

ALEX McDOWELL, RDI

Production Designer
I.A.T.S.E. Local 800 WCP

Alex McDowell is one of the most innovative and influential production designers working in the film industry today, with the impact of his ideas extending far beyond cinema. McDowell advocates an immersive design process that acknowledges the key world-building role of design in narrative media. His work on *Watchmen*, *Minority Report*, *Fight Club*, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* has not only captivated audiences worldwide, but also set new standards for the integration of digital technology and traditional design.

As the co-creator and the driving force behind 5D: The Future of Immersive Design, which launched the first ever international conference on immersive story-based design and world-building across all narrative media and continues to explore and implement the future of immersive design, McDowell has gathered a formidable army of high-level, cross platform, virtual and reality based collaborators. This illustrious group of connected, recognized, awarded thinkers and do-ers bring unique perspectives and solutions to all facets of design in the narrative disciplines - in film, animation, theater, architecture, experience design, interactive media, visual arts, information architecture, web, and transmedia - for both professional and academic audiences.

Along with his commitment as a working and immersed designer, it is McDowell's commitment to sharing his accumulated knowledge that has elevated him to a first choice speaker and educator. He has delivered the Keynote address at the Wexner Center for the Arts and a 4-hour master-class at the Toronto Film Festival, amongst his busy schedule of talks and classes at academic and corporate institutions and professional conferences of every description, where he continues to challenge audiences to "question everything". McDowell manages to do this while maintaining a prolific Production Design career in the Motion Picture Industry. He was the production designer for Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal*; its full-sized airport terminal was the largest architectural set ever built for film; and for musicians *The Cure* he designed one of the smallest sets in film for their *Head on the Door* video featuring the group inside a wardrobe, McDowell is currently at work on an original CG animated feature for DreamWorks Animation, is also an Executive Producer on the visionary film *Bunraku*, "set on a theater stage in a folded paper world where gangsters, cowboys, and samurai come together in inevitable and never-ending battle."

McDowell studied painting at the Central School of Art in London in the seventies, opening a graphic design firm, Rocking Russian Design, in 1978. With Rocking Russian he built his reputation designing album covers and T-shirts for seminal artists and groups in the London punk scene of the late 1970s. He soon branched into production design for music videos and commercials, a move that brought him to Los Angeles in 1986. After working on videos for *The Cure*, *Siouxsie* and *The Banshees*, *Madonna*, and many others, McDowell, along with such collaborators as directors Alex Proyas and David Fincher, moved into film. By the early 90s, McDowell was gaining notice as a film production designer.

McDowell's visionary and collaborative approach to production design has continued to attract some of the most prominent directors in Hollywood and won the respect and acclaim of his peers. In 2002, Richard Saul Wurman, founder of TED, named him as one of the 1000 most creative people in the USA. He won the San Diego Film Critics Society Award for Best Production Design for *Minority Report* in 2002 and the Art Director Guild Excellence in Production Design Award for *The Terminal* in 2005. He was nominated in 2003 for the Visual Effects Society Award, Phoenix Film Critics Society Award and the Art Director Guild Award for *Minority Report*, nominated again in 2006 for both BAFTA and ADG awards for *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and won the BAFTA that year. McDowell was named Royal Designer for Industry by the UK's most prestigious design society, the Royal Society of Arts, in 2006. In 2009, the Hollywood Film Festival nominated him for Hollywood Production Designer of the Year and in 2010 the Saturn Awards nominated him for Best Production Design for *Watchmen*.

As a visiting artist at MIT's Media Lab, McDowell has designed a "robotic opera" called *Death and the Powers*, which will bring together his experience in film design and emotion-based visualization to the stage for the first time. He serves on the Advisory Board for the University Art Museum at California State University Long Beach, where he is co-curator of 'ProjectLab', an ongoing art-science exhibition series that fuses emergent media, computer science, engineering, electronic music, and digital art production. He is currently adjunct professor at USC where he is teaching the first Immersive Moviemaking class at the Interactive Media Department/School of Cinematic Arts.

In the past two years McDowell has been invited to or spoken at or been a panelist for: fmx/07 International, ComicCon, MIT Media Lab, Berlinale Talent Campus, Cranbrook Academy of Art, EALA, fmx/08 International, MOMA, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, AFI Conservancy, 5D/08, UCLA Annual Design Showcase, The Art Center, The Art Institute, UAM CSULB, Texas A&M, Danish Film Festival, The Future of Transportation Conference, FOE3, Science & Entertainment Exchange, Sundance Film Festival, Hammer Museum, SCAD, National Films & Television School, Wexner Center for the Arts, X Media Lab, fmx/09 International, Universitaet Zuerich, The Production Guild of America's Produced By Conference, USC Dinner Party with History, Mundos Digitales 09, USC School of Interactive Media, Korean International Symposium for Arts and Contents, Animation Sans Frontières Workshop, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin, The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Technologies Committee of the Art Directors Guild, University of Manchester, CSA The Scenographer Masterclass, Venice Architecture, Carnegie Mellon ETC, Tijuana Film Conference, Seminar fuer Filmwissenschaft, LA Film Festival, A+D Museum, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Center for Future Storytelling, MIT Media Lab, Getty Research Center, Grimaldi Forum, Institute of Animation Visual Effects and Digital Postproduction, Kingston University, USC Universal, fmx/10 International ... and has taught a Masterclass at many of these events.

McDowell has completed filming on *In Time* with Director, Andrew Niccol and is currently in production on *Superman: Man of Steel* with Director, Zack Snyder.

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SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

Superman: Man of Steel
(Zack Snyder 2012)

In Time
(Andrew Niccol 2011)

Upside Down
(Juan Solanas, 2011)

Guardians of Childhood
(DreamWorks Animation, 2012)

The Fantastic Mr. Fox
(Wes Anderson, 2008)
Design Consultant

Watchmen
(Zack Snyder, 2008)

Corpse Bride
(Tim Burton and Mike Johnson, 2005)

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
(Tim Burton, 2005)

The Terminal
(Steven Spielberg, 2004)

Minority Report
(Steven Spielberg, 2002)

Fight Club
(David Fincher, 1999)

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
(Terry Gilliam, 1998)

The Crow
(Alex Proyas, 1994)

The Lawnmower Man
(Brett Leonard, 1992)