

AQUARIUS



AQUARIUS ART DEPARTMENT

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THE PRODUCTION DESIGN OF AQUARIUS

It is Hollywood in 1967. Times are turbulent. Anti war protests and civil rights movements such as The Black Panthers are flourishing all over the country. Rock' n' Roll is the fuel of a new Hippie counterculture generation that wants to make love and not war. Amidst this backdrop, Detective Sam Hodiak from the Hollywood Police Station carries on with his work including tracking and dealing with Charlie Manson.

Recreating and capturing the essence of late sixties Los Angeles was the main design challenge. To achieve this goal with a very modest budget, the task was split between practical locations and a few sets built on a sound stage.

The main anchor element to create a proper backdrop for this Police Drama of the era was the Hollywood Police Station. It was a set built on stage and modeled after the original building from 1938 later demolished in 1978.

Charlie Manson's Topanga Canyon Spiral Stair House was another important environment that brings the period in. It was created by a combination of a set built on stage and a practical location.

Detective Sam Hodiak's new bachelor pad was another set built on stage. It was modeled after the typical Los Angeles apartments of the sixties, minimally dressed, and devoid of personal possessions depicting a man who chose to leave his wife and give his life a new beginning.

Most of the remaining sets were chosen because of their stylistic compliance with the period around practical Los Angeles locations . Both the Karn Mansion and Law offices were perfect Mid Century Modern jewels. Detective Shafe's home was another combination of a set built on stage and a practical Mid Century Modern location.

Other buildings chosen for the season ranged in styles from California Spanish and Mediterranean, to Craftsman and Victorian. The selection of such range of architectural styles was deliberate and done to capture a realistic layered look representative of Los Angeles in the late sixties and responding to the psychological, social, and economical makeup needs of each character.

The combination between a dense color palette and a very calculated placement of windows and doors to control and allow light in was the key to create what can best be described as the "LA Noir" style of Aquarius.

