

The mainstream science is emphatic.

We have entered into a minefield of tipping points that threaten the status of human civilization as we know it. Despite decades of scientific clarity, despite nature firing formidable warning shots across the bows of our vulnerable ship, we still do not act as if this is a crisis of the highest order. “The Writing’s on the wall”, and yet humanity remains entrenched in a pathway of emissions that will push us towards various system collapses.

Paralysing language? Too much reality? Observing the sheer size and extent of the climate crisis can cause a ‘Locked-in syndrome’ – where all our creative and constructive instincts become immobilised. Or, more likely, we just don’t look at it. It is true that a proper look at the climate crisis demands that we stretch our imagination to its conceptual and emotional limits. But humans have overcome monumental threats in the past, so there is no reason to turn away in pessimism or denial now.

Indeed, a narrow pathway out of the crisis remains. So how do we mobilise our artistic instincts whilst the rock-hard science remains firmly in view? How do we keep reality in clear focus as a backdrop to our creativity? The answer is by putting the “Writing on the wall”.



The wall represents the reality of our situation. Not only the non-negotiable boundaries of physics and chemistry, but also the reality of the future for all those humans, whose rights and ambitions are so heavily compromised. The faces on the wall, looking out, are an echo of the

painting by Norman Rockwell, “The Right to Know” (1968). His powerful image, painted in the context of the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War, captured the responsibility of those in power to be just and transparent with everyone.

Today, although we have a very clear understanding of the remaining carbon budget, we only have a fog of commitments that do not square up to the science. Why are we capable of producing a dashboard for the COVID virus in weeks, but unable to produce an index for the carbon budget in decades?

SAVE OUR FUTURE CUT11%



The wall invites people to stand in front of it with the clear, unambiguous conclusions of science about what each nation has to do, to remain underneath the 1.5°C and 2°C average temperature thresholds. It is as simple as a mobile phone photo with a number held out to

the camera -eg. "Sweden cut 6.3% per year - now." (The numbers for every nation of the world and the basic science behind it can be found at www.cut11percent.org.)

Each number, for each nation has been calculated from the known carbon budgets for 1.5°C and 2°C using the latest data available. The numbers are updated every year. Each number is what you get when you apply common sense to that carbon budget. For example, the budget is divided per capita, the reductions start today, and they do not include unproven technologies for carbon capture. The calculations involved have been fact-checked by the world's leading authority on the carbon budget, Professor Kevin Anderson; and by my many other eminent scientists from leading institutions.

Holding these numbers up is just the start. The wall creates a backdrop for all kinds of media, social media and artistic initiatives. The students can use the wall to interview political or business leaders, their friends, or any visitor to the school. They can stand in front of the wall to explain the significance of tipping points, or the systemic dangers of the warming and rising oceans. They can have their voices heard about all their hopes and their concerns for justice – with the reality of the science to support them in the background.



Schools, businesses, institutions... they all have walls.

Find a wall. Paint your mural in the style of Norman Rockwell's "Right to Know". Write the words, "Save our future - Cut 11 % now".

And let your imagination and courage flow.

