

Sketchbook: Wrought Iron Fog

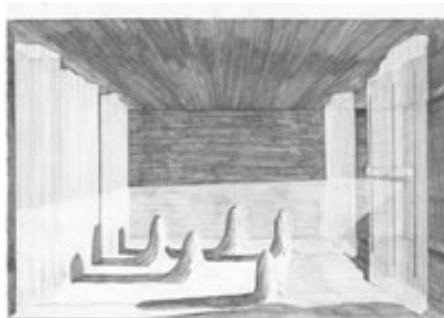
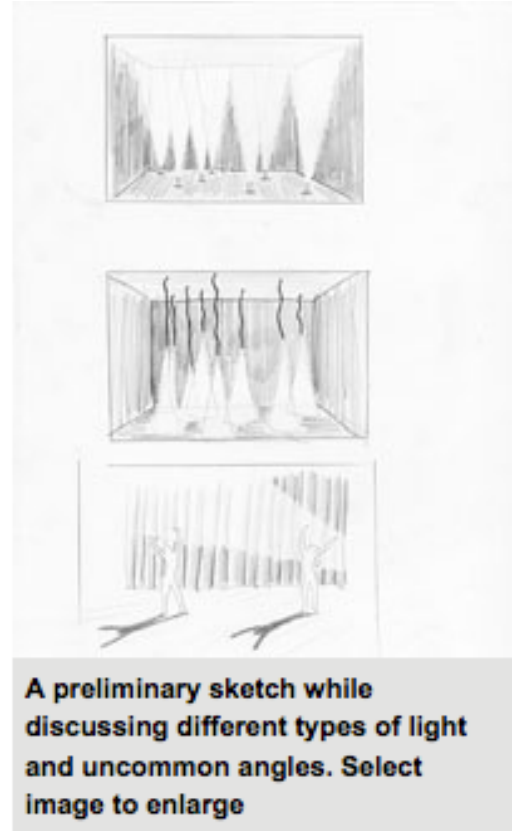
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For Wrought Iron Fog at Dance Theater Workshop, Tere O'Connor is the choreographer, the idea behind the choreography was to have about two-and-a-half hours of material, but only perform an hour of it each night. Every evening during the performance, the dancers will decide what comes next through subtle hints to each other. In essence, the dance will become its own living thing and never be the same twice.

Early on in our design discussions, Tere wanted to "un-light" the dance. We wanted the lighting to reflect the fluidity and organic qualities of the choreography. We talked about what dance lighting is and how to try something new. First we discussed using different lighting instruments or uncommon angles to give us a unique sense of the show, but nothing seemed right. Then we started a dialogue about the cueing of a typical dance piece. Almost every show you see involves sound and lights designed to happen at specific points in the piece. With our show, we thought, "What if the lighting design was as organic as the dance? What if we don't define when a cue happens? What if we hit go at the top of the show and let cues run themselves?" This is the direction we have stuck with.

My concept became the idea of a "free floating cue". The looks are based within the title's ideas of wrought iron and fog—sharp, hard shafts of light that can be slowly engulfed by a slow rolling fog of full stage wash. The cues then take on a personality like an additional dancer. Just as the performers decide what the shape of the show will be every night, the lighting will do the same.



Originally, the dancers were to be covered in fabric. This sheet would then be pulled up stage and onto the back wall to become out cyc. DTW uses two truss units up stage left and right to store extra lights. When I found out they had never been used in a show, I jumped at the chance to present it to Tere. Select image to enlarge

