

Designer and light

The simplest light limits the visible area of the scene. A limited area you can see, is due to the light and an integral part of visibility. Limiting is most commonly affected by such factors as director's control or performance choreography - the performers use of space or set design or space formed by the constraints.

Generally speaking, the role of light may vary between key light, architectural light, functional light, space structuring, artistic light or expressive light. Lighting function should always be defined based on the project needs. A professional designer has the ability to create the content by using his or her instruments and mentioned variables. Lighting designer's skills are in rhythm, control of light direction, color, intensity and contrast manipulation. Therefore, it is essential that the artistic working group realizes the possibilities in use of light.

Cooperation between the designers is a key factor when it comes to clarity. A performance as entity is unified scenography attached to the performers. Performers don't normally get inspired by the abstract worlds that designers tend to create. Therefore there is always a question for what purpose the design has been created. The quality of the performance lies on the performers due to the history of performing arts. As much as I want to uplift the designer work we must remember the stage side of the collaboration. The aesthetics of the genre selection is important and on this choice the traditional roles can be rethought.

When I begin a design process I compose a conception of a space. Vision includes the performers but my focus is more on the situation or image. When a scene is set on the stage images are materializing. This is still a background for the actual working where scenography and performing needs to be integrated. On the other words the purpose of vision needs to be redefined. Role of light changes and rhythmic thinking rises over the vision when situation turns into a living.

In equal collaboration everybody has to have a right to use their professional skills but also this includes the duty to listen to others. Director or choreographer is often the artistic team leader due to the tradition and grant structure. On this case they normally have the control over the budget and a chance to choose the partners based on that. In the ensemble work the beginning is an open situation. Despite the fact media and performing tradition undertakes the situation back to hierarchic evaluation or traditional frame. Hierarchy based on the theater tradition is a bigger issue and is dependent more on the personalities of the persons in my opinion. Designer education is no longer based on the traditional format.

In the pre-work phase the director shares an artistic vision with the team. This may have an impact on the other areas of planning. While directing choices are affecting to other areas it should be remembered that scenography is always a solution that affects to the direction. The designers or the directors aren't responsible alone for the choices.

Brainstorming is a creative state of mind without boundaries or professional frames. Following state is to concentrate the development on the own profession area. Depending on the design team's working method planning can be made simultaneously in general and private level. Ideas are then presented through discussions and sketches.

For the entity it is important that the team is working towards the predefined objective. A scheduled completion is not a sufficient goal in my opinion. In cooperation it is essential to debate with the other designers. This can hasten decisions that would be difficult, even impossible or too slow to achieve alone. The conversation will also avoid the most likely artistic conflicts which leaves more peace and time for actual working.

Artists are personalities and some realize the entities better than others. A skilled performer may observe that communicating with designers can help on their own work. The performer's perception of space may affect to the design details and perfecting the design.

Costumes and set elements are pointing to concrete compared to the abstraction of light. With a costume it is possible to take a person to the 1800s. Expressing the same with light is necessarily abstract. Color codes is the only way to visualize this kind of concreteness even remotely. Blue is night and so on. Dyed fabrics have brought more surprises in combination with the colored light than other materials in my experience. The other interesting materials in costumes I have worked with are paper, metal and plastic. In fabric centered theater costumes it is actually refreshing, if the materials change. Then again the use of alternative materials requires more testing and development in practice. Both action and lighting wise. If I get to choose I prefer light-sensitive materials. For example paper which may emit light to shine through.

Space, rhythm, set and visualization is always a combination of things. Costumes or set don't change a color by itself. With spot-lighting it is possible to highlight the details of staging or point out persons. Direction of the light can affect to the shadows with control or creating a mess. Color lights can highlight specific issues, such as blaze red dress with a red light. With aimless use of light one can "destroy" other's work.