



It's how our ancestors survived – by noticing things that were different in their environment, like a tiger, and using the observation to stay safe. Our lack of specialisation isn't just a decision about the work we want to do: it's a way to make sure our audiences are always engaged in our work."

As Kelli Anderson pointed out, perception can be enhanced through tactile means. She usually ends up building at least one part of a project physically, and says that touch can make the brain more receptive than sight alone. "By activating touch, you're giving an audience multiple inroads into your work," she explained. "People can then consider your work on different sensory levels."

She continued: "I'm more interested in perception and low-fi magic in an educational context. I want to communicate through touch as well as graphics or text. By making problems tangible, you open them up to physical intuition."

Moving Brands' Jim Bull, meanwhile, offered a new perspective on the future of design.

He talked about the "death of the rectangle", which he predicted will happen in the near future. "VR, AR, MR – it's all just stage one of a whole push to interact with content in a different way than through a rectangular screen," he said.

"We won't be wearing headsets. We'll be able to compose and craft light to make your brain think it's the same as the other light entering your eye. Suddenly, you won't need any packaging because objects can project into your eye. When I see people designing for VR and it's still in a rectangle – they're stuck at stage one. We need to create a new design vernacular for a world without rectangles."

The best career advice of the event, however, came from GFDA. The pair admit to having no idea what they're doing, and claim that they exist to make other designers feel good about feeling the same way. "You win some, you learn some," they said, during a motivational morning talk. "If you change your perspective, losses become learns and learns become opportunities." ▣

Clockwise from far left: Attendees gather outside for an early morning talk; Stink's David Navarro and Ben Hughes on stage; Kelli Anderson talks tactile design; GFDA admitting the pair don't know what they're doing.



EVENT REPORT: CREATIVE BATH

USE YOUR BRAIN

Rosie Hilder learns how, according to type legend Erik Spiekermann, anyone can learn good typography

With a career that has spanned over 40 years, veteran typographer Erik Spiekermann has seen it all. Not even a dodgy projector could stop him sharing his expletive-littered advice with a crowd of 400 at a recent Creative Bath event.

"If a client asks for a free pitch, they're not a real client," he said. "We don't do work for fucking free." Spiekermann stopped doing free pitches seven or eight years ago, and is positive that this approach works. "They call us and say 'I heard you don't do pitches', and we say 'no', and they say, 'let's talk about projects.'"

Not just any paying client will do, however. "Don't work for arseholes," he advised. "Use your brain, your brain is a totally underestimated device. It's usually on, it's unlimited. But it's like my hard drive, you can never find shit anywhere."

And by putting your unlimited device to use, Spiekermann said, anyone can learn: "I can teach anyone good typography in two or three days," he said. "Then it's just practice."

Sadly, even with a lot of practice, typography projects take time – Spiekermann spent two years designing a typeface for German Railways. This, he said, is the problem with working with big clients: it becomes all about the process. "The thinking part takes 10 minutes. But it takes two years to get anything through a large hierarchy. It took two bloody years to remove a frame."

And it's details such as the removal of a frame, that Spiekermann believes are worth fighting for. "God is in the details," he said.

Sometimes, it takes analogue methods to achieve such detail. "Use your brain, but don't forget your hands," he advised. "We don't know how to make stuff anymore, which is dangerous. We're all gonna be just thumbs soon." By using analogue methods as opposed to digital, you are immediately constrained, and that's useful, he said. "Choices scare me shitless." ▣