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T'PLANA-HATH
**VULCAN
LANDER**
SPECIAL ISSUE

SURVEY VESSEL

ACTIVE: 2063

DIAMETER: 43 METERS

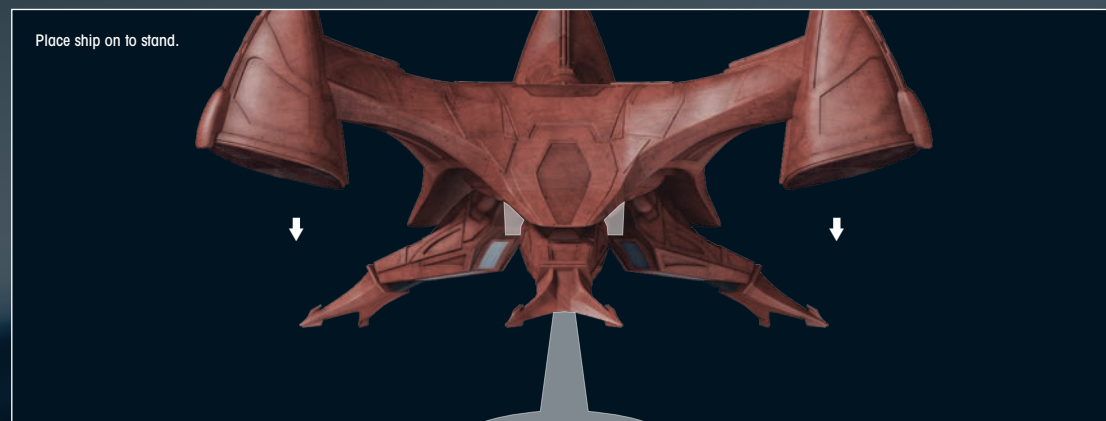
INTERSTELLAR EXPLORER

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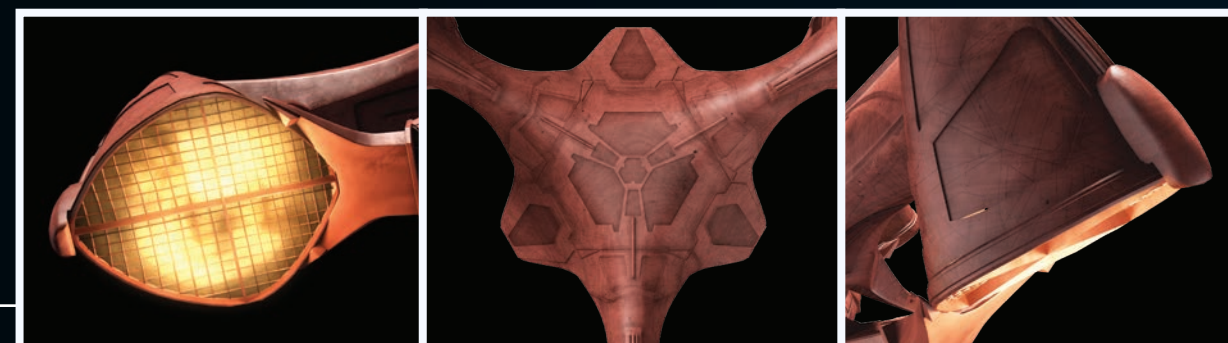
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VULCAN LANDER SPECIFICATION



NAME:	T'PLANA-HATH
CONSTRUCTED:	VULCAN
ACTIVE:	2063
FIRST CONTACT:	EARTH





◀ The *T'Plana-Hath* was the first Vulcan ship to openly make contact with Earth.

T'PLANA-HATH

When a Vulcan survey ship, the *T'Plana-Hath*, detected man's first warp flight they decided to make first contact.

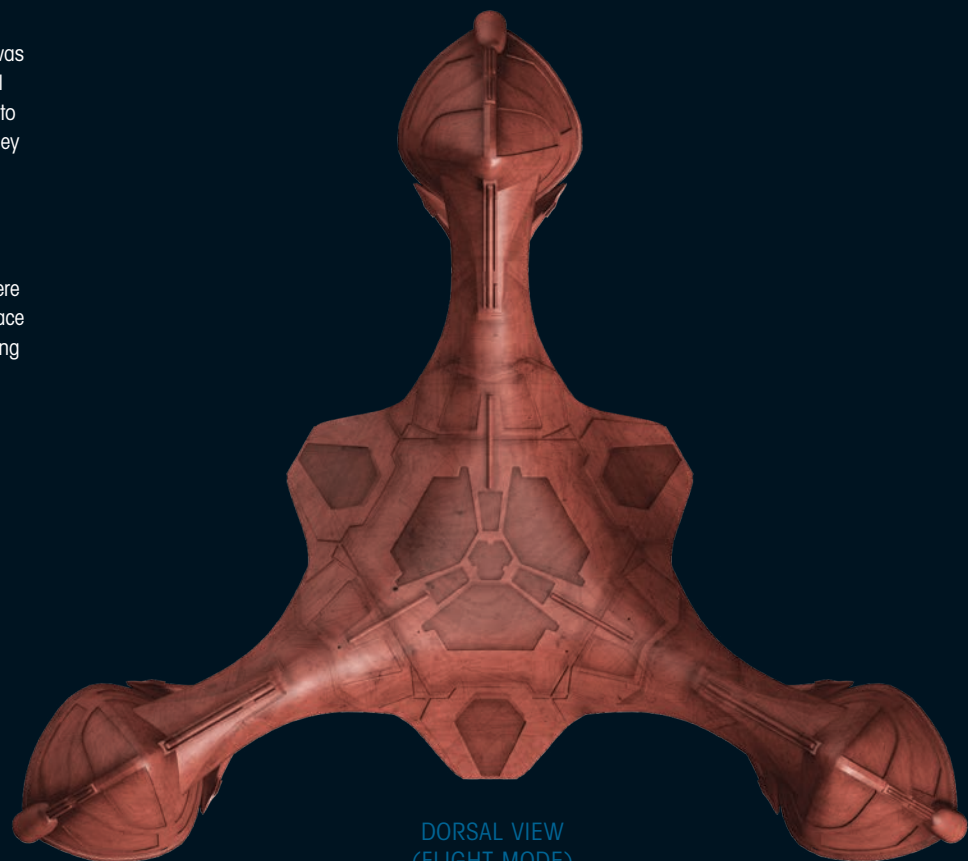


On April 5th, 2063 the Vulcan survey ship, the *T'Plana-Hath* was passing through the Sol system when the crew detected a warp signature from a faster-than-light vessel. The Vulcans had previously dismissed Earth as a primitive society, but the warp signature was evidence of advanced technology so they altered course and landed on the surface. They set down in Bozeman, Indiana, where they made first contact with humans, thus laying the foundation stone of the United Federation of Planets.

