

Hi guys. I hope you are all doing well. Thank you again for listening to the episodes and following the podcast on social media. I hope you guys are enjoying the episodes and finding them interesting. I have to say the last couple of episodes have been really fun for me. I honestly had no idea the direction this podcast would take. Of course, I had a couple of ideas or issues I wanted to discuss and guests I wanted to have on the podcast. But, I never thought that, for example, I would talk about art of animals pooping. Or about art that breaks our trust and lies to us and makes us insanely mad. If you don't know what I'm talking about you have to check out last week's episode with Heather Jessup.

Another thing this podcast is making me realize is how much deeper into certain issues I can dive into. For example, I had, of course, festivals as a huge topic on my idea list, and I'm realizing now that the topic can actually evolve over like multiple episodes, maybe like 10. So, first of all, there are different types of festivals to consider, so that's just 3 or 4 episodes within itself. Then I can talk about how somebody puts a festival together. I can also do an episode on how festivals make art more approachable. Then I can do another episode on the spectacle of festivals and whether they are really affective in getting the public to think about important issues. Honestly, the list goes on. So all of that being said, please reach out to me and let me know what topics you want to hear from me. Or, in contrast, if there are certain topics that you think I'm covering too often, and you would like a little break from, then you can let me know those as well. Is there maybe an awesome organization where you live that you think fits the theme and you would like for me to feature on the podcast? I'm realizing just how difficult it is for me to possibly be aware of other awesome organizations outside of the city I live in. A lot of the people that end up being guests on the podcast are from places I have been to, events I have participated in and galleries I've visited. So, it's really difficult for me to feature an awesome festival that's happening in your local city in France, because I've never been to France! Do you see my dilemma? So, please let me know if you are from France who I should have on. Or of course if you are from anywhere else you are also welcome to contact me. You guys can reach me on both Instagram and Facebook. For both of those platforms the handle is [backtothedrawingboardpodcast](#). And if you want to be maybe a little bit more private with you email, you are welcome to email me emilija@backtothedrawingboardpodcast.com If you don't know how to spell my name yet, shame on you.

So, for the topic you actually came here for. Probably only the closest people in my life knew that I moved over a month ago for grad school! I moved to Amsterdam, a city I've never stepped a foot in, to study Artistic Research. I did my Bachelors of Fine Arts in Calgary, which is a city in western Canada. Then I took a year off, in which year this podcast was born. And now I'm back in school. It's definitely an interesting dynamic between being a student and actually doing life. Because let's be honest, you are not actually doing life when you are student. And this is really interesting to me, but there is this student culture in Europe, that's definitely not the case in Canada or the USA. So, students here because of benefits and cheaper or sometimes basically free education, transport and lots of other awesome perks, students decide to stay in school as long as possible. Literally, they are not in a rush to get out. My sister even knew fellow students whose year it was to graduate, and they just decided to stick around for another year, just because there was no jobs available on the market. That doesn't really happen in Canada or the

USA. But I mean that's a topic that's totally not even related to the podcast. But, if you know of any other podcasters that have addressed this, let me know. I'd love to listen to somebody talk about this topic. But, I'm back in school, not doing life again, and I thought it would be an interesting topic, an interesting episode to talk about things that art school didn't teach me.

Now, this is my disclaimer, which I feel like I always have to add these so someone on the internet doesn't come biting my head off, as soon as I hit publish. I am happy (so far) with both of my higher education experiences. I definitely think they are playing a role in my development and learning and of course, some people would benefit from going to school, and some wouldn't. It's up to you, knowing what atmosphere you thrive in and where you want to go in the future and your personality.

Another disclaimer, is this whole notion that art school is a waste of money, and you should get a practical degree that can actually earn you money. First of all, if you think that, you can just stop this podcast right now. The pause button is right there. Just click on it. You are on the wrong side of the tracks here, buddy. I would suggest you run, before my fists come flying at your face. But in all seriousness, art school is a thing, a very legitimate thing and a thing that can definitely result in a rewarding and highly paid career. If you actually still have trouble associating money with art, maybe, instead, you should sit yourself down with episode 24 of this podcast and listen to some of the wise words Max Haiven dropped two or three weeks ago.

All of that being said, finally for the juicy part of the episode. Here are my five things that art school didn't teach me.

Number one: You are always going to be learning and improving. Honestly, this one is all of the formatting of art school. We work on deadlines, and project bases, which makes sense because professors need something tangible to grade us on. However, you have no idea how many times I have felt like my ideas were never really complete when handing in assignments. And, that's because my ideas will never actually be complete. I will be developing and stirring and brewing with these ideas for the rest of my life, no matter my job, or the amount of art I make.

Another aspect of this that bothered me so much was the feeling that I got from the professors that that one final assignment we were handing in was THE ONE. I honestly wish less emphasis was put on these assignments as the end all be all. I mean, to be honest, Michelangelo did not paint the Sistine Chapel in 6 weeks. So, I don't think I can provide you with a masterpiece in 6 weeks either. I'm sorry. Sometimes the truth hurts.

It's like the system sets you up for failure almost immediately. Perhaps we should consider these deadlines or these assignments, as the endpoints of defined periods in our art practice, where we don't just get graded on just the end point, but rather on everything that happened in the course of that period. Of course, that brings up the whole debate of how the crap do you grade art, or much worse, how the crap do you grad process, and I'm not going to get into that here.

