

BRUCE DUCKWORTH - GRADUATION CEREMONY SPEECH TRANSCRIPT

HONORARY FELLOWSHIP AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH GIVEN AT THE 2013 FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY GRADUATION CEREMONY

Transcript

"Well, thank you very much. I do feel truly honoured and delighted to accept this honorary fellowship, thank you very much. And the reason I think I'm so pleased to have it from Falmouth is because I've liked what you do, I really do like what you do. I like the way you teach and I like how you teach it. I like the designers that emerge from you. Well, I employ a few and some of you I know, I've spotted you, have been working at my place on placements. I like the people who come out of here, they're good all-round people. I think there's a lot of future with them.

And when I was an external examiner here a few years ago I saw the inside workings of how Falmouth actually works, and since then I've seen a few inside workings of how other colleges have worked and I have to say that it's something very special here. They're very dedicated staff and you really are passionate about what you do and it shows; you have great students that come out. I think this is a very, very special place.

I think design education at the high standard you do it is very important. We don't need more designers, we need more quality designers. It's not only for the individual, I've seen all of you come with your smiles; I've never seen so many designers feel so uncomfortable in ties. A little bit uncomfortable like I feel in this hat I have to say! But it's great for the industry as well. What we need is good, quality designers. As we've heard, the creative industry is a significant part of our economy and we need great designers to keep that tradition going. So it's good for the country as well.

You guys give people a chance to start their professional careers on the right footing. You put quality talent on the job market, and your designers come out as high quality individuals as well, so they're not just a cookie cutter, it looks like it's come from this college. There's no house style; they come out with their own personalities. But the most important thing you do is you teach the principles of design that I think are essential for a lasting career in the design industry. And that is that big ideas are the way to solve problems, that clear communication is essential. And you give them the freedom as individuals to express themselves, and that is where true originality comes from. And you also have an ethic that is to have a bit of fun while you're doing it. And believe me, when you've been working as long as I have you need to have a bit of fun every now and then.

I go all around the world working with different clients and things benefiting really from the excellent reputation that the UK has as a creative place. And as a designer I find when I sit in boardrooms with clients who are very educated people that I think differently to them. And I think when you go out into the real world and you start working you'll find you think

differently to other people as well, and I think that's a good thing. It's important and it's valuable. These guys have got academic degrees from Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, all these amazing places around the world. But they don't think creatively and they don't think laterally. And I think that's a good thing. It's important and it's valuable. Clients need creative people around them. Your ability as a designer to boil down a designer's problem into a simple visual solution makes you a good strategist. I bet you didn't know that! Your ability to visualise your thoughts and engage in visual ideas is important these days because people have shorter attention spans. You've seen everybody on the internet, you've seen them... people look at pictures and they disseminate them far quicker than they used to when they were reading books all day. And everything now being accessible globally has meant that symbols, visualisations translate better than language does, and I think really design has become the universal language that everyone can understand. Design is more important today than it's ever been.

What you're taught here will stay with you for all of your careers and I still try and do work that would satisfy the principles that I learnt when I was at college. Things I can guarantee about your career you're going to go into, I can guarantee that everything will change. Technology will change, how you design will change, things you design will change and things that you didn't even know exist now will change. But the one thing that shouldn't change is your principles and your ethics, and that's what you're learning here.

Funnily enough I was clearing out some of my college work the other day, that was interesting. It wasn't actually very good. I had a memory that it was good but I looked through it and honestly it was better in my memory than it was in reality. So I'm not going to show you because you might take that scroll thing back! But I genuinely think if I can do it you can do it. Design is a great career; it's varied and it's interesting. It can be glamorous on occasions; it can be extremely unglamorous most of the time. It can be fun and it can be serious. It can be frustrating and it can be rewarding. It can be very, very pressured and it can be quite relaxed. Sometimes it can be the most inconsequential thing you'll ever do, but sometimes it turns out to be culturally significant and it's always hard work by the way, you'll never get rid of that bit. But there's one thing that's up to you and that is to make sure that the one thing you don't do when you work is make design boring. Like this University you've got to keep learning, you've got to keep striving for the best, you've got to keep working hard, you've got to be confident but not complacent. Never rest on your laurels. I'm not going to. So what you've got from this University is a great start and that's why I'm proud to accept this award. Thank you very much."