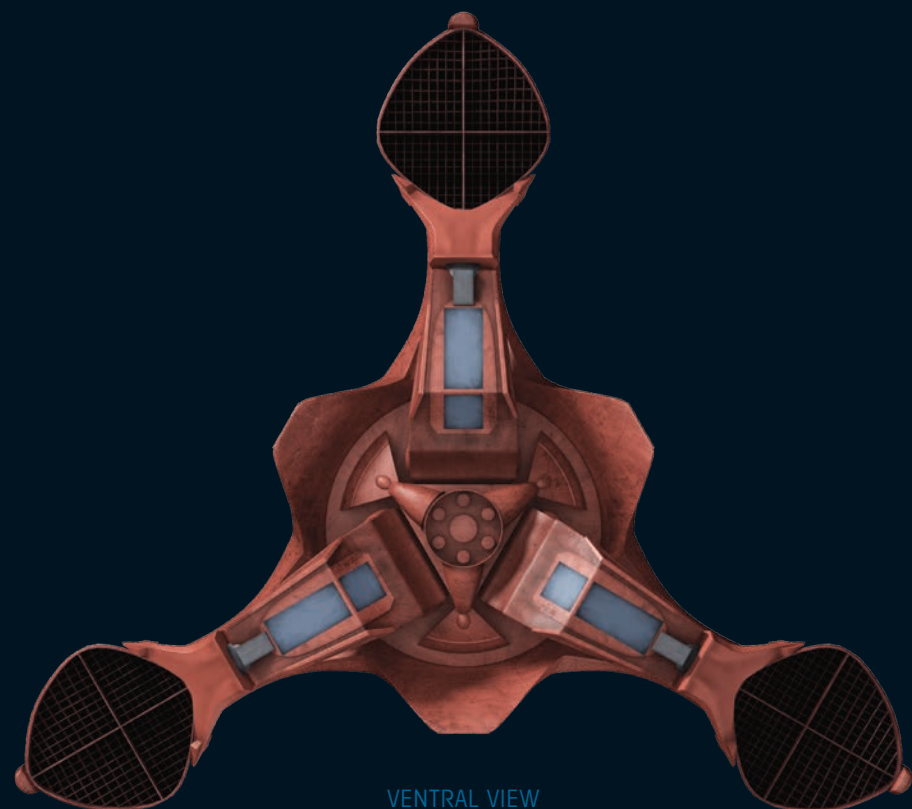
The *T'Plana-Hath* was a three-engined, warp-capable vessel that was named after the matron of Vulcan philosophy, who described logic as the path out of chaos. At 43-meters across, it was relatively small and was designed to make planetfall and land on the surface. When it did so, the lower part of the ship dropped below the main body and rotated to form three landing legs that supported the ship. The crew could then exit through a hatch in one of the legs.

◀ The Vulcans' decision to make first contact with Earth was momentous and had a profound effect on the course of human history. Within a few decades they helped mankind eliminate poverty and disease.

► The T'Plana-Hath was a warp capable vessel that the Vulcans used to explore the Galaxy. They were a cautious race who only established contact with species they considered to be advanced, but they were an intensely curious race and believed in studying cultures at a distance.



DORSAL VIEW
(FLIGHT MODE)



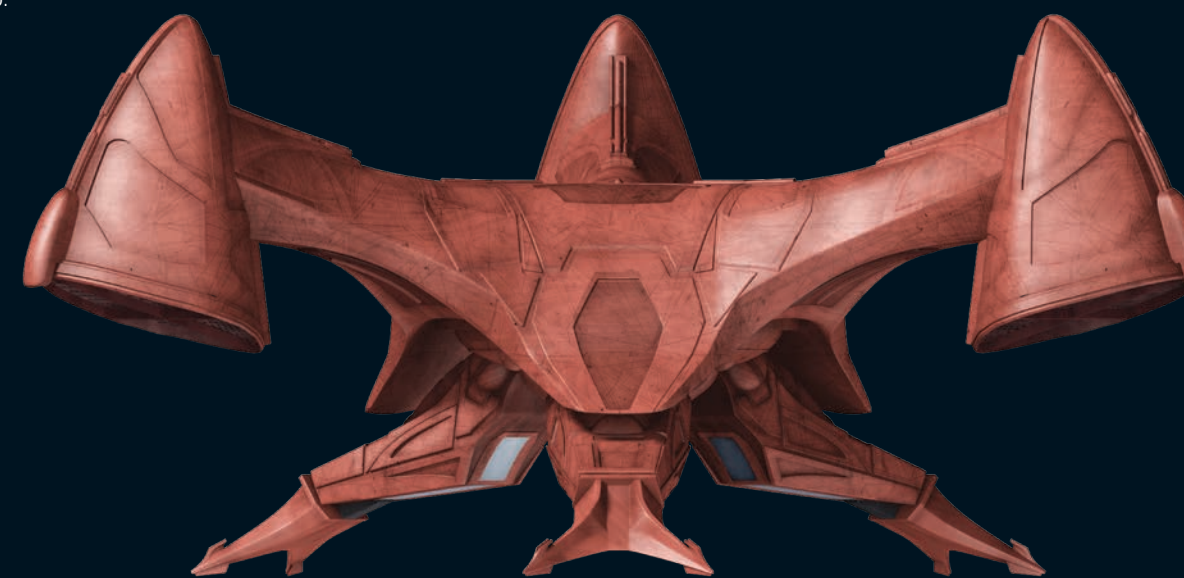
VENTRAL VIEW
(FLIGHT MODE)

◀ In flight mode, the landing gear was tucked up into the body of the ship, with the landing feet curling around the engines.

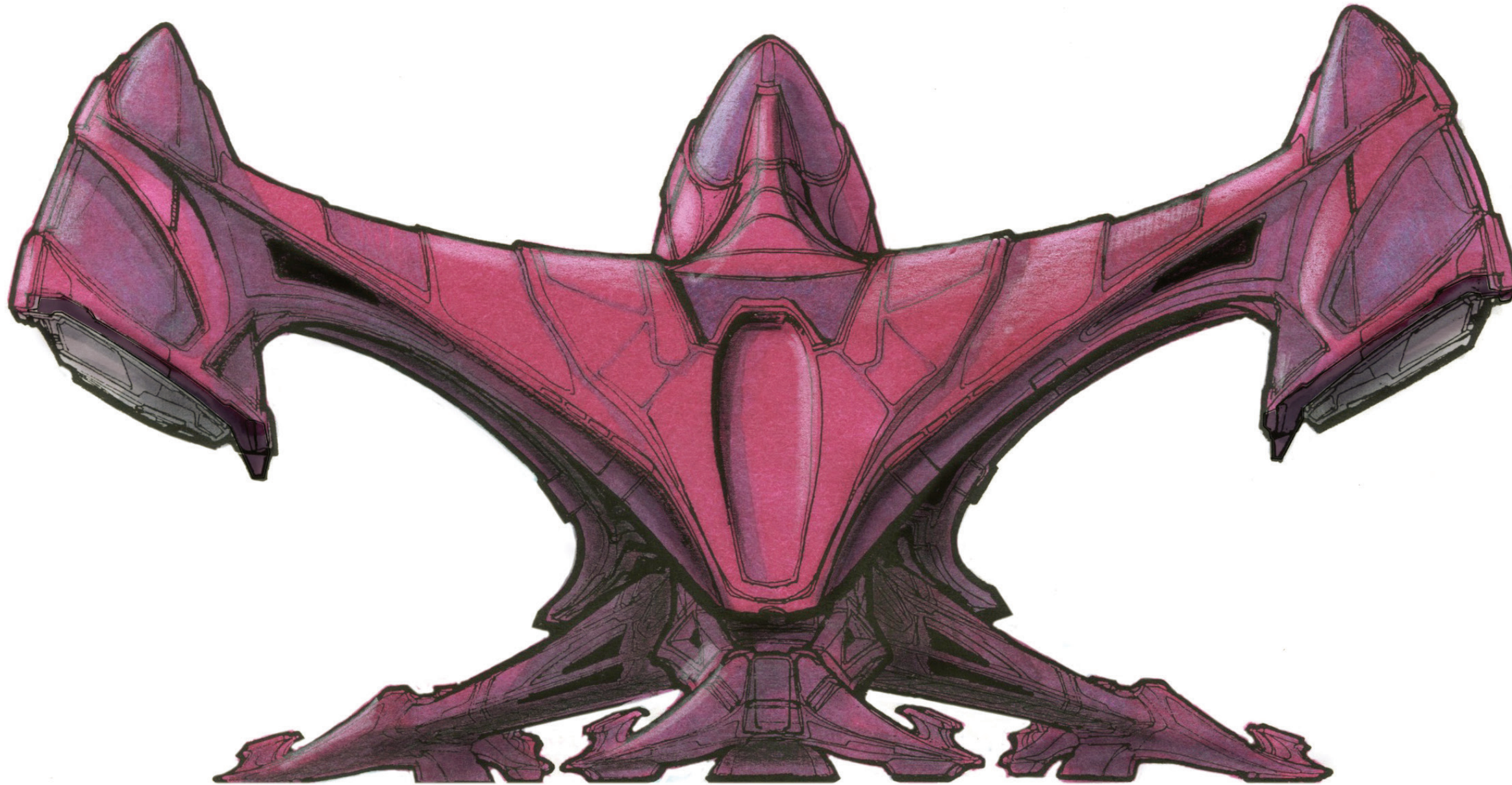


SIDE VIEW
(FLIGHT MODE)

► In Earth's 21st century, the Vulcans hadn't developed transporter technology, so their ships were designed to enter a planet's atmosphere and land on the surface. When the T'Plana-Hath landed it deployed three landing legs that supported the body of the ship.



