

Film: Red Desert, 1964

Lighting: Cool blue and grey light, ambiguously blended throughout the halls, like cold water. The LED's are animated to flicker, but much more slowly than actual water would.

Configuration: A medium sized L shape, with a wing for the projector and a wing for building robots whose only function is diversion. Their most prominent feature is their eyes. Piles of old potatoes, some sprouting, some with dead seedlings, some just dried out and dusty, fill the corners. The short leg of the L has some scattered trash from earlier configurations that Henry dutifully saved in anticipation.

Edited in the memory of the Desert House, Garfield Park Conservatory

Film: Ugetsu, 1953

Lighting: Piercing white stadium lighting from above.

Configuration: This house is shaped like a pair of glasses: two circular moats. One has a circular retreat where we can rest without watching anything, a fire in the center, a left eye that is also an archery target. A bridge over the space between the moats (which is not a bridge over moats, and is actually a bridge to hold the glasses up by the nose), and also a tunnel underneath to get us over to the right eye, join the two circles. The right eye, with no central flame, contains a rectangular grid of boxes making a square room (a representation of the larger soundstage) where we can watch those movies we haven't seen and might share. Ugetsu can be watched on top, projected abstractly into the fog that rolls in from the surrounding woods.

Our left eye tends to see the world in calamity, and our right eye optimistically tries to learn new things. Henry is our banishing priest, and easily counters those evil ghosts (except for when we want them).

This text remained unedited, Garfield Park Conservatory

(When we get stiff from watching movies we ice
skate in figure eights through the eyeglasses of our
frozen moat.)

Film: Tokyo Story, 1953

Lighting: Warm browns, then a tiny corner of dark blue to realize the brown.

Configuration: We arrange boxes into a small wooden cupboard/closet with a pitched roof, resembling an ice fishing hut in the middle of a frozen lake, the sound stage's concrete floor. Inside we huddle and rearrange to watch Tokyo Story from a small tv, old and yet pristine. The cupboard is lined with wood from the roof of the kiln house, not burnt from the fires, but warm.

Edited while parked in the snow, Garfield Park Conservatory

Film: L'Avventura, 1960

Lighting: Rich green light and medium grey light in broad circles at the base, and no light, just darkness on the building.

Configuration: A narrow, tall pointed tower, gradually arriving at a tiny room with one open wall. From here we can see the rest of the sound stage, littered with strange boxy houses and pools of colored light. We can watch the film from a screen the size of a playing card set slightly askew into the wooden module, the bottom right corner somewhat lower than the left. The screen is perfectly flush with the wall, and the sound inexplicably comes from all around us.

Edited on a bench facing the entrance to the fern room like a movie screen, Garfield Park Conservatory

Film: Encounters at the End of the World, 2007

Lighting: Pink/Red filters

Configuration: The screening room has two interior layers of terraced wooden benches. The two producers both have their own layer. They each lie on a bench sweating in the warm light watching the cold screen. Occasionally a disagreement flowers, and after pausing or talking through, one of them throws water on a small pile of smoking stones, turned to steam, covering scenes of blue ice. Like a papal conclave, only white smoke indicates unanimous approval of a moment.

Film: Mon Oncle, 1958

Lighting: As close to daylight as possible but gray.

Configuration: Four boxes, made into a counter. For this film, a production company of two sit on high stools at a countertop or kitchen island they have moved into a square (potentially to sell or drink lemonade in the next scene), a fake plaza or park inside the cavernous studio.

Not too tidy, there are a few badly trimmed hedges defining the plaza's lines. The two on their stools stare into the reflective metal bowl of a giant standing mixer. From above the film is projected into the bowl, and Hulot, like a goldfish, learns about other people. (The mixer would be more helpful for brownies than lemonade.)

Edited while oppressed by the noises of mechanical humidity, Garfield Park Observatory

Film: Jiro Dreams of Sushi, 2011

Lighting: Dusk

Configuration: A replication of Jiro's restaurant in the Tokyo train station in which the film plays on multiple screens. These screens are then viewed through windows from several smaller room configurations.

1. From a tree house perched on a planted telephone pole outside the restaurant we can view scenes from the front of the house. Jiro molding rice and taking three fingers to press the fish atop the rice, placing the piece on a plate and brushing it with soy. We watch him hand the dish to his customer while standing on the platform. We are looking through binoculars into a window of the restaurant at a screen behind the bar. He watches them eat and replaces one dish, perfectly timed with the next.
2. We skimmer down the pole (really a tube of boxes like a construction chute) and delve into the next house, attached to the back of the first 'restaurant' house. Here there are peep holes to the kitchen where giant screens play the kitchen scenes (kneading octopus for hours, baskets of perfect rice, rising steam clouds. But actually the cooling process is one of the more important).
3. A tea house on a suspension bridge over the fish market. The grid of specialty merchants rather than the rows of heavy tuna.
4. Some days when we are living in this house we take a boxed lunch to the aquarium and listen to the score on headphones.

Edited in a tropical crow's nest, Garfield Park Conservatory

Film: My Neighbor Totoro, 1988

Lighting: Butter Yellow, Softly Bright

Configuration: The exterior of the building is a long, spiraling ramp. Instead of a circular spiral, winding like the Guggenheim, this ramp is square, with four sides sloping upward and turning at a right angle at each edge. A box is formed that looks as though it has tiers despite the ramp's continuity.

At the top of the spiral, the path dips abruptly back down into a void left by the ramp. This last ramp leads down into a small room hanging in the void, which is where we watch the film sitting on oversized bean bags that are somehow perfectly ergonomic. There are tables and bookshelves full of nice books to read and posters from films we haven't seen but would like to hanging on the walls, lamps and side tables and vases of flowers. There are lots of potted plants in the room, too, and special lights that mimic the positive effects of the sun.

Edited beside the Axolotl's pond, Garfield Park Conservatory