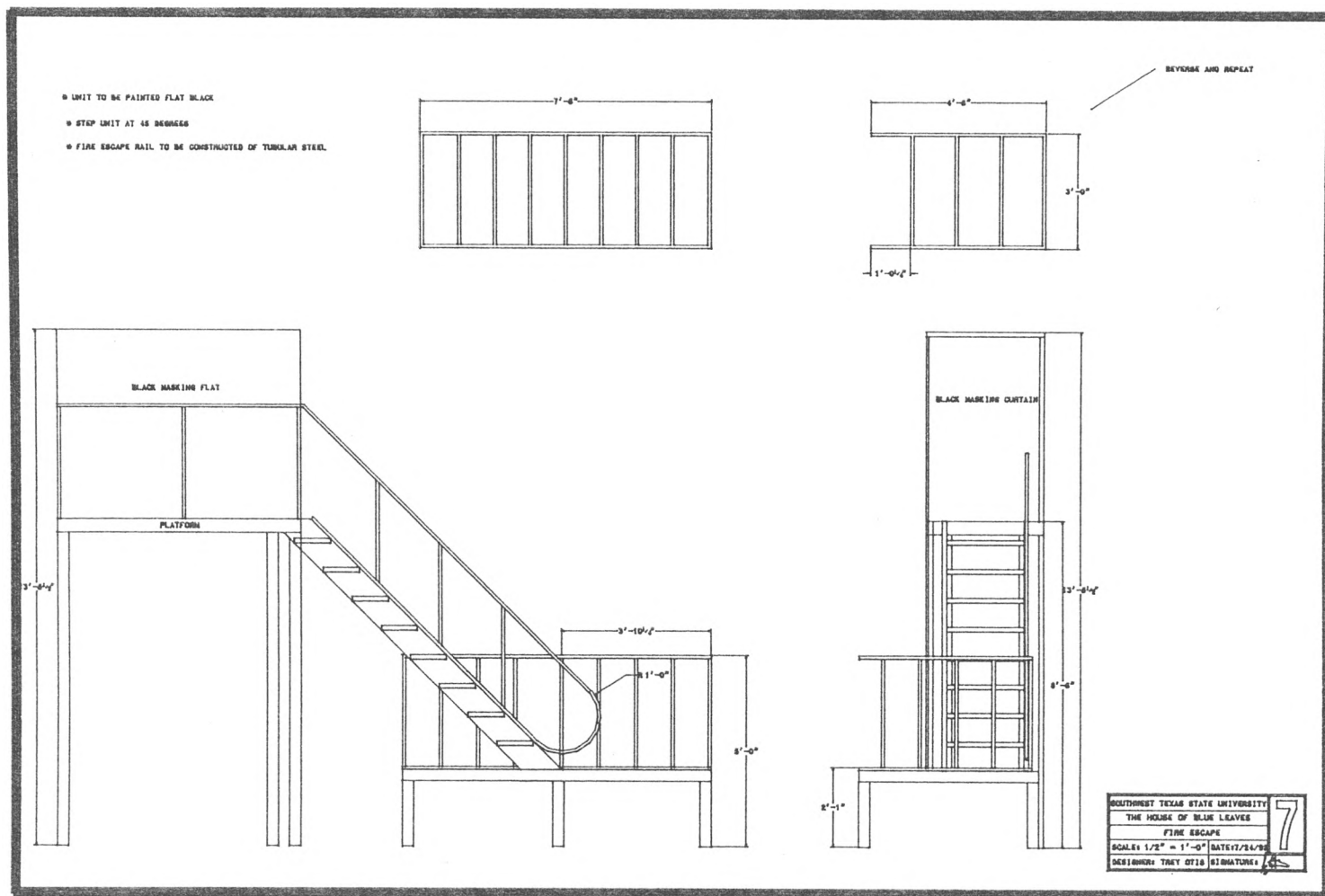




Fig. 16. Elevation, Spindle/Limb, Bar Unit

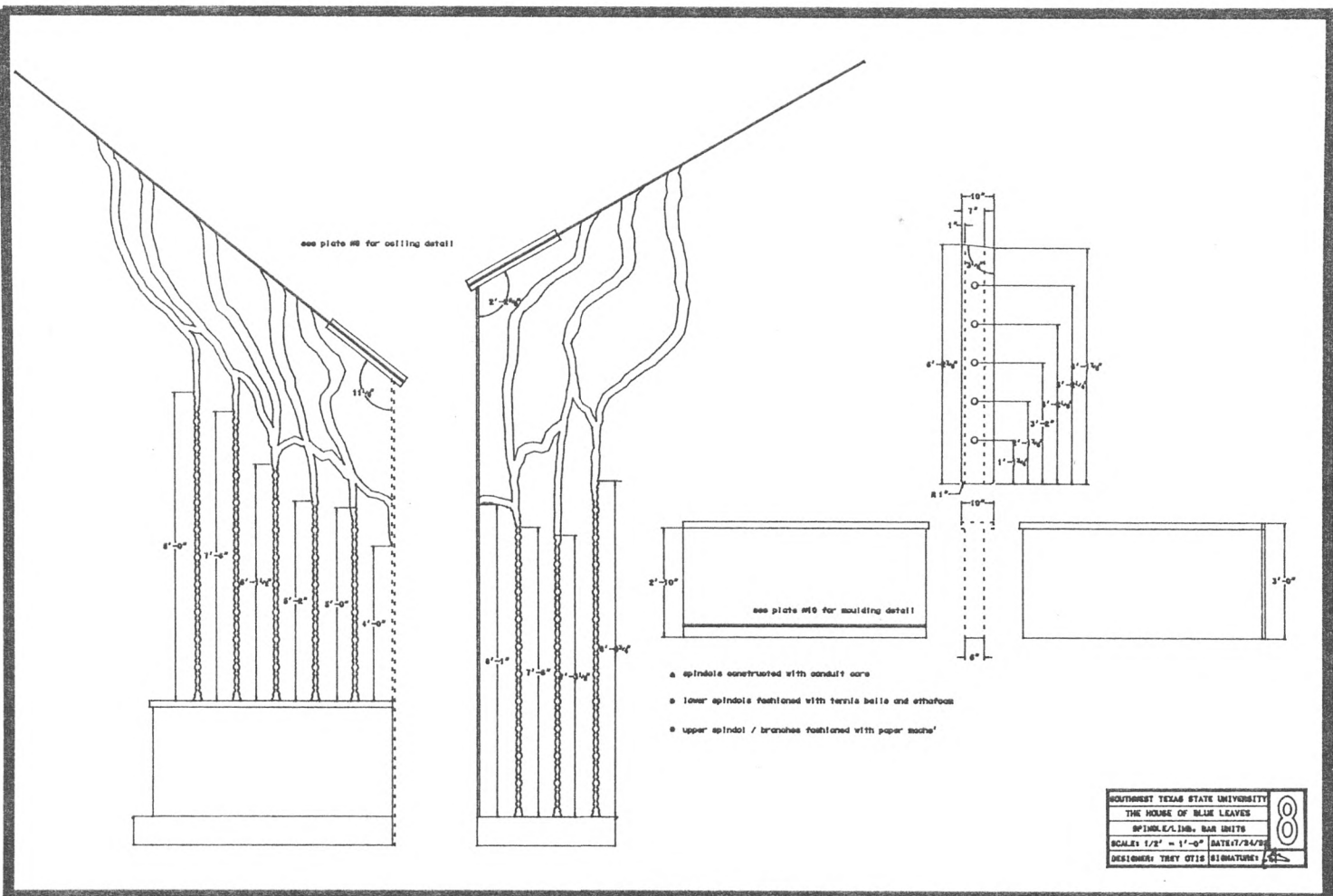




Fig. 17. Elevation, Ceiling/Limb Unit

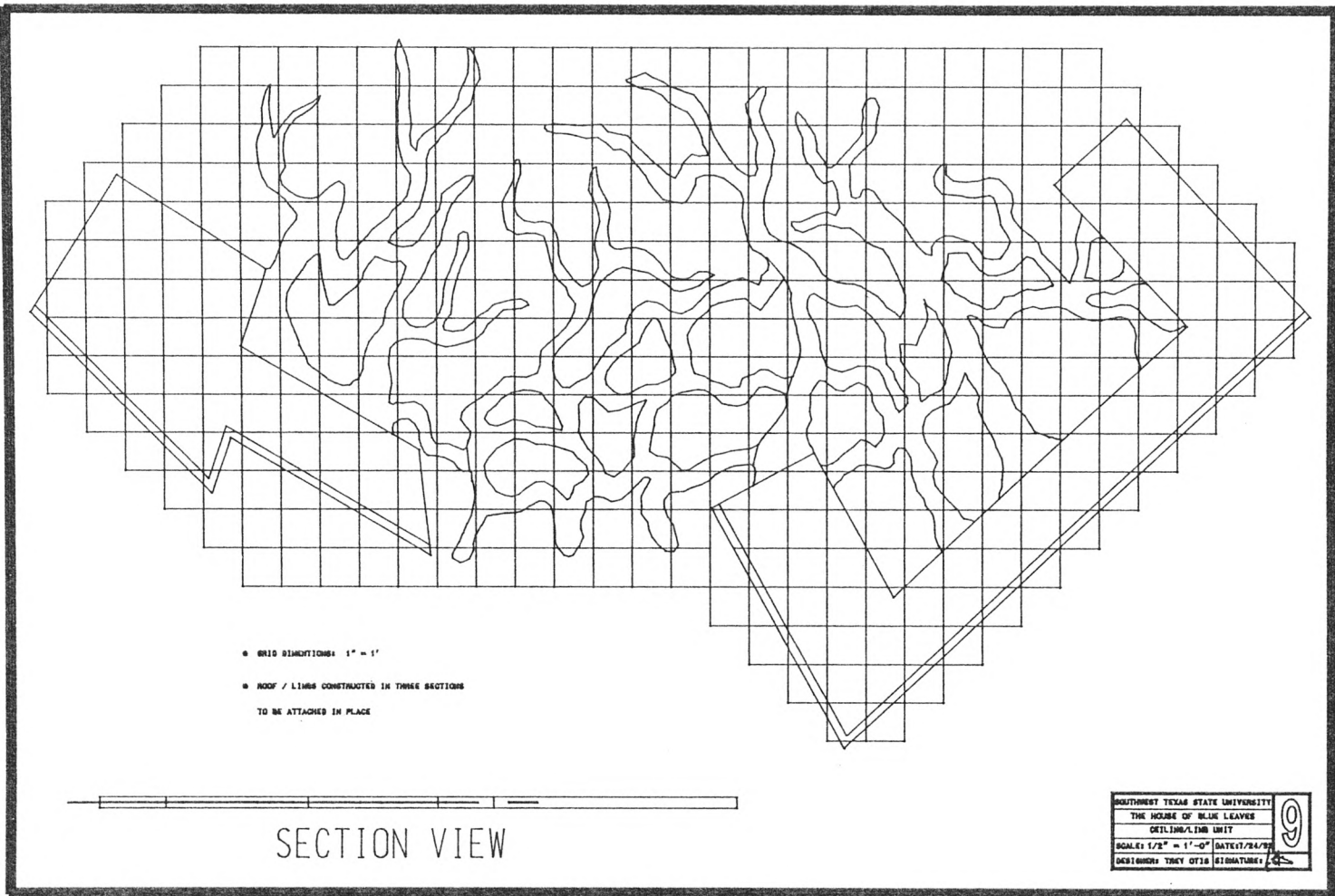
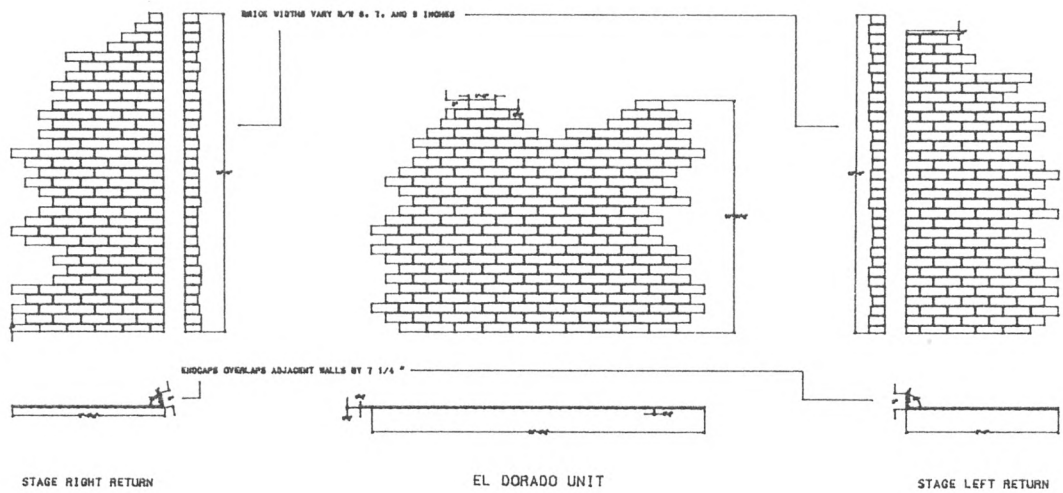




