

**THE
GREATEST
SHOW NEVER
MADE**

PRODUCTION DESIGN PRESENTATION

PRODUCTION DESIGNER STATEMENT

In our first conversation, the Director Ashley described the story that unfolded in 2002 and what struck me most was the absurdity of it all, how un-real this "reality" TV story sounded. He was set on taking a very unique approach from the outset and was keen for the tone of the documentary to be playful and silly. As we continued it became clear the design needed to push the absurd aspects of the story and to represent that idea with bold colour palettes and a surreal visual approach.

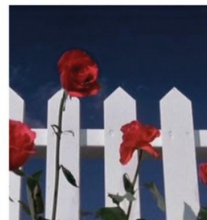
The pivotal point of this story took place in a flat in Dalston which the production wanted to re-create from archive footage - in order to give the main contributors a surprise step back in time when they re-entered it and were interviewed there. I knew immediately that I wanted to lift the original colours and distinguish the built set from the archive footage, firstly for it to be a joyous moment for the contributors walking in for the first time, like literally walking back into a rose-tinted memory. But even more importantly the colour palette needed to convey the sense of elation, madness and absurdity we were playing with.

Alongside the main flat reconstruction, we created 23 sets which served as interview backgrounds and additional settings to tell certain parts of the story. It became important to really push these sets into a more surreal world to emphasise the lack of "reality" in this story. The narrative has an obvious darker side and so it was an intentional decision for the design to cut against that and represent some of the more underlying themes at play. For example, the documentary wasn't aiming to wrap things up in a neat bow and find its villain, it was going to ask questions and look at the light and dark sides in all its characters. In this approach it became clear that we needed the colour palette to be unsettling; using clashing colours and loud garish contrasts was a way in which we could hint towards the madness and duality in all our characters and ask whether there is any true reliable narrator here.

Budget is always a challenge, but the real design challenge for me on this project was the fact that we were navigating working with real people; their schedules and their feelings. As some of the sets I was designing were meant to represent personal spaces of the contributors, I had to work closely with Ashley and have trust in his understanding of the contributors. This is where we felt that implementing the outlandish tone of these sets could work in many ways - the design of the sets was so far removed from reality that the contributors could not only let go of the idea of the sets being an accurate representation of them but it meant they could allow themselves to be playful and even become actors in our unreal reality TV show.

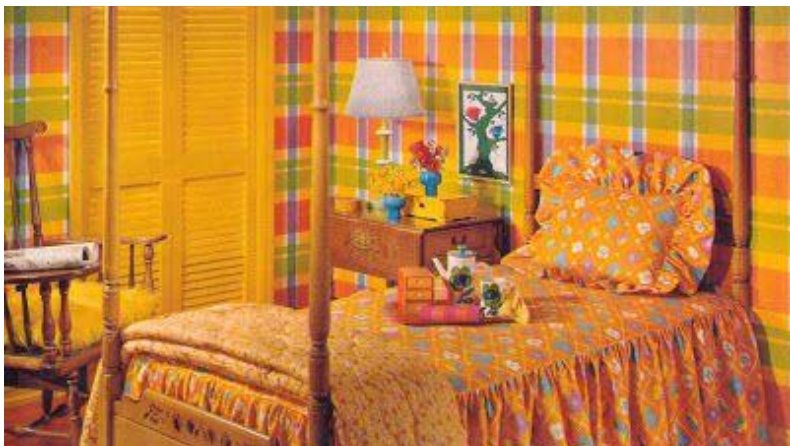
VISUAL APPROACH MOOD BOARD

This is my first moodboard for the visual approach. Bright and kitsch with a heightened, surreal and 2D feeling to the visuals. Taking inspiration from the atmospheres created by Baz Luhrmann, David Lynch and Martin Parr.



DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL APPROACH

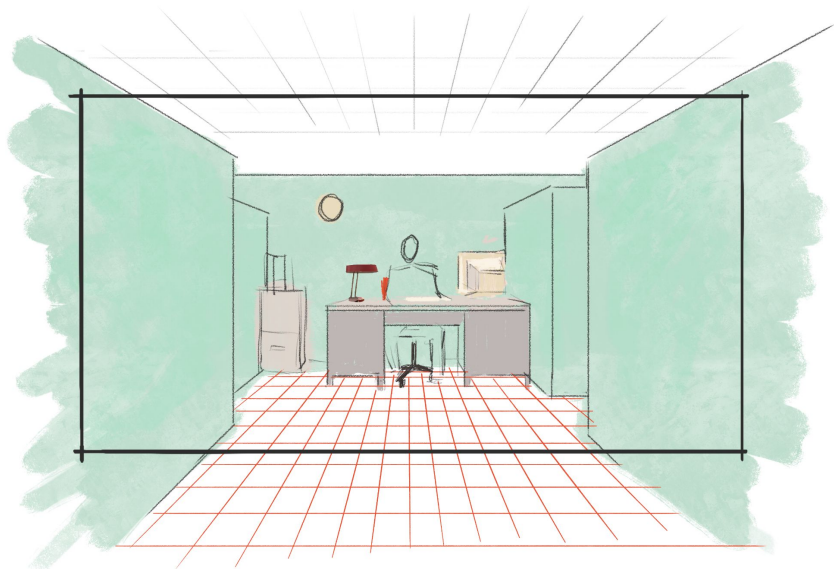
Setting a surreal tone and exploring clashing, ultra saccharine colour palettes. Taking reference in particular from 50/60s decor and television show aesthetics



CONCEPT SKETCH TO FINAL SET - David's Interview



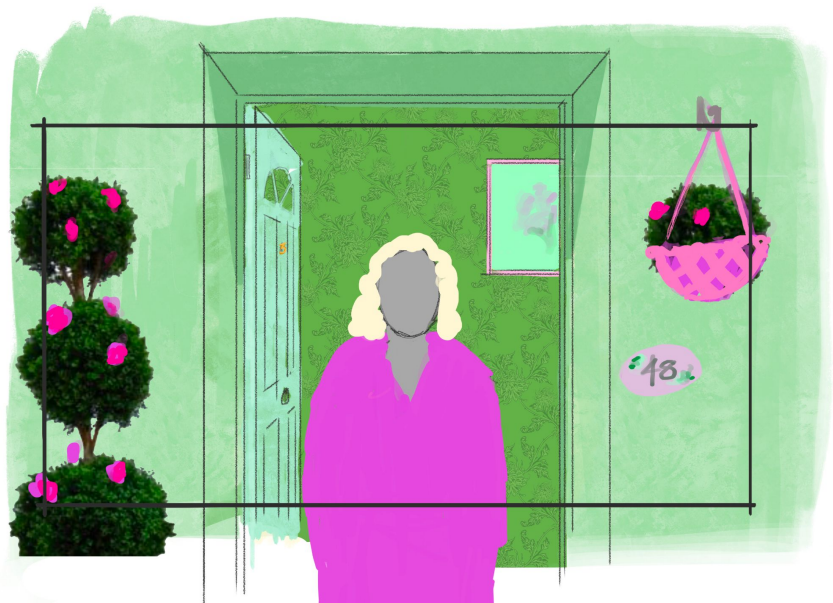
CONCEPT SKETCH TO FINAL SET - Daniel's Office



