

Deon Agyeman Commencement Speech 2025

I want to start off by acknowledging just how surreal it is, standing up here before my talented peers, the wonderful staff and faculty, and all the families here today to celebrate Montserrat College of Art's Class of 2025. These past 4 years have been a teaching experience like no other, and I don't just mean in the classrooms. Just as people, we have transformed from the 18 year old babies that first landed on this campus, into fully grown adults that'll have 40-hour work weeks and health insurance, and maybe even a mortgage if we're lucky. These are things I'm sure scared many of us at the start but the support from the Montserrat community as a whole has been instrumental in our transformation. But the transformation isn't complete. In fact, it's just starting, and I want to take this opportunity to give the class of 2025 some things to consider as we step out into the real world.

To the Sculpture seniors, be the Hannah Jacoby Brooks you want to see in the world. We need more whimsy in these dark times.

To the Printmakers, be the Len Thomas-Vickory you want to see in the world. The natural world order needs more people like Len with obscure knowledge of Battle Bots and music from before we were born.

To the Painters, be the person who creates a masterpiece, and just leaves it on campus after they graduate to end up in someone's office. Be the person a future student finds a picture of stuck to the pipes in the Hardie Building. In other words, be Josue.

To the photographers and filmmakers, if you ever have to choose between paying rent and buying that new camera, do the responsible thing, and buy the new camera and enjoy your thousand dollar toy. Make Ron DiRito proud.

To the Book Arts, your resilience is very commendable. You've survived every encounter with a paper cutter and you've made it here today in one piece. Let's keep it that way.

To the Graphic Designers, I challenge you, regardless of whatever your client wants, to incorporate Montserrat green into all your designs and just don't tell them.

To the Illustrators, I wish you luck with your webcomic. Here's hoping some 14 year old on tiktok with too much time on their hands falls in love with your characters and makes fan edits of them.

To the Art Educators, and this is genuine, you are taking on a tremendous task of being an influence on the next generation of artists especially at a time when the education system is in flux, and for that I commend you. You'll have your hands full with Gen Alpha, but I think you have what it takes to tackle the brain rot. Good luck soldiers.

To the Animators: I had the pleasure of working alongside 15 incredible animators this past year and I learned a lot from you guys. But the most insightful thing I learned is that the cost of being an amazing animator is never getting to sleep again for the rest of your lives. My sole advice to you all is to keep your external hard drive close and your three cups of caffeine closer.

And finally, the 3 other Games, Toys, and Play capstone seniors. I have a piece of advice for each of you.

Firstly, I'd say to take it easy but your definition of taking it easy is a full body, full rendered illustration of a beautiful woman who's also animated because you're just built different. So just keep doing that.

My second piece of advice is for someone who made a game about yetis one semester and the most beautiful yet unsettling film the next. Don't stop making weird art because your touch on the art world will be a unique and exciting one.

And my last words of advice: chicken jockey.

To close out, I want to give a big thank you to my peers who nominated me to be this year's class speaker. If you were expecting a serious speech, you voted for the wrong person. But your support and friendship have been key to my own transformation, into the unserious person you see up here today who has the confidence to give this speech in front of a class of such amazing and infinitely inspiring artists. And I can't wait to see all the ways in which we transform the world. Thank you, and congratulations Montserrat Class of 2025!