SIDE VIEW
(LANDING GEAR DEPLOYED)



DESIGNING THE VULCAN LANDER

The Vulcans arrival on Earth is a hugely important moment and called for a new and memorable ship.

Remarkably, in 1996 we'd barely seen any Vulcan ships. There had been an unseen Vulcan ship, the *U.S.S. Intrepid*, in the episode 'The Immunity Syndrome,' the shuttle Spock arrives on in *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*,

and three tiny ships, that were so small you could barely see them in 'Unification,' so when John Eaves was asked to design the Vulcan ship that arrives at the end of *FIRST CONTACT*, he had nothing to go on. As he remembers, the script

▲ The Vulcan Lander arrives at the end of *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*, ushering in a new era of peace and prosperity.

wasn't much help either. "It was a real vague description. All the script said was 'Vulcan ship.' That's it. There weren't any established designs for Vulcan ships, so they said, 'Make it up and we'll see what happens.'"

Eaves had very little time to think about the design. The producers wanted to see concepts almost at once, and he was in the midst of designing countless other pieces for the movie. "I drew up the initial sketch very quickly. I'd say maybe an hour's work went into it. I can't even remember what the inspiration was. I think I'd seen a chandelier that I thought was kind of cool."

He does remember that he wanted to give the Vulcan ship a distinctive look that would contrast with Cochrane's ship, the *Phoenix*, which already had the elements that would grow into the familiar

► When Eaves started work, the only Vulcan ship we'd seen was the shuttle that brought Spock to the Enterprise in *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*, designed by Andy Probert, but as a shuttle it was of limited use to Eaves.

► The only other Vulcan ships were the transports that were destroyed in 'Unification,' but these had barely been visible and were designed to land on the surface.

Starfleet design aesthetic. "Everything Federation at that point had a very symmetrical design," he explains, "so I thought maybe I'd make the Vulcan ship asymmetrical and work in threes instead of twos. That was something that would make it look a little bit different without making a big thing of it."

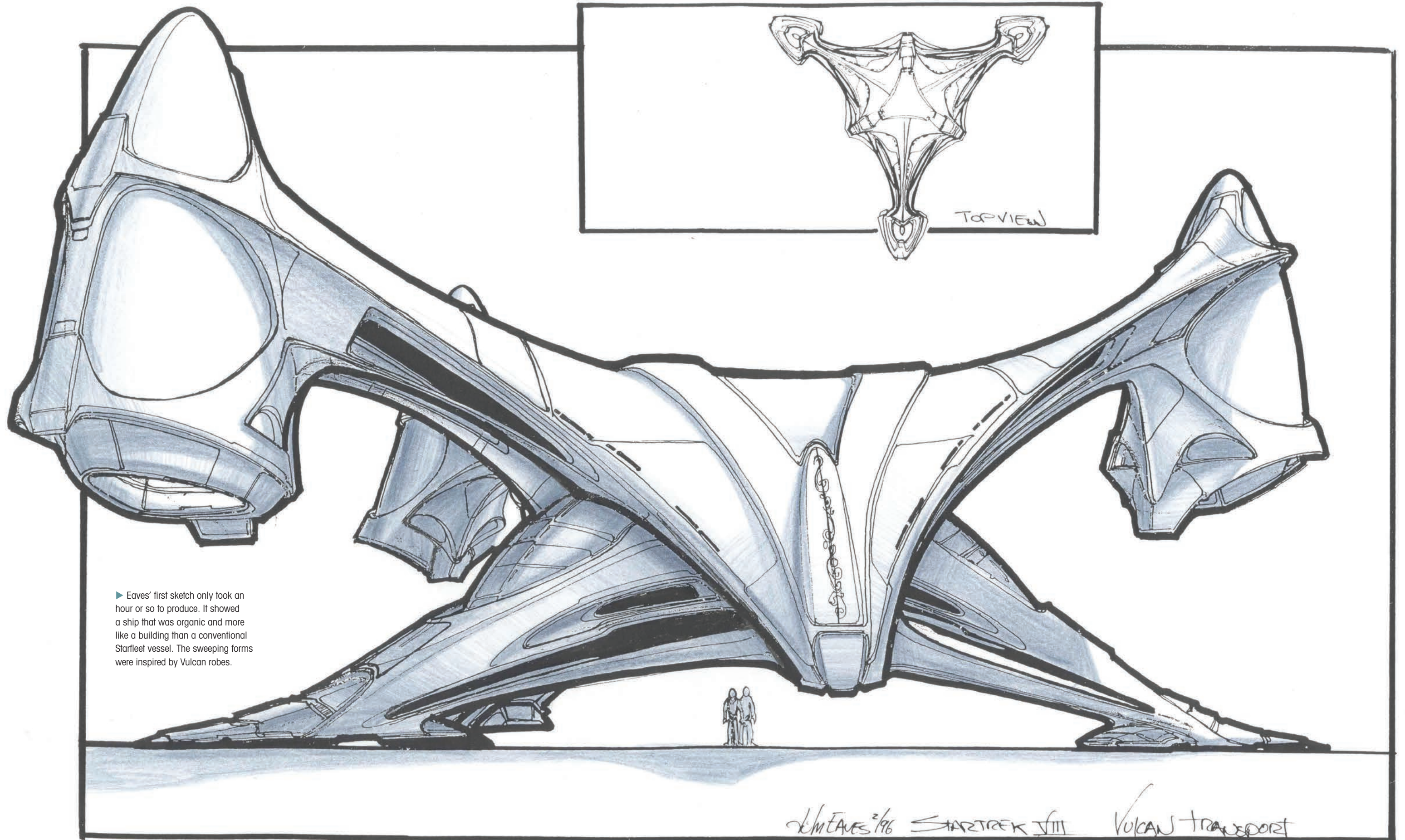
He also wanted to suggest the sophistication of the Vulcan people. "I thought that the Vulcans' approach to design would be more architectural and artistic as opposed to purely functional, so I started thinking that their ship should be more like a work of art rather than something that looked as if it was built by an engineer."