Fig. 18. Elevation, Brick Units




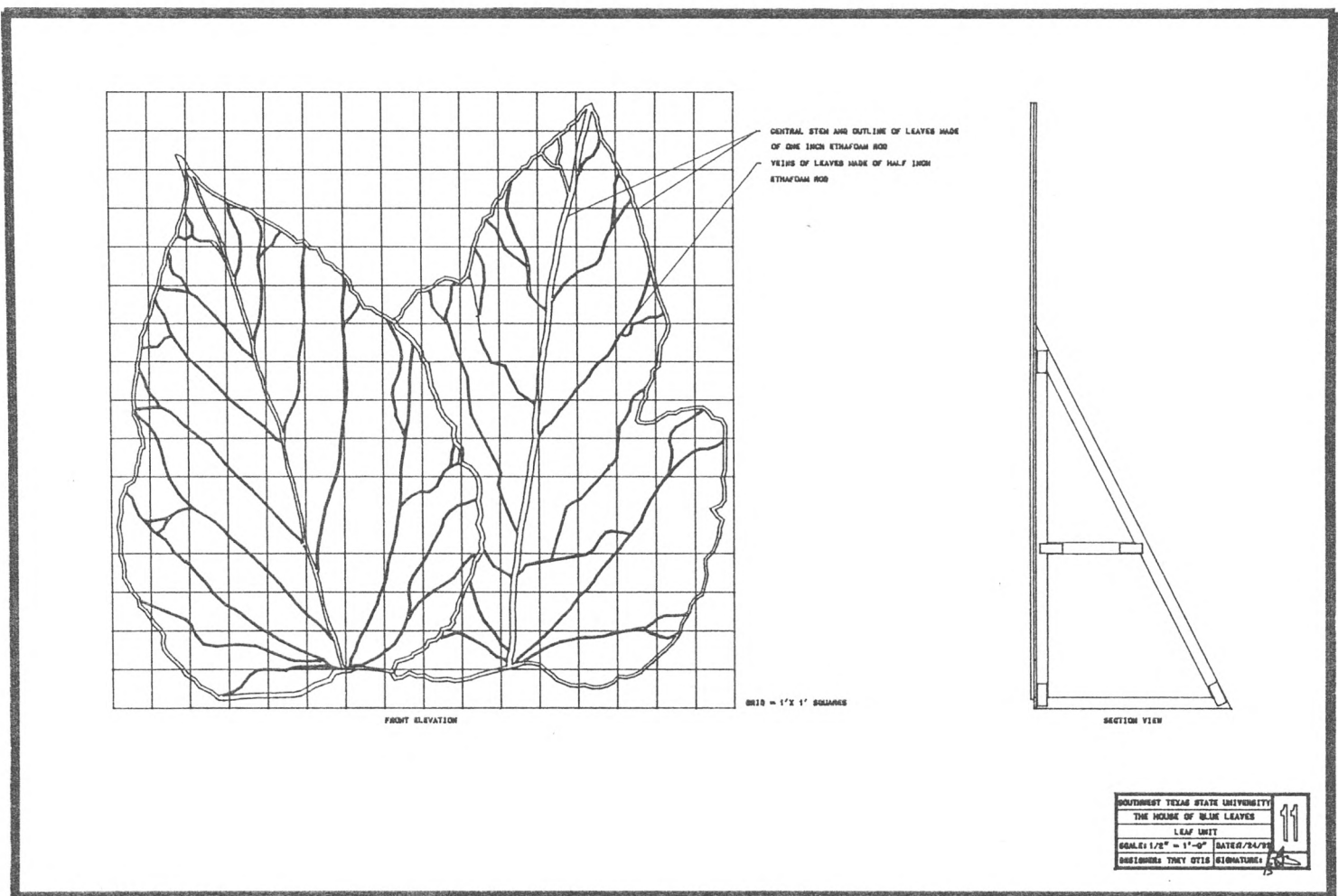
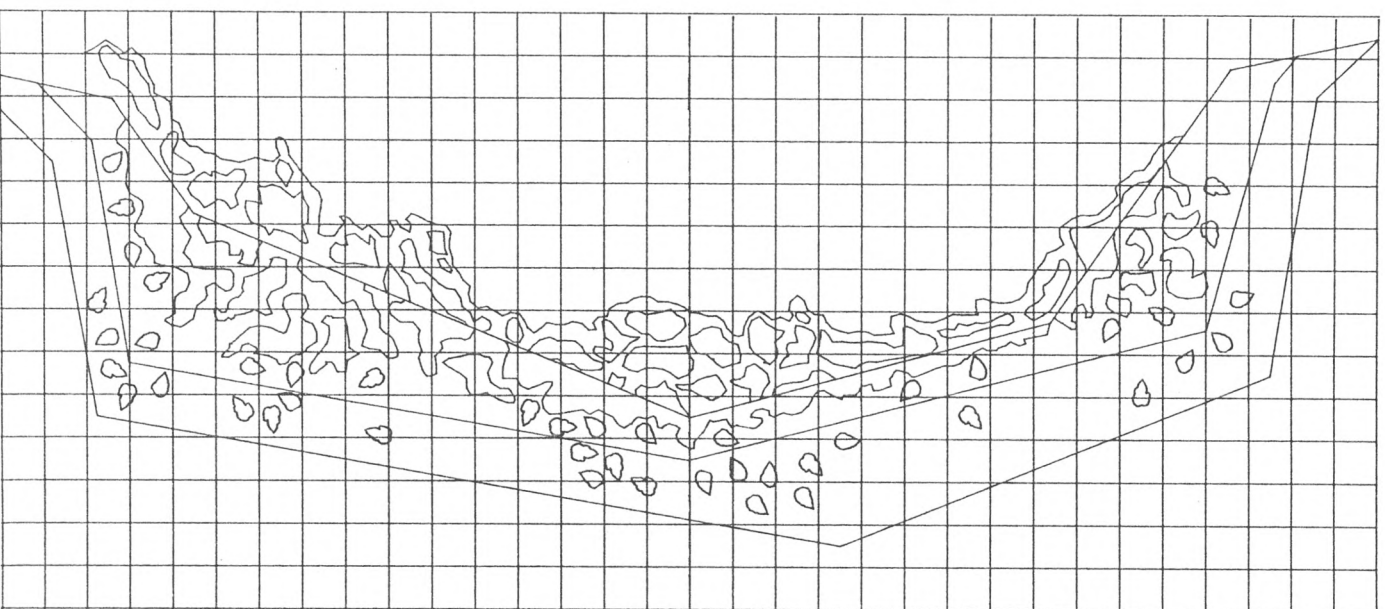
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY	
THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES	
BRICK UNITS	
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"	DATE: 12/24/98
DESIGNER: TREV OTIS	SIGNATURE: 



