

Ivy League Word Salad

An American friend of mine recently received an invitation to a symposium at the Yale School of Architecture. The invitation was in the form of a poster largely filled with words in various fonts upon a matte black background as follows:

*writing stating accompanying overwhelming looming meeting
overriding leading telling having describing noting learning
suggesting building hearing voicing conducting coming saying
receiving majoring graduating reporting consisting
revitalizing being doing founding teaching scouting
networking gaining designing assuming taking surrounding
waiting imagining aspiring rescuing visiting using reshaping
promoting masquerading thinking beginning saving working
casting reviving making commenting reflecting opposing
renovating offering getting searching calling rebuilding
deconstructing fictionalizing presenting encouraging emerging
dazzling documenting depicting changing broadening creating
disseminating drawing requiring focusing educating*

If you had read this list of words, what would you conclude that the symposium was about? Art? Genetics? Philosophy? Military history? Religion? Ethics? Would anything come to mind? If you gave the list to a thousand people at random, not one would guess correctly (not that they would try hard, for some mysteries are not intriguing). The list is as flatulent and inconsequential as a speech by Donald Trump.

In fact, the symposium that the list advertised and to which it referred was the J. Irwin Miller Symposium on "The Education of Architects in the 21st Century." What did poor J. Irwin Miller do to deserve such a memorial? True, he was an enthusiast for [*City Journal*](#).