The Scenic Design Process for 
The Ohio State University’s Production 
Of 
REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES & MATCHMAKER 
Directed by Francesca Spedalieri and Lesley Ferris

THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Fine Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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Abstract

The Double Bill, presented by the Ohio State University (OSU) Department of Theatre, interweaved two different plays, *Real Women Have Curves* and *Matchmaker*. Each play was quite different, but both shared an underlying tone of women’s liberation, female equality and immigration. The Double Bill was a unique scenic design situation where the sets had to help the audience visually travel from 1987’s hot and sultry East Los Angeles’s sewing shop to 1920’s cold Polish village. *Real Women Have Curves*, written by Josefina López, was directed by PhD Francesca Spedalieri and *Matchmaker* written by Patricia Suárez was directed by Professor Lesley Ferris. It was very important to find a middle ground between the two directors’ concepts to make the scenic environment look synchronized but still at the same time look distinctly different. Both the plays at some level talk about body image issues, cultural differences, immigrant workers and how women are perceived as commodities. But the production also emphasizes female courage, strength and their will to go on.

*Real Women Have Curves* is set in a family-owned sweat shop were five women stitch beautiful dresses for rich thin women, which they would envy due to their own “rubenesque” body types. The story line deals with their matrimonial, communal and cultural beliefs that in turn contribute to determining and at the same time distorting their self-image. The characters are Mexican immigrants, who still fear the “La Migra” (the immigration authorities), even though they are legal. The play is a comedy which
sometimes slips to become wry and cynical, but it brings out the importance of realizing one's identity and body-image.

*Matchmaker* is part of an Argentine trilogy entitled *The Polish Women*. The play was translated by Professor Ana Elena Puga and was the English-language world premiere at OSU. The play focuses on a dreadful moment in the early 20th century when young Jewish women, under the guise of an arranged marriage, were a part of an underground human trafficking operation. Women were tricked into believing they were marrying, while the fake marriage was the cover for a prostitution ring in Buenos Aires. *Matchmaker* is the second part in the trilogy. Set in the 1920’s winter in a rundown Polish village the plot line revolves around four characters. The scenic design for this production had a revolving wall and each side provided as a backdrop for the plays, there was no moving scenery during the run for both the shows, but the sets had to be completely changed during the fifteen minute interval for the next show.
Dedicated to my family,

Rajesh, Mumsa, Vidya and Appa
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I would like to thank my adviser and mentor Dan Gray, who taught me everything from the basics to advanced aspects of theatrical design. My growth as a scenic designer is due to his encouragement and support. I am thankful for the faith which he had in me and will always be grateful to him for giving me this opportunity.

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Chapter 1: Production Situation for Real Women Have Curves & Matchmaker

The Double Bill was an exclusive production conceived by the Ohio State University Department of Theatre to celebrate Latina playwrights and women in general. The production was in conjunction with the symposium “The Brothel and the Factory: Staging Immigration and Women’s Labor” which was hosted by the Department of Theatre, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute, the Thompson Library and the Theatre Graduate Syndicate and the Latino and Latin American Space for Enrichment and Research (LASER). The production was scheduled to open on the 2nd of February, 2012. The performance took place in Thurber Theatre, the proscenium theatre space in the Drake Performance and Event Center. The production team consisted of the theatre department chair as the producer Dan Gray, PhD candidate Francesca Spedalieri as the director for Real Women Have Curves, Lesley Ferris as the director for the English language world premiere of Matchmaker, Claire Landuyt and Jaclyn M. Benedict were the stage managers for Real Women Have Curves and Matchmaker respectively. The design team for both the plays was Shiree Houf (costume designer), MFA student Brian Elston (lighting designer) and myself as the scenic designer. Chris Zinkon was the technical director for The Double Bill, Chad Mahan was the scenic studio manager and Carla Chaffin was the scenic charge artist for this production. The scenery had to be completely
changed during the intermission and was executed by the undergraduate student run crew members Hannah Sterman, Judy Rodriguez, Jayson Troutman and Jef Wolber.

The total budget for the production was $11,000. From this $5000 was allotted for scenery, $2000 for costumes, $2000 for lighting, $1500 for properties and $500 for sound. The budget was equally divided for each show. The scenery budget for *Real Women Have Curves* was $2500 and $2500 for *Matchmaker*. There are two theatres in the Drake Performance and Event Center, The Roy Bowen Theatre, a 250 seat thrust stage and the Thurber Theatre, a 600 seat proscenium stage. Due to the need for extensive scene changes it was decided to stage the production in Thurber Theatre.

Thurber Theatre is a 600 seat continental house and has a 35’ wide and 22’ high proscenium. Upstage of the plaster line, the stage depth is 38’ and downstage to the plaster line is a shallow thrust which extends 7’-11”. The orchestra pit has a hydraulic lift which in this production case was not used. The stage right wing space is 35’x 38’. This space was really useful to store scenery during set change.

The fly system in the Thurber stage is unique with both single and double purchase counterweight systems present. Line set 1 through 6 is single purchase system and line set 7 through 35 is double purchase system. The theatre grid is 56’ from the underside to the stage floor, thus giving us ample fly room of 54’. The soft goods already present in the theatre space are, 10 pairs of black velour legs, each 12’ wide with no fullness (four legs if combined together could be used as a full stage curtain), 5 black velour borders each, 8’ high by 15’ wide (three borders if combined together to span the proscenium). The theatre also has 1 sky blue colored cyclorama which is 31’ high by 50’
wide, 2 black scrims 24’ high by 42’ wide (for this production only one was used) and 1 rear projection screen which is 30’ high by 48’ wide (which was not used in this production).

The production team received the directors’ concept statements on the 27th of September, 2011 via email. At the first production meeting on the 4th of October, 2011 I provided some research images based on the concepts presented by the directors to see the general reaction from the production team. After brainstorming through the initial production meeting, the preliminary designs for scenery were produced as scheduled on the 1st of November, 2011. After going through the design with the technician director, Chris Zinkon and my design adviser, Dan Gray the final design was presented to the production team on the 22nd of November, 2011.

The production was set to open on the 2nd of February, 2012. Winter break commenced from the 12th of December, 2011 to 2nd of January, 2012, leaving us with less than a month for construction, painting propping and set dressing. Given this tight schedule, Zinkon decided in conjunction with producer, Dan Gray and production manager, Eric Mayer that it would be best to finish most major construction of the set during the winter break. Construction began on 5th of December, 2011. The 23rd of January, 2012 was the 1st Tech rehearsal and on the 27th of January, 2012 was the 1st Dress rehearsal. 1st of February, 2012 was an invited preview. The production ran for 7 performances. The last performance was held on the 11th of February, 2012. The set was struck from the 13th of February, 2012 to 15th of February 2012.
One of the criteria of The Double Bill was that the entire production had to be no longer than 150 minutes, which included the fifteen minute interval between the two shows. *Matchmaker* is a short play and the director Lesley Ferris was able tell the story in about 60 minutes, but with *Real Women Have Curves*, by playwright Josephina López was conceived as a full length play. Director Francesca Spedalieri had to skillfully reduce and cut the play so it would not lose its authenticity and still would be able to convey the crux of the story line. In the end Spedalieri was able to shorten the play and the total run of the show was 75 minutes long. In this synopsis, I will discuss the shorter version of the play.

Josefina López is a Mexican playwright who was born in 1969, in San Luis, Mexico. She was just five when her parents decided to move her family to El Paso, Texas (Wikipedia). From there they moved to East Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights where she finished high school at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, graduating in 1987 (Rohr). It is during this period when López started to conceive *Real Women Have Curves*. The story revolves around an 18 year old, plump but pretty girl named Ana. It is a story of a young Mexican-American who is torn between her personal ambitions of going to New York to pursue academic goals and fulfilling familial and social pressure of how a Mexican woman should be and behave. Ana is also challenged
by the cultural assumptions of body image, beauty, a women’s social acceptance through marriage and child bearing capability.

Even though López is best known for her work in *Real Women Have Curves* she has written other plays such as *Boyle Heights*, *Lola Goes to Roma* and *Simply Maria Or The American Dream*. López obtained her undergraduate degree from Columbia College, in Chicago in film and screenwriting in 1993. She continued with her academic journey as she obtained her M.F.A in screenwriting from UCLA at the School of Theatre, Film and Television. López has also received various awards including a Gabriel García Márquez award from Mayor of Los Angeles in 2003. In addition to this she is also the founder of “Casa 0101 Theatre Art Space” in Boyle Heights (Rohr). *Real Women Have Curves* first premeired at the El Teatro De La Esperanza at the Mission Cultural Center in San Francisco, California, May 25, 1990 (4). López was just 21 years old then. The play in some ways is a summation of the playwright’s life when she was an undocumented immigrant in the United States. In the playwright’s note López describes a funny incident, when she was very young she and her friend while walking down to the corner store, thought that they had spotted “La Migra”(U.S. immigration officers) when they had actually had seen a L.A. Police Meter Maid. López immediately turned to her friend and started to “act white”, apparently she spoke in English and conversed about Jordache jeans and Barbie dolls thinking that it would make her fit it in with the rest of the American citizens. It was not until 1987, that under the Simpson-Rodino Amnesty Law, López received her permanent citizenship. López states that some people she knew were actually scared that the law was a scam to get undocumented immigrants arrested for
illegally being in U.S.A. They could not understand why the government would help
them after being persecuted for all this time. López was able to apply to college programs
once she got her residence card, but she had to wait a while longer to start her academic
journey as she had to become eligible for financial aid. During this period she worked at
McDonald’s but did not like working there and asked her sister to let her work in her tiny
little sewing factory. She worked at the factory for five months and the experience which
she gained there was valuable. They became the inspiration for *Real Women Have
Curves*. (López 5)

The play has five major characters. Ana is an 18 year old aspiring writer. Estela,
24, is plump and plain looking, older sister to Ana and proud owner of the “Garcia
Sewing Factory” a small dressmaking sweatshop. Carmen, a short, large 48 year old
woman, is a good story teller and is also the mother of Ana and Estela. Pancha, a very
large 32 year old woman, is sharp tongued and has an abusive husband. Rosali is 29,
slightly plump, and has extreme self and body image issues and is on diet pills.

The play begins at the first week of September in 1987, it is very early in the
morning around 7:00 a.m. when we hear keys turn through a closed door, Ana and
Carmen enter the dark room which is suddenly brightly lit as Ana switches on the lights.
Carmen quickly starts to clean the tiny sewing shop. The shop has four sewing machines,
a cutting table and an ironing board. There are stacks of fabric laying around. The shop
looks really messy but is not dirty. Ana meanwhile is sulking, sitting in a chair because
she had to get up so early. Carmen comes across as the stereotypical Latina mother who
is blunt, strict, and speaks her mind. A good example of this is when Ana is asked by her
mother if she wants anything from the bakery for breakfast and Ana says all she wants is to go to sleep. Carmen then tells her it is good that she is not going to eat because at least then she would not gain any more weight. Carmen leaves for the bakery and Ana quietly goes to the bathroom, she sticks her hand behind the toilet tank and takes out her journal which she keeps hidden. She starts to write about how her day started and how she would like her sister to give her a raise for working in her shop. She laments over the fact that all her friends from high school are in college but she is stuck working for her sister. She feels like she is leading the life of an undocumented worker even though she is legal. Her train of thought is disrupted when she hears Carmen yelling and pounding at the door as she thinks someone is following her. Ana quickly opens the door and shuts it even quicker just to realize that it was a false alarm. Carmen puts down the packet she got from the bakery and heats water for coffee. Meanwhile one by one the women start to show up, first Pancha walks in and then Rosali. They all settle down around the table, to eat and talk, except that Rosali does not eat. She says that she is on a secret diet from the “Orient”. Carmen complains while eating that she has not been able to lose weight after having so many children. Rosali goes to the window when she notices someone. She becomes very excited and asks where Estela was as her crush, a boy who had been given the nickname, “El Tormento” (The Torment) was standing outside. Estela comes bouncing out from under a large blanket, all the women scream as Estela runs towards the window to spy on her “Tormento”. Estela tells everyone that she had lots of work to do and, decided to stay overnight at the shop. As she is talking she brushes her hair and takes a look at herself in the mirror and is dejected at what she sees. However she is not so
bothered and is about reach for the door when the women tell her that he is gone. Still in order to double check she is about to open the door when Carmen creates a commotion that she saw the “La migra” van. Everyone gets scared and they run helter-skelter to hide. It takes them a few seconds to realize that they all are legal now. The women laugh about it and mock each other. Pancha confidently opens the door when Estela in a small voice tells them that she is not legal. Pancha slams the door shut. Estela tells them that she has a criminal record as she is being sued for not keeping up with the payments on the second sewing hand machines which she had bought. She explains to everyone that all the money she had went for the down-payment. She still thought that she would be able to keep up with the monthly payments but they never have finished any order on time. Because of this the Glitz Company would not pay her. She tells the women that she sent the Glitz Company some money and tried to explain her situation but they still want to take her to court. Ana asks her why hasn’t she applied for the Amnesty yet, but Estella is scared that she would be rejected if they find out about her lawsuit. All the women are suddenly determined that they would be able to finish the 100 dresses needed to fill the order in 5 days. The women quickly settle down to work, Pancha sits on her machine to work, when the machine makes an awful noise and explodes. Estela feels defeated by all the machines, but Pancha agrees to do it all by hand. The women work in peace, which lasts only a little while, when Estela and Carmen break out into a fight over some pink thread. Estela wants Carmen to work in a certain way, but Carmen is offended by the idea that she has to now listen to her daughter. Estela is frustrated by her mother’s taunts about how she would never get married, and it was a good thing that she was doing
something with her life, as by doing this she would be able to support herself. Their bickering is interrupted by Ana, who wants Estela to show her how to iron the dresses. Carmen hands over a size seven dress for the mannequin to Estela, she gives ironing instruction to Ana, and then puts the dress on the mannequin. Rosali looks at the dress and is dismayed that she never would be able to wear a dress like that. Pancha even though she is a huge woman, is comfortable with her body and thinks that it’s not worth it to turn oneself into a stick just to fit in a dress. Ana on the other hand is stupefied by the fact that they get 13 dollars to make a dress that is sold at Bloomingdale’s for 200 dollars.