Fig. 19. Elevation, Leaf Unit








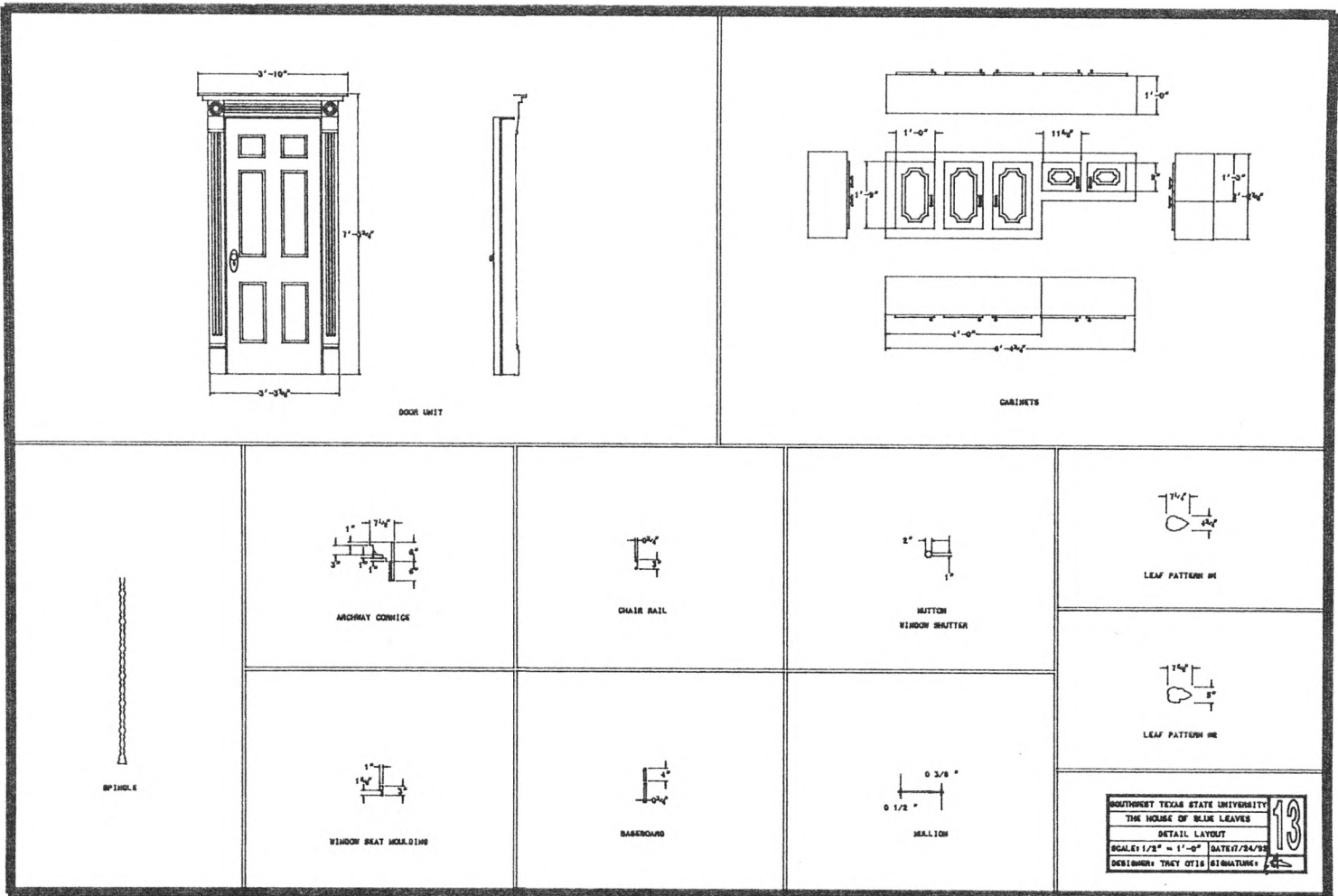
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY	
THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES	
CARPET PATTERN	
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"	DATE: 2/4/93
DESIGNER: TNEY OTIS	SIGNATURE: 

Fig. 20. Plan View, Floor Pattern



Fig. 21. Detail Layout





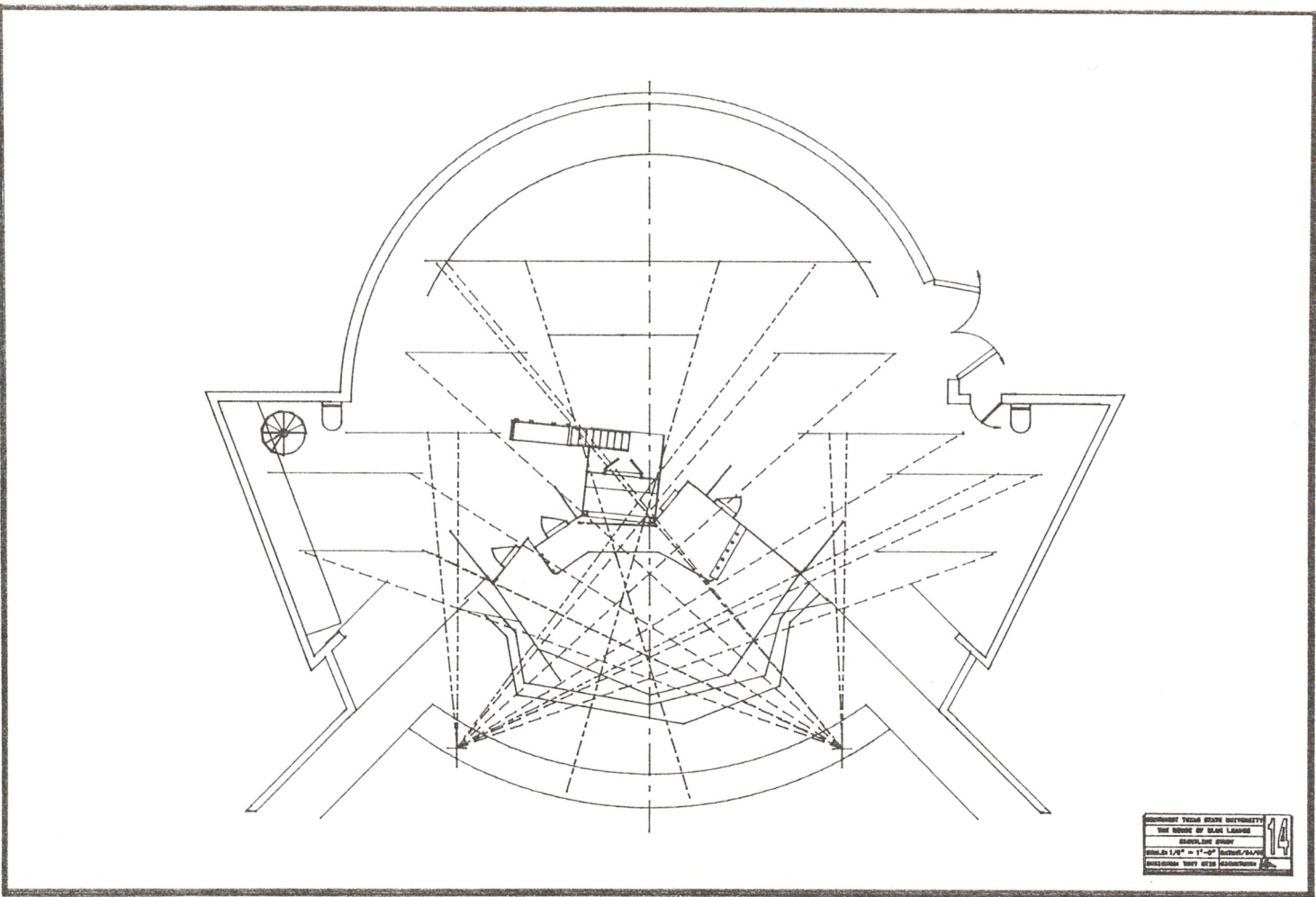


Fig. 22. Sightline Study







to the stage (see 43).

Figures 11 and 12 are wall elevations, which can be found on pages 44 and 45. The wall units on figure 11 are designated W2, W3, and W4. The units on figure 12 are designated W6 and W7. The basic wall parameters are given, along with doorways, cornices, chair rails and upper wall frames. The "leaf/eyes" are indicated, as well as the position of the tears and rips in the wallpaper. All of the organic elements, such as the limbs, moss, and "leaf/eyes" are represented in the drawings and identified by number. Phantom lines denote the position of the brick overlap at the outside corner of the outermost walls. A section of ground plan showing the relationships of the three wall units on figure 11 is included at the bottom of the drawing.

The components of the window unit are shown in figure 13. The upper section is shown flat, before the one-eighth-inch plywood was bent into position and attached to the sweep on the back of the arch. This drawing is found on page 46.

Figure 14, on page 47, contains the layout for the center archway and for the zoo bars. They are designated W5 and W8 respectively. The sweep, or nailer, to which the upper wall section of the window unit attaches is shown on this drawing as well as on the previous one.

On page 48 is found the next drawing of this series. It explains the configuration of the fire escape. The rails,



platforms, and stair unit are addressed as well as the masking for the upper platform.

The bar and spindle units are drafted on figure number 16, on page 49. The point of the metamorphosis between spindle and limb is defined, as well as the spacing between spindles and the general layout of the branches.

The ceiling/limb unit was handled on figure 17, page 50. A 1" = 1'-0" grid was created to facilitate the reproduction of the irregular limbs. The drawing shows where the three sections that comprise the limb unit were joined after the individual pieces were suspended in place.

The stage right and left brick units, found on page 51, were originally designated W1 and W9. They later came to be referred to as the stage right and stage left returns. The El Dorado Unit is also included in figure 18, due to the similarity of appearance between the units. Plan views are included below each unit, with the return plan views showing the position of the endcaps that overlap the apartment walls at the extreme ends of the structure.

Figure 19 illustrates the leaf unit utilized behind the fire escape. This unit was gridded using the same method employed with the ceiling limbs. Notes are provided specifying the use of foam rod for the outline and veining of the leaves, and a section view demonstrates the method of supporting the unit.



A 1"=1'-0" grid was also utilized for the breakup of the carpet at the down stage edge of the acting area. This drawing, designated as figure 20 and found on page 53, shows the placement of the blue leaves scattered about the front of the apron steps as well.

Figure 21 is broken down into eleven separate drawings defining details of the set. Included here are the doors and casings, the kitchen cabinets, the spindles, and all of the cornice, moulding and chair-rails employed on the set. Patterns for the "leaf/eyes" are provided as well.

Figure 22 is a plan view of the set incorporating a sightline study. This drawing was invaluable in the placement of the black masking around the stage.

The final drawing, figure 23, is a section on the center line of the set. It is found on page 56. The primary purpose of this drawing was to plan masking and to give the lighting designer the set's height. Although still somewhat incomplete as an independent drawing, all necessary information for the lighting designer is provided.

#### Special Problems in the Designer's Drawings

The biggest problem occurred with the calculations of the complex angles between the upper stage right walls and the corresponding ceiling unit. The problem was to match the different angles of the top of the three flats with the back



edge of the ceiling unit while maintaining a one-foot gap. The angle of the ceiling had to be calculated fairly precisely for its rear edge to stay aligned with the three angles of the wall units. I grappled with formulas for a week or so with no real success. I exhausted my limited knowledge of trigonometry without solving the problem. In desperation I began to randomly shuffle numbers and functions as they related to my problem. I did this in an effort to activate my right brain and possibly see the problem in a fresh light. Somehow the method worked. I managed to stumble upon a very simple formula which positioned the ceiling unit in relation to the wall units, lining everything up perfectly. I still have no idea why or how the formula works, but there is no question it was successful. The drawings under discussion are on pages 45 and 50. The formula is detailed below. All equations are relative to horizontal, all numbers are expressed as degrees, and the symbol  $\angle$  identifies angles.

1. Subtract top angle of W2 (20.1645 degrees) from top angle of W3 (30 degrees).  $[30 - 20.1645 = 9.8355]$
2. Subtract 9.8355 degrees from plan  $\angle$  between W2 - W3 (72.9999 degrees).  $[72.9999 - 9.8355 = 63.1644]$
3. Subtract  $\angle$  of top of W4 (12.0424 degrees) from plan  $\angle$  between W3 and W4 (89.9998 degrees).  $[89.9998 - 12.0424 = 77.954]$



The answer to this problem, 77.954 degrees, is the exact angle of the top edge of wall W2, the one-foot section located at the jog between Banana's and Ronnie's rooms. It also defines the angle of the ceiling piece which was suspended one foot above the stage right walls.