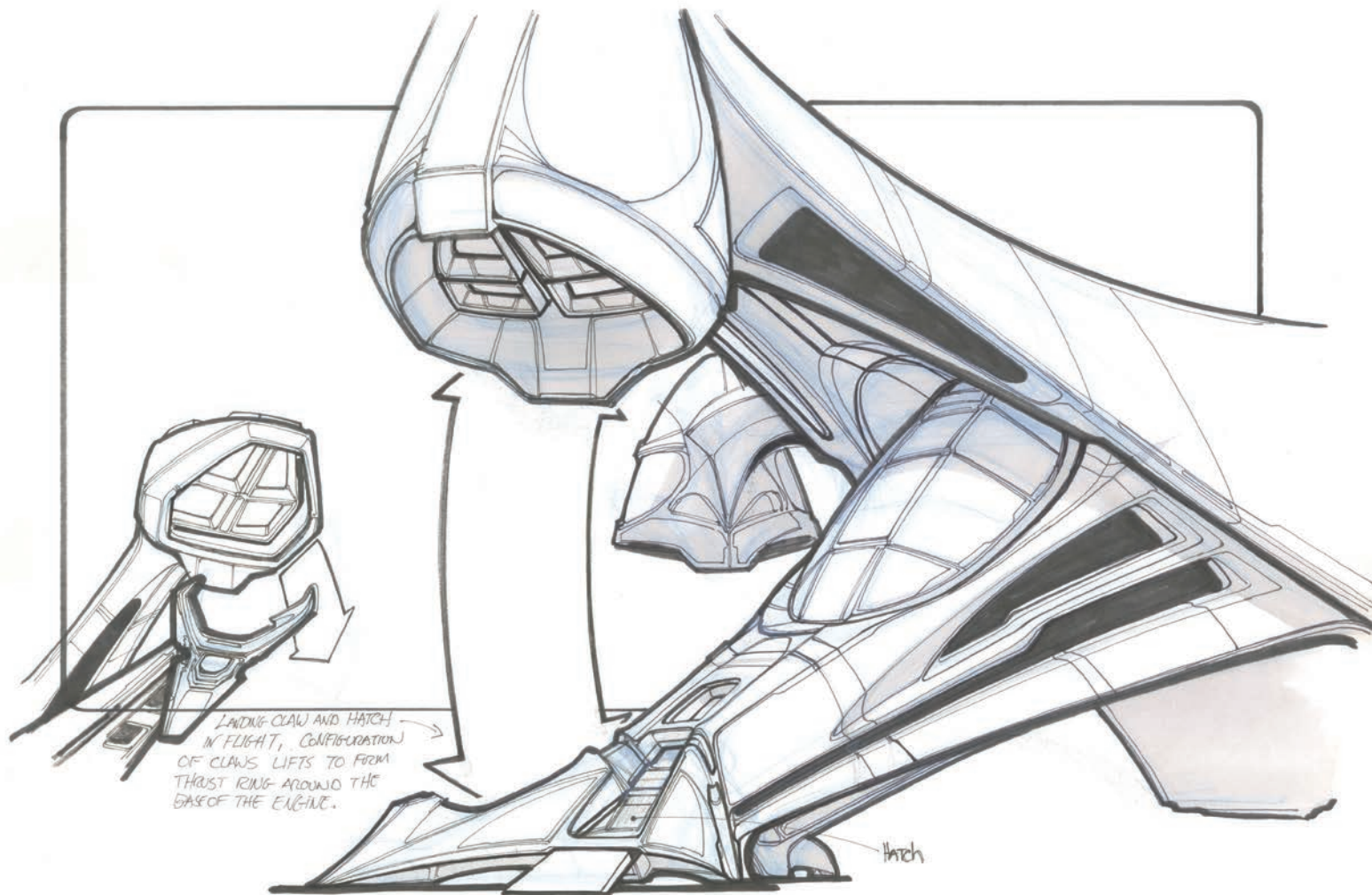
VULCAN AESTHETIC

Although there were no ships to give Eaves a direction, there were other elements that had helped to establish a Vulcan design ethic. "I drew some inspiration from the Vulcan outfits because they were very sleek and cool. I wanted to make the design for the ship flow to reflect their robes. It was meant to look kind of proud. Vulcans always have that sort of confident stature."

In the back of his mind, Eaves had another vehicle from a movie he'd just worked on as a modeler. "I had been on 'Terminator 2' shortly before and there's a little bit of a nod in the design toward the Hunter Killers. If you looked at them from below, they seemed very proud."







▲ Eaves designed the landing gear so that the three legs would swing down, and one of them would contain the hatch the Vulcans came out of. When the legs were in the flight position, the feet would form thrust guards for the engines.

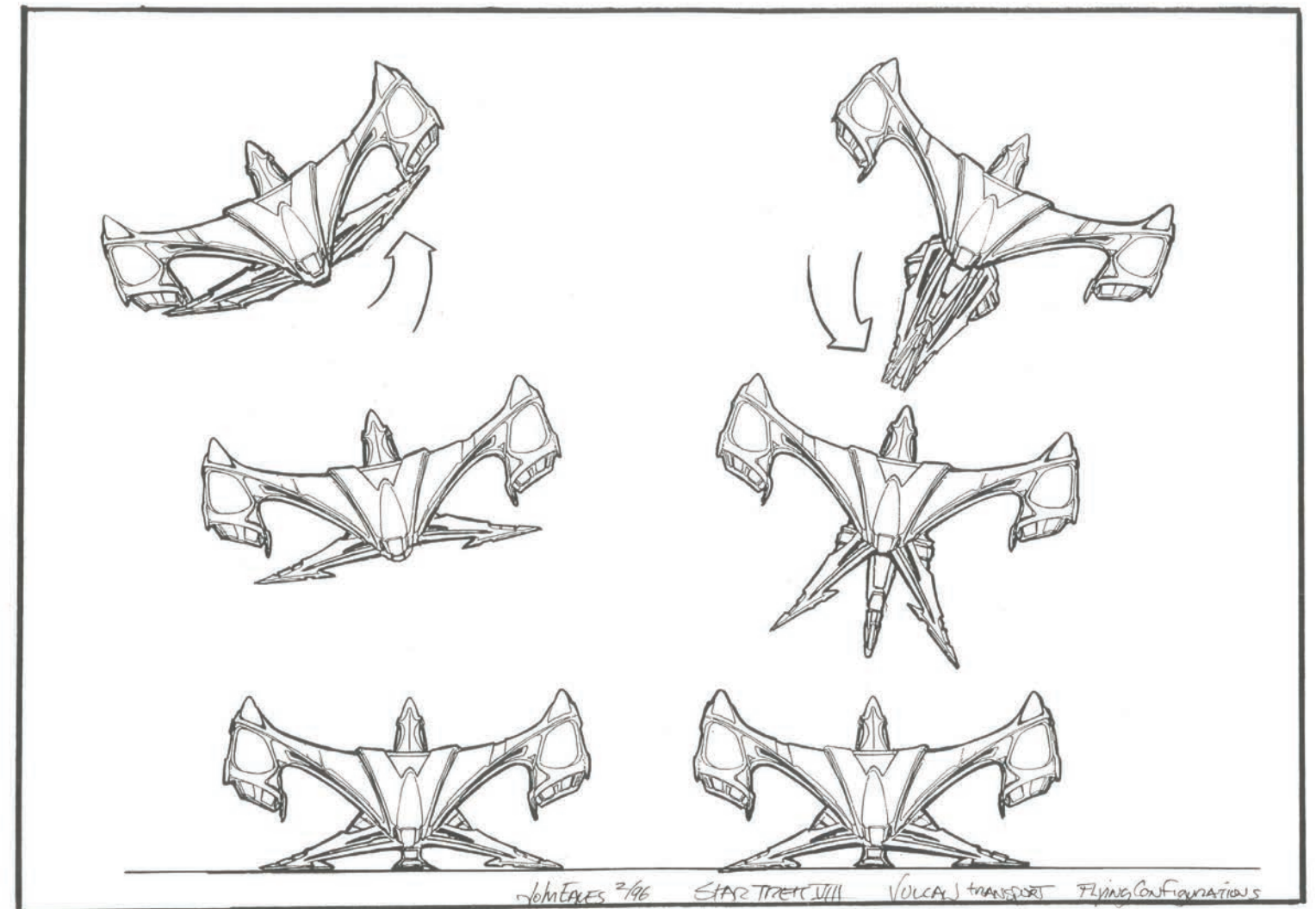
Eaves combined these elements to come up with a ship that he describes as looking like a three-lobed starfish. It was a distinctly organic design with three sweeping arms. He added some Vulcan writing on the front and presented the sketch to his boss, production designer Herman Zimmerman, but just as he did so, he realized that the design might be a little too unconventional for *STAR TREK*. "I remember Mike Okuda looked at it and said, 'That's not going to make it!' I said, 'Well, I don't have time draw anything else.' I gave it to Herman and he ran over with it. To our surprise it came back immediately with a big tick on it that said, 'Yes. That's great. Go for it.'" Eaves puts some of the radicalism of the design down to the fact that he was new to *STAR TREK*, having just joined the franchise.

With the basic design approved, the next priority was to work out the landing gear, which was going to be built practically and used on location so that

the Vulcans could emerge from it. "We always knew it was going to land on the surface so we would have to build part of the landing gear practically, but we didn't know how much we were going to build. We figured it would be one complete leg, but I did a drawing showing the whole architecture. I did that for my own benefit so when it came to doing other drawings, I'd have that piece worked out."

Zimmerman wanted the Vulcans' arrival to be as interesting as possible, so the art department worked on making the door they emerged from into more than a simple hatch. "We thought, 'Let's come up with a cool door,'" Eaves says, "'What if we make the outside part of the door the ramp, so it slides down and hits the ground to make the entry ramp?' Then you have two doors inside that, which open up. So, it's kind of a triple door."

