

ARTS conferment 13 June 2019

President's greeting at conferment dinner

Aalto University President Ilkka Niemelä

Art is an integral part of our culture. Art, design and architecture are a strong presence in our society and everyday life. The School of Art, Design and Architecture has always acted *Pro arte utili*, on behalf of useful art, and connecting with and influencing surrounding society is characteristic of it. At one time, Finland built its self-image on the basis of art and stories, visuality, practicality and functionality, and it is hard to even imagine present-day Finland without art, design and architecture.

The story of the School of Art, Design and Architecture and its predecessors is a tale of success and constant renewal. The work of these predecessors made Finnish design world-famous, yet our School has reimaged itself without hesitation and still basks in the international limelight at, for example, fashion show catwalks. It is an astonishing achievement for Aalto University's School of Art, Design and Architecture to be ranked as the world's seventh-best art and design educational institution, as happened just recently. In addition to fashion, our design, architecture, media and film departments have attained excellent results at festivals, exhibitions and contests. This success has also established a solid foundation for art education across our entire nation.

Art, design and architecture have an exceptionally strong status at Aalto alongside technology and business. Society's thorny problems cannot be resolved nor a sustainable society built if individual disciplines remain isolated in their own bunkers; solutions must instead be discovered through multidisciplinary cooperation coupled with the active involvement of artistic and creative practices. In addition to rationality, creative thinking and an empathetic approach are needed to open new perspectives in society. Our University's unique strength, multidisciplinary cooperation, took a giant leap forward when the School of Art, Design and Architecture moved into its new premises right in the middle of the Aalto campus.

I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all the new Doctors of Art participating in today's conferral! Challenge both yourself as well as others to renew themselves and reimagine the world – let's work together to make it a better place.