# Design Laundry talk at D&AD Festival reveals creativity thrives on mistakes



The D&AD Festival in London has once again emerged as a vibrant hub of inspiration for creative minds, where speakers captivate audiences by sharing their journeys through the often turbulent waters of the design world. Among the highlights is Matt Baxter and Dom Bailey's compelling talk, "The Design Laundry", which sheds light on a crucial yet often overlooked aspect of creativity: the inevitability of mistakes in the creative process.

Baxter and Bailey acknowledge that the narrative surrounding successful design is typically polished and idealised. "We live in a world where everything we see is pristine," Matt Baxter explains. This pristine facade tends to perpetuate the myth that creativity flows in a linear, error-free manner, a misconception that can particularly affect aspiring designers. Speaking during their session, Dom Bailey emphasises, "For young designers, it's quite reassuring to know that even the most experienced designers make mistakes."

The crux of their presentation is not simply to lament past errors, but to showcase them as invaluable learning experiences. Each anecdote serves to humanise the creative process. From the misfortune of leaving behind a portfolio after being startled by a travel companion's attire to the jarring experience of receiving a client's derisive "thumbs down" mid-brief, the speakers illustrate that blunders are universal, even among accomplished designers.

In a remarkable twist, Baxter and Bailey extended their exploration beyond personal stories by inviting contributions from the larger creative community through The Design Laundry initiative. What began as a trickle of shared tales quickly blossomed into an avalanche of submissions, revealing a shared landscape of awkward and amusing missteps. For example, Daljit Singh of Exactly AI's mistaken encounter with Gene Simmons, where an inadvertent shout of "Simon, come out you massive tosser!" earned him a memorable dismissal from the rocker, highlights the often humorous nature of miscommunication within the industry.

Among these tales, one story stands out for its mix of embarrassment and irony. Frances Jackson, while designing a book for the King's Trust, produced a stunning volume entitled "Art in the Public Realm". Unfortunately, an unfortunate typographical error in the title, which read "Art in the Pubic Realm", led to a notable rejection from none other than HRH King Charles himself. Such tales not only evoke laughter but impart essential lessons about attention to detail and the critical importance of proofreading in a creative field that prizes precision.

The conversation surrounding The Design Laundry draws parallels with broader discussions within the industry, including insights on famous design missteps and how to avoid them. Industry veterans stress that mistakes should not be feared but embraced as critical components of professional development, shaping individuals into more adept and resilient creators. As Baxter pointed out, the debate over errors can foster a culture of openness and growth within creative communities.

Ultimately, Baxter and Bailey argue that these colourful and often cringe-worthy stories underscore a vital truth: mistakes are part and parcel of the creative journey. "If you've got a story, you can submit it to The Design Laundry," they invite, encouraging others to find humour and solace in shared experiences. As the D&AD Festival continues to unfold, one thing is clear: the narratives of failure can be just as inspiring, if not more so, than those of triumph.

As this engaging talk reminds us, creativity thrives not in the absence of mistakes but in the lessons that emerge from them. Encouraging open dialogue about these experiences not only demystifies the creative process but also fosters a supportive environment where both seasoned professionals and new entrants can learn, grow, and ultimately create with greater confidence.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
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5. Paragraph 1
6. Paragraph 4
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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2. <https://www.creativebloq.com/professional-development/the-design-laundry> - An article discussing the 'Design Laundry' talk by Matt Baxter and Dom Bailey at the D&AD Festival in London, highlighting the importance of acknowledging mistakes in the creative process and sharing personal anecdotes to reassure young designers that errors are a natural part of growth.
3. <https://www.dandad.org/profiles/person/648327/matt-baxter/> - A profile of Matt Baxter, co-founder and Creative Director of Baxter & Bailey, detailing his extensive experience in the creative industry, including accolades from D&AD, Design Week, and New York Festivals, and his role as a writer, speaker, and awards judge.
4. <https://www.rianhughes.com> - The official website of Rian Hughes, a renowned graphic designer and illustrator, known for his work in the creative industry and his contributions to design education and literature.
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6. <https://www.creativebloq.com/inspiration/10-famous-design-mistakes-and-how-to-avoid-them> - An article highlighting ten famous design mistakes, providing insights into common errors in the creative process and offering advice on how to avoid them to improve design outcomes.
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