Since Eaves knew that the legs folded up into the body of the ship, he had the idea that the feet

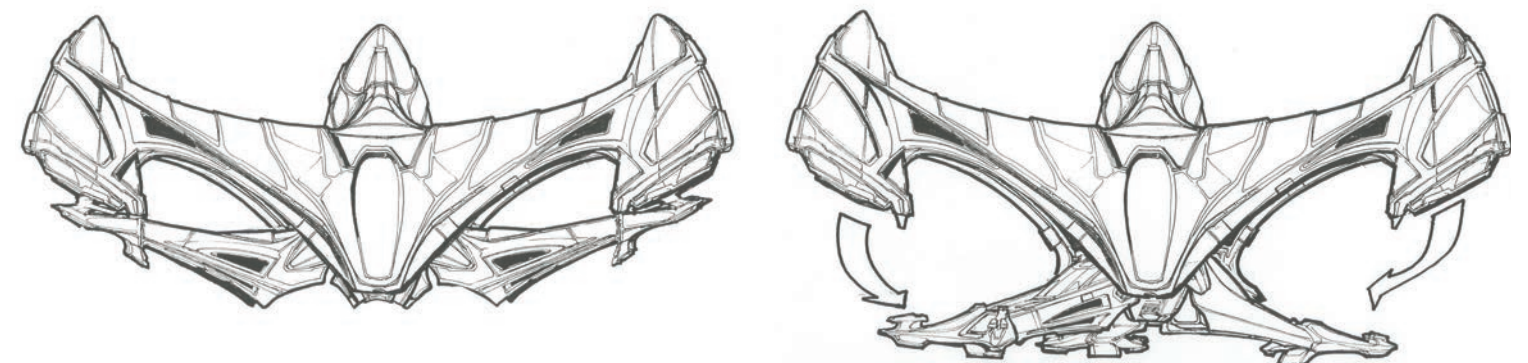


could have a function when the ship was in flight. "We had this idea that the hoop of the horseshoe foot actually cups around the bottom engine and becomes a thrust guard." He produced a sketch showing this and how the leg would drop to reveal the hatch the Vulcans would walk out of.

The next thing to do was to work out how

the ship would deploy the landing gear as it approached the surface. "As far as we knew it was going to land and take off so I had to work out what the ship was going to do as it came into land or when it took off again. I gave them two choices: one where the legs folded down during lift off and one where they folded up. Herman chose the one

▲ Eaves suggested two alternative ways the landing gear could be deployed. The version on the right was rejected because it made a shape that looked too much like a human figure.



▲ After the art department learned the ship would be made in CG, Eaves redesigned the landing gear so that it spun counter clockwise as it was deployed.

where they folded up. I remember he thought the other version looked kind of angelical and didn't care for the way the shape turned into a star."

At this stage, everybody in the art department assumed the Vulcan lander would be a physical model so the mechanics of the way the legs moved were an important consideration. However, *FIRST CONTACT* was being made at a pivotal moment in the history of visual effects and would feature both practical and digital models.

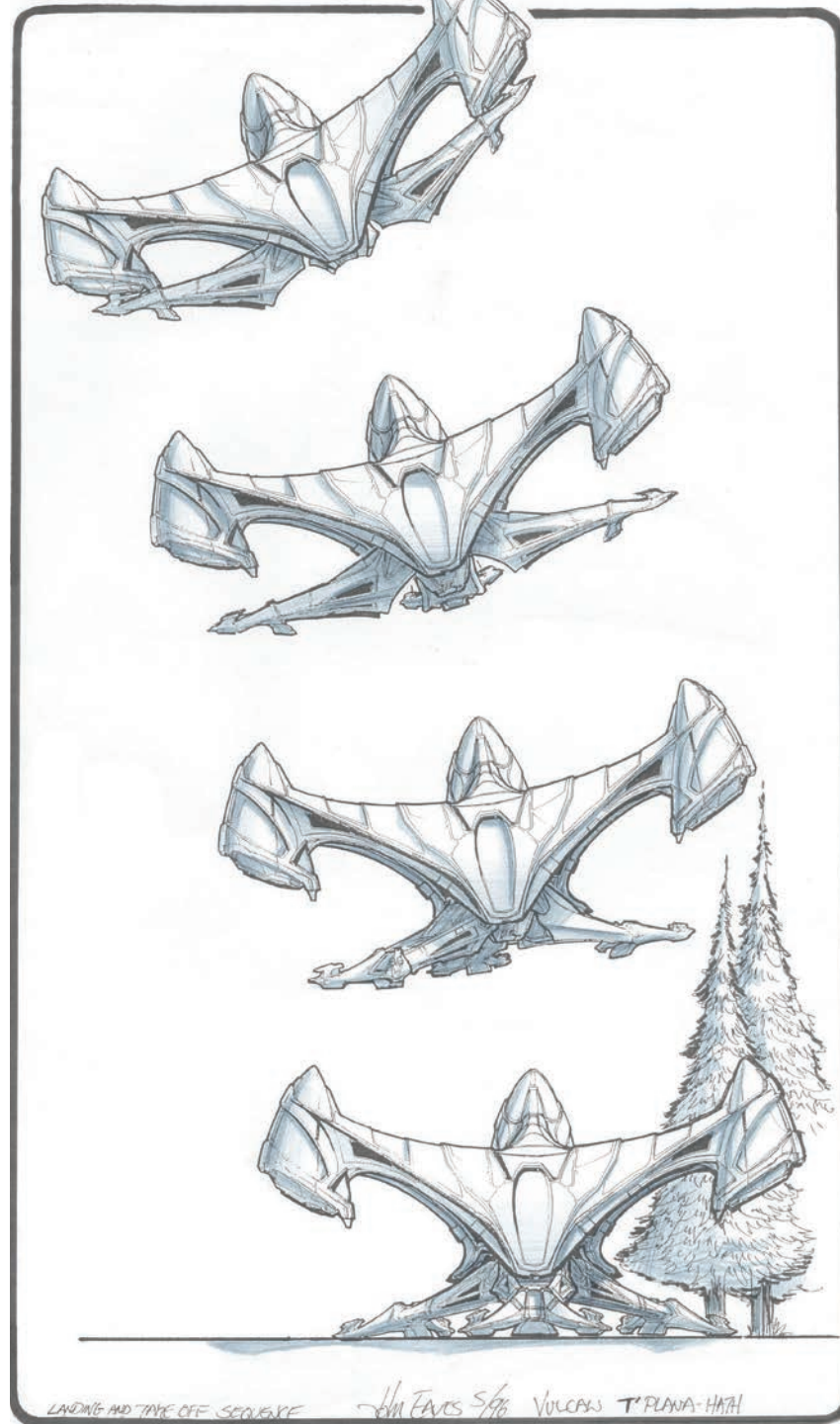
"Originally," Eaves explains, "the idea was that that the legs would just drop straight down. Then we learned it was going to be a computer model. I talked to John Knoll, who was the VFX producer at ILM. He said, 'We can do anything. We don't need to worry about hinges or mechanical apparatus to make it work. It's a computer model so we can have any kind of movement you want.'"

SENSE OF MOVEMENT

Armed with this information, the art department decided to add some additional movement to their Vulcan ship to make its approach to Earth look more interesting. "When the ship comes into land, the legs open up and rotate into a forward position," Eaves explains. "So, you had some rotation going on as the legs were lowering. You can see it in the film, but unless you know that's what's happening, I don't think you'd notice it."

Eaves produced a new set of drawings showing the landing sequence with the legs rotating counterclockwise as they drop. At this point, his background as a modeler came in handy. He freely admits that the ship he had designed was a very complicated shape that he had difficulty holding in his head. "There were too many compound curves for me to figure out what it looked like from different angles," he laughs. "It was scary. Drawing spaceships wasn't easy and I was kind of new to the drawing world, so I built a study model for myself so I could see what it looked like from different angles."

