

The background of the cover is a complex, layered artwork. It features a large, expressive face in the center, rendered with thick black outlines and splatters of red, orange, and yellow. To the right, there is a classical statue of a woman, possibly a Greek or Roman figure, partially obscured by the other elements. The overall style is a mix of expressionism and classical art, with a dark, moody atmosphere.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

BY NEIL LABUTE

**A DARK, CORROSIVE EXPLORATION OF
LOVE, ART, AND MANIPULATION**



A Note from the Chair

Dr. Cynthia Allan

Department of Communication

Welcome to the 2015-2016 season of the Pittsburg State Theatre! This is our first full season in the wonderful Dotty and Bill Miller Theater here at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts. The facility is a wonderful and intimate space for live performance. We look forward to many wonderful years in our new theatre "home" here at Pitt State. Our first production, last spring's *Eurydice*, was a rousing success and allowed us to stretch our wings in ways we have not had before.

It also gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to thank the alumni of the Pitt State theatre program. The excellent productions created by scores of previous students are, in part, what helped cement the support and belief in the theatre program and the need for a real performing arts center. Whether you currently work in the theatre profession or not, your dedication to Pitt State Theatre while a student is appreciated and respected. You are the legacy of this program and you set the bar high. We honor you and thank you. Our alumni reunion last spring was a great success and we plan to have more on a regular basis.

The 2015/16 season begins October 22-25 with *Charlotte's Web*, the beloved tale of friendship, loyalty, and determination that will enchant the entire family. Directed by Megan Westhoff, this production is sure to be a hit.

Then, on December 3-4, we continue our tradition of *Theatre Unplugged* with the student-directed one-act plays produced in the Studio Theatre (entrance on Joplin Street). The Studio Theatre remains the venue we will use for the majority of student productions. Also included in this year's offering is an original script by graduate student, Marisa Hunn.

In the spring of 2016, Gil Cooper directs the raunchy and bawdy Shakespeare comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, from February 25-28. This classic comedy is bound to help you shake off those winter blues! Finally, on April 21-24, Caitie Almond directs Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*, a scathing contemporary drama about two students at a small Midwestern college. Hmm...sound familiar? You definitely don't want to miss this one!

Finally, I want to remind our patrons that the move to a new space means new opportunities for PSU Theatre. One of these opportunities is the chance to offer more performances and we are pleased to announce the addition of Saturday matinees for each of our productions. This now provides 3 evening and 2 matinee productions. We hope you join us whatever time is convenient for you!

I am sure the faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Communication and PSU Theatre join me in expressing our gratitude for your support and our sincere hopes that you enjoy the 2015/16 season.

Regards,
Dr. Cynthia Allan

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Director's Notes

Caitie Almond



I have always been drawn to dramas that have some sort of controversial tension behind them – forcing the audience to abandon complacency and address the controversy head on. When I was searching for the play I wanted to direct for my creative project, I came upon LaBute's *The Shape of Things*. It had the tension I was looking for as well as an interesting parallel to me – the main character, Evelyn, is also working on her master's thesis project at a small college in a conservative Midwestern town.

Playwright Yasmin Reza once said, "Theatre is a mirror, a sharp reflection of society." I, too, believe that theatre provides a sort of looking glass for us to examine the issues modern society faces; but where is the line between the two, reality and theatre? The line can often be blurred or distorted. This is very much the case in *The Shape of Things*, only not with theatre, but with art. What is very much real for one person may be perceived completely differently by another. Two people can look at the same piece of art or watch the same theatrical performance and have completely different opinions on it. This subjectivity is central to why I love this show. You may find Evelyn's actions to be upsetting or immoral; however, in my eyes, she is merely bringing to light a very salient issue while playing on the blurred boundary between art and reality.

The Shape of Things examines "society's obsession with the surface of things, the shape of them." As a culture, we have become engrossed in material beauty, often losing sight of the most important aspects, those things which lie within and take more than a passing glance to appreciate. LaBute delves into this cultural phenomenon and examines the relationship between the interior and exterior while illustrating how terrifying and effective manipulation can be.

As Oscar Wilde said, "In art there is no such thing as a universal truth." Each of you will take something different away from this performance. I just hope that your response is not one of indifference. "Love it, hate it, whatever," but I do hope it leaves you questioning, how far would you go for love, for art? How far is too far?



