



Sean Adams:

First, thank you, once again, to the Gala Committee Mick Hodgson, Mark Randall, the national board, AIGA staff, and all those who have worked over the past year to make this evening a success. And thank you to all of you in this room who have devoted so much commitment, energy, passion, and resources to the AIGA in a multitude of ways. It is not unappreciated and it does make a difference, truly, in the daily lives of the designers across the nation.

We come together, obviously, once a year and celebrate our victories and the individuals who light the way as we move forward. We comb our hair; we dress in our finest, theoretically, put on our best manners, and reunite each fall. Now, when I look across the room I'm reminded, however, that each of us, each of you is more than --you're more than your Armani tuxedo, or your Prada gown, or your most recent success, or your biggest client. You are the culmination of a million moments and a thousand memories and as designers you have the remarkable gift to translate those moments and those rich memories into work that brings us joy, shifts our thinking, and changes the world.

Tonight we celebrate this idea and we recognize those gifts and the individuals who share their talents to enrich our culture and our lives. Last year I stood at the AIGA conference in Denver and I stated that we stood at the edge of the most exciting and most expansive time in design's history. Over the last year I've traveled across the nation speaking with designers from Charlotte to Chicago, San Francisco to Seattle, New York to Nebraska, and now I've come to believe that I was indeed mistaken. We are not standing on a precipice of change. That revolution, that tsunami has already passed us and we are now standing in its wake.

The design profession has, within a very short time, snowballed and exponentially expanded. It's expanded into ways of making, media, voices, definitions, and ideas far more diverse than we could have imagined a short 5 years ago. So now we stand at a juncture and perhaps this is the most challenging juncture in our profession's history. We can watch as the design profession fractures and splinters into a million tiny tribes with no influence, losing all of the hard work that we have done as AIGA and the community over the last one-hundred years, or we can find the common goals that bind us together and not make us one thing, but encourage our differences and make this profession more than what we imagine it can be today.

Whenever we denigrate or minimize another designer because of the style or medium of his or her work, whenever we tear at the fabric of a designer's life that has been carefully woven together, when we do this the entire profession is degraded, but when we work a little harder to provide support and encouragement to each and every designer we strengthen the fabric of the entire profession. And as demonstrated tonight this is a compassionate community, this is what our community embraces, this is what we stand for.

Our lives on this planet are too short and the work here to be done is too great to stand by and do nothing, of course. AIGA cannot bind this profession together in a single year or with a single initiative, but we can, perhaps, remember, if only for a time, that all those who share this profession with us regardless of media or style, whether they are rich or poor, young or old, famous or unknown are our fellow designers. That they share with us the same short moment of life and that they seek, as do we all, the opportunity to live out their lives doing

what they love best and becoming whatever their vision will allow. Within all of our differences we share this one trait, we see the world as Harry Truman said, not only as it is but as it ought to be. We are bound together with a common fate and we all share a common goal, this will bind our community together and when we gather on evenings like tonight and through AIGA we recognize excellence, we transcend all differences and are reminded at the last that we are more than just a group of designers and more than just AIGA. We are reminded that together we are indeed a compassionate and generous family, thank you.

[Applause]