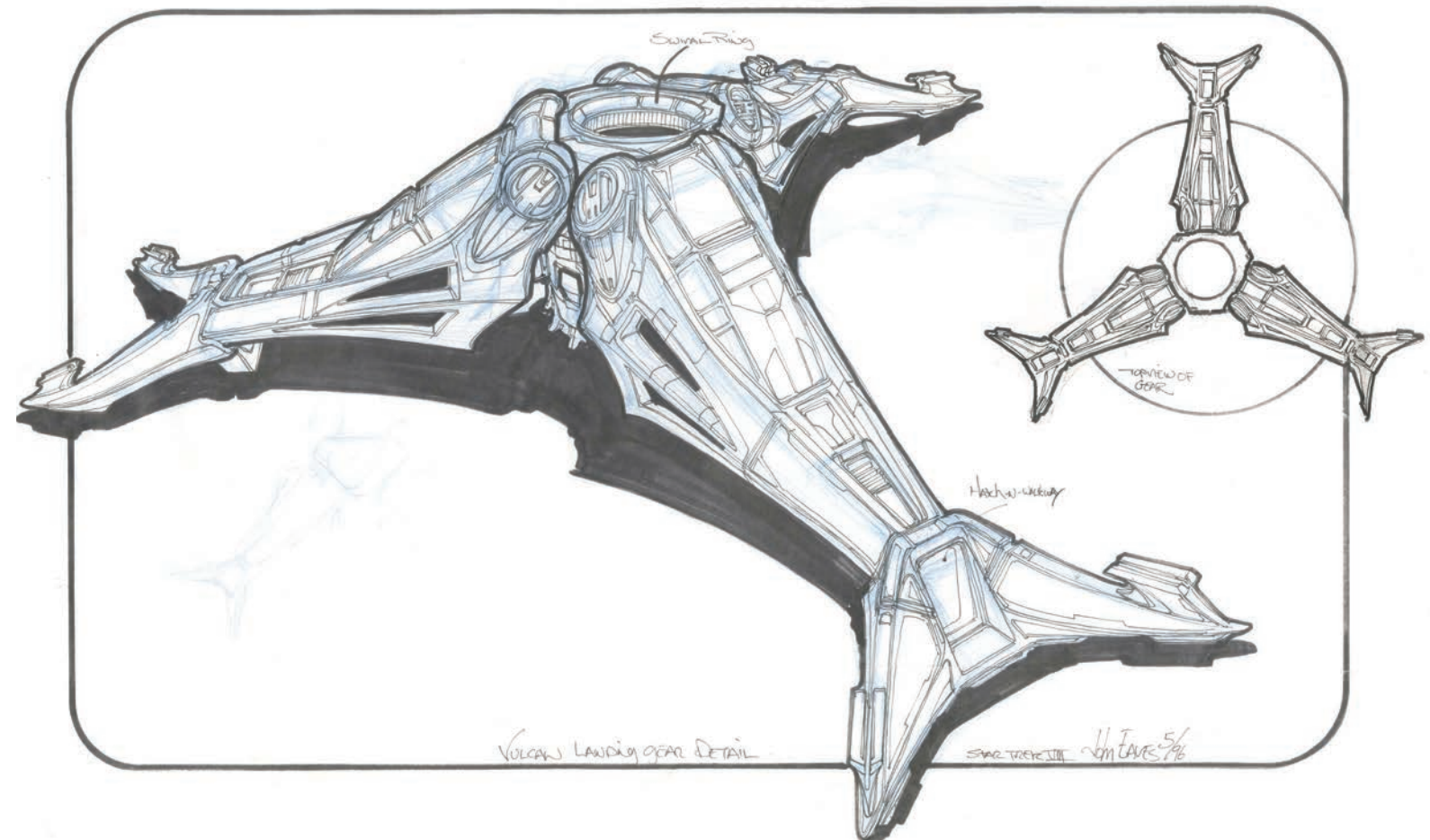
As he built the model, Eaves worked out a lot of the surface detail, some of which came from unexpected places. "My friend Anthony Fredrickson was the on-set scenic art guy. He said, 'You know a good detail for models is fake fingernails?' I said, 'You're kidding!' but I went and bought a bunch of them and used them to make little shields on the



edges of the engines. I used them all over the model. They were a fabulous little asset."

Although Eaves built the model for himself, he remembers that it turned out to be useful to other people. "Herman saw the model and said, 'Oh my God, that's perfect. Let's send it over to the VFX team so they can work from it.' The model also allowed the producers to see the ship in detail and make changes before the digital version was built. "The only real change we made," Eaves says,

▲ This drawing shows the revised landing sequence, with the landing legs turning as they are deployed until the ship touches down.



"involved the bottom of the engines. I had some inset vents and stuff. When I made the model, I made that look a little bit more mechanical. One of the producers, Peter Lauritson asked to simplify the design and to make it more of a vent because they wanted to concentrate on the light source as opposed to any detailing."

The art department were also responsible for giving the Vulcan ship its distinctive coloring, which

Eaves remembers were based on some Vulcan hand props that they were designing at the same time. "They floated between a purple and a red. Herman had a purple that he liked. I tried to do that on a drawing but I couldn't replicate it with the markers that we had. We knew the ship was going to be purple and we thought it would be cool to have some gold accents. Mike Okuda sat behind me. I asked him what do you think if we put

▲ Eaves knew that part of the ship's landing gear would be built at full-size for use on location, but he wasn't sure how much so he drew up the entire undercarriage.



◀ Eaves built a study model for himself, which was ultimately used to refine the design of the ship. The only major change involved simplifying the look of the engines.

some script on it? He said, 'Yeah' and gave me a piece of text. I thought that text would look good in gold in the center. I drew it in there, but it didn't make it on to the final model."

DIGITAL EFFECTS

Eaves worked another important detail that didn't make it into the film: he created a drawing showing the Vulcan bridge and exactly where it was located. "We didn't know if we were going to show a cockpit or not," he says. "My idea was that those big black shapes on the top were windows. I had been to a laser show at the Griffith Park observatory. Everyone sits in these kind of dentist chairs and leans back to look at the stars projected on the dome. I thought that would be a cool idea for a bridge - they all sit facing the center then the chairs rotate to look at the ceiling and that's how they pilot the ship. We never

