

Adrianna Palleschi
Student Commencement Speech to the Class of 2024

Hi everyone,

Some of you guys might have seen me around campus, or you might know me personally, or maybe you're just meeting me for the first time. Or maybe you might know me as the Splatoon player.

Okay, okay, I know what you're thinking! Here she goes again talking about the video game created by Nintendo, but it makes sense if you think about it. I mean, all it is, is just one gigantic paint war, except it's online. It is a bit silly to use an online game involving paint and ink to talk about our class, but we did start our school year online.

Four years ago on March 13th, I was here, touring Montserrat to get a feel for what it might be like. And when we got into the car? That was when we found out that school went on break for two weeks.

COVID-19 was something that affected all of us. In fact, I think most of us here didn't get a senior prom or a proper high school graduation. I had what we called a drive through graduation, but it didn't feel real, if that makes sense. We didn't walk the stage in front of our family and friends, or we did get to celebrate with our peers who were also graduating alongside us. But here we are today, with our friends and family, walking the stage with each other. We're celebrating together, our accomplishments, the work we've done, and the connections we've made that have brought us to this point. It's pretty special.

We all found our way to Montserrat, taking different paths to get here. A lot of the time, it did feel like Splatoon; a virtual paint war. We didn't even get the real one with foam swords and cardboard shields at orientation. Yet, we locked in and worked hard, because that's who we were, and that's who we still are. We're adaptable.

Then, we found ourselves in Observation I, just starting out. I remember when we were learning and building upon the foundations of art and in turn, I met some

really cool people in that class. When you think about it, we really did use a lot of cardboard in our assignments. I think my favorite one was where our instructor, Colin McGuire, had us build a cardboard replica of the Hardie building. He even had us make miniature versions of ourselves to place on or inside the structure. It was a special moment that had brought all of us together, even as we moved into our respective concentrations.

Becoming an animator, I learned pretty quickly that I had to adapt and work with new tools. It's kind of a lot like Splatton, where I'm using my giant, golden roller to stay in the game and do my best to paint the floor. I feel like that applies to all of us. Maybe your tool is a real paint brush, or it might be a drawing tablet. Maybe it's a block of wood, a camera, or maybe it's a found item, like a chair.

At Montserrat, each of us uses our own tools to create and everyone moves at their own pace. We all have our own voices and none of us is the same. Looking into the future, some of us might be looking at jobs right away, some of us might be exploring residencies, and some of us might be taking a small break from all the hard work we've done in the last four years here.

As an animator, my advice to you and myself is to just take it frame by frame. We've all made it through the best and toughest years of our lives. And, we came out strong, standing with each other side by side. For a moment, take a look around you, look at one another, capture this moment. We might be moving on from Montserrat, but we cannot forget about each other and all of the memories and accomplishments that we've made. They're a part of who we are.

So here's to the Class of 2024, my fellow graduates. An outstanding, strong, and progressive group of individuals that know what they want and how to get things done. I am forever thankful for all of the memories, both good and bad. And I am thankful for the faculty, staff, and friends I've met along the way. Please, don't forget to stay in touch, and congratulations to you all. And as they say in Splatton, Stay Fresh!