

In *Next to Normal*, the character of Diana Goodman is a mother suffering from bipolar symptoms. She drives the story chaotically forward, as her family struggles to navigate her illness. Most of the story takes place in the Goodman family's home, suggested by a skeletal, three-level set. Moving scrim panels and a tracking staircase vary the composition of the home from scene to scene, showcasing characters in various private spaces, often simultaneously. The tumult that pervades the household is represented by an upside-down image of suburbia that fills the frame of the set.



Next to Normal by Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey, produced by Pioneer Theatre Company, 2011.
Directed by Karen Azenberg. Photo by Alex Weisman.



Clybourne Park, by Bruce Norris, produced by Pioneer Theatre Company, 2013.
Directed by Timothy Douglas. Photo by Alex Weisman.

Clybourne Park takes place in one of the many traditional bungalows that popped up all over the Chicago area after World War II. In Act One, set in 1959, the current homeowners are in the process of moving out, while racist neighbors attempt to prevent an African American family from moving in. During the ten-minute intermission that occurs between acts, the set transforms: period-appropriate wallpaper is covered in graffiti, architectural details are stripped out, and packing boxes and furniture are removed. Act Two reveals the same home, fifty years later, now empty and in disrepair. As the dilapidated neighborhood begins to gentrify, the neglect and vandalism of 2009 surrounds the ghosts of the past.