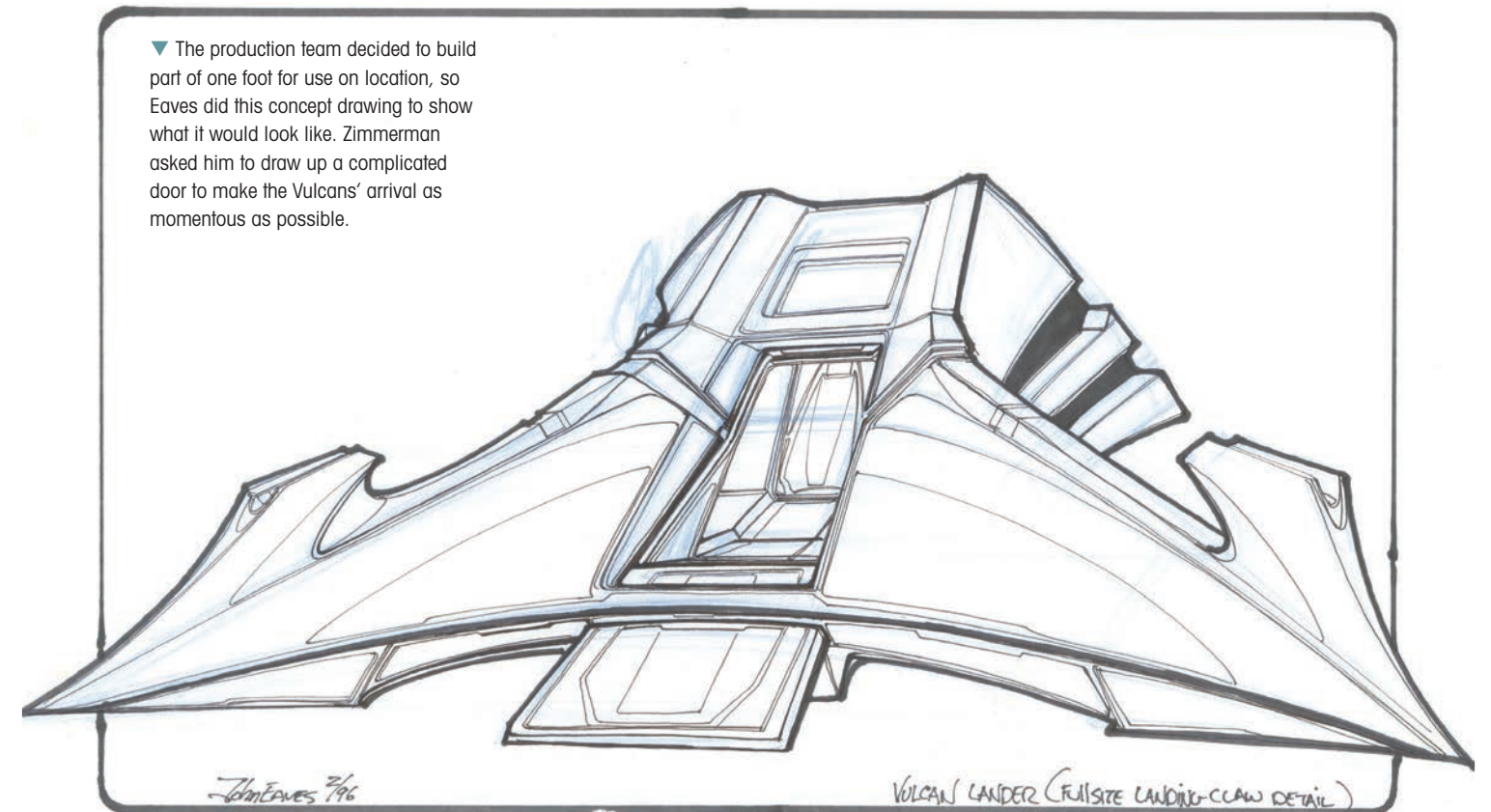
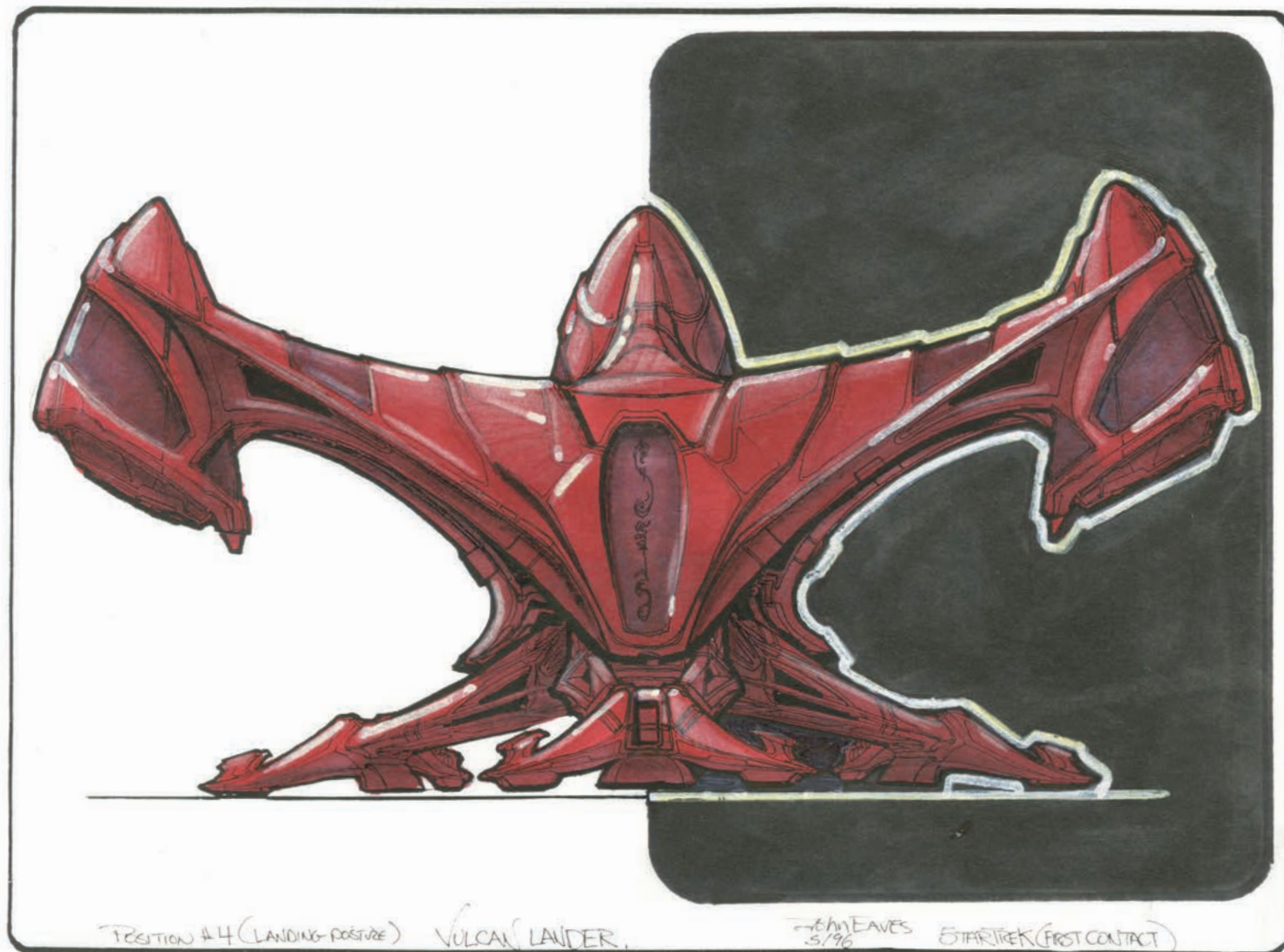
carried it that far, but I did a real, quick rough sketch for it."

Eaves' drawings and his study model were passed to VisionArt, who had created some of the Odo morph sequences for *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE*. Robert Tom painted up Eaves' model and Josh Rose photographed it to make the textures that would be wrapped around their CG model, which was built by Daniel Kramer and Carl Hooper.

VisionArt was also responsible for enhancing the environment that the Vulcan ship lands in. The production had built Cochrane's camp on location in the Cascade Mountain range, which had been burned by forest fires the previous year. VisionArt scanned the live action footage and handed them on to Matte World Digital, where they added trees and painted in a moving night sky that the Vulcan ship emerged from.

The practical landing leg that Eaves had

▼ Zimmerman wanted to give the Vulcans a distinctive purple color, but Eaves remembers that he couldn't replicate it using the markers that he had.