CONCEPT SKETCH TO FINAL SET - Detective's Office



CONCEPT SKETCH TO FINAL SET - Old Lady's Door





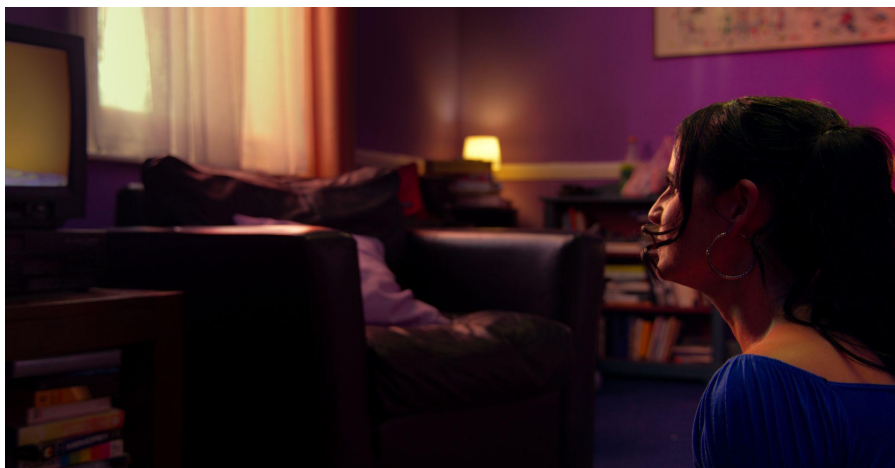
FLAT RECONSTRUCTION - ARCHIVE IMAGES

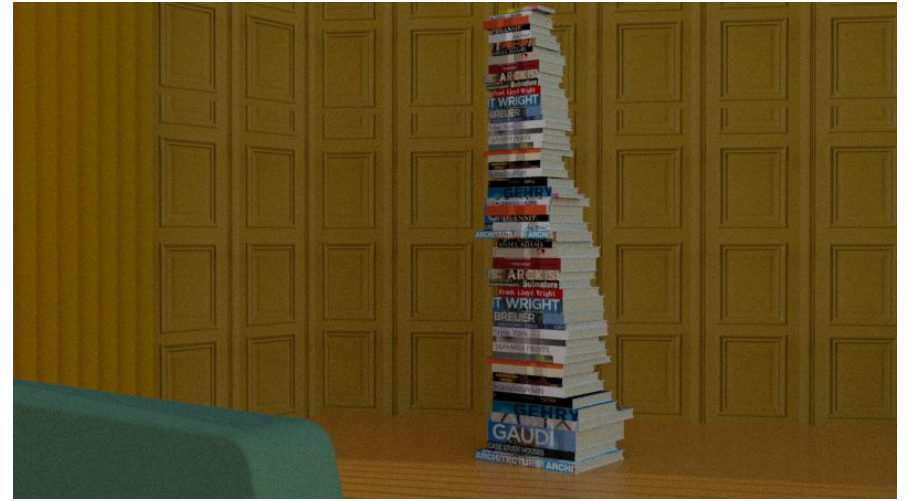
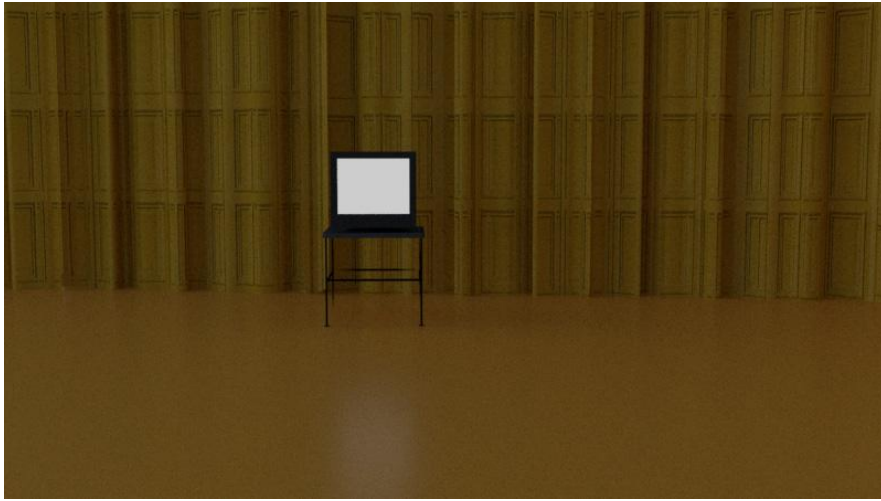
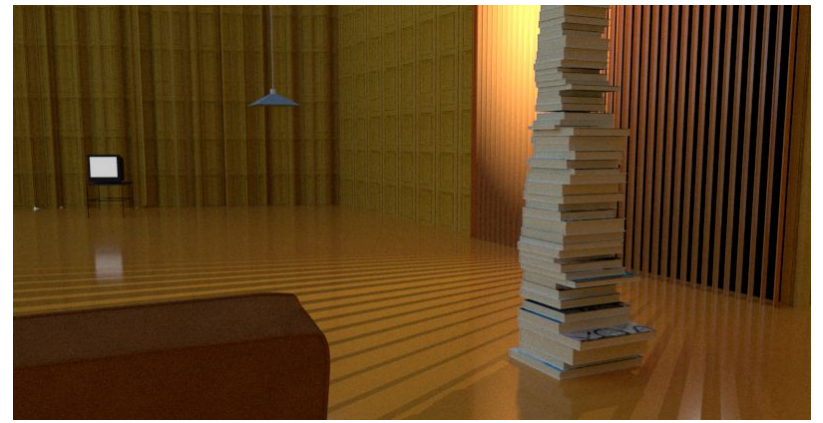
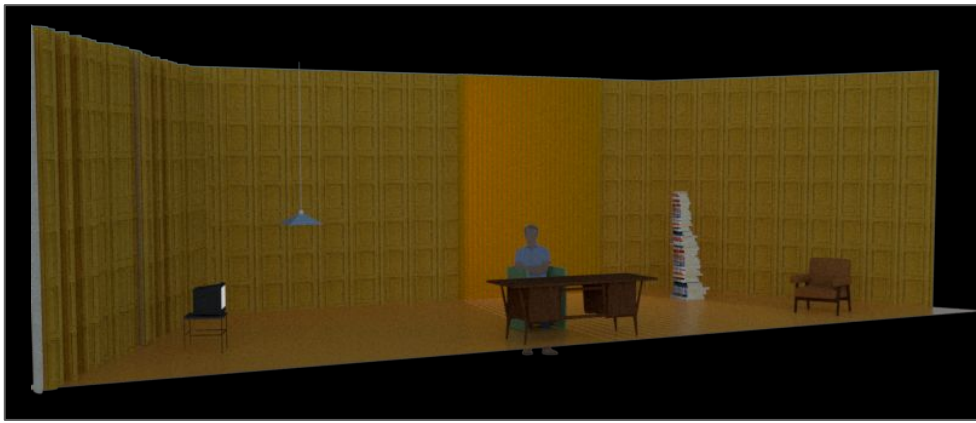
I watched through hours of archive footage taken in 2002 to figure out the layout and approximate dimensions of the flat in order to reconstruct it. All of this had to happen before the production was able to get our Art Director on board so I created the sketchup model that the construction team built from as there wasn't time or budget for drawings.

The reconstruction had to stay as true as possible to the real flat as we needed the contributors to recognise it. But we were able to expand the size a little and lift the saturation of the colours to meet the tones of our other sets which felt essential in setting the tone from the beginning of Episode 1.

We were lucky enough that the contributor who's flat it was still had a few of the more recognisable items and we were able to borrow and dress them in. But the majority of the dressing needed to be sourced to match as closely as possible.

STILLS FROM FLAT RECONSTRUCTION SET





NIK RUSSIAN INTERVIEW SET CONCEPT - MODEL RENDERS

This set went through multiple, very different iterations before it settled here. Nik was very cautious about coming on board the show and was understandably sensitive towards the background he would be portrayed against, which meant we needed to find a setting that he could feel comfortable and at home in. We settled on a study-type space and from that starting point I gave it a surreal and absurd sense to allow it to blend with the worlds of our other contributors. Nik's set definitely also has a darker edge with the suggestion that perhaps he is still the mastermind, controlling things from the shadows.



NIK RUSSIAN INTERVIEW SET - If a super-villain's study was a chat show studio. This set aimed to find the balance between the light and dark aspects of this character and to leave this open to interpretation by the viewer