

keen sense of perception, and a fertile memory. All of us have the basic mental capacities; designers, knowingly and unknowingly, develop them.

Several months ago I asked some theatre designers to talk to me about their imaginations. I posed some of the questions listed at the beginning of this chapter. The following comments, drawn from these conversations, provide some excellent reflections on the various ways designers describe their relationship with their imaginations.

I have learned to give my imagination time to work. After reading the script and seeing the set design and the beginnings of a costume design, I let my unconscious work when I am relaxed or asleep. Many times I will dream a design solution or awaken with an image that is the key to the lighting.

My imagination is nonverbal and metaphoric. Words ruin the connection unless they are poetic.

My imagination is pretty talkative. Mostly about the images. We (me and my imagination) have these conversations about what I'm seeing in my mind. Why red? I thought you decided no purple. Stuff like that.

I can teach my imagination by observing other people's creative work in areas such as art, poetry, and film. I find it difficult to learn intuitively from the theatre work of other people because my left brain is watching too closely. When I sit in a theatre, I'm automatically at work taking notes on shutter cuts and cue timing.

My imagination is triggered by the "What if?" question. What if I put a line right down the middle? What if one side was dark and one side was light? What if I painted a white circle on the dark side floor? What if the actors never stepped on the white circle? Images happen in my mind in response to the "What if's."

Images come when I take walks, look at art books, read poetry.

My best images are intruders. I hang out the flag early: Hey there, I'd like a little visual stuff for the third act. Then I do the routine: make up the bed, fix