Scene Two begins with all the women, except Ana who has gone out to get lunch, working hard on their stations. Carmen looks bored and takes out a book and shows it to Pancha and Rosali. As soon as Rosali takes a look at the book she screeches in shock. Carmen tells her that she found a pile of these books when she was cleaning her older son’s belongings. Rosali reads out the title of the book out loud “Two Hundred Sexual Positions Illustrated”. The women become engrossed in the book. When they come across an illustration of a heavy set woman, they are mortified but at the same time they are amused. Estela tells them to get back to work as it was not lunch time yet, but Rosali manages to also get Estela also involved. They are all into the book when Ana kicks the door open because she is carrying food and startles every one. Estela jumps as she thinks that it’s the “La Migra”. She yells at Ana and tells her to knock the door in a previously agreed upon rhythmic code so that they would all know that it’s not the immigration authorities. Ana lays the food on the table and catches a glimpse of the book as the others try to hide it. Ana becomes more curious and wants to know what the book was about,
Rosali is not able to contain herself and tells her that it’s a dirty book. Pancha tells Ana that they did not want to tell her as they did not want to pervert her. Ana is a little offended by it as she feels that she is being treated like a child. She tells them she surely knows more than them as she reads a lot. Carmen and Pancha are both very disapproving and tell her that knowing too much would be a turn off for her future husband. All the women gather around the table to have their lunch and Rosali again skips eating. Carmen tries to force fed her molé, which is turning green. Estela warns her mother to keep it away for the dress, as it would be difficult to remove the stains. Rosali moves away from the crowd and swallows a pill. She then goes towards the window and spots “El Tormento”. She tells Estela who excitedly runs out to meet him. All the other women are glued to the window to watch the action outside. In this hubbub Carmen drops the mole on a pile of finished dresses. They hear a knock at the door, realize its Estela and they run around with the dress to hide it so Estela wouldn’t see the stain on the dress. Estela yells from outside the door to let her in but Ana tells her she will not let her in unless she knocks the secret code. Estela knows that they were up to something but she is more preoccupied by the love letter which “El Tormento” gives her. When she tells them that she is going to see a movie with him tonight every one teases her. Her mother mocks her and tells her to dress up and not to show up for a date looking like a scarecrow. Estela is a little annoyed by her mother’s comment and tells everyone to get back to work.

Scene Three, all the women are still busy working at their stations, Estela is on a phone call and the radio is switched on. On the radio we hear that the commentator talking to a caller about her abusive husband. Pancha gets very annoyed by the topic and
switches the radio off. Carmen tells the women that she is lucky that her husband does not hit her. Ana is a little taken aback by this statement and asks her why should she feel lucky when no one is supposed to be living in a condition like that and women should not put up with it. She preaches by standing on top of the table that women should learn to say no. Pancha who is abused by her husband is a little rattled by it and scoffs at Ana and tells her that she would never understand relationships and love. They both start to argue as Ana thinks that even after 20 years of the women’s liberation movement, there were women like Pancha who were still putting up with manipulative men. Their argument is cut short by the honk of a car. Carmen, Rosali and Pancha leave and Ana stays back to finish the day’s work. Estela starts to get ready to go for her date and she sees Ana sneaking into the bathroom. To Ana’s surprise, Estela asks her what she writes in her journal. Ana reluctantly tells her that she is keeping a journal so that when she becomes famous she would be able to write her biography. They both share a moment of appreciation as Ana is proud of what her sister is doing at such a young age and Estela is proud to have a smart younger sister. Estela stands in front of the mirror holding one of the dresses which they were making and is mesmerized by it. Meanwhile Ana goes back inside the bathroom to write about the day’s events. Lights slowly fade out.

Scene Four, early morning around 7:10 a.m. All the women are huddled around the table as Estela is crying. They all understand something happened on her date and they want to know what but Estela is too proud and does not want to discuss it. She orders everyone to go back to work. Carmen is just about to leave for the bakery when she spots the “La Migra” and they all quickly try to hide Estela. They all finally decide
that Estela should not be working at the shop as it is too dangerous and that she should go home to work. Hesitantly she agrees, but only to return as “El Tormento” is standing at the street corner. Carmen bolts the door shut so that no one could come in and all the women settle down to work. Ana is loudly wishing for a fan as the lights fade out.

As scene five begins, all the women are busy working on their stations and Ana is seen inside the bathroom with her journal. Ana is disturbed after meeting a friend from high school at the store who is pregnant again. Her friend told her that she always knew Ana would do something good with her life. However Ana was ashamed and does not tell her friend that she was just working for her sister. Inside the shop Carmen tells everyone that she thinks she is pregnant. All the women are shocked but Pancha is taken aback as she could not have any children. Ana cuts their chatter as she increases the volume of the radio as she thought she heard about some raids in the neighboring factory by the INS. Carmen immediately turns towards Estela and tells her that she should give the Glitz Company a call and demand them to pay for the past orders. All the other women agree and Estela is pushed to call Mrs. Glitz. However Mrs. Glitz on the phone asks her about her proof of employment papers and tells her that if the immigration authorities shut her down, she would not pay for anything. She hangs up the phone disappointed and afraid that she would get deported. Carmen encourages her that things will be fine soon and even if she did get deported they would bring her back. Estela pulls herself together and gets back to work. She goes to Pancha’s station and grabs the skirts that she had made, but to her shock all the skirts are stitched on the wrong side of the fabric. Estela picks up another pile of dresses and finds them stained with mole. She turns around and sees Ana
burning the tulle with the iron. All hell breaks loose and Estela starts to yell at everyone for not doing a good job. All the women start to complain at once about how hot it is inside and they cannot concentrate on their work as they just want to get out of here. Ana pleads ti would on be better if they could open the door, but Estela is worried about the “La Migra”. The conversation between the women gets to the point of a heated argument when suddenly Rosali faints. Rosali slowly comes back to consciousness and sees herself surrounded by the rest of the women. Pancha helps her up to her feet and takes her home and Estela is left with a helpless expression as lights fade out.

Act Two, Scene One. It’s early morning around 8:15 a.m. Only Carmen and Estela are working at the shop. Ana enters with detergent in her hands. She quickly closes the door and stands beside the window. She points out a strange homeless guy to the women. To their surprise they see Pancha walking towards the shop, but before entering Pancha has a quick chat with the homeless guy. Estela is relived that Pancha had decided to come back to work and thanks her. Pancha tells them that she did not want to come to work but she somehow had to be there. Before coming to work Pancha had gone to see Rosali and she looked really pale. Estela asks every one if they could stay late to work and everyone reluctantly agrees. All the women settle down to work when Carmen asks Pancha to touch her stomach and inquires if she could feel the baby kick. Pancha tells her that she could not feel a thing and immediately rushes to the bathroom and begins to cry. She prays and asks why she was made a woman if she could not have children. She wipes her tears and steps out of the bathroom when there is a familiar code rhythm knock on the door. The women rush to the door to greet Rosali. They all ask her at the same time what
she was doing there and she said that she could not rest as she kept imagining Estela getting deported, and she knew that she had to come back because she was the only one who could fix the over-lock machine. Estela triumphantly tells her that she fixed it and the zipper which was Rosali’s work. Estela tells her that she should just go home take care of herself and that the heat was not good for her. Rosali finally tells them that it was not the heat because of which she fainted but because she had not been eating. She was not on any secret diet but actually on diet pills. Everybody is concerned and they tell her that she is not fat, Rosali tells them that she has realized that being a size seven was not as important as being a part of this family and helping Estela not getting deported. Estela is grateful, embraces Rosali and asks her if she could work late. All the women laugh and they get back to work and the lights slowly fades.

Act Two, Scene Two. It is around 2:00 a.m. and pitch dark outside. Rosali has a weird expression on her face and asks if anyone heard a stomach growl, Rosali then realizes that it is her own stomach. Working so late with no breaks has made all the women very hungry and they start to rattle their purses to see if they could find any food. Carmen gets up and opens the ice box and takes out her mole, which receives a unison “no”. Pancha opens her purse and takes a large amount of food and Diet Coke. She shows the Coke bottle tells everyone to prove that she is on a diet. The women all gather around the table to eat and chatter. Carmen turns the radio on and they start to dance to the tune (in this production *La Bamba* by the band Los Lobos) while they eat. Lights fade out.

Act Two, Scene Three, It’s the next day around 2:00 p.m. and the women have been working throughout the night. The women look sticky with sweat. Ana fans herself
and curses the heat. She is not able to take it anymore and decides to take her blouse off and stands in her sweaty bra. The women are shocked, Carmen tells her that even she is feeling hot but she is not taking her clothes off. Ana tells her that they are all women and they all are the same. Carmen mocks her saying that Ana has bigger breasts, but Ana quickly retaliates and tells her mother that she has a bigger stomach. Carmen sulks, and tells them that is because she was pregnant. Carmen suddenly feels like she has to vent and tells everyone that she does not want the child, but she can neither abort the child nor give it away. She is worried because the last time she had a child she almost did not make it. After that she did not take care of herself let herself get fat so that her husband would find her repulsive and would not touch her. Ana is concerned for her mother and asks her why she never told her father “no”. It was because of their social and cultural structure that Carmen was never taught to speak to a man with confidence and courage. Their generation was never taught to say “no”. To everyone’s surprise Pancha steps into the conversation and tells Carmen that it’s very simple. All she had to do was look at her husband and say “no” and then she should get out of the bed but she should take the blanket with her. The women laugh, while Ana takes off her pants as she is still hot. Carmen feels embarrassed for her daughter and tells her that she would look so much better if she loses 20 more pounds. Ana tells her mother that she would like to lose all the extra weight but a part of her does not want to fit into the norm of how the society wants to perceive a woman. She would not be seen as a sex object.

Estela agrees and tells everyone that she would like it if everyone would take her seriously. She finally decides to come clean about her infamous date with “El Tormento”.

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Estela tells everyone that throughout the date he kept making sexual advances at her and told her that it does not bother him if she was fat. This comment got her really angry because she thought he wanted to go out with her because she was smart and was appreciated that she owned a factory at just 24. To everyone’s surprise Rosali is not affected by it and wants to know if he has a brother as she thinks she was surely going to die a virgin. She tells everyone that she has never felt beautiful so she never proceeded in her love life. Estela tells her that she does not look fat and suddenly Rosali pulls down her pants shows her hips. Estela thinks her hips are bigger so she pulls down her pants so they could compare. One by one all the women start to shed their cloths comparing bickering and dueling about who has the larger stretchmark or who has the flabbie stomach. Pancha suddenly realizes that they are all partially naked, down to their bras and panties, and is worried what will happen if someone sees them. Ana assures them that nobody is looking and now they all could relax.

