

WEDNESDAY

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
MARK SCRUTON





NEVERMORE

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NEVERMORE

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WEDNESDAY'S DORM





CONSERVATORY

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NEVERMORE





PRINCIPAL WEEMS' OFFICE











Wednesday is a coming-of-age, supernatural mystery comedy focusing on Wednesday Addams and her years as a high school student at Nevermore Academy, where she attempts to master her psychic powers, stop a monstrous killing spree of the town citizens, and solve the supernatural mystery that affected her family 25 years ago—all while navigating her new relationships.

Created by Miles Millar and Alfred Gough and directed by Tim Burton, it was an ambitious project from the outset. Originally conceived to be shot in Toronto with an optimistic schedule and a seventy million dollar budget, it soon became clear that the show wasn't going to fit in the box it was intended. With studio space at a massive premium, a global search followed to find somewhere that could accommodate a show of this scale. Eventually Buftea Studios outside Bucharest was chosen, as we would have the whole studio complex and various fields and woodland to work with. We assembled a brilliant art dept in Romania, embellished with crew from the UK and Canada. Finally we could begin.

The show was to be made up of two specific looks; the dark gothic world of Nevermore Academy, rubbing shoulders with the twee New England town.

Gothic locations! Romania had them in abundance but New England towns were a little thin on the ground, so with the global shift, the decision was made to build the central town of Jericho rather than use a location as planned. We were looking at an eight episode run, and the town featured heavily, so it had to be an extensive build with various key story points and interiors built in. The town church, the coffee shop, town hall, rooftops to escape from, decorative statues and fountains that explode, grave yards, key houses for the characters, all to be built from scratch in a scrubby field we had bought next to the studio lot.

With that work underway the focus shifted to Nevermore. Another extensive environment that needed creating from the ground up. I'd already designed Wednesday's Dorm whilst prepping in London. It was the corner stone of the show and had to epitomise the underlying themes in one environment. A space for two diametrically opposed characters, who are thrown together as social outcasts in a school for outcasts. To highlight this we put them at the top of the school in the old loft space where the character of Enid already lives in colourful isolation. When Wednesday joins her she claims her half of the space and drains it of colour. This idea I took one stage further and stripped half of the central stained glass window down to black and white giving a strong graphic symbol to the centre of the space.

The rest of the Academy had to fulfil the expectations of the Addams Family aesthetic whilst still being something new and fresh to discover. In short it had to be "ooky & kooky." For some of this we used several locations with extensive build work done to them. The library was built in an empty office building, Weems' office was built in an old restaurant in down town Bucharest, with the Gorgon fireplace built in to an existing door opening. We used a castle in Transylvania (where else) for the exterior. This was designed and extensively re modelled in CG to expand it to the scale we required.

For other areas no location would fit. The central quad took many forms but finally ended up being a pentagon, riffing off a pentagram. Using a mix of architectural styles to build on the schools eclectic look, with Moorish motifs to resemble open mouths around the edge and a slew of gargoyles representing many of the creatures that have inhabited the school. The set was a huge build on the studio lot and incorporated a mechanical Edgar Alan Poe statue and a reflecting pool at the centre to add another dimension to the obligatory Burtonesque tree.

In all we created close to 100 sets for the show, roughly eighty percent of which were built in our production complex. The show runners regularly joked that we had built every kind of set there was and they weren't far off the truth. Along with the key sets, we built a variety of domestic interiors, a police station, mortuary, a haunted house, hidden basements, a fun fair, crypt, dress shop, psychiatrists office, antique shop, open air museum, publishers office, caves, oh and a high school dance complete with blood spewing sprinklers, to name but a few.