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Costume Designer's Notes

Lisa Quinteros

"Clothes Make the Man." This phrase is common to many cultures throughout history, in some form or another... what does it mean? From the The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,

Clothes make the man: What one wears is taken by others as an essential signal of status. The proverb is recorded in English from the early 15th century, but an earlier saying in classical Greek is, 'The man is his clothing.'

In our daily lives, we don't always think about the day-to-day effects of our clothing on others. We dress to feel good, impress occasionally, be comfortable, protect ourselves from the elements, but ultimately for ourselves... expressions of ME. But to perceive that the clothing itself makes us? Most people would say definitely not. That point of view is always through a skewed lens, for what I might think of as a change of pace, with a new jacket or dress, might represent a completely different perception to another...all those thoughts, notions, and shapes we do not differentiate because they are just us ...become most noticeable to someone else. Clothing is, has, and probably will forever be inseparable from the social psychology of humankind. Be it for good or evil.

We must put up with our clothes as they are - they have their reason for existing. They are on us to expose us - to advertise what we wear them to conceal. They are a sign; a sign of insincerity; a sign of suppressed vanity; a pretense that we desire gorgeous colors and the graces of harmony and form; and we put them on to propagate that lie and back it up.

- *Following the Equator*, Mark Twain, 1897





This character (Evelyn) is more complex than any that I have played since coming to Pitt State, which has made this production challenging and very fun for me. Finding the balance between the cute, sexy love interest and the aggressive, passionate, edgy artiste has been a delicate balancing act that added many layers to this character and this process. I hope that you are as affected by this production as I was when I first read it and that you truly enjoy our performance... But hey, that's subjective.

Breezi Hancock



I was drawn to the play for its realism. The themes relating to individualism and the image people create of themselves are particularly interesting to me. As a relatively easy going guy, I found a challenge within playing the hotheaded Phillip. This role took me out of my comfort zone but Caitie did well to ease the process through viewpoints. This allowed me to become more in touch with my character and the things that drive his behavior. My favorite part about the role was being the character to strongly challenge Evelyn.

Jacob Terveer

I've especially enjoyed the exchanges between characters. Labute's style of writing is very conversational and while that presented a challenge with regards to hitting our cues just right, it allowed for us, the cast, to adapt to the many overlaps and interruptions and really play with the script. I think this reflects the way that we as a whole talk to each other. The process has been a real treat with lots of collaboration of ideas between the director and cast. I don't know if this is necessarily a theme but this play has so many great moments and I completely identify with Adam's experience at the end. No, I haven't been molded and manipulated without my knowledge but I understand that feeling when the rug gets pulled out from under you while you're simultaneously being punched in the gut.

Logan Qualls



In playing the role of Jenny, I enjoyed her character growth. She starts out as a dainty, gentle thing, and then through her experience with Evelyn she becomes much more confident and sure of herself. Caitie, our director, really challenged me throughout the process and helped me become an actress that can be taken more seriously. I am personally a very vivid, sort of wild person, and I've played a lot of rolls that match that persona. Jenny is contained. She is subtle. She is real. She is like no character I have ever played before. Some people may think of her as a boring prude, but I see her as a genuine, complicated woman and so far the most difficult character I've had the honor to play here at PSU, because of how normal she is. As Jenny would say, "Sorry I'm not an artsy person or cool enough... But as far as just being a person, like an average type person... I'm pretty OK. I am."

Jaley Hoyt

Scenic and Lighting Designer's Notes

Linden Little

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

-1 Corinthians 13:12

I first heard this phrase some seventeen years ago that would serve as the visual anchor for this design. The text was used in a song meant to celebrate a high school graduation, but the composition was riddled with discord and dissonance.

The idea would come to me again through several other sources from popular culture. The Philip K. Dick sci-fi novel *A Scanner Darkly* references the verse, while the BBC television show *Black Mirror* has a foothold in the iconography. A line from Chuck Mee's play *bobrauschenbergamerica* more directly points to my understanding of *The Shape of Things*; it goes,

She collected cut Italian colored glass decanters and glasses. Each object uniquely shaped. Colors rich. I valued those objects deeply. I wanted to play with them, to make new shapes of them, to make new surfaces for them. I wanted to smash them and see what they looked like as heaps, to see how light played on their shattered surfaces.