Estela reminds her that they are not yet finished even though they just have 14 more dresses to finish. Everybody reassures Estela that they would be able to finish it in time and not to worry. Suddenly Carmen comes up with an idea that they should make cloths for themselves, Ana adds to it that they should make clothes in larger sizes and Estela jumps in and tells them she would one day open a boutique. They all stop to visualize the potentials of a plus sized high fashion store.

Estela is the first one to snap back into reality and tells them to get back to work. Pancha pleads if they could open the door for just a while. All of the women look at Estela and finally Estela gives in. Carmen runs to the door, fans herself with the door for
a while and then boldly steps outside. But immediately runs back inside screaming that she saw the “La migra” van, everyone runs around to find their clothes. The women are partially dressed when Rosali and Ana look out of the window and realize that the van outside was not “La Migra” but just the police. They all huddle around the window to see the commotion outside when they see the police dragging “El Tormento” to the van, Ana realizes that it was a drug bust. Carmen and Ana recognize the homeless man as the police, which is why he was asking where “El Tormento” lived. Ana turns to her mother and asks if this was the van she had been seeing all this time and Carmen nods her head timidly. Everyone gasps and then they all start to laugh. Estela is so relieved that she tells everyone that they should go home. There were only 14 more dresses and she would be able to finish them all by herself. They all thank Estela and run outside before she could change her mind. Estela stands there near the table and turns on the radio and sways to the music (in this production La Niña by recording artist Lila Downs) and whispers to herself “larger sizes”. As the light fades down, we see Estela measuring herself to cut a dress for herself from a roll of leftover fabric.

Act Two, Scene Four. It’s the next day and there are no more dresses around. The table holds a birthday cake and helium balloons. Ana is holding a camera in her hand and Pancha and Rosali are hiding away from the door. They all yell “surprise” thinking that it’s Estela but it’s only Carmen. Carmen has a pot of rice in her hand and looks very unhappy. Rosali asks her what had happened. Carmen had just seen the doctor and was told she was not pregnant but was only going through menopause. She is upset because now she would be no longer would be a woman. Ana reassures her that all of this
is normal and she is a 100 percent woman because she is a real woman. They hear footsteps outside and realize that it’s Estela. They all take their positions and as she enters they all scream “surprise”. Estela is pleasantly amazed that they all remembered. She tells them that she delivered the dresses to Mrs. Glitz and she finally paid. She starts to hand out everyone’s checks and she also brings in a standing fan. Carmen suddenly has a realization and asks Estela if she has money left to send to the lawyer. Estela tells her she has got 600 dollars and she would send some of it today and maybe they would not take her to court. The women all feel bad and at the same time. They all want the dream of owning a boutique to become a reality. One by one they all give back the checks to Estela, Ana does not want to give her check but reluctantly gives it saying that she could only take half of it as she would like to buy a second hand type writer.

Estela announces that she has a phone call to make and calls Mrs. Glitz. On the phone Estela tells Mrs. Glitz how rude she has been during this entire process and she is mean, greedy and unsympathetic. With Ana’s prompting she adds capitalist to the list. She tells Mrs. Glitz that they quit and hangs up. All the women have sullen expressions on their faces but Estela laughs excitedly and tells everyone that she got them a contract with Señor Vasquez. All the women embrace excitedly and Ana takes pictures of all the women. They all freeze and Ana turns around and tells the audience how much she learned from this experience of working in the small sewing factory. She gets through New York University and when she returned owning the boutique was no longer a dream but a reality. She is helped by a dresser to get into her designer jacket, an original design by Estela Garcia’s boutique Real Women Have Curves. One by one all the women come
out wearing beautiful evening gowns and dance to the music of Vogue by the artist Madonna and lights fade out.

The entire script has a constant push and pull of action and emotion. There is a moment of peace which is quickly disrupted by a sudden commotion. Even at a very young age López definitely knew how to draw the audience’s attention using funny moments to get to the crux of the theme.

This young playwright may still have things to learn about plotting and story development, but she has a sharp ear and a gift for comic dialogue--

(Bruckner)

When performed at the Gramercy Arts Theatre in New York, in October, 1994, it was performed in Spanish and at the same time was translated in English and remained part of the repertory through year end. (Bruckner). Even though the play was instantly embraced and immediately after the 1990 production in San Francisco, it was being produced all around the country, the play faced criticism along the way. In November 1993, when produced at the Victory Garden Theatre, in Chicago, the production got mixed reviews.

Lopez never fully develops the situation or the characters. Actions never seem to have consequences, resentments are aired and dismissed, and the women are far more involved in swapping funny stories that in confronting problems. Any problems that are confronted are usually solved with a one-liner and a hug. When the dour, abused Pancha receives a lecture about women’s rights from Ana, she reacts with a wholly
believed jaded contempt. But later she follows Ana’s advice to stand up to her husband, thanking Ana the next day with a kiss and a hug. Not a word is said about how her husband might have reacted—(Shaw)

Even though the production is uneven, we can understand the intentions of the playwright. The play was made into a movie in 2002, which was co-authored by George LaVoo and López. The film was debuted at the Sundance film festival, where it was awarded the Humanitas Prize and the Audience Award (Wikipedia).

Patricia Suárez, like López, was born in 1969. Suárez was born in Rosario, Argentina. She started to study psychology and anthropology at Universidad Nacional de Rosario (National University of Rosario) but she dropped out without completing her degree to pursue her writing career. Suárez has written many children’s book, short stories, poetry and novels (Wikipedia). In 1999, Suárez became interested in theatre and after studying with the playwright Mauricio Kartun, she took the Buenos Aires theatrical scene by storm. In 2002 she launched the trilogy named The Polish Women. The trilogy included Tartar Stories, Matchmaker, and The Warsaw Club. Some of her other major plays are The Little Coat, The Mystic Rose and Shots Fired for Love (Puga 3). Her work has also been produced in Caracas and Madrid, but The Ohio State University Department of Theatre would be the first to produce Matchmaker in an English translation. The first part of the trilogy occurs on a train while crossing the Polish border, the second part takes place inside the house of woman in small Polish village and the third part sets in the middle of the ocean on a boat, traveling to Buenos Aires (Puga 2-3).
The Polish Women trilogy is roughly based on the historical facts of human trafficking of women in the late 19th century and early 20th century in Argentina. Of course not all sex work was forced and neither were they all Jewish or from Eastern Europe, but majority of the pimps were Jewish. These men started an organization known as La Varsovis, but in order to save members from criminal prosecution, they re-grouped and started to run their organization under the new name Zwi Migdal in 1927 (Puga 4). This organization worked by persuading young Jewish girls a better future in a different world altogether and bribing the desperate poverty stricken parents with significant amount of dowries (Magnarelli 37). Jewish pimps would take advantage of their strict religious marriage laws and perform a fake wedding without a rabbi present. According to the Jewish law once a woman is married she has to abide by her husband. These so called “husbands” rarely had to force their wives to prostitute themselves. Furthermore due to these religious regulations once a woman is abandoned by her husband, she would not be allowed to remarry. Unfortunately these forsaken women were considered outcasts from their own society, which in turn would lead them back into the world of prostitution to earn their daily living (Guy 8).

Prostitution being legal in Argentina between 1875 and 1936, men would get away with what is commonly considered criminal activity. Even if the police were tipped off about the forced prostitution (which was illegal), they usually would look the other way as they would be bribed to do so. The entire organization was brought down when Raquel Lieberman filled a complaint against her husband for forcing her back to “work” years after her retirement from the profession (Puga 5). Suárez’s Matchmaker looks
inside the lives of women who lived (or live) in stressful conditions and how they could be kind, generous and strong willed, but at the same time how twisted and manipulative they can be to save their loved ones.

*Matchmaker* is the story about Golde, Schlomo, Edit/Ana and Emma, set in the 1920’s rural village of Poland. The story begins inside the living room of the matchmaker Golde’s house. The house has only got the bare minimums, with a chair and an old torn sofa. There’s also a small table and three screens behind which there is a little boy’s bed. (In this production) Golde seems to be running around cleaning the living room, when suddenly we hear a knock, Golde increases her pace and tries to cover up her old tattered sofa with an equally tattered blanket. Meanwhile the knocks get more desperate. She opens the door and Schlomo (a well-dressed gentleman from Buenos Aires) enters. He nervously looks around and sits on the sofa. Golde brings him some tea and abruptly asks him if he would like his future bride to be young, pretty and have long blond hair. Schlomo nods “yes” while sipping his tea. She tells him that Mr. Trauman wrote to her about finalizing the deal and adds how worried she is about her son Moishe who needs treatment for his lungs. Schlomo feels sorry for Golde and gives her some money. She successfully extracts some more money by telling him that she would like to give some to the girl, or his new “bride”. Golde chit chats with him asking him about Mr. Trauman’s health and her cousin Ester. She goes on gossiping about a shoemaker and his wife, while building the anticipation for Schlomo who just wants to hear more about the girl he is marrying. As Schlomo gets more desperate she asks him if he has any children. Schlomo loses his control and shouts at her that he is here to get married and how can he have
children, if he was just getting married. Golde calmly but sternly tell him to lower his voice as her son is still asleep due to a fever. Schlomo is now desperate to know about his future wife and Golde finally reveals the girls name, “Edit”. Schlomo likes the name a lot and demands to meet her immediately. Golde suggests that he should go see her in the morning when she takes the family’s two cows to graze in the field. Golde tells him that he should also take some sweets for the girl to please her, but before Schlomo could leave, she milks a little more money out of him, telling him that the money is for the girl, so that she could buy her some silk ribbons. Once Schlomo leaves Golde sits down on her chair and quickly starts to count the day’s earning.

In Scene Two, it is early morning, it’s almost dark outside and it’s snowing. Golde rushes to the door in her night gown as she hears angry knocks, to her surprise it’s Mr. Schlomo. He looks furious and yells that he does not like Edit. Golde points towards the baby and tells him to calm down and asks for an explanation for his anger. Schlomo tells her that he had gone to see Edit at the hillside and she looked completely retarded, she was sucking her thumb and saliva was drooling down the corner of her mouth. He does not understand how Golde could think that anyone could marry that “idiot” woman. Golde tries to convince him that she is a sweet girl, but Schlomo would not budge. He tells her that Mr. Trauman spent a fortune for this deal and he would not be happy to see to see the “idiot”. Golde feels disappointed and tries to make amends by offering one of the girl’s sisters. Schlomo contemplates for a moment and demands to know if the other sisters are fine and normal. Golde assures him that her sister Anna would be appropriate for him and even after giving birth to her child she had not physically changed a bit. By
this point Schlomo is so frustrated that he yells at her as he doesn’t want to marry a married woman. Golde immediately rushes to make sure that her son is not disturbed by all the yelling. She tries to make Schlomo pay the dowry for any one of the girls by reciting a sob story of how poor Pan Volf’s (Edit Volf’s father) condition is, and that the money would help him feed his family. But this time Schlomo does not feel generous. Golde tries to talk him into liking a fourteen year old Alma, but he rejects her because she does not have blond hair and also that she is very young for him. Golde feigns confusion as he is not pleased by any of her suggestions. Schlomo paces around and asks her if she has anything to drink. Golde happily gets a bottle of vodka out and quickly they start to get drunk. Golde goes on chattering trying to calm Schlomo, she asks him about Ukraine, about his village and their language. Finally Schlomo caves in and agrees to meet Edit’s sister. He tells Golde that he just wants a girl who is pretty, and intelligent and blond if possible, a cheerful woman who can bear children.

