

Firstly I would like to thank the dean of the School of Fine Art and the fellow heads of department for joining us this afternoon.

Artists make me angry. I see them marching down the street, making a lot of noise about climate change (which is great), yet serious ecological problems within their own industry are consistently overlooked — among them, the disturbing volumes of waste following them out of art school.

Recently, while working at a university in the UK, I was tasked with ordering skip-bins in preparation for the art school's graduate exhibition. During the two weeks of the install alone, we filled 3, 30 cubic meter skip bins every two days. Over just ten days, this equates to filling roughly 2.5 thousand wheelie bins or 645 level trailer loads. If that was all that the 400 students sent to landfill in the year, it would still be a lot — this was just two working weeks.

What I am proposing is a potential solution. What I am proposing is a way of thinking. What I am proposing is AWE (Art-school Waste Education). An integrated curriculum that can be easily applied to existing, prevailing frameworks of higher art education. It just slots right in there, promoting small consistent changes to the culture of waste production — in both the institutions and the emergent art practices they foster.

It begins with a clear message. From the get-go, students need to appreciate the impact their industry has on the environment. Give them the numbers. How much do they consume and discard. How much of their tuition fees go to waste disposal and how could this money be better directed. Set clear and achievable goals. Simple.

Second is teaching. Like any vocational training, art and design schooling establishes a way of thinking and developing a sustainable practices that can carry you out into the world. Through these existing pedagogical frameworks, students should be encouraged to think about the resulting waste produced by each project — questioning how they can improve and how can this be managed moving forward. Expose them to exemplary practices and institutions. The list goes on.

Following this is assessment. Sustainability should be included among existing criteria. How much waste was produced? Could it have been minimised? How has your project developed with this in mind? Does the final product justify the waste it produced? These concerns should be real, contributing factors in education and making work in general.

Finally we have infrastructure. With these shifts there may be recourse to take the tens of thousands budgeted to big ol' skip bins, and redirect it to improve recycling systems. Like we do at home, separating materials is a basic practise that should be more broadly adopted. Place the responsibility with the students to think about and look at the materials they use. Rather than the current out-of-sight-out-of-mind, chuck it all in one bin and walk away attitude, simply separating

metal from timber from plastic from e-waste, seeing it all laid out can be the confronting visual kick up the keister they need to move forward. So c'mon. Insert your own cliched catchphrase here and lets put an end to the hypocrisy! Thank you, you've been great.