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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

“Digesting Diegesis”
Audience Engagement Through Immersive Design

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Design)

by

Charles David Jicha

Committee in charge:

Professor Robert Brill, Chair
Professor Judy Dolan
Professor Deborah Stein

2017

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The Thesis of Charles David Jicha is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my parents and my birth mother, Lynn Marie Jicha. Thank you for always believing in me and pushing me to not settle for my best but be relentless in my creative efforts. Mark, thank you for keeping me mindful of what matters and helping me know when being stubborn is a skill to maintain. Susan, Thank you for being a homework drill sergeant and for keeping my feet fully grounded while my head was in the clouds. To my family, you keep me striving for more and are beyond the support group I could have ever asked for. To my friends, thank you for keeping me sane and putting up with the craziness. To Carl, you are my partner in crime and my biggest cheerleader. Thank you more than I can say, without you I don't know how I would have made it this far.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“Digesting Diegesis”
Audience Engagement Through Immersive Design
by

Charles David Jicha

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Design)

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Robert Brill, Chair

The first impact of the world of the play is a ripe chance to allow for the audience to forget about their technology and the outside world, enabling them to engage with the performance in a more thorough manner. When entering a theatrical setting, you should gather a context that not only tells you where you are, but also leaves you rendered with an emotion or reaction that sets the scene for what is coming. This moment of induction into the world of the play can be summed up with the idea of Diegesis: the ability of the narrative environment to engage the audience and allow them to forget about the rest of the world around them. As a

designer, I find being able to forget about the outside world enables you to better focus on what is right in front of you.

In my own work I have aimed to create worlds that engage audiences from the beginning to the end of a performance. Collaborating with designers, playwrights, and directors has enabled me to bring these ideas to life in multiple forms that I would not be able to do on my own. In this day and age of personal technology, entertainment has to compete with many other distractions in order to maintain an audiences attention, I believe diegesis may be one of the best solutions. The best forms of immersive design are only able to come to fruition due to the collaboration of many artists coming together with a uniform idea of creation.