## CHAPTER 3

### EXECUTION OF SCENERY

Debra Coates was the technical director for The House of Blue Leaves. Without her tireless effort and endless ingenuity this project could not have been realized to the extent and quality that it was. Her responsibilities ranged from producing the construction drawings, selecting the best materials for the construction of the various individual units, procuring the necessary materials, working out any special problems concerning construction and stability of the set, and generally supervising the entire construction process. I am not going to attempt to explain all her work here, but an overview of the process seems appropriate.

Construction of the set was in progress during much of the drafting process. The scene shop was turning out units almost as fast as I could turn the drawings over to the technical director. This made it necessary to release some of the drawings before they were completely ready. Although not an ideal practice, no serious problems arose due to incomplete drawings. Most pertinent information was included, with the drawings being incomplete mostly in format and layout. The Technical Director copied the information



directly from my diskette onto her computer hard drive, allowing her to manipulate the drawings as she saw fit. I made it a point to remain available for questions, and attempted to foresee as many of the questions as possible before they were asked. I made frequent visits to the scene shop in an effort to catch any problems before they might arise.

#### Wall Units

The first pieces turned out by the scene shop were the apartment walls. These were framed with one-by-four yellow pine boards covered with one-eighth-inch plywood for added stability (see 64). Independent door units were inserted into the walls. One of these door units was pulled from stock, and the other two were constructed using the first door as a pattern. The cornice and wall panels were constructed from sculpted styrofoam backed with one-quarter-inch plywood and adhered to the walls with an adhesive. The "leaf/eyes" were cut into the wall units, positioned inside the upper wall panels on each of the three flats. These were then covered with cheesecloth, paper napkins, and Phlex-Glue, applied with a brush from the front of the unit. Phlex-Glue is a product of Spectra Dynamics of Albuquerque, New Mexico. It is an acrylic binder that remains flexible when dry. Lighter tissues and Phlex-Glue were used to soften the edges





Fig. 24. Rear View of Walls, Stage Right  
(Photos by Debra Coates)



of the brown paper. Along the same vein, the peeling "wallpaper/wounds" were applied using brown paper napkins as well. The paper was peeled or torn as dictated by the model. The bulk of the walls was covered with white paper towels to add texture to the surface. After the walls were standing, coffee-can-lights sporting red color filters were attached directly to the back of each individual "leaf/eye".

The chair rail above the wainscot and the baseboard along the floor were added after the walls were set. The cornice also had to be cut to fit with the walls in place. Limbs and ball moss growing on the upper walls were added to the cornice at this time. The foam wall moulding was cut away as well, and replaced with limbs wherever the model indicated, then the foam and wood were blended with paper towels and Phlex-Glue.

#### Brick Units

The brick units were fabricated of the same plywood and one-by-four frame construction with which the primary walls were built (see 67). Oversized bricks were then cut from one-half-inch foam sheets and attached to the flats with adhesive, leaving a one-half-inch space between each at the grout lines. The bricks were then distressed using a variety of tools, including sure-forms, wire brushes, and a butane torch.



### Leaf Unit

The sixteen-foot-tall leaf shaped backing unit that dominates the upstage area was made up of irregular flats pulled from stock and attached together to form the main body of the unit. Profile pieces were then added to the outside edges to give the leaves their shape and identity. The unit was then covered with corrugated paper to give it a unified surface. One-inch foam rod was utilized to form the center stem and perimeter of the unit, with one-half-inch foam forming the veins of the leaves. The entire unit was then covered with paper towels and Phlex-Glue (see 68).

### Fire Escape

The fire escape consisted of two wooden platforms -- one nine feet tall, the other two feet -- connected by a wooden stairway with a forty-five degree slope (see pg. 69). The platform rail was constructed of tubular steel, and the stair rail was made from one-half-inch conduit.

### Platform

A nine-inch platform was located along the upstage edge of the apartment between the front door and Banana's room. Stock platforms were used, and specially shaped plugs were constructed as needed to complete the platform design. The parquet floor was achieved by cutting one-foot squares of





Fig. 25. El Dorado Unit  
(Photo by Debra Coates)





Fig. 26. Leaf Unit  
(Photo by Debra Coates)



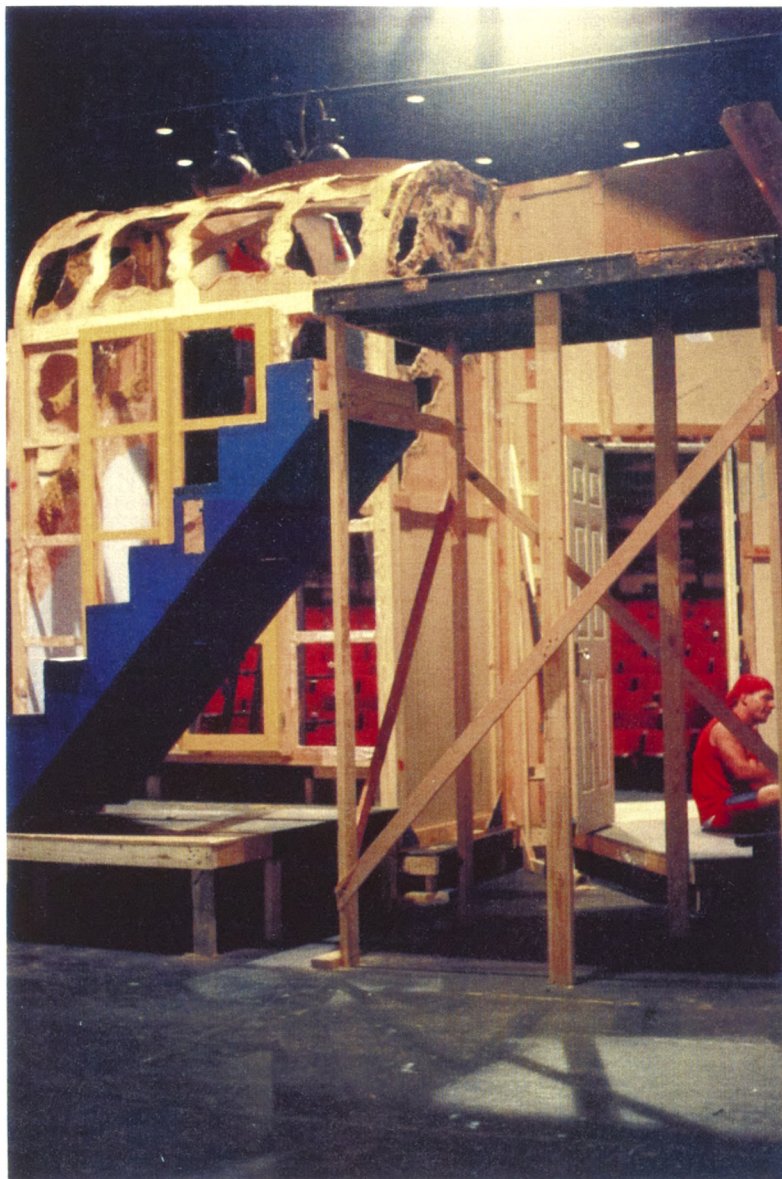


Fig. 27. Rear View of Fire Escape  
(Photo by Debra Coates)



plywood and adhering them to the platform as the model dictated. Certain of the plywood tiles were pried up or distressed to match the design. A strip of one-and-one-half-inch moulding was applied to the front edge of the platform.

### Zoo Bars

Early in the design process, the director had a vision of Artie climbing the zoo bars, like one of the apes in his care. This symbolic stripping away of the last of Artie's humanity could have been very effective. There was no doubt it was very expensive. The vertical bars were one-inch-round steel pipe, with the horizontal bars of angle iron notched around the vertical pipes (see 71). The locking mechanism was made of steel plate welded to the metal framework. Heavy duty butt hinges were used on the door. Tubular steel bracing had to be employed to stabilize the unit, with each length of steel passing through holes placed in the wall for the chain and padlock. One end was attached to the bars, the other bolted to the floor. This steel bracing isolated the unit from the rest of the set, preventing any unnecessary shaking of the set walls as Artie climbed the bars. Unfortunately, the director changed his mind about this use of the zoo bars, but not until six-hundred dollars had been spent preparing the unit for climbing.





Fig. 28. Zoo Bars  
(Photo by Debra Coates)



### Ceiling/Limb Unit

The architectural portion of the ceiling was constructed of plywood on a one-by-four frame. A six-inch reveal was then attached to create the illusion of mass and weight. The reveal was notched to allow the limbs to branch off from it.

The limb shapes were cartooned onto three-quarter-inch plywood laid out on the stage floor (see 74). A 1" = 1'-0" drawing of the roof overlaid with a one-inch grid was used for reference in conjunction with a one-foot grid placed on the plywood. The limbs were then cut out and one-half inch iron rod was attached to the back of each limb to provide added support. The limbs were then fastened to the appropriate roof unit, leaving the center cluster of limbs unattached. All three pieces were then paper toweling and Phlex-Glued, as the walls had been. While this was occurring, the rear edge ceiling support posts were placed behind the walls, extending one foot above the top edge of the wall. The ceiling/limbs were then raised into place using the fly system of the theatre to position the units. After anchoring the rear edge of the roof, permanent support lines were dropped from the theatre grid and attached at predetermined points to support the structure. The center limb cluster was then secured into its proper position, with the back edge fastened to the rear of the arch.



### Bay Window

The bay window itself was constructed in a fairly basic manner. The side walls were one-by-four frames covered with plywood, with cut-outs in the upper portions of the wall matching the transitory limbs on the section above the window shutter (see 74). The window seat was a simple box with moulding along the top edge. The muntins and mullions of the window were framed from two-by-two pine fastened with corrugated fasteners. Each was then routed to a finished edge. The shutters were hinged to the back of the unit to create a recessed casing. A curved nailer was placed on the rear of the arch to provide an anchor for the limb cluster at the top, while the limbs were screwed into the window frame at the bottom. The entire unit was then pulled together by the application of paper towels, napkins, and Phlex-Glue.

### Spindle/Limb Unit

A skeleton of one-half-inch conduit was constructed using a conduit bender and many trial and error fittings. The conduit fit securely into holes drilled into the platform on stage right, and into the bar unit on stage left. After the pipes were fitted, they were returned to the shop where tennis balls and foam rod were applied to complete the design of the lower portion. They were then returned to their position on the set where a Phlex-Glue papier-mache was added





Fig. 29. Ceiling/Limb Unit  
Fig. 30. Upper Window  
(Photos by Debra Coates)



to the upper portions to aid the transformation from spindle to limb.

### El Dorado Unit

The El Dorado unit was constructed in the same fashion as the brick returns, but this unit had to be rigged to fly out of sight at the end of the scene. Two large eye-bolts were attached to the bottom rail to which aircraft cable was clamped. Directly above each of these, about one-third of the way down the unit from the top, D-ring straps were fastened to the frame as guides for the aircraft cable, which in turn was attached to the batten pipe. There were problems aligning the unit with the counterweight system of the theatre. Fortunately, the El Dorado scene is the first scene of the show. The unit was placed in position before the play began. The scene change from the El Dorado to the apartment was the potential problem. Controlling the unit during the scene shift proved to be manageable with the addition of screen door handles on the back and a little rehearsal with the stage crew.