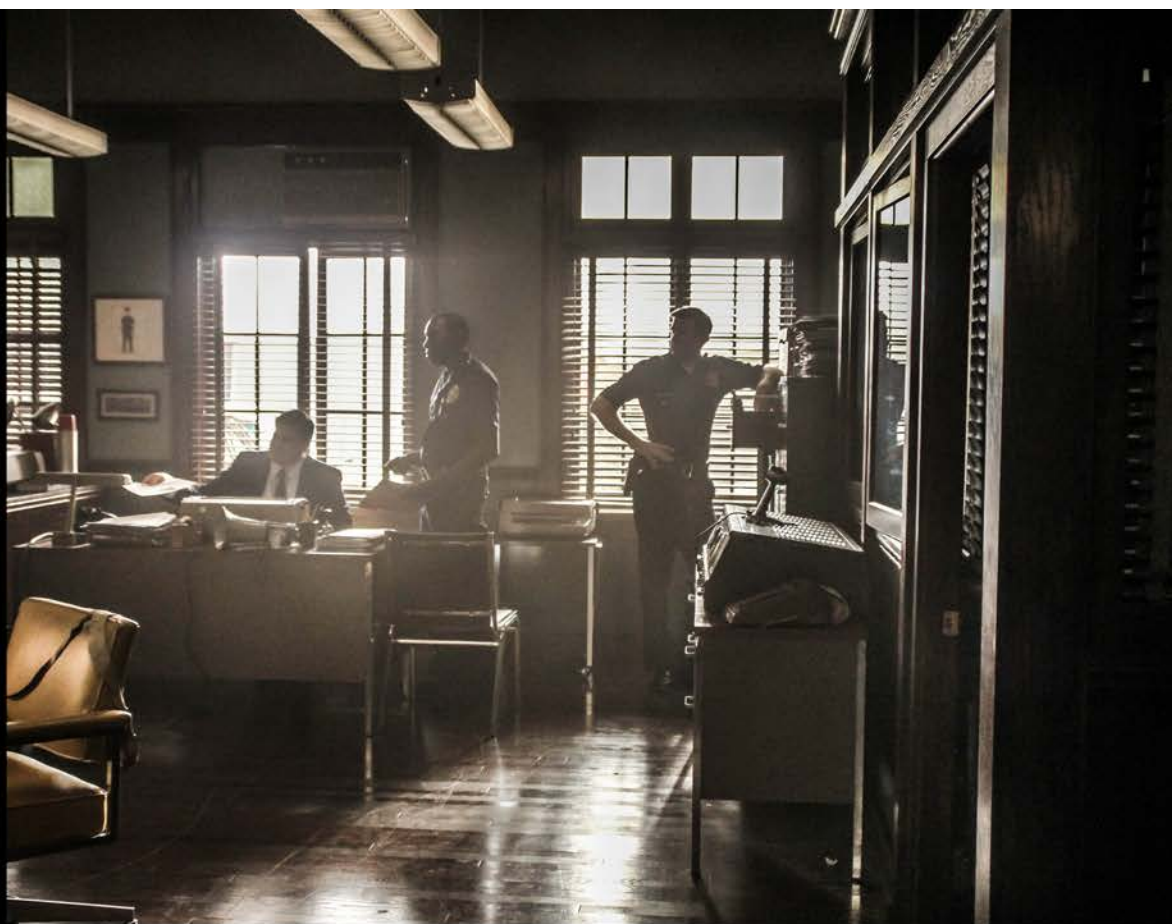


The Hollywood Police Station set was designed facing an alley. The “exterior” alley was the main source of daylight into the bullpen and interior spaces of the station. Having the alley allowed to view street activity through the windows of the bullpen, this created the illusion of a real location outdoors and not one inside a stage.



Architecturally the building was modeled after the original station built in 1938 but layered with furniture, air conditioning units, suspended ceilings, and other elements of the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's.

