

# *From Mr. Chips to Scarface: Walter White's Transformation in Breaking Bad*

## Designed as part of the core exhibition *Behind the Screen* Museum of the Moving Image, New York, NY, 2013

In 2013, Walker worked with Museum of the Moving Image curator Barbara Miller to design a unique installation about the character Walter White from the television show *Breaking Bad*. Of course, the show had a very devoted following, and that audience eagerly awaited the opening of the installation which got significant coverage and attendance, even though it was not a full scale exhibition.

*The Breaking Bad project was another special project I did with Barbara Miller. She obtained some loans from the show's production, and developed a very specific story focused on the main character, Walter White—and the use of costumes and props to bring that character and his story to life.*

*This was conceived as a small exhibit within the Museum's larger core exhibition, Behind the Screen. It's actually a section within a larger section of that 15,000 square foot exhibition. With installations like this, the graphic style and basic tone of the installation is already established somewhat by Behind the Screen. It means the "voice" of the installation must blend in, and that can make it simple, but it can also make it complicated when the story line is larger than the place it's filling within the larger exhibition. Because we anticipated a significant audience for this small installation, I was also very concerned about crowd control and the visitor's flow through the exhibit. Screen content adds time to a visitor's experience, and sound adds other complications, and we had both.*

*I came up with the idea of creating a small enclosure using millwork. It created an intimate space while providing the platform I needed for the costumes, and it allowed various views of them. It also gave me the space needed for visitors to watch the monitors and contemplate the content.*

*In the end, Walter White's underwear was the hit of the installation! (WW)*

You can read about it online, and the links below are some examples...

[Museum of the Moving Image](#)

[Gothamist](#)

[The New York Times](#)

[Business Insider](#)

[Los Angeles Times](#)

[Forbes](#)

[The Hollywood Reporter](#)

[New Yorker](#)

*When I designed special installations for Behind the Screen like this, the section signage basically serves as the main text for the installation. I think this is one of the reasons it got confused in some of the press coverage. In this installation, I used a unique, angled pedestal shape to provide an entrance to the alcove I created for the main props on display. I confess a special love for the pink teddy bear, and the placement was probably one of the more difficult elements. The bag of "blue sky" and the props from the methamphetamine lab were also challenging—a different scene in context—until I had the idea of the recess in the platform with a backlit panel directly under the lab suit and underwear. (WW)*



**At left and below:** *Using costumes—including the famous yellow lab suit—with some props to show the character transition of Walter White was straight forward in one way, but potentially not engaging in another. I used a slight change in platform heights to separate the two Walters, and then elevated the lab suit higher over the lab elements, with the famous underwear floating alongside. (WW)*



**At left:** *A very special moment happened when Charlie Rose interviewed Vince Gilligan for his PBS show at the Museum, and they came to the gallery to see the installation before the show. I loved seeing Vince Gilligan in the installation smiling! (WW)*