A related problem dealt with getting the piano offstage after the El Dorado scene. The set was positioned so far downstage that no room was left through which to roll the instrument offstage. Triangular platforms at the point where the apron steps intersect with the stage proper had been



designed for that purpose. This provided ample room to remove the piano.



## CHAPTER IV

### PAINTING

The set was painted with Cal-Western brand concentrated acrylic scenic paint. Aniline dye was used as a glaze on all of the wood-grained units. A variety of techniques was utilized requiring consecutive paint applications. Almost every type of brush imaginable was employed as well as sponges, rags, spray guns and even moss. Specific processes are detailed below.

#### Brick Units and El Dorado Unit

After the brick surfaces were prepared, the units were painted a rust orange. The orange was gently faded into a raw umber along the irregular edge of the walls. The fading of the orange into the brown gave the units a nice quality of depth, darkness and age. The El Dorado unit used a raw umber wash over the orange base to give depth and character to the bricks. The wash was consistent across the unit and did not fade toward the edges as the brick units did.

#### Interior Walls

The interior walls were painted in a standing position.



This was done not only to provide valuable rehearsal time on the set by standing the walls up earlier, but also to take advantage of gravity in reproducing the subtle runs and puddles of the model, which was also painted upright. A light blue base was applied to the walls using an automotive spray gun (see 79). A light tan was applied to the walls below the chair rail with a brush. The light tan base was also applied to the side walls of the bay window. A raw umber wash was used to dirty and stain the "wallpaper". This was applied with a brush to achieve an uneven effect. The tears and peels in the wallpaper were painted yellow and green to suggest putrid, rotting wounds. The wall panels, limbs, cornice, doors, door frames, chair rail, spindles, edge of platform, bar unit, and kitchen cabinets were all wood-grained in dark hues, then washed with brown aniline dye to give it a depth and a luster. The upper walls were given a slightly darker raw umber wash to smooth the visual transition between the two worlds (see 80).

#### Ceiling/Limb Unit

The painting technique for the ceiling, though not the color choice, was inspired by Edvard Munch's work The Scream (see 114). The colors shifted from the brown of the cornice through green, yellow, then back to brown at the tips of the limbs.





Fig. 31. Base Coat  
(Photo by Debra Coates)





Fig. 32. Interior Walls  
(Photo by Debra Coates)



These colors were chosen to give a dry, brittle, organic quality to the set. The units were painted on the floor before being raised into position, with touch-ups performed as needed after the structure was in place.

#### Bay Window Unit

The window unit repeats the basic color shifts of the roof, with slightly less emphasis given to the yellow. Brown dominates the upper organic portions of the unit while green washed with raw umber is the primary color of the lower architectural section.

#### Platform

The parquet tiles were mopped with a heavy raw umber wash followed by a thin black wash to punch up the spaces and cracks in the floor. The missing and broken sections of tile were painted flat black. The parquet floor was never sealed to allow the actors to wear and distress the floor not only during the rehearsal period, but throughout the run of the play.

#### Carpet

Initially, I wanted a real carpet, unfortunately not enough matching pieces could be located. The floor was painted green with brown amoeba-like patches reminiscent of



mottled sunlight through the branches of a tree. These patches were stamped into the carpet using foam cut-outs mounted to the end of sticks. The break up at the downstage edge of the carpet was painted free-hand using the model for reference. The blue leaves scattered on the steps were cut from a low napped carpet, painted blue, and stapled to the floor.

#### Kitchen

The major appliances, consisting of a refrigerator, a stove, and a sink, were arranged according to the model. A raw umber wash was applied to these appliances to create a dirty, unwashed appearance. Dishes were stacked in the sink and distressed with raw umber paint as well. Empty cartons and such were scattered about the room. The dead plant by the sink on the model had to be cut due to stage space, but was replaced visually with a dish-towel on a rack at the end of the sink unit. The floor was painted a light brown and spattered with a dark brown, a mid-range blue and a pale yellow. The cabinets were stocked with utensils and the doors were left slightly ajar.

#### Fire Escape and Leaf Unit

The entire fire escape was painted flat black, resulting in a crisp silhouette against the leaf unit, and disappearing



into nothing against the black masking. The leaf unit itself was painted light blue with dark blue shading along the foam veining.



## CHAPTER V

### EVALUATIONS

#### Self Evaluation

I learned a great deal from the experience of designing The House of Blue Leaves. This was the most complex design I have ever attempted, and I was very pleased with the final result. As for the actual set, I was very fortunate to have a technical director the caliber of Debra Coates. Her dedication, perseverance, and skill saw to it that everything I had envisioned was brought to reality. I have no regrets concerning the execution of my design. There are, however, a few small items that could be improved in my design process.

First and foremost I must learn to use a calendar more effectively. The most difficult portions of the process to schedule were the most technical, the computer drafting and the creative project report. Delay in these areas was due to insecurity and inexperience in the fields of computerized drafting and technical writing. The confidence and knowledge I have gained by following through on these projects have made me a much more competent designer.

Discipline, especially in the creative process, is



another area that can be improved. The ability to call forth inspired approaches at will would be a great asset. Organization and accurate records would also help to expedite the design.

One of the best aspects of the design was the seamless blending of the many metaphors that helped to shape this world. The primary metaphor of the asylum grounds served well as the unifying element of the design, in effect encompassing everything in an organic malignance without overwhelming the individual elements.

The least effective aspect of the design was the El Dorado Bar and Grill, used in the prologue. I did not give the scene serious consideration until the main body of the setting was, for the most part, finalized. I considered placing the bar on one of the "side stages" of the University Theatre, but this asymmetrical arrangement offended my sense of balance. In retrospect I realize that the design for the prologue should have been developed more closely in conjunction with the rest of the design to give the production a greater sense of unity. This integration of design would have undoubtedly forestalled the limitations I created for myself.

Writing this report helped me to evaluate both my design and the process from which it developed. The organization of thought necessary when placing words on paper gave me a



clearer perspective of the project. It enabled me to see mistakes made in the process and gave me the opportunity to correct misconceptions I had formed about why and how things happened. This retrospective has helped me to anticipate problems in future designs.



Faculty Evaluations

Dr. Daniel L. Hannon, Department of Theatre

I was Mr. Otis' faculty advisor for his design work on *The House of Blue Leaves*. I watched his daily progress through the preparation of the design and the designer's drawings. I was less closely involved with the shop preparation and finishing work on the set itself, although I was aware of most developments. Because of my close involvement with the project my observations cannot be objective. My close association makes me more aware of certain strengths and weaknesses, and provides insight into the developmental process.

It is usual in our graduate program to have students interested in scene design prepare at least two produced designs while they are here. The first experience serves to prepare them to take complete responsibility for the final design. When Mr. Otis came to Southwest Texas State University we had already assigned all available design slots for that year. Instead of designing his own production that first year Mr. Otis assisted me on two productions that I designed. I'm sure he learned from those experiences, but nothing is equivalent to having the personal responsibility for a design. I was concerned that we might be rushing him into his final project prematurely. In some ways, I suppose we were. He had no opportunity to deal with deadlines directly before that. He had never been on his own (at least not here) with full responsibility for developing a design in collaboration with a director and other designers. He had prepared some drafting, but never in detail for his own designs. In his class work and in his assisting work he had difficulty completing designs and in following through with his responsibilities. When he assisted me on a production of *Into the Woods* at St. Edwards University his early work still lacked the follow through that would be necessary if he were to work independently. I was considerably encouraged later by his execution of much of the finishing work for the set. It was the first time I had seen him demonstrate the level of dedication and determination necessary for independent work. I felt that he could handle his final project, even though there would be many things he would be undertaking for the first time.

The beginning work on *The House of Blue Leaves* was quite hesitant. It often is for anyone, but I was especially concerned that Mr. Otis take responsibility for this design, and I may have worried more than the actual circumstances should have suggested. In a very short time, however, Mr. Otis began to respond to the script and to the director's production concepts. After that breakthrough his confidence never lagged during the entire process of developing the design. He worked diligently; he was excited and enthusiastic. He was full of ideas that he couldn't wait to incorporate into the production plan.



He and the director developed an excellent rapport, and the design developed rapidly and thoroughly. It was obvious that his enthusiasm and the excitement of others were carrying him through this portion of the process. I suspect that Mr. Otis will remain a designer very dependent upon spontaneity and inspiration. These are glorious assets for any designer, but discipline always becomes useful in some part of the design process. Discipline does not come easily to Mr. Otis.

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Mr. Otis has indicated his satisfaction with the design for *The House of Blue Leaves*. I agree. I think it was an exciting concept and design, and I think his design compares favorably with others I have seen for this play, including the two productions on Broadway. It worked well in production, and was well received by the audience.

The drafting for the production proved to be quite difficult, especially on the computer. I don't think Mr. Otis ever mastered the computer, but the drawings he produced were quite good. I'm sure he eventually spent more effort on the drawings than any other aspect of this production. He learned a great deal while he was suffering. Still, I'm not sure that he could approach drafting for another production with confidence.

It was much easier for him to paint and prepare the finishing details on the actual set than it had been for him to draft. He captured the spirit of the painted model. He did not keep records. When he came to prepare this report he could only generalize about the painting and finishing techniques. Nevertheless, I feel confident that he can manage well as a painter of his own designs in the future. I just hope he can improve his work habits and record keeping.

The preparation of this report has been as much an accomplishment for Mr. Otis as was the execution of the design itself. He has learned a great deal in the process, and he has realized that he has communication and analytical abilities he had hardly used in the past. I am pleased with the work as it now stands.



Daniel Hannon  
Head, Theatre Design and Technology  
Southwest Texas State University



J. Jay Jennings, Department of Theatre

Trey Otis was a great help during the production process of The House of Blue Leaves. His contributions involved five main areas.

First, his knowledge of absurdism allowed us to see the play from similar points of view. Secondly, Trey was able to take my metaphors and translate them into a dramatic visual reality. Next, his insights into the play were quite remarkable for a student designer. His vision helped shape the characters. Trey was able to take the ordinary queens apartment and translate it into a work of art. Lastly, his attention to detail was most evident in the model and in the set dressing and props.

The world of Artie Shaughnessy came alive in Trey's design. The metaphors of trees and leaves, and the reality of lives in deterioration and confusion were woven together in a remarkable way.

The least effective part of the design was the setting for the El Dorado Bar. This was partly due to an awkward script requirement and secondly because of the limitation of the acting space. Nevertheless, the bar setting did not match the appeal or intensity of the main design.

