

The Telegraph

Martin Amis admits fear of ageing and losing his talent

Martin Amis, the novelist, has voiced fears about ageing and losing his talent as he approaches 70.



In conversation: Martin Amis talks to Edmundo Paz Soldán at the Hay literary festival in Xalapa, eastern Mexico (GABRIELA BAUTISTA)

By Victoria Ward

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The influential writer said that medical science had “condemned” writers for whom, unlike painters, it was impossible to maintain their skills as they got older.

“We’re all going to die twice,” the 62-year-old told the Hay Festival in Mexico.

“We’re going to die as everyone dies, but before that our talent is going to die. There are no exceptions to this.

It's an entirely 20th century phenomenon.

“Shakespeare died at 52, Dickens at 58, Jane Austen at 41 and DH Lawrence at 44. But now you have the octogenarian novelist, and on the whole they're no b---- good.

“You can't keep it up and there are various ways you can see novelists disintegrating before your eyes as they move past 70.”

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Amis, discussing his last novel *The Pregnant Widow*, also drew parallels between beauty and ageing, stating: “You get ugly when you get old. Everything seems fine until you're about 40. Then something is definitely about to go wrong.”

He said that in your early fifties you were “suddenly visited by the past” which was like a huge palace with different rooms.

And he disclosed that he had told his sons that when they have affairs they must remember every detail as they would need “these rooms with a girl in each one” when they were old.

The writer also spoke about pornography, declaring that it seemed women had “partly accepted and come to enjoy it” which represented an “enormous social change”.