

Dies Natalis 26 March 2019

*Laudatio on behalf of the honorary doctorate of Sionaidh Douglas-Scott at Utrecht University
by Sybe de Vries, honorary supervisor*

What Walter Isaacson wrote about Leonardo da Vinci goes equally true for Sionaidh Douglas-Scott: what sets her apart from other people is her creativity, her ability to apply imagination to intellect, her ability and passion to wander across disciplines, her willingness to collaborate and to reach out to society.

Sionaidh Douglas-Scott studied philosophy, history of art and aesthetics before taking her law degree. It is therefore not surprising that she was the co-director of the Centre for Law & Society in a Global Context at Queen Mary University of London, which is engaged in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research into the global dimensions of law and society.

Sionaidh's multidisciplinary background and knowledge, as well as her creativity, also appears from her large oeuvre of highly respected publications and research projects. Not only does her book 'Law after Modernity', which was nominated for the prestigious Socio-Legal Book prize, explore many of the issues of pluralism, justice and human rights, but it is also illustrated with various images and artistic works.

Justice and human rights in Europe, which are currently increasingly contested, are the running themes throughout Sionaidh's work, and are explored in a number of groundbreaking publications, including the Research Handbook on EU law and Human Rights, the book on Faith in Law and numerous articles in legal journals. These themes together with her multidisciplinary, creative approach to law and society link very well with Utrecht University's research and educational agenda, carried out through inter alia the Centre for Global Challenges, the Strategic Research Theme Institutions for Open Societies and the Law Department.

Sionaidh's collaboration with Utrecht University became particularly visible in the bEUcitizen-project, a multidisciplinary project of 26 universities on European citizenship, which was subsidized by the Commission and led by Utrecht University, wherein she wrote an excellent paper on EU citizens' civil rights in the UK and Ireland.

Sionaidh Douglas-Scott recently received a Fellowship from the Leverhulme trust as one of only two legal scholars to receive this prestigious award. It enables her to work on the important and very topical issue of "Brexit and British constitutional unsettlement" in order to investigate the impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on the British Constitution.

Sionaidh Douglas-Scott is a role model for other scholars working on a recipe for enduring creativity by combining different disciplines, which is so pivotal for making this world a better place. For Utrecht University, which shares her mission, it is all the more fitting that Sionaidh Douglas-Scott receives an honorary doctorate today!