   Scene Three, Schlomo is sitting on the chair and Edit is sucking her thumb sitting on the sofa. Emma chatters away telling Schlomo about how her sister fell down from a tree and since then Edit had never been normal. She continues by saying on that her father was very upset because Edit is so pretty and her father thought that her pretty face was half the dowry. Schlomo is engrossed in her chatter and seems to enjoy her company. He immediately tells her that she was pretty as a red rose. Suddenly Edit starts to scream “bathroom”. Emma takes a hold of her and tells her to control herself. Emma continues with her nonstop talk. She tells him how everybody in the village loves Mrs. Golde and how she has helped many girls get married. Schlomo tells her that he is in the “skin
“trade” when Emma asks him what he did in Argentina. Emma is pleasantly surprised as her friends husbands were also fur traders. She turns towards Edit and asks her if she remembers what type of fur they traded. But Edit just sits there staring and sucking her thumb. Emma mocks Edit for not remembering anything which leads to a small fight. The girls pull each other’s hair and pinch each other. Schlomo tries to break up the fight by reminding them about the little boy. Emma pulls herself together and continues with her blabbering, she tells him the story of her two brothers, who died too young either due to alcohol poisoning or due to the cold weather. Edit starts to cry and she just gets louder and louder as Emma’s story progresses. Frustrated, Emma tells her to keep quite. She turns to Schlomo and shows him how she has holes in her boots and tells him that the cold had already killed seven people. Schlomo interrupts her and tells her that he could help and gives her some money. They talked for a while before he tells her that she would love Argentina if she ever comes there. Edit suddenly throws a tantrum which leads to a fight between the sisters. Emma, irritated with her sister, tells Schlomo that he should not take Edit to Argentina with him just because she is beautiful. She would drive him up the wall. Schlomo explains that he did see Edit’s photograph first but if he had seen Emma’s photo first he would have definitely picked her. Schlomo hesitantly asks her to marry him. Emma looks at Edit and both the sisters laugh together. Emma agrees to the proposal but is afraid that her father might not agree. Schlomo tells her not worry about it and asks her permission to kiss her. But right at that moment Edit urinates on the floor and Emma, embarrassed, slaps Edit to teach her a lesson. Edit falls down on the floor and starts to cry.
Scene Four, Schlomo tells Golde that he really likes Emma and he would like her to talk to Emma’s father. Golde states that the money which is offered for Emma is not enough for the father and Emma is definitely worth more than Edit. Schlomo tries to argue that Edit is far more beautiful than Emma, and that Emma has a crooked nose, and freckles on her face. To break the tension, Golde tells Schlomo that she is going to go check on her son. She comes out with a disheartened face and tells him that her son is delirious and his condition is getting even worse. Golde composes herself and tells Schlomo that the family needs Emma more as she churns the butter and because Emma knows how to make entertaining conversation which would mean more rubles for their business.

Schlomo, irritated, tells her that he wants Emma for himself and that he has fallen in love with her. Golde is skeptical and tells Schlomo directly, that it does not matter whether he would like Emma to be his wife or work in a brothel. The price which was fixed was for Edit Volf and not for Emma and he would have to pay more for her or she would not be leaving town. Schlomo, after thinking for a while, asks the price for Emma. Golde demands double the amount and some extra money for her son’s doctor fee. Schlomo is shocked by this demand and threatens to kill her. Golde reminds him peacefully that the police have been warned about skin traders like him coming into poor villages. Schlomo, after a lot of careful consideration, negotiates a price for Emma with Golde and tells her that it would take a week for the money to arrive. Golde, to reassure herself, asks him again if he had really fallen in love with Emma. She wonders what would happen if Emma comes to know that he came to the village to find a girl for their brothel. Also, how can he hide his business from Emma? Schlomo explains that he has told her that he
is a furrier and more over he stays far from the brothel zones. He has a pretty house with a Spanish maid who takes care of the house, and that Emma would live happily with him. She still doesn’t believe him and pushes on with her inquires about what would Mr. Trauman say when he comes to know that Schlomo has gotten himself a wife rather than the “skin” which he was told to bring back to Argentina. Golde continues by asking him how many wives he had before he came on this trip. Schlomo self-consciously replies that he had five wives, he tells her that one of his so-called wives has retired from the field as she is very old now, but he does not know what the other women are doing. His job is to just recruit them for the trade. Golde is exhausted by this intense conversation and tells him that she would not reveal anything to Emma about his business if he tells her what ever happened to Rut Rosenbaum, a pretty young girl with long blond hair and grey eyes, who was Golde’s niece. Schlomo after a long pause recalls her and in a disappointed voice tells her that Rut poisoned herself. She worked for Zwi Zusman and when he abandoned her she was not able to continue with her life. Golde goes to see her son and breaks down and cries.

   Scene Five, Golde, Emma and Ada (Edit) are huddled together on the torn sofa. Emma looks detached and Ada looks very normal. She is not drooling or sucking her thumb anymore. Golde chatters away to keep the mood light and asks Emma if she has got everything ready. Emma nods and tells her their trip itinerary. Ada and Golde are both very happy for her. Emma tells them about the things which Schlomo had told her about Argentina and the different words in Spanish which she already had picked up. Excitedly Emma tells them about the beautiful house outside the city and their maid who
can make tasty dishes. She tells Ada that she would send her the recipes so that she could bake it for Moishe. Golde suddenly asks her if he told her that he loves her. Emma nods in approval but asks Golde if she thinks that she should trust him. Golde tells her that there would be nothing to lose if she does not believe him. She tells her the story of her niece Rut, she assures her that there is no reason why the same should happen to her, but still she needs to be careful. Emma starts to cry; Golde and Ada try to console her. Golde tells Emma that they should go over the plan one more time. Meanwhile, Ada sits down to breast feed Moishe. Emma recites that as soon as she lands at Buenos Aires she would try to contact the Jewish Association for protection. If she does not see anyone from the association then she would write in code asking for help, and maybe they would be able to rescue her. Golde tries to pacify her by saying that in the worst case scenario it would last for three years, and she would be able to help her family from poverty. She tells Emma that maybe the next one who goes to Argentina could take some money to buy your freedom and that most likely the blacksmith’s daughter Rifka would be the next one to get “married”. Golde and Ada say their final goodbyes to Emma and tell her that they would see her soon. Golde takes her grandson from Ada’s arms and starts to play with him. She tells Ada that next she would be playing a mute and her name would be Rejzla during Rifka’s transaction. Ada is a little annoyed by her mother but Golde is sure that the next person who comes would be definitely looking for a girl who could provide some kind of entertainment and a mute would not do and then they would bring Rifka into the transaction and for a little more money they would let the man take Rifka with him. Golde explains to Ada that God has given her beauty and she should use it to save
these poor girls or else they just might starve to death. Ada quietly confesses that this time when she was staying over at Emma’s house, pretending to be her sister, Pan Volf (Emma’s father) tried to touch her, but she was able to stop him by telling him that he has only been able to conceive female children and if he touched her she would have a girl child. Golde was surprised that a remark like that stopped him. Ada adds that he was drunk and he fell down at her feet and cried. Golde plays with her grandson. She swings him in the air and bounces him. Ada tells her mother how beautiful her son is. Golde looks at the child and calls him a poor bastard.

Mrs. Golde cleverly executes an intricate bait-and-switch routine, were she lures these so called “furriers” by showing her beautiful daughter’s photograph for marriage. But when the men show up, they meet a mentally challenged woman and in desperation they settle for a physically less attractive woman and eventually end up paying more. It is interesting how by the end of the story we understand that maybe everyone was part of the plan, Emma, Edit/Ana and maybe also Emma’s father. It’s interesting to see the deceiver in turn getting deceived. Also Emma who throws herself into the “marriage” knowing all about the profession, but still having faith that maybe she would be rescued by the Jewish Associations and maybe she still has a little bit of a control over her life.

As dramaturge/translator Ana Puga states,

The character of Mrs. Golde reminds us that women in Argentina skin trade were not simply passive victims of male pimps: they were often active as procurers of other women and as madams of brothels. Far from
being a victim, Mrs. Golde organizes the sale of Emma to economically support her daughter and her grandchild-- (Puga 5)

It’s also interesting to see that in both the plays women are exploited by other women. Mrs. Glitz in *Real Women Have Curves* exploits the immigrant Mexican women threatening to turn them over to the American immigration officers. Mrs. Golde in *Matchmaker* is ready to put another girl in danger to protect her own daughter from the disgraceful life of a sex worker. Maybe Golde, in the larger picture was helping out, but it is interesting to see how Golde has to completely desensitized herself towards Emma or the new girl Rifka’s future even after hearing what happened to her niece, so that they can escape from starvation and their poverty ridden life. These plays are eye openers for contemporary audiences and show shameful crimes have been committed against women throughout history.
Chapter 3: Design Concept for Real Women Have Curves & Matchmaker

I was happy that The Double Bill was assigned to me as I was enthusiastic about taking up the challenge of designing for two shows simultaneously. Moreover I was excited to be working with Lesley Ferris and Francesca Spedalieri, as I had previously worked with Ferris who always been a supportive mentor to me and Spedalieri is a close friend and trusted colleague. It was really helpful that I had a copy of both the scripts during my summer break. This gave me an ample amount of time to read and become well versed with the plot lines of both stories. I was very careful to not think about design during this process as I did not have the directors’ concept and I did not want to become too attached to any ideas before I could discuss the play with Ferris and Spedalieiri.

During this period I was able to draft up a preliminary prop list and do comprehensive research on both plays. The 4th of October, 2011 was the first scheduled production meeting for The Double Bill and I received the directors’ concepts statements a week before that date. An interesting challenge which was put forth by both the directors was to visually shrink the proscenium opening to make a very intimate space. Furthermore, the Thurber stage is 40’ deep and if we include the 11’ orchestra pit which is situated downstage of the plaster line, we have a total space which is 51’ deep. Since both the plays are very dialogue driven it was important to have an intimate space for the audience to connect to the characters. The idea of selective realism and magic realism was
proposed by both the directors. We also discussed some ways to incorporate scenic elements and visual nuances which would link the two plays together.

*Real Women Have Curves* calls for a small, hot and sultry sewing shop. Spedalieri in her concept statement stated that the design needed to be functional but at the same time it need not adhere to reality. In the script López describes the shop as having some hanging, florescent tube fixtures which Spedalieri was not keen on seeing as part of the scenery. She suggested that she would prefer to see light fixtures which would emit yellow light rather than white. It was a logical choice as white light gives out a sense of coolness which was the opposite of what we wanted. Spedalieri also suggested using a big industrial window which could not be opened to enhance the trapped feeling of the immigrant workers. Spedalieri really wanted defined spaces in the set. Individual work stations, the kitchenette and the bathroom should all be stuffed together so that the space looked almost suffocating. Spedalieri wanted me to explore Mexican and Mexican-American art through the designs and also to use iconic imagery like the *Virgen de Guadalupe*.

I was really inspired by the Frida Kahlo’s 1933 painting, *My Dress Hangs There* (see Figure 1). It’s a beautifully layered painting which exhibits the extravagant display of American wealth and simultaneously shows the poverty and suffering of the lower class. What appealed to me the most was the Tehuana dress, a traditional costume which was worn by the Zapotec women from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Zapotec women have always represented freedom and economic independence (Helland 399-400), which could be seen in the characters of the five women as they strive to work hard in the sewing shop.
to earn a living. Other paintings where Kahlo has used the Tehuana dress are *The Two Fridas* and *Remembrance of an Open Wound*.

![Figure 1: My Dress Hangs There - Frida Kahlo](image)

I started to look at some more examples of Mexican art and art forms. I was also intrigued and wanted to incorporate symbols from the traditional Mexican Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead). While searching for images of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* I came across this photograph of graffiti covered wall in Cicero, Illinois (see Figure 2). I was instantly captivated by the imagery, the vibrant colors which were used to paint the
Virgin Mary and how it was surrounded by urbanity. I instantly connected to the idea of mixing graffiti art and Mexican art and artfully superimposing different layers and colors. The script suggests that there is one door and a window present, with four sewing machines, an ironing board and a steam iron. There is a bathroom inside the shop which on many occasions is used in the play to deliver some really funny and heart melting monologues. I wanted the interior walls of the shop to have the look of exposed yellow cinder blocks, as cinder blocks were a heavily used building material in the 1970’s and I imagined the shop to be in an older, and lower income neighborhood of east L.A. I also wanted to use sewing machines which were manufactured between 1950’s and 1980’s, because the script calls for old and second hand machines.

Figure 2: Virgen de Guadalupe
Spedalieri also wanted to actually use all machines on stage so all the machines had to be in proper working condition. In order to facilitate this action, we discussed training the actors to actually sew the garments on stage. Another important part of the design was the 100 dresses which the actors had to pretend to complete in the 5 day duration of the play. It was important to create an illusion for the audience to see the passage of time through half constructed dresses to fully made dresses at the end of the show. I choose to take an independent study with Kristine Kearney (resident costume designer) to learn how to sew so that I would be able to recreate the dress in pieces.

