

ACTING

In London acting is not a capricious, freakish, or Bohemian way of life. It is an ancient and honourable profession that is accepted by the public as a normal part of the life of London.

– **Brooks Atkinson**

Broadway, 1970

Acting is a bum's life.

Quitting acting – *that* is a sign of maturity.

– **Marlon Brando**

When you act in the West End you pick up your coffee cup in exactly the same way for nine months. – **Richard Briers** *The Times*, 6 May 1992

I am acquainted with no immaterial sensuality so delightful as good acting.

– **Lord Byron** letter to

Thomas Moore, 1814

All acting is a question of control, the control of the actor of himself, and through himself of the audience.

– **Noël Coward** quoted in *Great Acting* (ed. H. Burton), 1967

Acting is the shy person's revenge on the world.

– **Sinead Cusack** *Daily Mail*, 16 February 1991

I think I love and reverence all arts equally, only putting my own just above the others . . . To me it seems as if when God conceived the world, that was Poetry; He formed it and that was Sculpture; He coloured it, and that was Painting; He peopled it with living beings, and that was the grand, divine, eternal Drama.
– **Charlotte Cushman**

An actor with no insecurities would be lost. – **Judi Dench** *Daily Mail*, 21 January 1992

It is easier to get an actor to be a cowboy than to get a cowboy to be an actor.
– **John Ford** attrib.

Of all the arts I think acting must be the least concrete, the most solitary. – **John Gielgud** *Early Stages*, 1938

When you finally learn how to do it you're too old for the good parts. – **Ruth Gordon** quoted in Leonard Lyons'

column, 21 June 1972, when she was 76

The terrible thing about acting in the theatre is that you have to do it at night.

– Katherine Hepburn *New York Times*, 16 January 1976

Acting isn't really a very high class way to make a living, is it? – Katherine Hepburn

Life's what's important. Walking, houses, family, birth and pain and joy. Acting's just waiting for the custard pie. That's all.

– Katherine Hepburn

Acting is painting, not photography. – Derek Jacobi *Sunday Times*, 24 May 1992

It is a most unholy trade. – Henry James

Acting more than any other art is a demonstration of rebellion against the mundanity of everyday existence.

– Micheal MacLiammoir

I think the whole business of being an actor and being part

of entertainment, whether it be TV shows or stage shows or movies, is noble. You learn about everything, and you're involved in something. You know what it is – it's acting. Look at the doctors and the lawyers. They think they're real people.

– Walter Matthau, 1979; quoted in J. Green, *A Dictionary of Contemporary Quotations*, 1982

Acting is therefore the lowest of all the arts, if it is an art at all. – George Moore *Mummer Worship*

The whole matter of acting is enveloped with written and oral bosh. – George Jean Nathan *Encyclopaedia of the Theatre*, 1940

Acting should be seen and not written about. – Ibid.

If somebody asked me to put in a sentence what acting was, I should say that acting was the art of persuasion.

– Laurence Olivier quoted in K. Tynan, *Curtains*, 1961

It does seem sometimes

that acting it hardly the
occupation of an adult.

– **Laurence Olivier**, 1970

Acting – the ability to keep
an audience from coughing.

– **Ralph Richardson**

Observer, 1947

Acting is like roller skating
– once you know how to do
it, it is neither stimulating
nor exciting. – **George**

Sanders quoted in J. Green, *A
Dictionary of Contemporary
Quotations*, 1982

Highly paid casual labour of
the most casual sort.

– **George Bernard Shaw**

Shouting in the evening.

– **Patrick Troughton**

(definition of acting)

I love acting. It is so much
more real than life.

– **Oscar Wilde** *The Picture of
Dorian Gray*, 1891

Acting is like painting
pictures on bathroom tissues.
Ten minutes later you throw
them **away** and they are gone.

– **Shelley Winters** *The*

Saturday Evening Post, 1962

ACTORS

The aim of an actor should
not be the part, but the
whole. – **Peggy Ashcroft**, 1961

A good French actor is
merely a French barrister
who has missed his vocation.

– **Arnold Bennett** *Journals
1896–1928*

An actor is a sculptor who
carves in snow.

– **Edwin Booth**

An actor is a guy who, if you
ain't talking about him, ain't
listening. – **Marlon Brando**

Observer, 1956

An actor is something less
than a man, while an actress
is something more than a
woman. – **Richard Burton**

The better the actor the more
stupid he is.

– **Truman Capote**

They are a race apart,
doomed to go through life
pretending to be someone
else. – **R. F. Delderfield**

He speaks all his words