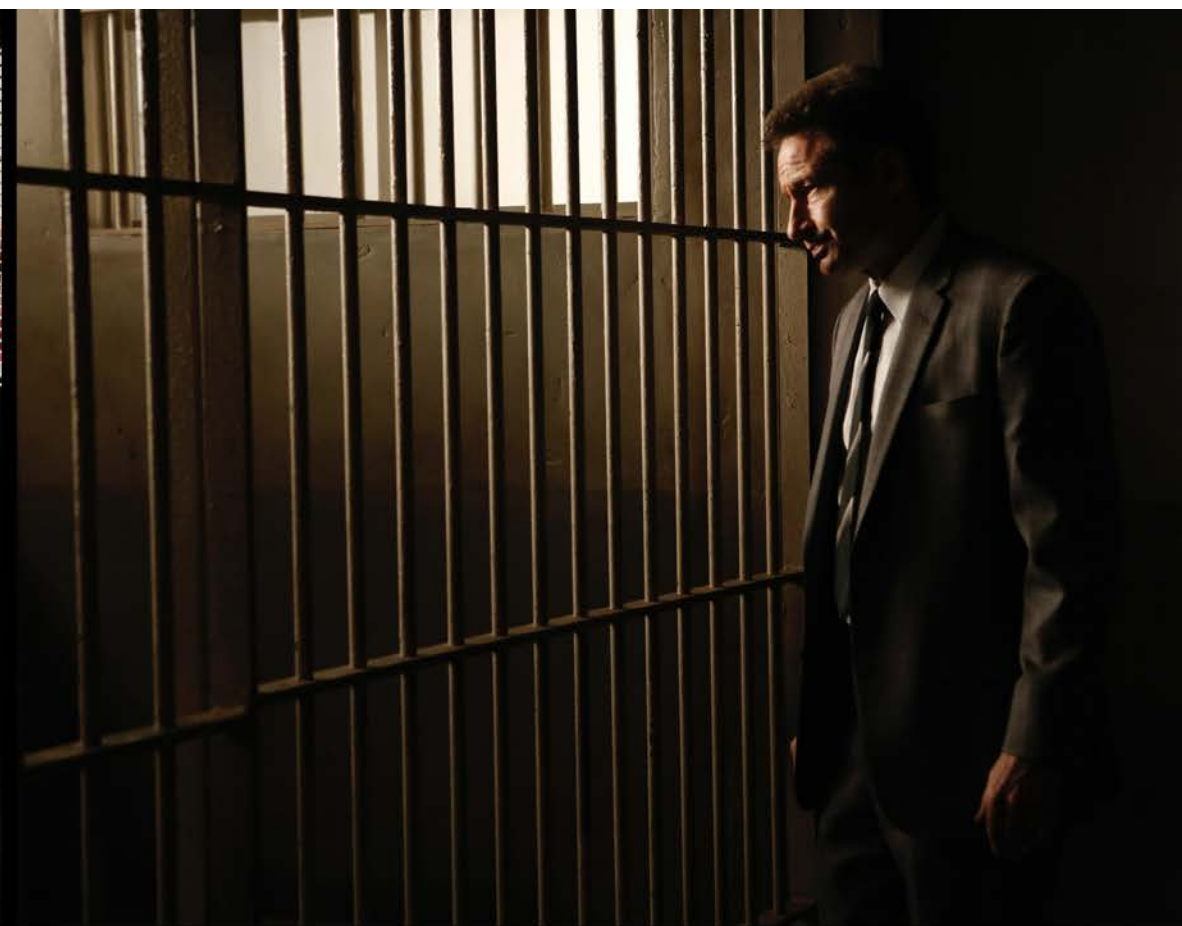


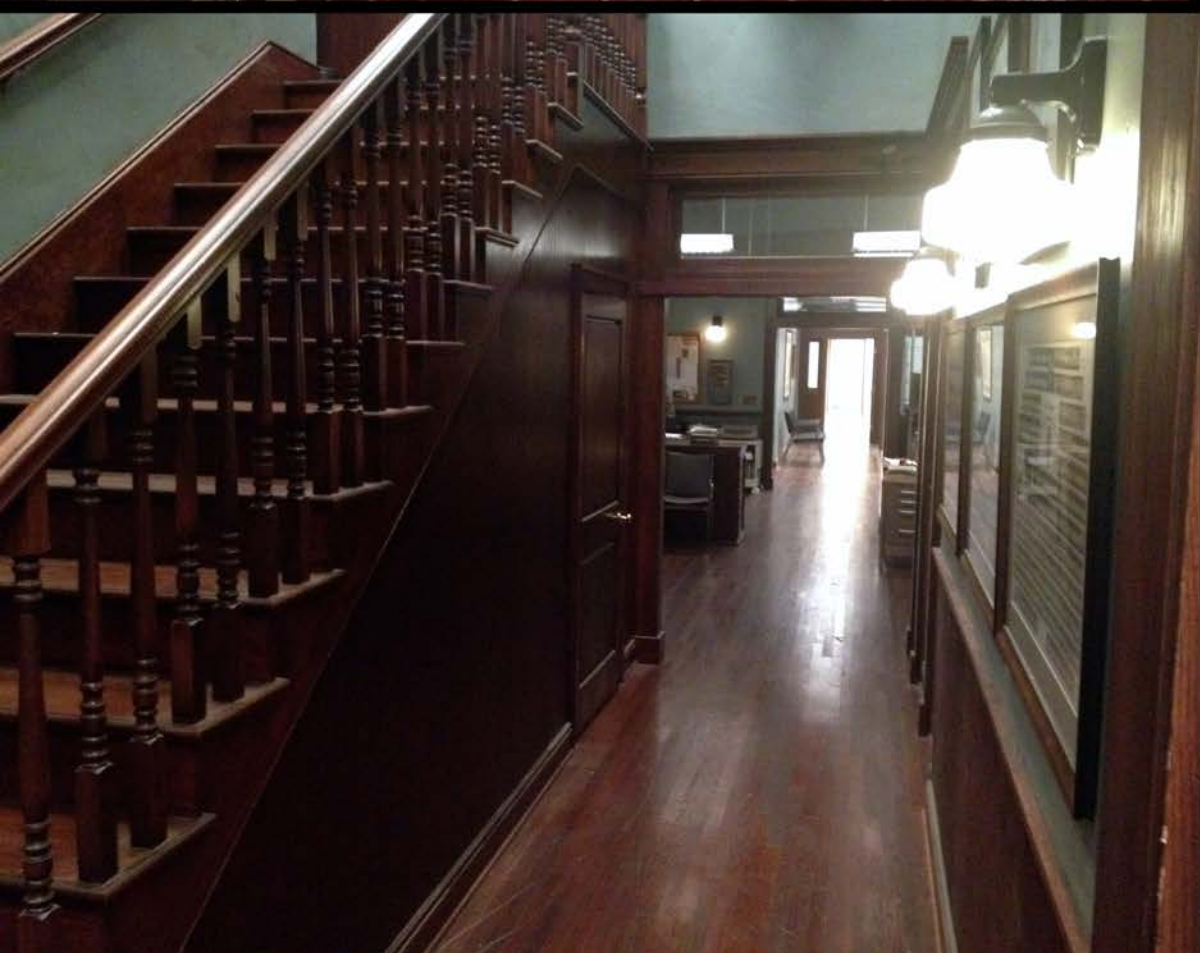




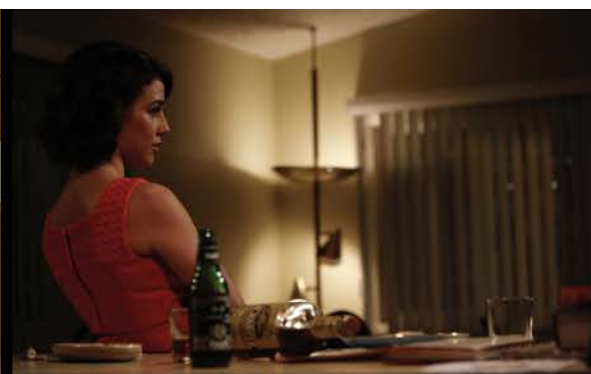












Hodiak's apartment was a set built on stage and modeled after the typical Los Angeles apartments of the 1960's with high sloping ceilings and sliding doors into an exterior balcony. The living room faced an "exterior" courtyard and a neighbor's unit. This choice was perfect to create the sparse 'Bachelor pad' of a man who walked away from his marriage with almost no material possessions in hope of a new life.



