



Mark Ravenhill's Challenge at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival

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Mark Ravenhill challenged performing artists in [a provocative speech](#) at the opening of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. While he references current British economics & politics, the details are not all that different from realities for artists in the United States or elsewhere. Read [the full text](#) & see what you think.

Here's are a few excerpts from [the full text](#), published in *The Guardian*:

"...I think the message in the last couple of decades has been very mixed, in many ways downright confusing: we are a place that offers luxury, go-on-spoil-yourself evenings where in new buildings paid for by a national lottery (a voluntary regressive tax) you can mingle with our wealthy donors and sponsors from the corporate sector and treat yourself to that extra glass of champagne but we are also a place that cares deeply about social justice and exclusion as the wonderful work of our outreach and education teams show. So we're the best friends of the super-rich and the most disadvantaged at the same time? That's a confusing message and the public has been smelling a rat. If the arts are for something, who are they for? And what are they doing for them? Might an artist have to choose what side she is on? In a society which has reached such a wide gap between the rich and the poor as ours ? as wide a gap as almost a century ago ? then the artist can't I suggest be for everyone and if we don't do something pretty brave then we will be by default for the super-rich."

And because Ravenhill is a playwright, here's a pointed bit of a dialogue:

*"What were you doing, Mummy, in the decade before the world hit the biggest economic crisis in almost a century?
Well, darling, I was learning not to talk and think like a grungy, angry artist but think and act more like...cultural
commissars and their friends in the banking sector.*

*Mummy, would they be the ones who got us in to the whole mess that I'm going to be dealing with for my whole life
time?*

Well, now you put it like that darling, yes I suppose they rather were.

And you spent a decade trying to be more like them, Mummy?

Well yes I rather did.

And wasn't that a rather stupid thing to do?

*Well, not at the time, darling, no; because you see I thought it would get me some funding and then I could build a
career path for myself in the creative industries.*

And did that work out for you Mummy?

Shut up and go a nick a can of beans for your tea."

Read the [full text](#) in The Guardian:

http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2013/aug/03/mark-ravenhill-edinburgh-festival-speech-full-text?CMP=tw_t_gu