

# John Hurt Quotes

*Thinking, Directors, People, Film, Men, Acting, Play, School, Imagination, Mind,  
Long, Interesting, Real, Optimistic, Elephants, Trying, Believe, Character, Light,  
Order*

I put everything I can into the mulberry of my mind and hope that it is going to ferment and make a decent wine. How that process happens, I'm sorry to tell you I can't describe.

~John Hurt

If you listen, you learn; if you talk, you don't.

~John Hurt

As Beckett said, it's not enough to die, one has to be forgotten as well.

~John Hurt

Each day, as you get older, there is a new perspective on life. It's a progression of some sort.

~John Hurt

Society is constantly recalibrating, redefining what it considers to be moral and immoral.

~John Hurt

Life is full of ironies and paradoxes.

~John Hurt

I never had any ambition to be a star, or whatever it is called, and I'm still embarrassed at the word.

~John Hurt

Pretending to be other people is my game and that to me is the essence of the whole business of acting.

~John Hurt

The only concession you can make is to what you believe is right.

~John Hurt

Nudes are the greatest to paint. Everything you can find in a landscape

or a still life or anything else is there: darkness and light, character dimension, texture. I painted heads too, of course.

~John Hurt

Obviously, the arrogance of my own nature in regards to other people's work would suggest that I think I'm talented.

~John Hurt

I think it's interesting to see how things come into and go out of fashion.

~John Hurt

When you're really working well with a director then you can be as outrageous as you like and so can he. And there's no worry about it.

~John Hurt

Also the wonderful thing about film, you can see light at the end of the tunnel. You did realize that it is going to come to an end at some stage.

~John Hurt

I am really the victim of other people's imagination.

~John Hurt

I think, you have to forget about intellect, to a degree. Intuition is very important when you're working with a lens, I believe, for what the lens is doing, too.

~John Hurt

Acting is an imaginative leap, really. And imaginations prosper in different circumstances. And it's being able - I can't tell you how one does, but one tries to read those circumstances correctly.

~John Hurt

You collect as much information as you can and then you put it into the

mulberry of your mind and hope that you come up with a decent wine. Sometimes you do; sometimes you don't.

~John Hurt

It's a great relief to feel that you're working with someone rather than for someone. You don't feel that you're being tested, as it were.

~John Hurt

Anything which retains interest is optimistic. When the characters become disinterested, it's pessimistic. Does that make sense?

~John Hurt

I've never known what I've wanted to do. I've never planned anything in my life.

~John Hurt

I remember once when I told Lindsay Anderson at a party that acting was just a sophisticated way of playing cowboys and Indians he almost had a fit.

~John Hurt

It would be difficult to have any unfulfilled ambitions because I don't have any ambitions. I've never been that kind of performer.

~John Hurt

The clergy is in the same business as actors, just a different department.

~John Hurt

I never quite understand why we watch the news. There doesn't really seem much point watching somebody tell you what the news is when you could quite easily listen to it on the radio...

~John Hurt

People say you never retire in this [film] business and I say, well, not until they retire you.

~John Hurt

If I'm in theatre, cinema doesn't even cross my mind. Similarly when I'm making a film, theatre doesn't cross my mind.

~John Hurt

My parents felt that acting was far too insecure. Don't ask me what made them think that painting would be more secure.

~John Hurt

I don't like no confusion.

~John Hurt

If you do an interview in 1960, something it's bound to change by the year 2000. And if it doesn't, then there's something drastically wrong.

~John Hurt

A very, very impressive director, Tomas Alfredson. It's only his second film [ 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy'], but he's a real find.

~John Hurt

I'm really the addition of other peoples' imagination, quite honestly. It's what they see me as, and I'm very happy to comply. I find things are more varied that way.

~John Hurt

I am not an enormous believer in research being the be-all and end-all. I get suspicious when I read about actors spending six months in a clinic, say, in order to play someone who is sick.

~John Hurt

I first decided that I wanted to act when I was 9. And I was at a very

bizarre prep school at the time, to say high Anglo-Catholic would be a real English understatement.

~John Hurt

I think it would be very difficult to play somebody if they didn't think they had any virtues or redeeming characteristics.

~John Hurt

My mother's father drank and her mother was an unhappy, neurotic woman, and I think she has lived all her life afraid of anyone who drinks for fear something like that might happen to her.

~John Hurt

The first film is everything you want to say and how you want to say it. Lots of directors will do that and do it really well, but the second film is not so easy.

~John Hurt

I think [Lars Von Trier] is a fantastic filmmaker. No question. You've got to be ready for him. He's sharp and he's got a sharp tongue and I love that. He doesn't mind it back.

~John Hurt

The big problem with literature is people tend to take the dialogue from the book, forgetting that everything that surrounds it is literate, therefore not knowing quite how to put that on screen.

~John Hurt

I have lots of favourite memories but I can't say that I have a favourite film.

~John Hurt

Very broadly speaking, you can put directors into two areas: One for whom you work, and the other with whom you work. And I prefer the

latter, for obvious reasons.

~John Hurt

I think you can get better in mathematics on a school level, but when you're talking about being a mathematician, I think that's definitely a gift of genes or whatever.

~John Hurt

It's quite a dangerous career move to go wilfully on making films that may not find a distributor.

~John Hurt

Some directors involve waiting, and if you want to work with that particular director you're going to have to hang around.

