

I want to add my congratulations to all those graduating today. This is the culmination of enormous effort on your part for the past few years. The fact of your success is the award you have received today but also the superb parades and exhibitions that many of us have had the privilege of attending that you have contributed to as students in your time here.

I also want to extend my congratulations and understanding to your families and partners and friends without whom you would probably have not achieved the success they you have. Students are demanding people to share houses with and this is particularly the case with students in the creative disciplines who are necessarily obsessive and don't always keep to the routines that the rest of us observe.

Could I ask the graduating students to thank their supporters in the traditional way.

Today as newly graduated designers In Fashion Interior and Styling you enter another and different family- one of the fastest growing and most influential families in society today, What is more it is an international family which lives in Paris, New York, Milan, Stockholm London ,and other cities- as well as in Sydney- the family that can be called the creative class. This group identified in the work of Richard Florida consists of all the people who share a common culture that values creativity, diversity, individuality and whose work it is to challenge the status quo and to create some new form or design.

As a group you are having a profound impact on not only the cultural and aesthetic shape of the world but also on the geographic and economic. In the US for example , depending on your definition, the creative classes make up one third of the economy and what they demand is transforming cities and regions refashioning them so that they can provide an inspiring place to live as well as work- cities which provide for tolerance, a diversity of lifestyles, nightlife, recreational facilities, museums performance spaces and so on. Cities and regions which ignore the creative class and their demands are in real danger of terminal decline- look at cities like Detroit for example build on mass production methods of the 50s, unable to adapt to the new times and which are now largely urban dystopias. So as a group you need to be aware of your power and the responsibilities this brings.

Your branch of the family- designers- are a particular subgroup of the creative class with a long tradition but only recently with professional status .

But you are graduating at a time when prospects for your profession have never been better. Of course there are contradictions. While it is still the case that the majority of the public lack a true appreciation of the value of good design and are content with products that are often inappropriate to their environments, it is also the case that more and more people are demanding products which provide a combination of comfort , individuality, ease of use and aesthetic satisfaction. More and more people want design which is challenging, bold, imaginative which make their life more interesting and stimulating.

I was struck by what Simon Lock had to say about fashion week in an interview recently which seems to me to capture this excitement:

*Fashion is fascinating, it is big business, it is small business its against all odds, its rich versus poor, its supermodel, superbitch, supergossipy, it is visionary, moving, its got intrigue, its got love affairs its got break ups, its got court cases, its aspirational, its disgusting its perfect... And the reason why people want to associate themselves with the fashion industry is because it is the ultimate form of freedom of expression And every body wants a bit of that in some way.*

Here at the beginning of your career then, personal commercial opportunities, have never been better ( how much publicity is fashion week generating for example and how much does that say about the level of interest – international incidentally- in our designers) But at the same time the contradictory circumstances provides your lifelong purpose – to educate those who as yet don't understand, to give them some insights into the freedom of expression that we all want a bit of- to strive to make design an integral part of most peoples lives in Australia (and beyond it for that matter); and by so doing to enrich their lives and add to the common-wealth and vibrancy of our community.

With a considerable degree of envy I wish you the best in what for all of you will be a fascinating, fulfilling and exciting journey.