In contrast, *Matchmaker* is set in rural Poland during winter. According to the script, the action takes place in the ragged living room of a small house with some screens kept in the corner that can be moved around. According to Ferris’s director’s concept the screens possess both the sense of warmth and danger and provide a secret alcove were the characters (especially Mrs. Golde) could hide and plot. As the script recommended the inside of the house is bare and striped down. The only furniture pieces present are an old ragged sofa, a small table, a chair and three screens which are hiding a baby basket or a crib. Since we knew from the beginning that *Matchmaker* would be the second play on the double bill, Ferris suggested that maybe there is a kind of “ghosting” of the immigrant workers plight in *Real Women Have Curves* which could be incorporated into the world of *Matchmaker*. Ana Puga who not only translated the play but also was the dramaturg for this production, had also put forth the image of a snow globe, which at any moment could be shaken. Another fascinating idea which Puga laid
in front of us was to perhaps incorporate the outline images of a female body using mannequins or the imagery of the Russian nesting dolls.

I was immediately drawn to this idea of dolls and the female body. During my research process I stumbled across the image of these vibrant babushka dolls, which reminded me of the colors which were largely used in Mexican art (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Russian dolls

Moreover the rounded body structure of the dolls was a cheerful reminder of the five women from *Real Women Have Curves*. During the research process I was amazed
by the stark difference between Poland and Buenos Aires in the 1920’s and I wanted to somehow connect it to the play through the scenery. I was also mesmerized by the color palette of a painting by a Polish painter Alfred Wierusz Kowalski named the *Lone Wolf* (see Figure 4): the beautiful blue and umber night sky and a wolf standing in the middle of vast stretches of snow covered earth reminds me of the character Emma in the play as the lone figure who has to fight the cold of Poland and dangerous world of prostitution in Argentina.

![Figure 4: Lone Wolf - Alfred Wierusz Kowalski](image)

In my mind the living room of Mrs. Golde’s house was like a trap for Emma or for Mr. Schlomo who gets duped by the women or even by the entire village (Puga 4). I was captivated by an old broken window from an abandoned insane asylum Zofiołwka in
Otwock, Poland (see Figure 5). I was drawn to the arch of the window, and the old peeling paint that looked like it was being ripped from the walls telling a story of struggle and much horror.

![Figure 5: Zofiowka asylum](image)

For the next production meeting I was able to share some rough initial sketches and the stage managers for the two shows were given the preliminary props lists. As I started to put my thoughts down on paper, I soon realized that I wanted a permanent set piece near center stage which could be rotated to reveal the next space. I really wanted
striking use of graffiti for the set of *Real Women Have Curves* which used colors that were not too garish that incorporated imagery and iconography which Spedalieri and I agreed was appropriate for the show. Another element which I wanted to add was a moving scroll with very realistically painted clouds which would enforce the idea of passing time against which the characters are racing. As the scroll moves the play advances from day to night or vice-versa. I also added a lamp post and attached to it was a clothes line which in turn was connected on the other end to the column which was protruding from the central set piece. Covering the bathroom walls with scrim helped to hide or reveal the interior of this room when needed. Using lighting to make this happen was an easy and interesting solution. I proposed 5 hanging bulk head lights which replaced the florescent tube fixtures and Spedalieri liked the bulkhead lamps as they had a very industrial look to them. In my initial sketches I had also incorporated imagery of some of L.A.’s iconic buildings rendered as graffiti and also a palm tree to reinforce the place and time (see Figure 6). After some discussion in our production meeting these elements were cut because we felt the concept was repetitive.

Inside the small shop I planned to orient the sewing machines, the ironing board and the table in such a way that it was easy for the audience too see the action being played out on the stage. I suggested that we should replace the dining table with a cutting table as it would fit better in the sewing shop. Also because the play had to be cut to fit in the allotted time, the scenes near the table were stripped down to the point that I felt a proper dining table would not be appropriate. Also the height of the cutting table is higher than normal tables which would create interesting levels of furniture on the stage. I also
suggested the use of differing, mismatched styles of furniture, so that it looks like they either got pieces for their home or they bought them second hand. In my initial drawing there was also a second door present as the script suggested the presence of a back door. However, Spedalieri thought that it was unnecessary as that door would have been used only once.

Figure 6: Initial sketch - *Real Women Have Curves*
With *Real Women Have Curves* my concept was to create an environment that was based on layers. I wanted the audience to peek into the layered world of the characters as they reveal their true strength even if social norms dictate otherwise.

With *Matchmaker* I wanted to explore the concept of using frames (see Figure 7) as frames remind me of photographs and that in turn reminds me of the past. To shrink the stage, I proposed adding a false proscenium which would frame a black, jail-like lattice structure with black dress forms hanging behind it emphasizing the plight of trapped women. This jail backdrop would in turn frame two hanging flats which would symbolize the neighboring houses. These houses would frame the central set piece, thus bringing the entire focus to the inside of the house.

I really wanted to enclose the central structure to create a kind of a hole which would have been appropriate for Golde’s living room, but it would have created major sight line issues.
Figure 7: Initial sketch - *Matchmaker*

In my initial designs I had the central structure on an elevated platform, but the idea was scratched because it detached the unit from the rest of the environment, and confined the actors to that elevated space. This meeting was really helpful as both the directors were very responsive to the sketches and I started to get a clearer picture of what the two directors wanted. Spedalieri really liked the idea of graffiti for *Real Women*
Have Curves but she really did not want the neighboring building to over power the set and suggested reducing the size of the hanging flats. Though I was a little unclear about the use of the screens in Matchmaker, the director definitely wanted screens that were free standing, but I was really not sure how to integrate them into the set. I expressed my concerns to Ferris and she immediately agreed to meet me during her office hours so that we could talk and come to a conclusion about the screens. This meeting was really helpful for me to further the design.

The next production meeting was scheduled on the 25th of October, 2011 and by this time with the help of my adviser Dan Gray I was just a few steps away from my final design. Some of the major changes which occurred during this process were modifications to the central structure. As it got more defined and I started figuring out how it would work for both the plays, it became just a central wall which would to be shared and pivoted around to disclose the other show. There was some discussion with the technical director Chris Zinkon about putting the entire wall on a turn table, but I felt that it would again create a disconnect as a turn table was reminiscent of the elevated platform which I had proposed in earlier meeting. I did understand that it would have allowed an easier transition from the Real Women Have Curves to the Matchmaker, but I was happy that Zinkon and Gray both accepted my point of view. Finally we decided that the wall would spin around on one pivot point. This meant I still had to figure out a way to make the wall more stable as the wall base had a very small surface area which was not very structurally sound (see Figure 8).
Figure 8: Initial ground plan - Real Women Have Curves

The other major change which took place over the course of time was the positioning of the bathroom. The bathroom was essential to the play as it provided a solitary and secluded environment for some of the important monologues. As such, Spedalieri thought that the bathroom should be placed more downstage in the set. Though I was sure that the most apt location for the toilet would be upstage right flush to the wall, I drew little sample sketches to show Spedalieri the different options and how sightlines affected each one of them. These sketches helped us to come to a conclusion and Spedalieri agreed with me about the bathroom unit placement. Zinkon suggested that the bathroom visibility and the sightlines would be greatly improved if the toilet was raised on a short platform. I immediately latched onto that idea as it was simple, effective and did not compromise the design in any way. Also a shower curtain was used instead of a
door at the entrance of the bathroom. Spedalieri really wanted to stage some funny scenes inside the bathroom and a door would have hindered any fast paced movement. Some other additions to the Real Women Have Curves set were the two side walls (see Figure 9-10). These walls tapered from upstage to down so that there would be no visual obstruction. Also, the presence of the walls solidified the outlines of the sewing shop. Spedalieri wanted to work in a confined space and the side walls were helpful to set boundaries. On the stage left wall I proposed a free standing shelf which was 7 feet high. I thought it would be funny to see short women trying to reach for things which are kept higher than what’s comfortable for them.

![Diagram of side wall](image)

**Figure 9: Sketch of the side wall - Real Women Have Curves**
Figure 10: Sketch of stage right wall - *Real Women Have Curves*

I also added some permanent set dressing (see Figure 11) to the wall like an exhaust fan above the bathroom, outlets, a florescent bulb fixture and conduit connecting the outlet and the light source. None of these fixtures needed to be practical though, as they were put there as further evidence that nothing worked in that particular shop.

Figure 11: Sketch - *Real Women Have Curves*

For *Matchmaker* the most important addition was two lopsided portal frames (see Figure 12), to give the house a bare boned look that enhanced my concept of framing. The portal frames gave the illusion of a concentric structure which in a way created a focal point making the audience concentrate on a limited area on stage creating the
impression of a shrunken stage apace. Zinkon and I also had a quick chat about budget and it made me realize that constructing a false proscenium would put us over budget so I started looking for cheaper alternatives to achieve the same effect. Discussions with Ferris about the free standing screens led me to understand that she was not looking for a standard dressing screen but rather would like to move all the frames individually. Thus I proposed frames which had an angle built into it so that each frame supports itself (see Figure 13). Initially I had proposed to hang dress forms which had a caged bottom, but due to budget constraints chose to use the cheaper, cage-less dress forms. The Department of Theatre costume studio had 3 of caged-bottom dress forms, available for our use which would help add variety on stage.

Figure 12: Initial ground plan - *Matchmaker*
Preliminary designs were due on the 1st of November, 2011 and I had a set of drawings and 1/8” scale models of each play. The entire production team was very receptive to the design decisions which were made throughout the process. Ferris was pleased to see the free standing screens for *Matchmaker* as the individual frames allowed more mobility and greater placement options inside that scenic environment. Ferris also liked the portal structure (see Figure 14) which framed the house but wanted me to expand the width of the structure so that it spanned a larger area on the stage to increase the playing area.
The scenic backdrop for *Real Women Have Curves* had major changes. Spedalieri no longer considered the passage of time as an important element. This led to the discussion about the scrolling backdrop (see Figure 15), as the particular set element that enforced the idea of day and night. After further discussion with the director, I decided cut this expensive and complex scenic element.
Figure 15: 1/8" Model - *Real Women Have Curves*

*Real Women Have Curves* a play is about dreams and aspirations of all these women as seen through Ana’s eyes which she meticulously jots down in her journals. I wanted to take a glimpse into her journal to understand this life through her point of view. I thought that a backdrop would connect well to the audience if it tells a story. I finally proposed that the backdrop should be a chapter of Ana’s life from her journal, expressed through a compilation of graffiti and doodles which Ana might have made drawn at the corner of a page (see Figure 16). I put forth the idea that images from the backdrop should morph into reality and that the backdrop be a combination of scrap pieces of paper from Ana’s diary which blend into the realistic sewing shop. Throughout the play, the world outside of the sewing shop plays a major role. The bakery, “El Tormento” and “La Migra” keeps the viewer tied to the world outside the sweatshop.
Because of this I wanted the audience to get a hint of the other side and thus by I arranged the flats which suggested the neighboring building to give the feeling of a back ally (see Figure 17). Spedalieri was really supportive of the idea.

![Image](image.png)

Figure 16: Doddles - *Real Women Have Curves*

Inspired by the strength of Zapotec women and mesmerized by the cultural symbolization through color and clothing, I really wanted to hang a Tehuana dress on the cloth line, along with T-shirts which symbolized the mixing of two cultures. It was also a personal homage to the painter Frida Kahlo. I was very happy when Spedalieri accepted my point of view about the dress. The clothes line was designed so that part of it was drawn on the walls of the neighboring structure and a rope line comes through the
painting and the other end was tied to the lamp post as an example of the graffiti merging into reality. Shiree Houf the costume designer helped me locate the dress.

Figure 17: Prelim ground plans - Real Women Have Curves

By the 15th of November, 2011 after having a detailed discussion with Zinkon I had a very clear picture about our budget standing. Several changes of material choices needed to be made to get the shows within budget. I really wanted a hard drop for the graffiti/doodle page drop but I had to switch to muslin as it was the cheaper alternative. The jail like back drop which I had proposed to be constructed out of black PVC pipes proved too costly and labor intensive. Zinkon came up with an ingenious idea of using ½” rope to cut the cost. I really liked the idea and to make good use of the rope I tweaked the design a little bit so that the rope could be vertically wrapped around 3 horizontal
pipes. These pipes would be rigged hanging one below the other, thus looping the rope around the pipe to make a sturdy spider web like structure. I had also added a low ramp in front of the door, on both sides of the wall to make the rotating wall sturdier. On the Matchmaker side of the wall I added old, tattered floor length lace curtains to the window to create the look of a house. The false proscenium which I had proposed for Matchmaker as we had expected did not fit in the budget so I suggested that we could use legs and borders instead, I changed the placement of the proscenium upstage so that the legs and the border gave the impression of a frame without looking too much like just a masking curtain.