The completed set proved to be a haunting prison for the play. The mood it provided touched everyone involved. It inspired the actors to a new level of performance as they



moved in and took possession of their home. The results also had a strong impact on the audience. After each performance there were many favorable comments about the set. And a few people remained in their seats to think, unwilling to let go of the performance.

The complete stage design and the action of the play danced together to create that special magic that is only possible in the theatre.

J. Jay Jennings

Lecturer, Department of Theatre Arts

Southwest Texas State University



## APPENDIX A

### Production Photographs





Fig. 33. The Completed Set  
Fig. 34. Bunny Makes Herself at Home  
(Photos by Debra Coates)



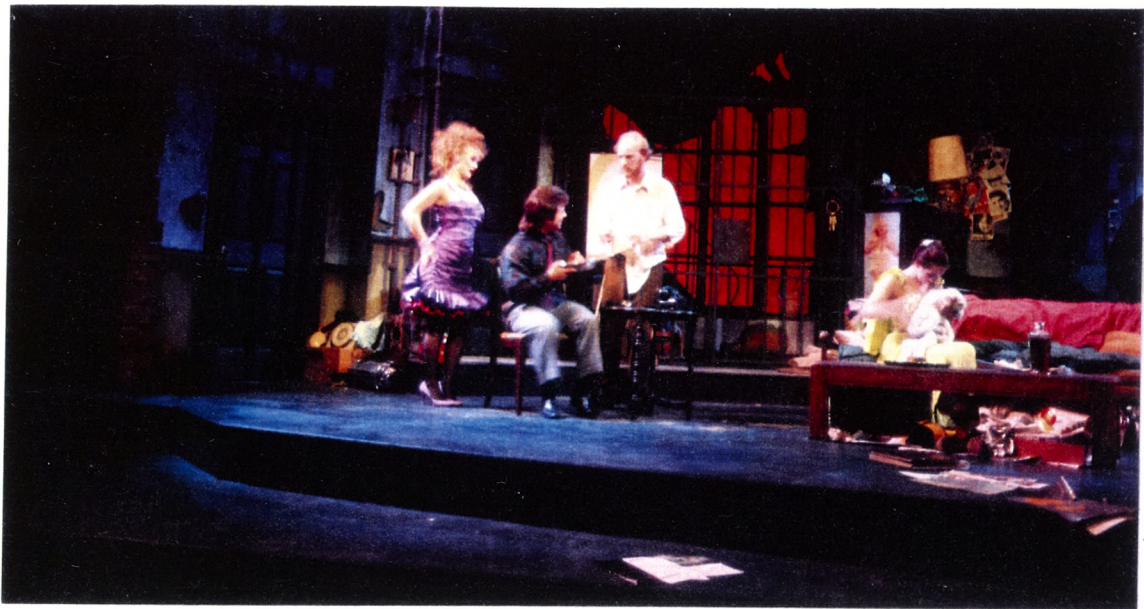


Fig. 35. The Nuns Watch T.V.

Fig. 36. Artie Tries to Impress Billy



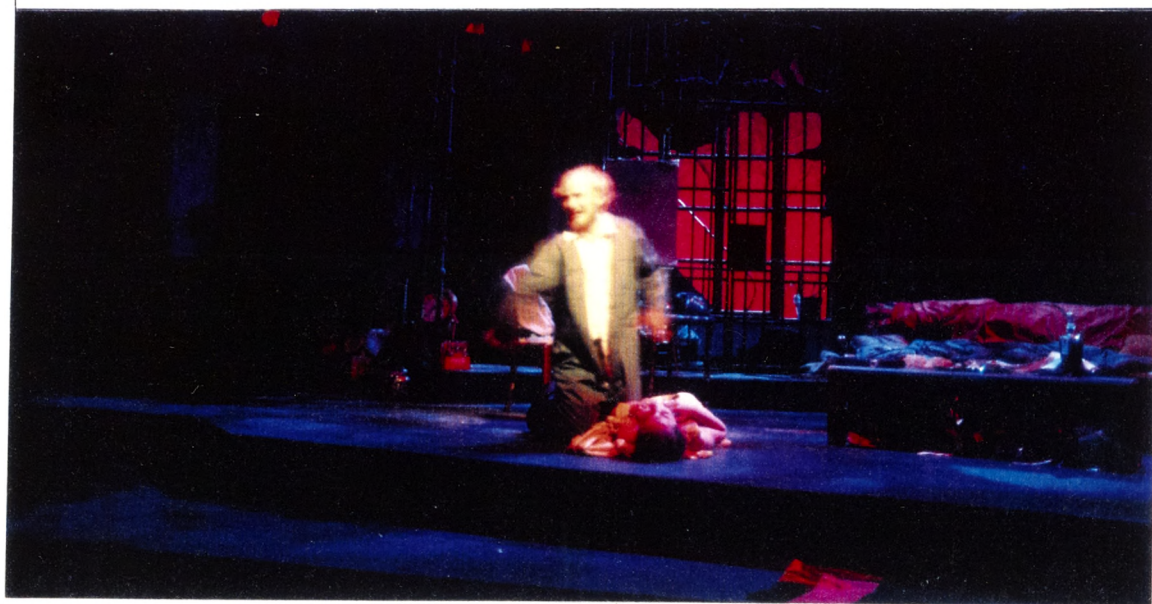


Fig. 37. Billy and Bananas  
Fig. 38. Artie Murders Bananas  
(Photos by Debra Coates)



## APPENDIX B

### PROGRAM



**Become a "Member" of the  
SWT Theatre Program**

With the cost of education increasing, more of our scholastically and creatively talented students require financial assistance to continue their studies. You can play a supporting role in our effort to help our best students complete their education through a contribution to one of the scholarship endowments described below. Awards are made from the interest earned after the endowment reaches five thousand dollars minimum, so the greater the maintained balance, the more scholarships are awarded. No contribution is too small, and all are equally appreciated.

Donors of fifty dollars or more receive two season tickets with advance box office privileges.

Please consider helping us in this effort.

Frederick J. March  
Chairman

**JAMES G. BARTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Established to honor James G. Barton, Professor Emeritus, who served as Director of Theatre from 1947 until 1976, the fund is designed to honor outstanding scholars and artists majoring in Theatre Arts, regardless of classification. The scholarships are awarded on a semester basis.

**THEATRE ARTS ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP:  
IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL D. SULLIVAN (1947-1986)**

Established by a group of alumni to provide scholarships for Theatre Arts majors "in memory of Michael and his love for the Theatre," the scholarship will be awarded to the most outstanding Theatre major completing their first year of study. Contributors of \$50 or more are "Founding Donors" and will be listed on a plaque. (Michael participated in all phases of Theatre at SWT from 1967-1972.)

Tax-deductible contributions should be made payable to "SWT Development and Alumni Affairs" and sent to Frederick J. March, Chairman, Department of Theatre, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX 78666. Please specify the scholarship you wish your donation deposited to.



**1992 - 93 Season**

**The Department of Theatre**

**presents**

"...an outrageous comedy  
about the absurdity  
of modern life."

**THE  
HOUSE OF  
BLUE LEAVES**

by John Guare  
Directed by J. Jay Jennings

**7:30 P.M.      Sept. 29 -  
Oct. 3  
2:00 P.M.      Oct. 4**

**Adults \$ 6.00  
Students \$ 3.00**

**Southwest Texas State University**

University Theatre Box Office 245 - 2204



## COMING ATTRACTIONS

Nov. 17 - 22

### *The Merchant of Venice*

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Dennis Maganza

One of Shakespeare's best known, the play presents a critical view of "judgment", "redemption", and "mercy" in the context of a bourgeois society.

April 1 - 10

### CABARET

A joint production with  
The Department of Music

By Joe Masteroff  
Based on a play by John Van Druten  
Stories by Christopher Isherwood  
Music by John Kander  
Lyrics by Fred Ebb  
Directed by Richard Soddors  
Keith Winking, Musical Director  
Choreography by Dr. Joan Hays

April 27 - May 2

### Candlestein

Written and Directed by Charles Pascoe

A musical play about cruelty to animals and the power of revenge.

A mistreated group of farm animals run away from their master and encounter a society of farm animals. One of the animals is Candlestein, the white racoon, who has his own reasons for hating the cruel farmer.

## No admittance After Opening Curtain

You are cordially invited to meet the cast and crew in the Green Room, immediately following the performance.

#### THEATRE ARTS FACULTY AND STAFF

Frederick J. March	Chairman, Introduction to the Fine Arts, B.F.A. Program..
James G. Barton	SWT Theatre Archivist..
J. Paige Bishop	Beginning and Intermediate Acting.
J. Peter Coulson	Director of Graduate Studies; Theatre History, Drama Theory and Criticism.
David G. Flemming	Introduction to the Fine Arts, Film History and Aesthetics.
Claudette Gardner	Supervisor of Student Teachers; Beginning and Intermediate Acting.
Daniel Hannon	Head of Design; Scenic Design, B.F.A. Design Program.
Sheila A. Hargett	Costume Designer; Costume Construction, History and Design, Oral Interpretation, B.F.A. Design Program.
James N. Harrell	Beginning and Intermediate Acting, Characterization, Television/Film Acting.
Larry Hovis	Beginning Acting, Television/Film Acting.
J. Jay Jennings	Beginning and Intermediate Movement, Beginning and Intermediate Acting, B.F.A. Acting Program.
Dennis M. Maganza	Head of Actor Training; Beginning and Intermediate Acting, Acting Styles, Stage Directing, B.F.A. Acting Program.
Charles Pascoe	Director of Children's Theatre; Beginning and Advanced Creative Dramatics.
Bill R. Peeler	Technical Director; Stagecraft, Stage Lighting, Introduction to Fine Arts
Richard Soddors	Head of Director Training; Beginning and Intermediate Acting, Introduction to Fine Arts, Stage Directing, B.F.A. Acting Program.
Marilyn M. Swinton	Teacher Education

#### THEATRE STAFF

Theatre Arts Secretary	Annie Patton
Box Office Manager	Nikki Lowman
House Manager	Valerie Valdez
Scene Shop Foreman	J. Lynn Cobb
Costume Shop Manager	Angie Johnson
Costume Cutter-Draper	Homa Khosh-Khul



DEPARTMENT PRODUCTION STAFF:

Scene Shop Foreman	J. Lynn Cobb
Grad. Scene Shop Assistants	Trey Otis, Leigh Ann Truly and Richard Boultinghouse
Scene Shop Assistants	Barton Faulks, LeRoy Tibbets and Paul Hovis
Head Cutter/Draper	Homa Khosh-Khui
Costume Shop Manager	Angie Campbell Johnson
Costume Shop Assistants	Chelley McDaniel, Katherine Trewin, Ken Weber and Carrie Robinson
Box Office Manager	Nikki Lowman
Box Office Crew/Ushers	ThA 2111 Class
House Manager	Valerie Valdez

SPECIAL THANKS

BARGAIN BIN  
ANTIQUES BY KEN MILLER  
SANDY WILBUR  
GERONIMO ANTIQUES  
SHIRLEY CHALKER  
MICHELLE WEYLAND  
JENNIFER POGUE  
DAN HANNON  
BILL PEELER  
LYNN COBB  
CLAUDETTE GARDNER

SHAN BRYANT  
CARRIE DAVIS  
LEROY TIBBETS  
TREY OTIS  
ANNIE PATTON  
BARTON FAULKS  
DEBBIE COATES  
MR. & MRS. PAT POGUE  
KELLY MANUEL  
WILD HARE  
JOSEPH LANGHAM

PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH  
SAMUEL FRENCH, INC. NEW YORK, N.Y.

