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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

"The Cheese Does Not Stand Alone":
Scenic Design as an Ephemeral Art Form

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Design)

by

Andréa Healy

Committee in charge:

Andrei Both, Chair
Mark Guirguis
Victoria Petrovich
Manuel Rotenberg

2015

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The thesis of Andréa Healy is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2015

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who has always supported me in my artistic endeavors, and to John, for going on this journey with me.

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File 2. LittleChildrenDreamofGod2

File 3. LittleChildrenDreamofGod3

File 4. DrumsintheNight1

File 5. DrumsintheNight2

File 6. DrumsintheNight3

File 7. ALieoftheMind1

File 8. ALieoftheMind2

File 9. ALieoftheMind3

File 10. MrBurns1

File 11. MrBurns2

File 12. MrBurns3

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I would first like to thank the mentors I have had over the years. Curtis C. Trout, thank you for teaching me the fundamentals, as well as a passion for design that I have carried with me. Andrei Both, thank you for helping me think outside of the box—or thinking about allowing my cat to sleep inside of my model box; for introducing me to new artists and helping me refine my craft during my years at UCSD.

I am grateful for all of the wonderful artists and colleagues that I have had the chance to collaborate with over the last three years, and the worlds that we have been able to create together. I would not be the artist that I am today without every single person in the UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance.

And finally, I want to express my gratitude for my family and friends, who have always supported and encouraged me.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

"The Cheese Does Not Stand Alone":
Scenic Design as an Ephemeral Art Form

by

Andréa Healy

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Design)

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Andrei Both, Chair

Theatre exists as a moment between an actor and an audience member. A scenic designer knows that her work serves to heighten that moment, but still feels a temptation to view the scenic design as separate from the innately ephemeral aspects of theatre. While the a scenic designer is creating a tangible art installation, she cannot fully contribute to the creative process of the play without accepting that the design is as in flux as any other part of the production right up to opening night. The

design is not a set of draftings, or a model, but what the audience experiences while they are watching the performance—this unique theatrical moment.

In *Little Children Dream of God* by Jeff Augustin, seventy-two feet of poly-silk fabric only really defined the eleven separate locations in the story once the actors walked over, around and through the undulating cloth. For *Drums in the Night* by Bertolt Brecht, a wall of satirical billboards highlighted American love of buying things but only gained urgency when juxtaposed to the apathy shown to returning soldiers. In *A Lie of the Mind* by Sam Shepard, the dangling boxes of mementos that defined the walls were just a clutter of bric-a-brac until the faulty memories of the characters turned them into a physical representation of hopelessly disorganized recollection. The scenic design for *Mr. Burns* by Anne Washburn, was built of scavenged parts, which were merely whimsical until they were given the context of the characters struggling to rebuild a society.