On the 22nd of November, 2011 was the final design presentation when a complete drawing package, with a model and color renderings of the elevations were due for both Real Women Have Curves (see Figure 18-22) and Matchmaker (see Figure 23-27). The ground plan for Real Women Have Curves did not change but the elevations changed drastically.
Figure 18: Final elevation - *Real Women Have Curves*

Figure 19: Final ground plan - *Real Women Have Curves*
Figure 20: Final section - *Real Women Have Curves*

Figure 21: Parts of detail drawings - *Real Women Have Curves*
Figure 22: Color rendering - *Real Women Have Curves*

Spedalieri was excited about the changes in the design. She liked the graffiti and the doodles which told a story and the play of bright colors which had a faint reminiscence of Mexican artists. Ferris was also very receptive to all the design choices and changes. I had presented detail drawings which helped convey a better understand for both the designs.
Figure 23: Final elevation - Matchmaker

Figure 24: Final ground plan - Matchmaker
Figure 25: Final section - Matchmaker

Figure 26: Parts of detail drawings - Matchmaker
Unfortunately the construction of the set had to be done during the winter break due to time constraints. The production was set to open on the 2nd of February, 2012, the winter quarter began at the 3rd of January, 2012, which gave us just a little more than 2 weeks to complete set construction and painting. Zinkon decided that realistically it was not possible as The Double Bill was a very paint heavy show and we did not want to
include the week which was needed for tech rehearsals and dress rehearsals as part of our construction and painting schedule. Thus the construction of the sets began on the 5th of December, 2011.
Chapter 4: *Real Women Have Curves & Matchmaker* Production Process

I arrived back after the winter break on the 3rd of January, 2012. I was pleasantly surprised to see the entire set built and all ready to be painted (see figure 29). Smaller details like the exhaust fan, light switches, curtain rods, etc. were the only thing which needed to be added. The department’s other winter production, the MFA Outreach and Engagement project *This Above All*, was scheduled to open at the Bowen Theatre on the 16th of February, 2012 and the shop crew was completely engrossed in finishing construction for that show.

Figure 29: Unpainted scenery

Carla Chaffin was bought in as the scenic charge artist for The Double Bill and together with Chaffin and theatre practicum students, we completed the painting for *Real*
Women Have Curves and Matchmaker. I had ordered the required paint before I left for winter break, so we were able to begin painting immediately. Technical director, Chris Zinkon, helped Chaffin and I to organize a paint schedule which was very useful to keep track of our time and gauge our progress.

Chaffin and I started painting the backdrop for Real Women Have Curves on a muslin drop which Zinkon had already purchased. It took us one full working day consisting of 8 hours to starch the muslin drop, base paint it and draw out all the blue lines (see Figure 22) which depicted pages from Ana’s diary. It was my first time working with a ¼” lining brush attached to a bamboo rod and a lining tool. It was a little awkward at first, but as I continued I started to get better and faster. The next day while I drew all the graffiti doodles, Chaffin mixed all the paint for the drop. We were only able to get a quarter of the drop painted by the end of that day (see Figure 30).

Figure 30: Unfinished backdrop - Real Women Have Curves
The drop was completely painted the following day, as Zinkon was able to release two graduate scenic students to help us for 4 hours, which definitely expedited the completion of the backdrop. The next step was make all the cut outs in the drop, as I really wanted the light from the cyclorama placed behind the drop to shine through. The cut-outs were backed with scenic netting (see Figure 31), which acted as support so that the drop would not look like it was sagging at the spots were fabric was cut off.

![Figure 31: Scenic netting glued in place with a glue gun](image)

I was taking an independent study with the resident costume designer Kristine Kearney, which helped me immensely in constructing the many parts of the dresses used,
to show the progress of work for Real Women Have Curves. The prop budget was very tight, and we were only able to afford six readymade dresses. The dresses which the director liked that fit in our budget did not have tulle in it as called for in the script. Since one of the characters was supposed to burn the tulle by mistake creating a commotion on stage, Spedalieri thought that the tulle was an important element. Thus the costume designer Shiree Houf, bought the appropriate color of tulle which would fit with the 1980’s style, and I stitched it to each of the dress, to give it the proper look (see Figure 32).

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 32: Blue tulle tier added to the dress on the mannequin
The next stage in the scenic environment was to paint the rotating wall, and we started with the *Real Women Have Curves* side. I wanted the look of exposed cinder blocks and we laid out the block pattern first, with the help of chalk line. Then, with a $\frac{1}{2}$” spike tape, mortar lines were created so that a coat of Jaxsan (a latex based, commercial roofing compound) could be applied over it, as Chaffin suggested that the block would read better if it had some kind of dimensional texture to it. Immediately after the coating the spike tape was removed to reveal the cinder block pattern. We had to let the Jaxsan dry for a day before we could paint over it. While the coating dried we based the *Matchmaker* side of the wall. Theatre 220 students also helped us base and prime many of the scenic pieces, including the portal frame from the *Matchmaker* set (see Figure 33).

Figure 33: Portal frame - *Matchmaker*
The portal was made out of aluminum making the unit light weight and easy to move around. After applying a coat of metal primer, Jaxsan mixed with saw dust was applied over it to give it a grainy and gritty texture as I wanted the frame to look like it’s made out of rough wood. A group of students also helped us prime the movable screens from the *Matchmaker* set.

The Jaxsan on the rotating wall had completely dried overnight, thus we proceeded with the paint. Chaffin had already mixed the paint colors according to my paint elevations. Chaffin showed me how to achieve the look of old dirty cinder block, using a technique called wet blending. To accentuate the dirt, dark paint was applied with a sponge blending the color to the base color while concentrating on areas like the corners and the bottom part of the wall which naturally gets dirty over a period of time.

![Figure 34: Finished cinder blocks - *Real Women Have Curves*](image)

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The last step was to give highlights to the mortar lines so that it gave a sense of depth from a distance (see Figure 34). After explaining the paint technique, Chaffin went ahead and worked on the portal frame while I kept working on the cinder blocks. The next phase was to repeat the entire process for the tapering stage left and stage right side walls. In my paint elevation the bathroom had the look of textured concrete, thus Jaxsan was applied in a circular motion with a brush to create a rough texture which was then slightly smoothed out with a dry brush. While the Jaxsan coating was drying, we started working on the Matchmaker side of the wall. I had proposed a pastel blue plastered wall which had unevenly aged over time with dust and soot. We faced a unique challenge while painting the surface, as the wall was standing upright, the paint started to create vertical drip lines while wet blending the colors together. To overcome the problem Chaffin suggested that we use a dry sponge and dab and fade out the color as soon as we applied it on the wall. I felt truly challenged with this paint technique as I had to work really fast to avoid drip marks.

The following week Chaffin decided that we should divide the work among ourselves so that we could reach our deadlines faster. Also, I had to be pulled away from painting the sets as I was also working on set dressing. Out of the two shows in The Double Bill, Real Women Have Curves was the prop heavy show. There were so many subtle nuances in the story line about the character’s culture and their lifestyle shown through the small trinkets and knick-knacks present in the space. This meant very detailed set dressing was required. The costume shop was certainly helpful as they let me borrow rolls of fabric which they were not using to dress the sewing shop on stage (see
Figure 35), to make it look like left over fabric from previous projects. Also the prop master had purchased tape measures, scale rulers and French curves which we needed for set dressing, but I felt that they looked really clean and new so after asking the costume shop manager, I exchanged the new tools with the used tools which looked more apt in the scenic environment.

![Figure 35: Rolls of fabric used as set dressing - Real Women Have Curves](image)

The script suggested using a placard which says “Gossiping is Prohibited” in Spanish (Se Prohíbe Chismear) as a set dressing option. Spedalieri really liked the idea and asked me to somehow incorporate it in the environment. I suggested a handmade poster which maybe the character Estela made as she is the one who keeps telling
everyone not to talk and keep working. I made a poster using Photoshop and colored it by hand to give it a handmade look (see Figure 36). I opted to use a digitally prepared poster as I could replicate it easily if the poster got damaged through the run of the show.

Figure 36: Poster on the door - *Real Women Have Curves*

Meanwhile Chaffin had asked me to prep the neighboring wall units for both the shows and also to work on the movable screens for *Matchmaker*. I decided to work on the *Matchmaker* neighboring wall units first as I wanted the look of old plastered exterior wall which had chipped in certain areas and brick was exposed through the missing
plaster chunks. Chaffin had already told me that using a mixture of Jaxsan and paint would help show the details of brick and plaster more clearly from a distance and also would expedite the process as it would take too much time to paint and draw each brick with shadow details to give the illusion of depth. I wanted the individual brick size to be 8 ½” x 2 ½”, I first drew the portion inside which the bricks were to be exposed, I applied a thick coat of Jaxsan to the plastered area (the area which has not weathered), with a 3” putty knife which coated the surface with a thin layer in some areas and thick layers in other spots, which created an uneven surface. To create the area with exposed brick, I started laying out a brick pattern with ½” spike tape (see figure 37). I didn’t want to apply a coat of Jaxsan over the brick pattern layout as I wanted the plastered area to dry out a little bit. Zinkon was always a step ahead as he knew our paint schedule and had laid out all the walls on saw horses, which was really helpful as I could jump to the next wall as the others dried.

Figure 37: Brick pattern layout - *Matchmaker*
I repeated the same process on the second wall unit for the *Matchmaker* set. By the time I was done laying the plastered surface on the second wall, the first wall was dry enough for me to start with the next step of laying Jaxsan on the brick layout area (see Figure 38). Both the walls were left to dry overnight so that Chaffin could paint over it the next day (see Figure 39).

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 38:** Brick layout with Jaxsan – *Matchmaker*
Two major prop decisions were made for both the shows during this week. The *Matchmaker* scenic environment called for a sofa. It was very interesting how different Ferris’s and my thoughts were about that particular prop. As the play was set in the 1920’s I was thinking that the furniture piece should also reflect that era, but the sofa which I had selected was too elaborate and large. After hearing Ferris’s explanation about the poverty stricken Polish village I realized the sofa did not quite fit in the space. We finally decided to use a smaller love seat which was simple and had the appropriate silhouette. The only problem was that it was made out of black pleather which was too modern for the period. To solve this problem I decided to create a slip cover which had the look of an old torn bed sheet which had been tucked into the seats (see Figure 40).
In relation to props for *Real Women Have Curves*, Spedalieri, after having a discussion with Ferris, decided that she no longer wanted the actors to actually sew on stage. In our previous production meetings, Spedalieri had proposed working sewing machines for a more realistic impact. Kristine Kearney had already conducted training sessions for the entire cast of *Real Women Have Curves* to execute simple hand sewing techniques and straight stitches on industrial sewing machines. But even under bright stage lighting, it was not a suitable work situation for young actors who had to concentrate at two tasks of delivering their dialogue and at the same time stitch on electric sewing machines. Also because of the on-stage sewing, the play was stretching out longer then the time which was allotted to it. Thus Spedalieri decided that it would be practical and more efficient to act sewing on stage. This proved to be a set back as all the pieces of fabric were cut to facilitate the action of actually sewing on stage. But with the
help of Samantha Kuhn, a costume design graduate student, I was able to rig the fabric pieces in such a way that the actors could assemble the pieces on stage with straight pins or safety pins to look like detached bodices or skirts which could be stitched together to make the final dress. At the end of the show all that the stage managers had to do was to remove the pins and the pieces were again ready for the next run.

The next phase was to paint the neighboring walls for the sets of *Real Women Have Curves*. As Chaffin had directed me I based the walls with the paint which she had mixed and I drew all the blue lines (lines which represented Ana’s journal). The next day Chaffin and I used an overhead projector to project the image of *Virgen de Guadalupe* which I had provided, and traced the image on the appropriate neighboring wall. While Chaffin started working on the *Virgen de Guadalupe* graffiti wall I used charcoal to draw the small graffiti details on the stage right wall, preparing it so that Chaffin could immediately start working on the other wall (see Figure 41-42).
Figure 41: Stage right wall – *Real Women Have Curves*
Once all the walls for both the shows had been prepped, I started working on the movable screens. But before I began working on the screens, Chaffin had quickly showed me how to work on a scrim and explained that it was important to not fill the holes of the scrim weave as it would make the screens opaque. (see Figure 43).
Meanwhile Zinkon had installed the shower curtains, the wire conduits which connected the florescent bulb fixture, switches and sockets on the *Real Women Have Curves* side of the wall. I had proposed a round exhaust fan over the bathroom, but Zinkon had found a rectangular exhaust which already belonged to the department’s prop section. We opted to use the exhaust unit which we already owned, as I liked the look of that particular unit. I dressed the shelf with some old editions of *Vogue* magazine and attached a plate holder with some light weight plastic plates. I wanted the look of the shelf to be consistent each night, so I glued everything to the shelf. I was careful not to add too many things on the shelf as it had to be moved every night and I didn’t want to make the side wall too top heavy. I also introduced a wall telephone, a clock and hooks to
hang coffee mugs in the scenic environment. I made it a point to add different types of mugs so that it looked like the characters might have brought them from their home.