This notion of final assignments, in art school, has actually sometimes deterred me from making art out in the real world, you know, when I'm out of art school. You get drilled in your head that the things you make have to be solid, final, and meaningful. And it has stopped me from playing,

from trying, from realizing and materializing things that I 100 percent know will be crap but trying them out will allow me to learn and direct your process further. I mean, why should I make something that's not perfect and will just be thrown in the garbage two weeks after it's finished?

Number two, or the second thing that art school did not teach me is to embrace uncertainty. This one kind of goes in hand with number one. Because of the formatting of art schools, final assignments, final papers, critiques, I have always felt that I was supposed to know something and present to others these things that I knew. The truth is, I know crap about nothing. And I never will. Making art is the most uncertain thing ever. Honestly, I hate to break it to you, but none of us know what we are doing, what we are making, why we are making it, how we are making it. That's not to say that our work is not good, and that when we talk about it we are just making stuff up. It's just the fact that we'll have an idea: "Oh, drawing on a banana peel is cool. Let me try it out." We don't know where it will lead, we don't know if it's a good idea or what in the world anybody else will think of it.

I thought that maybe this was just because I was inexperienced and over my time in art school I will improve, and I will know something, finally. But honesty you never do, I say that so certainly like I'm a seventy year old man here. But, I have learned to better present my work. I have learned to use history and theory to explain my ideas. I have learned to talk more effectively about my work. And of course, I have learned more technical aspects of, for example, how to use charcoal, or clay or acrylic. I have also gotten better at following an idea through its process to get it to a point where it's worth making and pursuing. But I still don't know what I'm doing. Never have and never will.

The third thing that art schools did not teach me is that professors are equals. Honestly, this one has been a big one for me personally in the last couple of weeks. I'm feel like I'm saying honestly a lot in this episode. So, this one, professors are equals, to us, the students, is related to number 2. Because I am always uncertain about what I'm doing, I have always felt like what the professors have said is the absolute Holy Bible. Never shall be questioned. Which is actually not true at all. I'm realizing that with my professors in my master's program. So, maybe, art school did teach me this. Okay, never mind. So, in my master's program we have discussions in which they genuinely ask us what we think, and what our perspectives are. And they do that, not in a way to tell us whether we are right or wrong, but as a way to have a discussion about the ways we are thinking, the differences and the similarities. If you are studying science or business, then maybe yes, listen to your professors. Please don't combine two disastrous substances together and blow up our planet. I would really appreciate it. But, if you are in art, studying art, referring back to number two: nobody knows what they are doing. Not the professors, not the curators, not the directors, not the auction houses, not even the cleaning staff. This is off tangent, but have you guys seen that commercial when one of the cleaning staff in a gallery accidently throws out a piece of sculpture, because he thinks it's garbage? Not because he doesn't like the work, but because he literally does not realize that it's an actual piece of art. He thinks it's garbage that one of the visitors left behind. Yeah. Like I said. Nobody knows what they are doing.

So, please, tell your professor, what you are thinking, what you are reading, and what you are grappling with. And when they try to convince you what they think your work is about, or what they think your work is doing, don't take it too seriously.

The fourth thing art school did not teach me is you can't own any nice clothes. Or I cannot own any nice clothes. Maybe you are really tidy when you make your art, but I am not. I mean this one is pretty straight forward. I do not think I need to say a lot more.

I remember back in Calgary I would always feel like crap going to the cafeteria, because there would all these nicely dressed business students walking around in their dresses or suits, and then myself and my artists friends would walk in, and we literally have splatters on everything. Or for me personally, it was charcoal on everything.

Honestly though, the less concerned you are about wrecking your clothes, the more open you are to actually making good art.

The fifth thing that art school did not teach me is that you have to work to create and keep your community after school is over.

Ah, I feel like this is a perfect note to end on, honestly. Like I said before, this podcast came out the year that I took off between my undergrad and my masters. It was from my desire to keep learning and from my desire to meet and talk with others that had cool ideas on the same topics that I started the podcast.

Artists need their community. Like a lot. We are always creating in conversation with our world, With the things we see, the things we taste, and touch and hear, the events that are happening around the world, the feelings we are feeling. I mean, take all those things away from us and you get a dead artist making dead art. I'm dead serious. And after art school, you honestly, lose that entire community. I was especially involved extra circularly within my program, so it felt like I actually lost a lot when I graduated.

So, my advice for you would be to create that community for yourself outside of your school once you graduate. Maybe get a couple of friends over for tea and art critique once every four months. Or you could start a challenge where you each create a work every day of the month. Maybe, you can start volunteering at a local gallery or museum. Or meet for coffee with a professor, an old professor, to jump your ideas off of them. Go to openings and introduce yourself to somebody you don't know. I know, all of these are easier said than done. I'm still learning to practice what I preach.

I think that's all for me today. This is a shorter episode than others, and I'm not sure if you guys like that or not. Just to cover all of my grounds, if you like a shorter episode, you are welcome. If you like longer episodes, I am sorry. It will definitely be an experiment for me to keep up a regular uploading schedule while I am back in school full time. I promise I will try my hardest and still upload an episode every Monday. If, however, you do not see an episode from me one week, then just know that I am buried deep in a book, in a corner somewhere, or actually, even better, in a canal somewhere. Oh and I'm probably crying.

Back to the Drawing Board Podcast

Episode 026: Thinking Out Loud, 3rd Solo Episode, Things Art School Did Not Teach Me

Wow that was a really sad note to end on. As always, thanks for listening you guys and I will talk to again next week! Please contact me. Let me know what you thought of today's episode and of past episodes and of course, let me know of any other awesome topics of people I should talk to. Alright. Bye for now.