THE DIRECTOR AND MANAGEMENT RESPECTFULLY REQUEST  
THAT NO CAMERAS OR RECORDERS BE USED DURING THE  
PERFORMANCES.

Southwest Texas State University Theatre  
Presents

# *The House*



# *of Blue Leaves*

by John Guare  
Music and Lyrics by John Guare

Directed by: J. Jay Jennings  
Assistant Director: Jeanne Timme Crenshaw  
Scene Design by: Trey Otis  
Lighting Design by: Stephanie Grebe  
Costume Design by: Katherine Trewin  
Stage Manager: Steven Carter Ness  
Additional Original Music Score:  
Timothy Girardot



### Director's Notes

The House of Blue Leaves is one of the absurdist plays that were popular during the 1960's when playwrights were intent on calling our attention to the absurdity of modern life.

John Guare says his play considers what people will do to avoid humiliation. This production of his play asks the question: Is ambition a positive trait? A better question might be: How much ambition is too much? These are difficult questions for us because ambition is the bed rock foundation of the American Dream.

The style: Vacationing in London, John Guare saw Sir Lawrence Olivier in two plays. The first was an outrageous comedy, the other a serious tragedy. He wondered if he could combine these polar opposite styles into one script, and so The House of Blue Leaves stretches from the silly to the sublime -- from slap stick to dark sorrow.

The Metaphors: There are two powerful symbols that guide the action. 1. The Zoo: Many of the characters in the play have animal qualities and names. Artie works in a zoo. He has caged his wife into their apartment and feeds her animal tranquilizers to keep her subdued. Without love, humans are as ruthless as animals. Bananas says that "Animals aren't meant to be famous." 2. The House of Blue Leaves: The leaves are actually blue birds who leave to seek their fortune. The House is both an insane asylum in the country and the house where Artie lives - the house that everyone leaves.

Who are the insane ones in our world, humans who live with ambition as their overriding lust, or humans for whom love comes first?

### CAST

Artie Shaughnessy.....	Joseph Lee Langham
Ronnie Shaughnessy.....	Patrick R. Reed
Bunny Flingus.....	Christi Spain
Bananas Shaughnessy.....	Le Easter
Corrinna Stroller.....	Carrie Davis
Billy Einhorn.....	Wally Baban
Head Nun.....	Kelly R. Manuel
Middle Nun.....	Emily Reyes
Little Nun.....	Laura Boudloche
Military Police.....	John Whitten and Chris Filla
Asylum Attendants.....	Brad Crawford and Darren Shaw
Voice of the Pope.....	Joe Moore

Scene: Artie's Apartment in Sunnyside, Queens, New York City.  
Time: October 4, 1965

### PRODUCTION STAFF:

Technical Director	Debbie Coates
Master Carpenter	LeRoy Tibbets
Set Construction Crew	ThA 1358 Stagecraft Class
Assistant Stage Manager	Shan Bryant
Property Aquisition	Cindy Chalker & Branden Allmon
Property Mistress	Cindy Chalker
Property Assistant	Branden Allmon
Property Crew	ThA 2111 Class
Master Electrician	Kelly Terrell
Light Board Operator	Paul Hovis
Lighting Assistant	Lori Merkle
Lighting Preparation Crew	ThA 2338 Stage Lighting Class
Sound Board Operator	Eric Peterson
Live Piano	Timothy Girardot
Recorded Sound	Joseph Lee Langham
Costume Design Assistant	Ken Weber
Wardrobe Supervisor	Laura Briola
Costume Running Crew	ThA 3344 Costume Construction Class
Costume Construction Crew	ThA 3344 Costume Construction Class
Make-Up	Tim Burns and Shawne Ratay
Hairstylist	Deborah Anderson
Poster Artwork	Joseph Lee Langham
Poster Layout	Fred March
Ushers/Box Office Crew	ThA 2111 Class



## APPENDIX C

### Production Calendar



**HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES**IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL 27TH.....BEGIN DESIGN SKETCHES  
MAY 15TH.....BASIC DESIGN CONCEPT IN CONCRETE  
JUNE 15TH.....DESIGN FLUSHED OUT-BEGIN DRAWINGS  
JULY 15TH.....DESIGNS COMPLETED  
JULY 27TH.....BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF BASIC SET PIECES  
AUGUST 3RD-MID AUGUST.....BEGIN SET CONSTRUCTION  
AUG 31ST.....CATTLE CALL  
SEPT 2ND.....CASTING COMPLETE  
SEPT 3RD.....1ST READ THROUGH  
SEPT 4TH.....PRELIMINARY LIGHT DESIGN DUE  
SEPT 9TH.....COMPLETED LIGHT DESIGN DUE  
SEPT 12TH.....LIGHT HANG  
SEPT 18TH.....SET COMPLETED  
SEPT 19TH.....LEVEL TECH  
SEPT 21ST.....FULL TECH RUN (STOP & START)  
SEPT 24TH.....COSTUME PARADE  
SEPT 29TH.....SHOW OPENS

\* ALL DATES ARE TARGET DATES AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE CONSIDERED TENTATIVE. (WITH THE OBVIOUS EXCEPTIONS).



# June 1992

## House Of Blue Leaves

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 7:00pm Design Meeting	3	4 2:20pm Registration Summer I	5 Registration Summer I	6
7 ● FQ	8 Classes Begin	9 <del>7:00pm Design Meeting</del> No Meeting	10	11	12 Drop/Wd Deadline Automatic "W"	13
14 ○ FM Flag Day	15 Set Design Drawings Begin Production Meeting 5pm	16 7:00pm Design Meeting	17	18	19	20 Summer begins
21  Father's Day	22	23 ● LQ 7:00pm Design Meeting	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 ● NM 7:00pm Design Meeting				

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						


July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



# July 1992

## House Of Blue Leaves

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Dominion Day (Canada)	2 Drop/ Withdrawal Deadline	3	4  Independence Day Classes Do Not Meet
5	6 ● PQ	7	8 Last Class Day SS I	9 Final Exams Summer I	10	11
12	13 Registration Summer II	14 ○ FM Classes Begin/ Schedule Changes	15 Set Designs Comple- ed <i>all drawings completed</i>	16	17	18
19	20 Drop/Wd Deadline Automatic "W"	21	22 ● LQ	23	24 All Tech Drawings Comple- ed	25
High School Workshop						
26	27 Begin Construction of Basic Set Pieces	28	29 ● NM	30	31	
High School Workshop						

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



# August 1992

## House Of Blue Leaves

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 High School Workshop
2	3 Begining Pulling Costumes	4	5 o FQ	6	7 Drop/ Withdrawal Deadline	8
Set Construction						
9	10	11	12	13 o PM Last Class Day	14 Final Exams Summer II	15 Undergraduate Commitment
Set Construction						
16	17	18	19	20	21 o LQ	22
Set Construction						
23	24	25 Graduate Registration	26 New Student Registration	27 o NM Late Registration	28	29
30	31 Classes Begin 7:00pm Cattle Call					

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



# September 1992

## House Of Blue Leaves

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 Casting Complete	3 ● FQ 1st Read Through	4 Preliminary Light Design Due	5
6	7  Labor Day Classes Meet	8	9 Completed Light Design Due	10	11 ○ FM	12 9:00am Light Hang
	Costume Fittings					
13	14	15	16	17	18 Automatic "W" Drop/Wd Deadline <div>Set Completed</div>	19 ● LQ 9:00am Level Tech
20	21	22 Autumn begins	23	24 7:00pm Costume Parade	25 Degree Application Deadline	26 ● NM
	Full Tech Run (stop & start)				Dress Rehearsal	
27	28  Rosh Hashan- ah Final Dress Rehearsal	29 7:30pm Opening Night	30			

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



## APPENDIX D

### Selected Research Illustrations



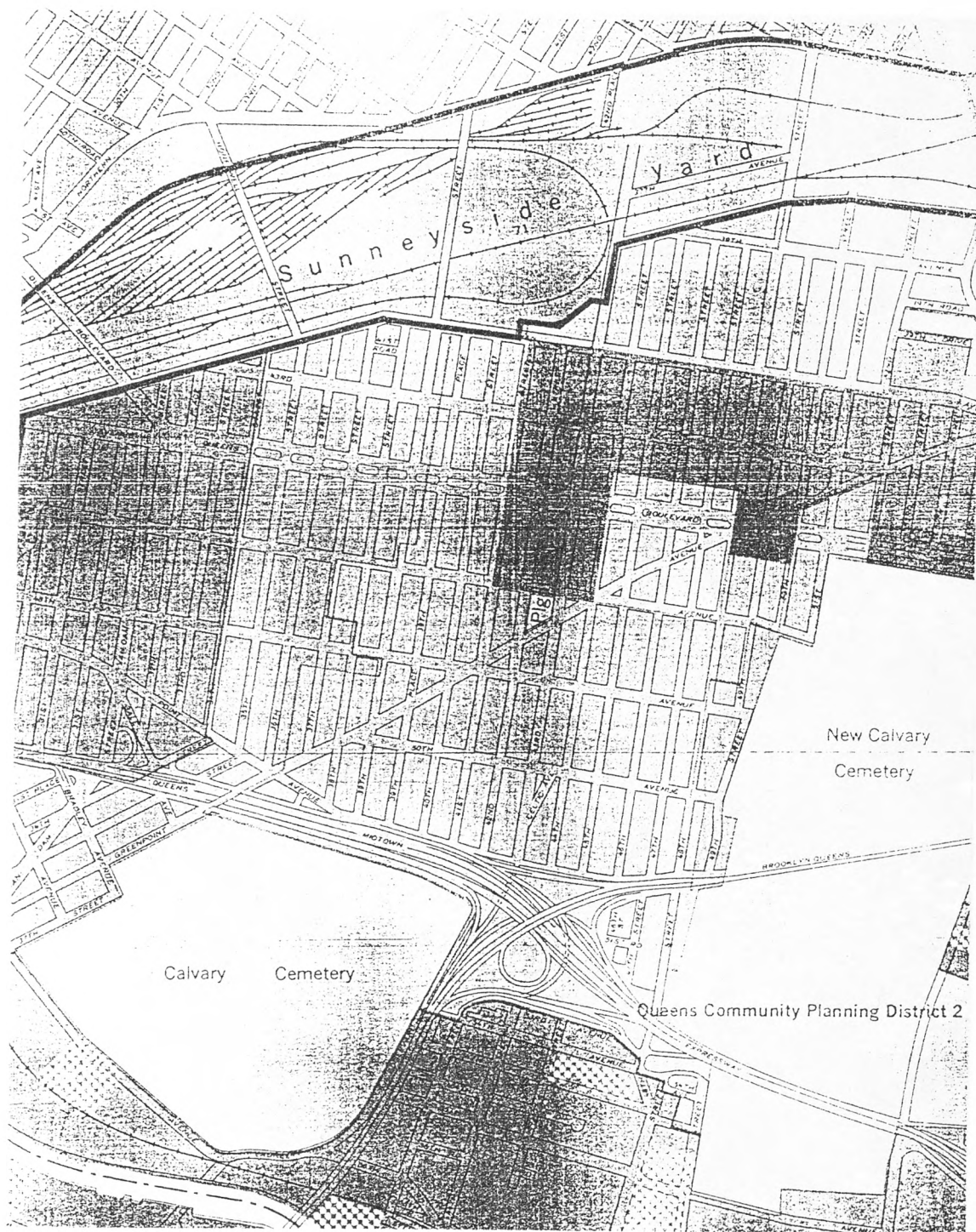


Fig. 39. Map of Queens, New York  
 (Reprinted from City Planning Commission,  
A Plan For New York City)