The Karn residence and his Law office were Mid-Century architectural gems and both practical locations. They have an immediate interior - exterior connection typical of Los Angeles living and were the perfect choice to denote the character's power, wealth, ambition, and social status.



Charlie Manson's Spiral Stair house was split between an exterior practical location and an interior set on stage. The objective was to capture the Hippie Topanga Canyon style of the 1960's actual location. The set on stage was oriented to face a high sloping hill built with all the indigenous landscaping and soil textures of the Topanga terrain.



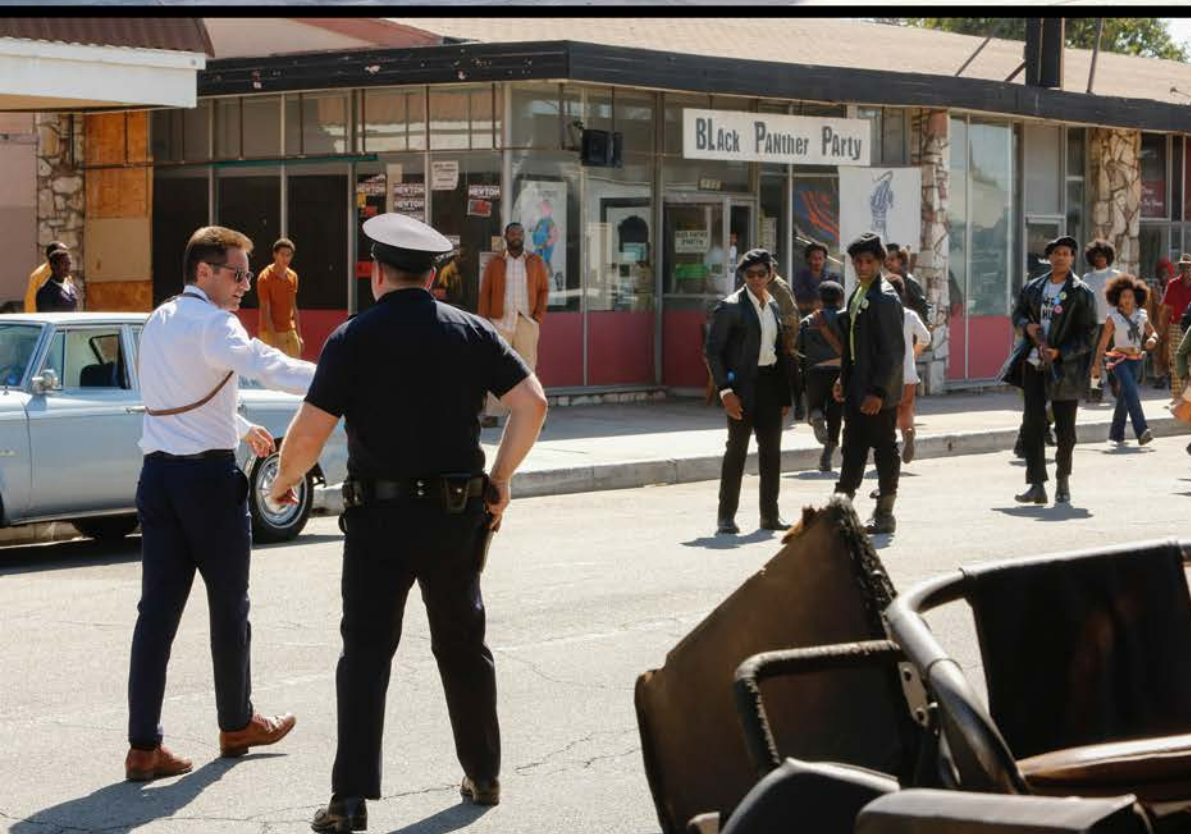
Stained glass and color windows were used on the set to enhance the psychedelic feel of the light in the interior spaces of the house. The color palette was unlimited but the colors were muted and desaturated avoiding pure primaries.