These research fragments are what come together in what you see on stage. The characters live out their experience for you in a broken landscape of darkly reflected images and heaps of shattered colors. To say anything more would rob you of the experience of following Adam and Evelyn; so I leave you with just these bits.



The Shape of Things

by Neil LaBute

Directed by Caitie Almond*

Scenic and Lighting Design by Linden Little

Costume Design by Lisa Quinteros

Hair Design by Mary Lou Farmer

Adam..... Logan Qualls*

Evelyn Breezi Hancock*

Jenny..... Jaley Hoyt

Phillip Jacob Terveer

Ensemble..... David Bush

..... Jeanine Kunshek*

..... Amanda Longpine

..... Austin VanBecelaere

"The Fornecelli" Robby Raio



setting: a liberal arts college in a conservative midwestern town

There will be a 10 minute intermission

**Produced by special arrangement with Broadway Play Publishing, Inc.

No flash photography or video recording is permitted during the performance.
Please make sure ALL cell phones are turned off.

Production Staff

Technical Director	Linden Little
Stage Manager	Katia Arians
Assistant Stage Manager	Bobbi Jo Smith*
Properties Managers	Jocelyn Donegan*
Light Board Operator	Catherine Duncan*
Sound Board Operator	Ila Phelps*
Scenic Construction	Alex Hermanson, Breezi Hancock*, Catherine Duncan* Caitie Almond*, Megan Reed*, Alexander Watstler, Austin VanBecelaere*, Katlyn Weve, DJ Bush
Costume Construction	Barbara Davis, Lindsey Viets*, Katlyn Weve, Krista Hightower, Koleen Gladden
Living Statue Design	Megan Reed*
Make-up Crew	Krista Hightower, Katlyn Weve
House Managers.....	Jocelyn Donegan*

Theatre Staff

PR/Advertising Manager.....	Jeanine Kunshek*
Poster/Program Art.....	April Huninghake
Production Photographer	Paige Bowman

* indicates members of Alpha Psi Omega, Theatre Honor Society



Special Thanks to:

Our family and friends for your support and encouragement throughout the production process.

Jason Huffman

Olivia Ellison

Memorial Auditorium

The Root



I have enjoyed this whole process immensely. The view points added a fresh take on something that can often get very stale - blocking a show. I have been a part of many shows where I could definitely tell the director was calling all the shots. This is not how this show was staged. Caitie made sure she took into account everyone's opinions on things, which really helped the awesome camaraderie that we all have. The only challenges view points presents is because of its naturalistic roots, like people, it is always evolving. This is really awesome to see as an artist, not so awesome to see as a stage manager, you should see my prompt book. I enjoy the play because it truly could happen anywhere. This is not a foreign concept, and on a much smaller scale, this type of thing does happen everyday.

Katia Arians, Stage Manager

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Art Exhibition

The Shape of Things: A Responsive Collective

Robby Raio, Curator

The art exhibition focuses on the content brought to light from within the play, *The Shape of Things* by Neil LaBute. The art work displayed in the exhibition revolves around society's obsession with the exterior of things, as well as the blurred boundaries between art and reality.

The art exhibit is another seed of awareness that there is more to what you may see with your own two eyes. The exhibited artists utilized a variety of two-dimensional mediums. The mediums and techniques were open to the artists involved; in doing so, giving the artists freedom to create how and with what they desired. The artists watched an adapted screening of the play. While watching the screening of the play, the student artists responded in their sketchbooks and took key notes specifically focusing on the content. The play's content covers many important topics, for example: the subjectiveness of love and art, reality, identity, censorship, morality, and so much more. The artists then create a final piece from that experience and exposure.

We are all artists on some level; it starts with awareness of self, acceptance, and creating your own reality true to you. We should not submit ourselves to be created by the exterior things. The artists involved should have found a positive influence and/or inspiration from the exposure and experience of the plays content and in the creating of the art work; the viewers should take something from this exposure as well from a different perspective. This art exhibition is a fitting, and an accenting touch to the art of the theatrical play and those involved.



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