

Thanks so much, Principal Henderson. First, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders, past, present, and emerging.

I would also like to thank Louise Hoy and Anna Gingell for inviting me to be a part of this special evening. And of course, thank you and welcome to the families and students of JTC.

My time at JTC started in 1986. I was part of the very first cohort to complete 12 consecutive years at the Mount Claremont campus, finishing in 1997. I am very proud of that milestone and to this day, I am still part of many friendships that were formed here at JTC.

Just the other day, I spoke of that milestone to a neighbour who is currently attending this school. She was offering her babysitting services. I was quite enthusiastic to let her know I was one of the originals. Though I must remember for the future that it does reveal how old I am, and how long ago I attended JTC!

Regardless, I am honoured to be here at such a special event. The quality and scope of the art on display are impressive and inspiring, I feel perhaps my advice may not be needed or required! However, I would like to share some experiences to reflect on, which I believe best illustrate my journey and may be of some value to our current students.

During my final years at JTC, I participated in an event known as 'Apex'. For those that may not know, the "Apex Australia Teenage Fashion Awards" was the start of what would forge my drive to have a career in fashion.

On competition night, I had taken over my mum's sewing room with mess everywhere - very much like a professional studio later in my career. I was in a mad rush to complete the outfit - again very much like a professional deadline. In the rush and chaos, I had stepped on a sewing needle. I thought nothing of it, as I was so focused and determined. The show must go on! In the end, it was an incredible experience for my first ever real fashion show!

A few weeks later, I was able to re-live the moment, by producing another form of artwork that incorporated a real x-ray of my foot. Titled: 'Travelling broken needle up foot'. Medium: radiography x-ray.

Surgery to remove said broken needle was immediate, resulting in my first ever real fashion show scar. The scarring became permanent and marked the beginning of continual "blood sweat, and tears" of a formidable chosen career in fashion.

After discovering that there were no fashion courses offered in a university setting in Perth, I was devastated. This was encouraged by my parents to attend University here. However, I completed a Design degree at Curtin University, where I eventually ended up teaching in the very same course. Online courses did not exist back then,

and what was on offer was, I felt, limiting to my goals. However, I persevered, adjusted and continued to learn.

Learning has never stopped for me, and I feel that it continues to be of paramount importance now, more than ever. At present, the ability to think quickly and creatively is pivotal to survival and success within the arts industries. The world is connected more than ever and so much more is accessible now, than it was in my day as a young student. Take advantage of the opportunities to diversify and upskill.

I have dedicated my life to artistic vision in one way or another. Through my art, I have been a fashion designer, creator, painter, graphic designer, educator, mentor, and an entrepreneur. Importantly, I have never limited myself to one platform, and neither should you. All the valuable, transferable skills I learned have enabled me to create the most amazing things possible and to overcome many significant career challenges. Challenges that many of you will face if and when you undertake careers in the creative industries. Meet those challenges head on and learn from your mistakes, not just from your achievements.

I am also a big believer in nurturing and maintaining relationships with like-minded creatives; fostering a creative arts community that truly supports, grows and learns from each other. This has been made all the more possible with the development of technologies like the internet, and social media, allowing us to stay connected, despite physical distance. Make sure you build and maintain strong relationships with your peers and get to know your audience.

The creative industries can be challenging, time-consuming, labour-intensive, sleepless nights, physically and mentally taxing, expensive, and sometimes not financially rewarding. So why and how am I fulfilled?? Because we creative's are a unique resilient breed who love, thrive and thirst for this all. It can be the most gratifying and fulfilling, as there is no limit to art and creativity. It's true that if you enjoy and have passion for it then it will reflect in the success of it. Work and chase it. Any decisions and moves are not wrong, you have learnt and grown, and that has and always will be a plus.

In closing, I would like to wish all of the arts students here at JTC experiences that are enriching and memorable. I also hope your experience here at JTC inspires you, as I was, to undertake a journey in the creative industries. Learn, be resilient and thrive.