On the Matchmaker side of the wall Zinkon helped me install the curtain rod for the old lacy curtains. I had to manipulate the height of the curtain as it was too long. I did not want to cut the curtain length short as other future productions in the department might want to use the longer fabric length. I simply folded and stitched the fabric to the specific height which I needed. We also installed a small wooden hook for one of the actors to hang his coat on it. The set dressing for Matchmaker was minimal and every piece of furniture which was present in that environment was there because it had a specific function.

I was happy that we were able to finish all the paint work by the 1st tech rehearsal. There were two important props effects present in The Double Bill. One was the exploding sewing machine in Real Women Have Curves and the other was an effect, of a character (Edit) urinating on stage in Matchmaker. For the urinating effect we decided to use a small sport hydration bag which Houf cleverly rigged to Edit’s costume. The tube of the water pack was placed in such a way that the actress could have the nozzle in her palm which she could squeeze when the action was required. It was a cheap and easy solution but the effect on stage which it created was truly amazing. The actress playing Edit/Ana was the only one in full costume before dress rehearsal because Ferris wanted the particular actress to get the hang of the effect which she had to create on stage and thus the actress had her rigged costume on the 1st tech rehearsal.
We faced some difficulties creating the exploding sewing machine as it was difficult for us to figure out the mechanism as it was against fire regulations to use pyrotechnics. Due to which we were not able to make a decision till we were into tech week. Finally with Dan Gray’s help we decided to use a pump which would be filled with baby powder, which when pressed would create a cloud of powder. Thus we filled a tube with baby powder and attached the tube to a squeeze hand pump. I dressed the pump to look like a straight pin holder so that the pump looks like it belongs to the surrounding environment. This definitely proved to be a hindrance in the rehearsal process as the actors had to learn the effect on the fly. I was pleased that the actors were quickly able to incorporate this new addition.

During the 1st tech for *Real Women Have Curves* I noticed that the lamp-post was on throughout the show. The play progressed through day and night. With the lamp-post lit the throughout the day portion of the scenes it felt very distracting to me. I spoke to Brian Elston the lighting designer for the show and he quickly agreed that he would have to add some extra cues, as he also was distracted by it. During the tech table discussion, it was decided to cut the clock which was a part of set dressing in *Real Women Have Curves* because it would have been very confusing for the audience to see a clock on stage which did not move as I had removed the batteries. It is very deceptive to have working clocks on stage as it misleads an audience about the progression of time. Finally I decided to paint a ring of dirt on the wall so it seemed that a clock was hanging there which was removed.
Elston had top lit the graffiti drop (in *Real Women Have Curves*) which accentuated all the creases on the soft drop. I expressed my concerns to Elston and suggested if he could add some front lights so that the shadows of the wrinkles and folds would get muted. Elston felt that he did not have enough space in the truss as he had to double hang lights to achieve his lighting design which he had proposed. Chaffin and I tried to make the bottom of the drop heavy and stiff by adding strips of “2x4” lumber. This helped to remove some of the wrinkles from the drop.

For *Matchmaker* during the production meeting it was decided to use a snow machine but it was very loud and there was no background music which could have muffled the noise. However at the tech table discussion it was decided to keep the snow machine as the effect was important to support the story line and also the look of the show. By the end of 2nd tech for both the shows we were able to time most of the light cues and sound cues. However the most important part of the technical process was the set change during the fifteen minute interval. We practiced moving the scenery during tech rehearsals but were not able to dedicate as much time towards the run crew and the fly rail systems. Thus Zinkon decided that we should dedicate one entire rehearsal slot so that the crew could practice the change over and over. With help the production manager, Eric Mayer, we scheduled to meet over a Saturday on the 28th of January, 2012 to work on the scene changes. The crew was able to change the scenery in under 11 minutes by the end of the day.

By the end of the 2nd dress rehearsal we were getting very close to the final product. Gray was very supportive and enthusiastic to see my progress and kept
suggesting ways to make small changes to achieve the appropriate look. The 31st of January, 2012 was the 3rd dress rehearsal and Matt Hazard was responsible for the archival photos which were also taken during the run of the show (see Figure 44-47). The invited preview of The Double Bill was on the 1st of February, 2012 and the show opened the following night, the 2nd of February, 2012.
Figure 44: Production photo - *Real Women Have Curves*
Figure 45: Production photo - *Real Women Have Curves*
Figure 46: Production photo – Matchmaker
Figure 47: Production photo – *Matchmaker*
Chapter 5: Evaluation

The design process for The Double Bill was very gratifying. The success of the show was due to the collective effort of the entire production team, and I am grateful for everyone’s support and confidence. Throughout the process Spedalieri and Ferris were open to the ideas which I had about the look and feel of each production. It definitely helped to communicate with the directors freely as I had collaborated with both them on several projects in these three years of graduate school.

The Double Bill gave me the opportunity to add stitching to my list of skills. Even after the show was struck Kristine Kearney continued to coach me and encouraged me to keep sewing. I also learned a lot about scenic painting. Working directly under Carla Chaffin’s (scenic charge artist) supervision was a great pleasure. She pushed me and challenged me to work harder and faster.

I was pleased with the scenic environment of both the shows. The basic set elements were similar for Real Women Have Curves and Matchmaker. Both the shows had a backdrop, two hard flats which represented neighboring buildings and the pivoting wall. However different paint treatments and positioning of the flats within each scenic environment created a drastically different look for each show. I was also happy to see the positive effect of the color palette which I had used. For Real Women Have Curves I had used warm hues of browns and yellows which truly made the environment look hot and sultry. Also my stress on detailed set dressing gave the sewing shop the sense of a cramped
enclosure. For *Matchmaker* I had used tints of blue and greys which made the entire stage look eerie and cold. Also the set dressing added to the stark difference of both the environments. I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with a great production team, each of them with unique and inspiring talents. I was excited to see the cohesiveness of the costumes, lighting and the scenic environment. Our collaborative efforts were clearly seen but still I could see our individual aesthetics.

I think it would have been really helpful for the run crew members if we had time to change the sets every night during tech rehearsals. Especially during the shift from *Real Women Have Curves* to *Matchmaker* there were some very heavy pieces of scenery and moving them at the right position in 15 minutes was definitely a challenge. During the 1st tech rehearsal I could see the run crew move frantically on the stage as they changed the sets to *Matchmaker* and the heavy portal frame which had to be lowered onto the stage floor from a rolling dolly cart was about to topple over into the orchestra pit. Thankfully the run crew members were able to support the portal frame. Zinkon suggested that the portal frame should be the first piece brought into the theatre space during the scenery transition. Along with the run crew members the assistant stage managers also helped transform to the next scenic environment. But after much practice during the tech week the sets changes became smoother and the run crew became more confident with the set changing routine. The scenery shift during the intermission was quite stunning to watch. During the second week of the production run, the run crew members were able to change-over the entire set around in just 8 minutes. Many audience
members were mesmerized at the scenery change and did not appear to want to leave the auditorium at intermission.

Ferris really liked the idea of using snow effect during some scenes in *Matchmaker*, to reinforce the cold Polish environment. We ended up using a loud snow machine instead of a snow bag as we did not have two adjacent battens free to rig the effect. I wish I had incorporated the idea of using a snow bag from the beginning as the snow bag would have been noiseless and would have created a more even spread of snow.

I feel that in the production the two least effective set elements were the *Real Women Have Curves* backdrop and the exploding sewing machine. I felt that the backdrop would have looked much better if it would have been constructed as a hard flat, as the wrinkles on the muslin drop were too distracting, but that was not possible due to budgetary constraints. Another solution which we discussed about was to construct a frame around which the muslin cloth could have been stretched, which would have fit in our budget but because the lighting designer wanted to backlight the cyclorama we would have been able to see shadows of the frame through the drop. May be the wrinkles on the backdrop could have been evened out with a different lighting solution.

We knew that the most difficult prop piece was the exploding sewing machine. That machine should have been the first prop effect we worked on to insure its success. We kept pushing it off to tackle the simple but extensive prop and set dressing list. I felt very hurried and rushed to figure out the effect. Maybe the baby powder puff effect was the best solution as using pyrotechnics was against fire code but I think I would have felt
more satisfied if I had come to that conclusion after thinking and experimenting with other options.
Bibliography


Appendix A: Director’s Concept

_Real Women Have Curves_

**DRAMATIC ACTION AND THE WORLD OF THE PLAY**

Set in a sewing factory situated in East Los Angeles in 1987, _Real Women Have Curves_ is about self-image and the familial, social, and cultural expectations that contribute to shaping and distorting one’s self-image. The characters perceive themselves through layers of preconceived notions of what Mexican immigrants and Mexican women should be and behave like and slowly negotiate their way towards tearing down those veils and subduing the distortion and disturbance they perceive in their world.

**CENTRAL IMAGE**

Picasso’s 1932 painting, *Girl before a Mirror*, quickly stood out as the central image of the play. In a brief analysis of the painting commissioned by the NYC Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the reflected image of the girl is described as suggesting:

“[…] a supernatural x-ray of the girl’s soul, her future, her fate. Her face is darkened, her eyes are round and hollow, and her intensely feminine body is twisted and contorted. She seems older and more anxious. The girl reaches out to the reflection, as if trying to unite her different ‘selves.’” (MoMA website)

Picasso himself said that the reflected image of the girl, “this reorganized form, is the sum of destructions.” For him, the soul is not an ethereal entity but it is assembled, it is made of urges. It is vital, brutal, natural and true.
I believe that these two thoughts summarize a central point in *Real Women Have Curves*: the need to rectify this “altered-self recognition;” to re-assemble Latin bodies and a souls cut into pieces and subject to distortion prompted by cultural, societal, and economic struggle.

As Picasso to his girl, the audience is the silent witness of the psychic and physical transformations of the women in the Garcia’s factory. Throughout the play, we see these women become stronger, more united. We see them reorganize their distorted perception of their self-image (as women and as Latinas) – we see the multifaceted pieces that compose their soul become brighter, we observe them slowly fitting those pieces back together by overcoming a series of destructions – my them be spiritual, physical, or economical.

The idea of a distorting cultural, societal, and familial mirror that creates and self-image that is at odds with the self (in both outward likeness and the soul) is going to be incorporated in the play in both design and staging. I’d like to explore mirroring Mexican and Mexican-American art into the play not only in terms of color pattern and shapes (which are also found in this painting – also note the “tiles” in the back and resemblance of the girl’s reflected image to a distorted “Virgen de Guadalupe”), but also in movement and tableaus created by the characters’ bodies on stage.

Also, I am interested in possibly showing multiple views of objects and characters on stage. This idea is particularly interesting to me when it come to the “asides” of the play – for instance when Ana writes her diary or Pancha is in the bathroom or Estela dances with a dress.

**STRUCTURE, STYLE, and TONE**
Although often the play reads like a soap-opera (telenovela), the script is much more complex than it seems. The play breaks the conventions of Realism by progressively incorporating monologues that are more and more directly addressed to the audience – culminating in Ana’s last monologue and in the fashion show/curtain call. I would like to use that and use it to slowly begin to break down the fourth wall. By the end of the play, I’d like to create a direct line with the audience.

The play is a comedy (sometimes wry and cynic), but it also must bring forth important realizations about identity and self/body-image. There are moments in the play that will need to be honored, such as when delicate dreams are caressed (again Estela and the pink dress, the women talking about the future) or when the characters hit deep despair or even anguish (again Pancha and her inability to have kids.) I’d like to use those moments to seamlessly break and then reconstruct the fabric of the whole production.