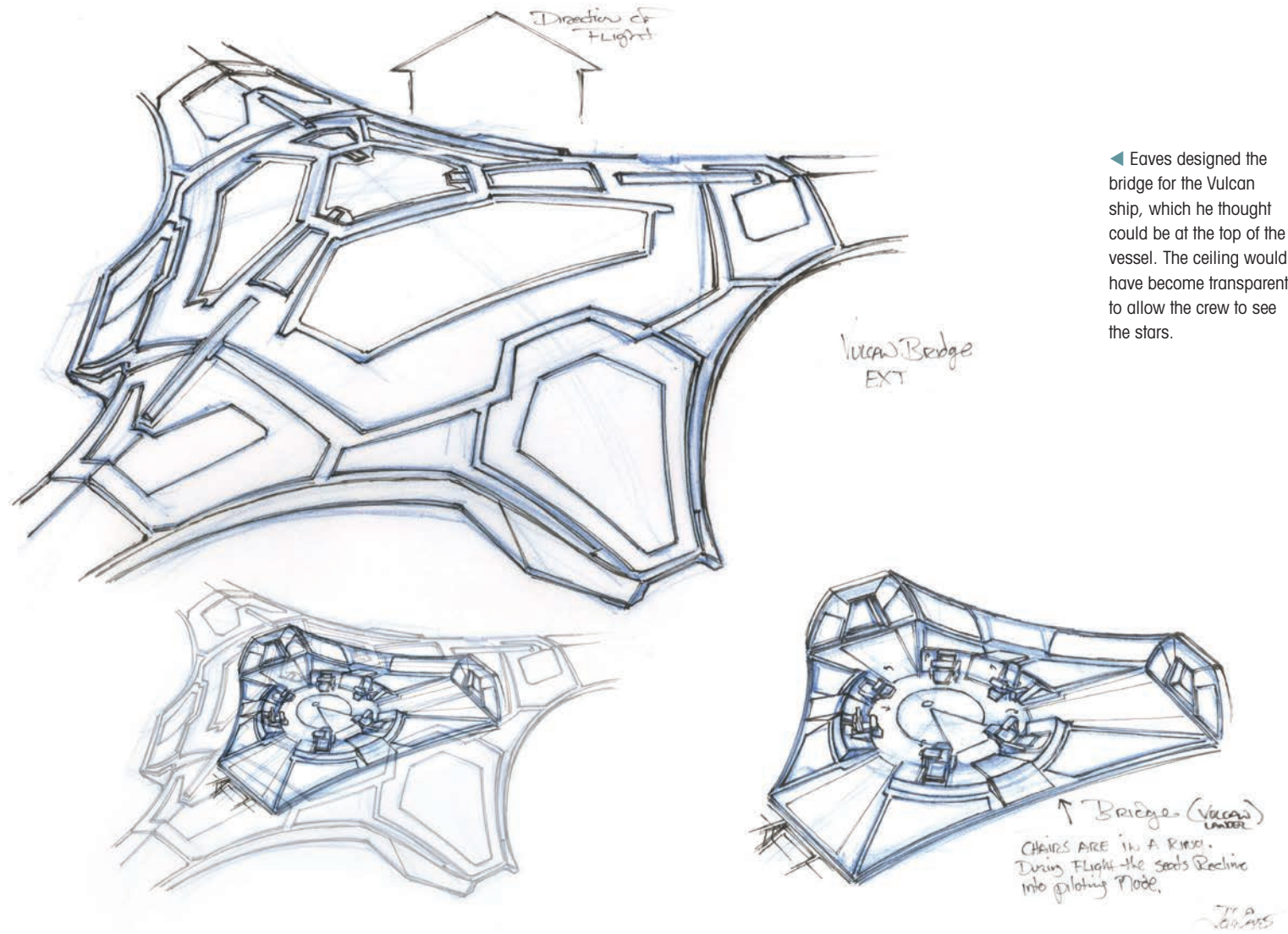
▼ The production team decided to build part of one foot for use on location, so Eaves did this concept drawing to show what it would look like. Zimmerman asked him to draw up a complicated door to make the Vulcans' arrival as momentous as possible.



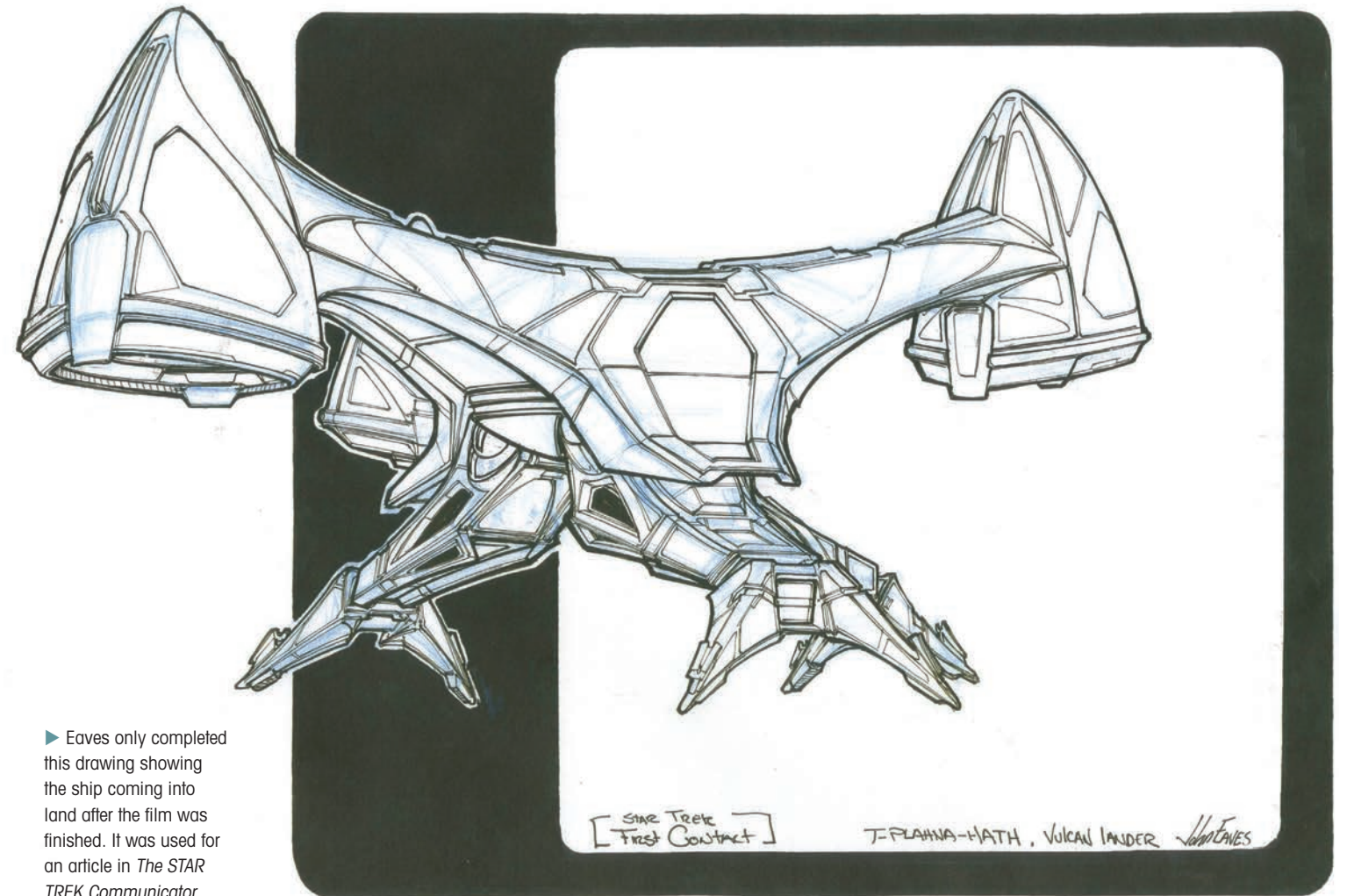
◀ The practical part of the foot was built at full-size on the lot before it was transported to the location in the Cascade Mountains.



◀ If you look closely, you'll see that on part of the foot is visible in most of the shots the Vulcans appear in.



◀ Eaves designed the bridge for the Vulcan ship, which he thought could be at the top of the vessel. The ceiling would have become transparent to allow the crew to see the stars.



▶ Eaves only completed this drawing showing the ship coming into land after the film was finished. It was used for an article in *The STAR TREK Communicator*.

▼ The digital version of the ship (left) was built by VisionArt, who also animated the door opening (center).

designed had also been taken to the location where it was filmed. It proved too complicated to make the doors open the way Eaves had envisioned, so the task was also handed over to VisionArt, who created it digitally and added the animation to the live action footage.

The final shot of the film involves the camera pulling back to show the Vulcan lander next to Cochrane's camp. Because the camera was moving, the shot involved some complicated work that was much more challenging in 1996 than it would be today. Special code was written to

replicate the camera move and Ken Evans and Susumu Yunuhiro built a miniature landscape at 1:50 scale, which was combined with a painted background, the Vulcan ship, and the live action footage.

The Vulcan lander may only have a few

seconds on screen, but it plays a major role in one of the most important moments in *STAR TREK's* history. It marks the beginning of everything. Its design would go on to inspire the look of Vulcan cities and establish an aesthetic for one of *TREK's* most enduring races.

▼ The practical scenes were extended with a matte painting that showed far more of the Vulcan ship.



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