~John Hurt

It's an immensely competitive business, and I can tell you the older you get, the parts are fewer, and the people who are proven performers are greater.

~John Hurt

We shot ['Sailcloth'] five days down in Cornwall, and you couldn't have asked for a more beautiful place. It was a couple of tough days at sea, but when I say tough it was still enjoyable.

~John Hurt

'The Elephant Man' was hugely enjoyable to do. I thought the one stage, when Chris Tucker did the first makeup and it took 12 hours, I thought they'd actually found a way for me not to enjoy filming.

~John Hurt

The great joke is that a realist is an optimistic pessimist. That's very witty. Whether it's truthful or not, that I don't know.

~John Hurt

I do what interests me when I'm invited and do it as well as I know how and try to get better. That's all.

~John Hurt

The truth is rarely true and never simple.

~John Hurt

Once you've started to dig a hole, you can't get out of it.

~John Hurt

I was keen on sports-that's how my nose got this way. It's not actually broken; the nose was just pushed up a little bit and moved over. It's an aquiline nose, quite Irish.

~John Hurt

My springboard is always the script. Even if the script is taken from a novel, I often haven't read the novel...

~John Hurt

We're all far too afraid of being so arrogant to say "Either you can or you can't."

~John Hurt

I stopped asking a long time ago, "why would you want me to play that?" I'm an actor. That's what I do.

~John Hurt

From John Huston to Fred Zinnemann and Richard Fleischer and all those great American directors.

~John Hurt

I love working with Lars [von Trier]! I've worked with him three times. I did the narration of Dogville and Manderlay.

~John Hurt



One wonders sometimes, looking at the world, how it's dealing with itself. There are days when you wake up and you feel very optimistic and there are days when you feel pessimistic.

~John Hurt

If I hadn't been a part of [Harry Potter] I would have been deeply upset.

~John Hurt

Bong Joon-ho is enormously sensitive to performance. He knows what he needs to see and that's all he needs to shoot. He is so daring. We don't do that in the west. We shoot everything.

~John Hurt

In the States it's more and more difficult to get an independent film off the ground, and you certainly won't get the opportunity to play something like that in a studio movie.

~John Hurt

I'm very director oriented.

~John Hurt

Lotte Lenya was all emotion. She wasn't anything but emotion. She was not an intellectual.

~John Hurt

It's amazing how quickly human beings adapt, isn't it? It was such a great crew, and David [Lynch] was wonderful to work with [on 'The Elephant Man']. It was a very thrilling time, actually.

~John Hurt

I left drama school and went straight into a 10-week film for which I was paid £75 I might say, which for 1962 was one heck of a lot of money.

~John Hurt

I turn up in Los Angeles every now and then, so I can get some big money films in order to finance my smaller money films.

~John Hurt

I wanted to work with those boys (producers Andy and Larry Wachowski) because they're so eccentric and peculiar. Larry, of course, is halfway towards being a woman now. It's a crazy world.

~John Hurt

I certainly don't see myself as Caligula.

~John Hurt

With [Fred] Zinnemann I did A Man For All Seasons. He was my screen godfather. I'm happy to say he was.

~John Hurt

[Alfred] Hitchcock was very interested in the image on the screen. As is any good cinema director. That is the language they speak. It is not literature, it is images on screen.

~John Hurt

I find it difficult to say, like "which child do you prefer the most", and it's a sort of surface choice. I've never known how to quite answer that one adequately.

~John Hurt

There may be arrangements to have me retired but I don't know. Things happen that I enjoy doing, and as long as I enjoy doing them I'll go about doing them, I guess.

~John Hurt

I felt, you know, body and soul, as it were. But, of course, I mean, I - at that age, I didn't think in terms of being professional. I didn't know anything about it. That happened later.

~John Hurt

We all have our limitations.

~John Hurt

If you put on an Oscar Wilde [play], it will interest those who are interested in Oscar Wilde. But it won't interest anybody else, because they won't get that wit.

~John Hurt

On the other hand, you get other films that are spread over a much longer period of time and it's entirely exhausting. But there's always light at the end of the tunnel with a film.

~John Hurt

This whole theory of alienation that intellectuals have been passing on, really is just to stop a lot of ham acting. If you fill something with a proper emotion, it didn't worry him at all.

~John Hurt

I'd say the film to avoid is a director's second film, particularly if his first film was a big success. The second film is where you've really needed to have learned something.

~John Hurt

I've done lots of films with first directors, so it's not unusual for me.

~John Hurt

I thought ['Sailcloth'] was a terrific script. Einar Arnarson, the director, is bound to be a director we'll hear from, and the whole thing was really enjoyable.

~John Hurt

The image onscreen takes you forward, it's the driving force of the

piece and it's also the information that you're given.

~John Hurt

I've got plenty of train memories. I was sent to school when I was eight years old in 1948 in Kent. So I had to go through London in 1948, just after the war. Many ,many strange experiences.

~John Hurt

My fathers a clergyman, and he was in the mission field for a certain amount of time in British Honduras, which is now Belize.

~John Hurt

There are certain people that when they ask you to do a film, you just say, "Where and when?"

~John Hurt

The British tradition, basically, is to go to the character. And the Hollywood tradition, shall we say, is basically to take the character to the performer.

~John Hurt

People are not what they seem to be according to their looks.

~John Hurt

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