Fig. 40. Backyard in Sunnyside, Queens  
(Reprinted from City Planning Commission,  
A Plan For New York City)





Fig. 41. Apartment Building, Queens  
(Reprinted from Stern, New York 1930)



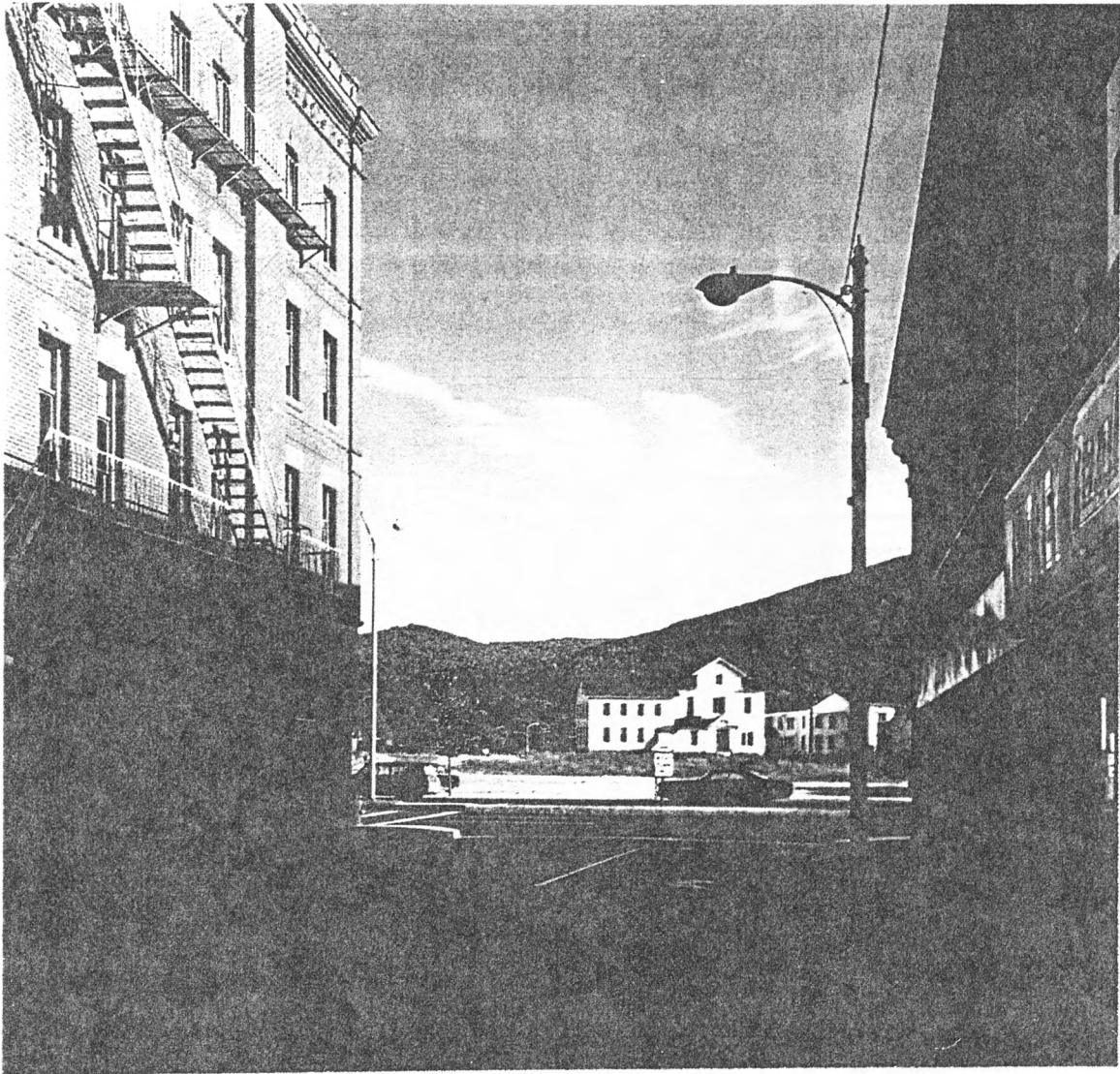


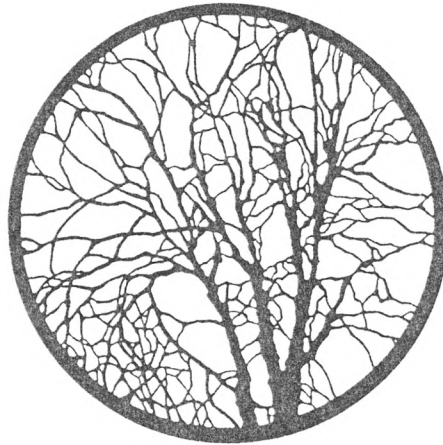
Fig. 42. Fire Escape  
(Reprinted from Upton and Upton, Photography)





Fig. 43. Bars  
(Reprinted from Nagel, The New Red Barn)





★216  
BARE BRANCHES



★215  
BARE TREES

Fig. 44. Leaf Gobos  
(Reprinted from The Great American Market  
catalog, 1992)



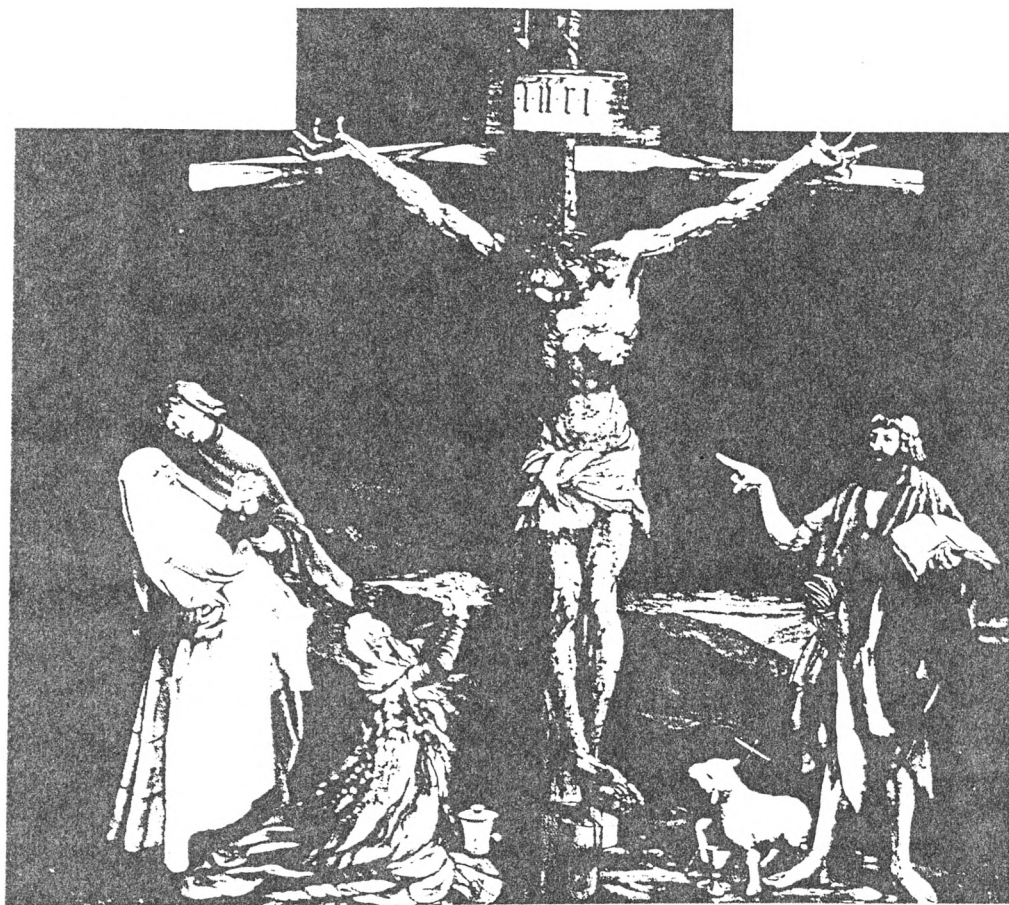


Fig. 45. The Crucifixion  
(Reprinted from Janson, History of Art)





Fig. 46. The Scream  
(Reprinted from Messer, Edvard Munch)



## APPENDIX E

## PROPERTIES



Properties for  
The House of Blue Leaves

pillow	pills and container
sleeping bag	livestock pill dispenser
rug	suitcases blankets
pink vinyl notebook couch	purse
coffee table	cereal boxes/canned foods
cuckoo clock	kitchenware
crosses for nuns	serving trays
bibles for nuns	ashtray
moving boxes and newspaper	sheet music
Lucky Strike cigarettes	bric-a-brac around piano
hand grenade	piano lamp
picture frames	coat rack
easel	refrigerator
distressed photographs	sink and counter
period books and magazines	cabinets
money and wallet hearing aid	art paper and oil pens
clay pots/dead plants	skeleton keys
vacuum cleaner hose	leaves, spray painted blue
assorted junk in boxes	



Sources of Acquisition

Mrs. Chalker's attic (Cindy's mother)

Four Seasons Bargain Bin

Geronimo Antiques

Wimberly Market Days

Mrs. Allmon's garage (Brandon's mother)

New Braunfels antique shops

assorted flea markets and garage sales



APPENDIX F

DEPARTMENTAL AWARD



Southwest Texas State  
University  
Department of Theatre

Best Set Design of the Year

Trey Otis

The House of Blue Leaves



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