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Entertainment

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'Iron Man,' 'Baby Mama' and more:  
Exhibit showcases set decorators

"PULLING Back the Drapes," a new exhibition at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Fourth Floor Gallery, looks to shed some light on an individual who is instrumental in breathing three-dimensional life into the two-dimensional realm of the movies: the set decorator.

"The production designers create the world and the architecture in collaboration with the directors and their vision," explains academy programmer Ellen Harrington.

"The set decorator is the person who comes in and gives layer and depth and personality, so that actors in that set will be sitting in the right type of furniture and interact with objects that connect to their characters and help them build their characters."

The exhibition features a cornucopia of sets from current and upcoming films, including the "Iron Man" cave, from Lauri Gaffin; Tina Fey's bedroom in "Baby Mama," from Susan Bode-Tyson; the home library and desk from "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," created by Larry Dias; and K.C. Fox's Hawaiian hotel lobby featured in "Forgetting Sarah Marshall."

Because set decoration is a very immediate craft, Harrington says, it's difficult to assemble shows like "Pulling Back the Drapes."

"Set decoration is the kind of material that's assembled for the shoot and then it quickly disperses again," she explains. "We couldn't do a show of movies that were made two years ago. What we have to do is schedule a show and say, 'Who is working on films that we could have things put aside that the studios would be willing to lend to us, that they are OK with keeping it in storage for a fixed number of months?' "

Set decorators Leslie Rollins, who has re-created the Chief's office from the upcoming comedy "Get Smart," and Jan Pascale, who is restaging Arthur Spiderwick's mysterious attic from the family film "The Spiderwick Chronicles," are also participating.

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