***Please note: the play is very different from the movie in both characters’ dynamics and feel. There are no men physically present in the play while men comprise Ana’s whole support system in the movie. Also, in the play, the antagonist is really La Migra and time, while in the screenplay, Carmen (the mother) acts as the antagonist.***

**CHARACTER NOTES**
ANA...........18, plump and pretty, sister of Estela, daughter of Carmen. She is a recent high school graduate and a young feminist. She is strong in her opinions and determined to change things. Trying to negotiate the way she fits in with her heritage and her aspirations.

ESTELA........24, plump, plain looking, owner of the “Garcia Sewing Factory.” Takes extreme pride in her work and independence. Also insecure about not have met the expectations of her mother.

CARMEN.....48, a short, large woman, mother of Ana and Estela. Quite self-centered.

PANCHA.....32, a very large woman. Mellow in her ways, quick with her tongue. She cannot have children and is abused by her husband.

ROSALI .....29, only a bit plump (between size 7 and 8) in comparison to the rest of the women. She is sweet and easy going. She has deep issues with her body image. On diet pills.

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS
I would like to create a closely knit group of performers that will be able to trust and rely on each other in rehearsals and on stage BUT ALSO, I would like to have a tightly knit group of designers that will collaborate closely to create this world. We must have a functional set and functional objects on stage BUT I would like them to NOT be too realistic. I would like the idea of distortion and mirroring to creep into the world of the play. I am not sure that “larger than life” is the right definition for what I am looking for --- but I urge you to think out of the box! --- maybe magic realism?

COSTUMES and MAKEUP
Each character will have about 4 costume changes (they can be partial) plus a fashion show/curtain call costume at the end of the play.

The fashion show/curtain call at the end of the play gives the costume designer for the show the opportunity to actually become some sort of a “fashion designer.” Those clothes must be in high contrast with what the women wear throughout the play and must be stunning and flattering to their curves.

The actors will have to strip to their underwear in the play. Particular care needs to be taken with this part of the play as it is one of the most important moments in the script. Consider separates for this part for at least some of the character – “sequential stripping” will be needed. Also – the actors will compare stretch marks and scars – I am a little concerned about Carmen’s big scar (from a C-section) -- we’ll need to talk about that.

There is a lot of sewing in this play – In addition to working closely with the set and prop designer to dress the set (particularly with the dresses on the racks), I would love if the costume designer could come to a few rehearsals and show the cast how to sew, iron, hand stitch and surge.
LIGHTING
The play takes place over 5 days in September in East L.A. Scenes span from 2:00am to late afternoon so there the possibility of marking passage of time with light. It is supposed to be scorching hot, somewhat dusty. Please consider that there’s going to be a lot of “functional light” on stage – sewing machines and all that. This is something you’ll have to work with the set designer to figure out how to integrate them...

I’d like the ability to completely isolate certain parts of the stage, particularly during the “direct address” scenes to create (the bathroom is one of those places for sure) as I’d love the ability to create a very intimate and lyrical stage picture. I think side/dance light is fantastic and if you’d like to play with that I am happy to indulge.

SET and PROPS
First and foremost, we must find a way to shrink the Thurber stage and focus the eye on an intimate setting. This is a tiny sewing factory in East L. A. Again – there is no need to be imbedded in Realism: consider distortion and mirroring (both as real mirrors – even suspended - and also mirroring as in “floor plan mirroring.” Dangling/hanging lights, concrete walls, and at least one big industrial window that can’t be open. In addition to the individual work areas, there are two additional areas that must be defined: the kitchenette and the bathroom.
I am thinking of a smaller, almost suffocating, hot place rather than a big an airy space.

The play is set in a sewing factory – with all that this entails in terms of set dressing: sewing materials, racks for clothes, steam iron, serger, sewing machines...etc – also loads of “personal effects” – most definitely a Virgin Mary icon somewhere and other tings hang on the walls. There is an exploding sewing machine that might be a little tricky to figure out, as well as a steam iron. But again, try to think functional but non-realistic. Also, this show has a lot of food in it.

The prop designer will have to work closely with the costume and set designer to figure out what is happening on stage in terms of prop dresses. I would love to get as many rehearsal props (or even the real thing) to use during rehearsals very early on in January.

SOUND
This play can be considered as having 6 characters: 5 women and a radio. Sound is extremely important to the success of the play. In addition to carefully create environmental sounds, I’d like the sound designer to toy with sound collages – playing with diegetic (sound/music in the world of the pay) and non-diegetic sounds (sound music surrounding the world of the play). The play in dept and emotions, similar to that of a film, would be extremely beneficial.

The radio stations needed for the play will need to be carefully crafted so that music makes sense rhythmically and also dramaturgically with the text and the mood of the scenes. Keep in mind that the music selected should be predominantly (if not exclusively) in Spanish.
There is one song that will be included in the play, no matter what happens: *La Niña* by Lila Downs (also played in the movie). There is tremendous (social and cultural) significance attached to that song and I want to honor that by including it in this production.

There is also voiceover work that needs to be recorded and integrated into some of the radio programs.

Submitted by Francesca Spedalieri, September 2010
**Matchmaker**

*Matchmaker* is the second play in a trilogy entitled *The Polish Women* (2002). The narrative of all focus on three moments in the early 20th century in which arranged marriages for impoverished young Jewish women was a cover for an underground operation of trafficking women for prostitution in Argentina.

The trilogy as a whole and *Matchmaker* specifically spotlight thematically the multiple ways in which theatrical space comments on, reflects, interrogates the narrative concerns of Suarez’s work. While the action of the play with its five scenes takes place in a single location—“the living room of the matchmaker’s house”—there are “three or four silk screens, imitation Japanese, which allow the various characters to move behind them and speak privately.” (stage directions) These screens and their ability to move and slide serve as a kind of transitional marker, one that has the ability (like the theatre space itself) to hide reality and to reveal surprise. Thus the screens suggest a microcosm of the stage itself, a theatre-within-a theatre. And this stage in turn is the site of a story that encompasses two continents, traverses an ocean, and situates a limitless number of lost lives that moved, like the screens on stage, between one world and another, between an imagined new world life and the revelation of the reality of prostitution.

In thinking of the importance of the moving screens I am reminded of the very beginnings of Western theatre. Much has been written about the classical Greek stage and its use of space: its outside (the actual stage space for performance) and inside (the space beyond the stage space that usually had a large door and represented inside the palace). As Greek scholar Froma Zeitlin points out, the “arrangement of architectural space on stage...continually suggests a relational tension between inside and outside”. Within this stratified, delineated theatrical world, the Greeks created a device—the ekkeklema—for bringing the inside to the outside. This rolling platform, the epitome perhaps of ‘relational tension’, delivered the dead bodies of those killed offstage as the Greek convention forbade violence on stage. Suarez’s screens serve as contemporary ekkeklema of sorts, the function of which is to connect the two worlds: that which is hidden and that which is revealed. [more to develop here on the profound way this device creates a blurring of the inside/outside binary in term of physical space and physical being.]

Other issues to develop: gender dynamics; female bodies; the women’s sense of agency in a world that denies them just that.

**Scenery:**
1.) Selective realism—-that may enhance the mystery and otherworldliness of the Polish Jewish community in the 1920’s. It is a rural village—-where Jews were undergoing regular pogroms. (Russian word for ‘devastation’—‘destroy by the use of violence.’)
2.) The shabby parlor with moveable screens—to both hide and uncover. The screens augment the dual sense of this place as both cozy/warm and dangerous/cold. Ana Puga has suggested the image of a snow globe—at any moment things can be shaken up.

3.) How to suggest the double world: rural Poland and sophisticated Buenos Aries?
4.) As this will go second on the double bill—can some of the Real Women set and props be incorporated into this world? As a kind of ghosting of the other world of immigrants under peril? Sewing machines? Exploitation of women’s labor?
5.) Ana Puga fascinating idea: Mannequins, dressmaker dummies, outlines of female bodies might be able to play a role in both scenic designs.
6.) Image of Russian nesting dolls: matryoshkas also known as babushkas.

**Costumes:**
1.) Four characters: Period 1920’s Eastern Europe, Poland. Rural, poor. Schlomo is the go-between and his dress indicates he is very prosperous—he is more well off than the villagers, but not as much as his clothes demonstrate.
Golde: the matchmaker
Schlomo: the man ‘seeking’ an arranged marriage.
Edit/Ada: daughter of Golde and mother of baby Moishe. Ada is the bait for Schlomo and she plays the ‘idiot’ as Edit.
Emma: less attractive than Ada, she will leave with Schlomo

**Lights:**
1.) Crucial to establishing the atmosphere of Polish cold and bleakness.
2.) Specials for the scene transitions which will use the moving screens; stylized movement.
3.) Claustrophobia.

**Sound:**
1.) Can sound be used to bring Argentina into cold and desolate Polish sitting room?
2.) Four scene transitions: need sound.
3.) Atmosphere of winter cold.

*Matchmaker Director’s thoughts October 2, 2011*
### Appendix B: Prop List

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Prop Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<th>Purchase</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clock</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>Mouse trap</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollar bills and coins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notebook and pen</td>
<td>1 each</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>A bag of bread (which they eat)</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>plates</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hair Brush</td>
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<td>Lipstick (Costumes)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Deodorant stick</td>
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<td>Perfume bottle</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>A kettle to boil water</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooler</td>
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<td>Hot plate</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Coffee mugs (all should look different)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Tupperware for “Mole”</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mole</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>A large Blanket</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Different colored thread spools</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Pink thread spool</td>
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<td>Size 7 dress form</td>
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<td>A book with illustrations of different sexual positions</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>American express card</td>
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<td>Bottle of distilled water</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tacos</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tortilla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pill bottle</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirin bottle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
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| Item                                                  | Quantity | Unit | Price 
---|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|------|
| Manual for the over lock machine                     | 1        |      |      |
| Temporary employment cards                           | 4        |      |      |
| Box of fried chicken                                 | 10       | x    | 30   |
| Hamburger                                            | 10       | x    | 20   |
| Bag of cookies                                       | 10       | x    | 15   |
| Bottle of Diet coke                                  | 1        | x    | 3    |
| Checks                                               | 4        | x    |      |
| Telephone                                            | 1        | x    |      |
| Calendar                                             | 1        | x    |      |
| Tissue                                               | 1        | x    | 5    |
| Detergent powder                                     | 1        | x    | 15   |
| Balloons (Helium)                                    | 12       | x    | 12   |
| Birthday cake                                        | 1        | x    |      |
| Large ‘25’ candle                                    | 1        | x    | 5    |
| Camera (use and throw type)                          | 1        | x    | 6    |
| Large standing fan                                   | 1        | x    | 20   |
| Over lock Machine                                    | 1        | x    |      |
| Electric sewing machine                              | 2        | x    | 80   |
| Industrial sewing machine                            | 1        | x    |      |
| Chairs (different type)                              | 4        | x    |      |
| Steam Iron                                           | 1        | x    |      |
| Iron Board                                           | 1        | x    |      |
| Table                                                | 2        | x    |      |
| Table                                                | 1        | x    | 40   |
| Clothing rack                                        | 1        | x    |      |
| Magazine                                             | Many     | x    |      |
| Plastic Hangers                                      | 30       | x    |      |
| Garment bags                                         | 30       | x    | 120  |
| Full body mirror                                     | 1        | x    | 50   |
| Straight pins                                        | 2 pack   | x    |      |
| Pin cushions                                         | 5        | x    |      |
| Dresses                                              | 6        | x    | 102  |
| Matching dress fabric                                | 6-7 yards| x    | 60   |
| Measuring tape                                       | 5        | x    | 36   |
| Rolls of fabric                                      | Many     | x    |      |
| Pattern cutouts                                      | Few      | x    |      |
| Rulers                                               | 5        | x    | 40   |
| Small scissors                                       | 4        | x    | 30   |
| Paper scissors (with black handles)                  | 5        | x    |      |
| Plastic stationary boxes                             | 3        | x    | 15   |
| Soap bar                                             | 1        | x    | 3    |
| Plunger                                              | 1        | x    | 8    |
### Milk crate

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**Table 1: Prop list - *Real Women Have Curves***

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<td>Matchmaker</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samovar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tea glasses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kopeck &amp; Rubles (Polish currency)</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small muffins (which they eat)</td>
<td>7 boxes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vodka bottle</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot glasses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scissors (old iron or steel ones)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool yarn</td>
<td>2 rolls</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knitting needles</td>
<td>1 pair</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handkerchief (Costume)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm Chair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby bassinet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center table (round)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing basket/table</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side table (rectangular)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofa doilies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Console</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw pillow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Prop list - *Matchmaker***