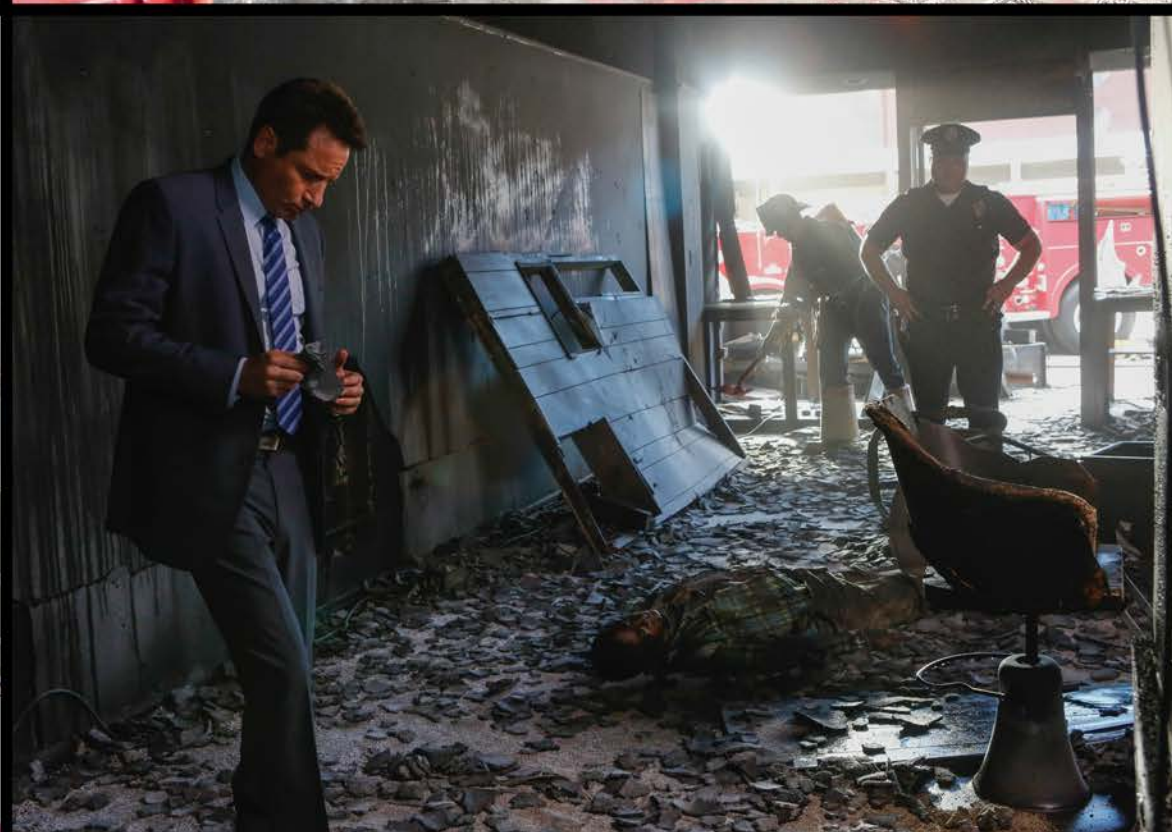
The Peach Pussycat was a combination of a set built on stage and a practical location with glossy gold and velvety black wallpaper serving as the unifying element between both. Dancing Go-Go girls in cages were the heartbeat of the joint.



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Two city blocks in a boarded up original Mid-Century Modern strip mall provided the foundation for a vibrant, economically depressed, and politically restless slice of a 1960's South Central neighborhood.



The aftermath of a fire to a beauty salon was completely created on location using paint, charred set dressing pieces, special effects smoke, and water.





CARLOS BARBOSA

Born in Bogota, Colombia and trained as an architect with a Masters degree from Tulane University, Carlos Barbosa's professional career started in New Orleans at the firm of Perez Associates where he was hired as a staff designer planning the 1984 Louisiana World's Exposition. New Orleans became Carlos' second home and his first in the USA. It was in New Orleans where his love for Blues, Jazz, and Zydeco was ignited, as well as his passion for the local cuisine, native architecture and deep multicultural history.

He was later recruited by architect Charles Moore's Los Angeles firm of MRY. This brought him to Los Angeles where the world of designing for the silver screen became a reality and an alternative career.

Today his credits as a production designer include *Aquarius*, *Magic City*, season eight and the pilot of *24* for which he was nominated for an Emmy, the pilot for *Terra Nova*, *Lost*, *CSI-Miami*, *Studio 60*, *Action*, *Coach Carter*, *The Invisible*, and *Hurricane Season* among many others.

In addition to filmmaking Carlos continues to practice as an architect and has completed projects in California, Louisiana, Miami, and Jamaica.



MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR.