

Unitec BOLD INNOVATORS Scholarship

The Scholarship is available to support highly innovative recent Unitec Masters or Doctoral graduates to take the next step with a concept they have developed during their studies at Unitec.

Award value: \$11,000
Provider: Tuapapa Rangahau, Unitec Institute of Technology
Contact: Gregor Steinhorn, gsteinhorn@unitec.ac.nz

The Scholarship is awarded based on the potential of the concept for social, environmental and/or economic impact, the academic and general performance of the applicant and the ability of Unitec to support the concept. This is determined through a dialogue with Tuapapa Rangahau through Research Partner – Enterprise Gregor Steinhorn and is the decision of the Director of Research and Enterprise. Unitec reserves the right to make the final decision on what scholarship is awarded.

The award includes a \$5,000 scholarship for project related costs, a \$500 weekly stipend (payable for up to 12 weeks), a workspace at Unitec (computer, internet etc), negotiated access to Unitec's facilities (e.g. the library, workshops, studios) and professional mentoring.

The scholarship is designed to assist entrepreneurial Masters or Doctoral graduates into the NZ innovation ecology by providing;

Space	a financially supportive gap between study and work
Connections	introductions to Callaghan Innovation, business, government
Expertise	for grant applications assistance with developing a business case
Opportunity	or proof of concept, R&D, product development
Advice	on market research, IP and commercialisation.

Applications for this scholarship will be considered **anytime**.

The 2018 Bold Innovators Scholarship was awarded to Creative Industries graduate Atarangi Anderson, a young Maori desinger who created a new clothing label *Inky Cat* - offering ethical fashion sourced from secondhand and organic fabrics. Read on for more information on *Inky Cat*.



Second to none



Atarangi Anderson's new clothing label offers ethical fashion sourced from secondhand and organic fabrics – and it won the former student a Unitec Bold Innovators Scholarship.



Atarangi Anderson.

A young Māori designer is using the creative ethos she grew up with to develop an ethical clothing label that puts fast fashion to shame – with a little help from a Unitec Bold Innovators Scholarship.

Atarangi Anderson (Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngāti Porou) graduated from Unitec last year with a Bachelor of Creative Enterprise, having already set up Inky Cat, a fashion label using recycled and organic fabrics. Her initiative is hardly surprising, given her creative parents: they made most of the family's toys, presents, tables, chairs and shelves.

"My upbringing was that you have clothing and then you pass it on. Aunties would take a bag away whenever they visited, and I remember having clothes come back to me years later! We would wear clothes until they were falling apart," she laughs.

Winning 2018's first Bold Innovators Scholarship – initiated by Unitec's Tūāpapa Rangahau; partnering research and enterprise – meant she received a grant, and access to an on-campus workspace and resources. It's given her time and space to work on her winter 2018 collection, Texture Me.

"I'm currently obsessing over layers and textures," Anderson says, which is evident in her completely secondhand outfit worn while speaking to Advance. A dusky pink wool skirt provides warmth on a chilly day; a modified black t-shirt drapes over a sheer polka-dot undertop from the Inky Cat Summer 2017 collection, in turn layered over a crop top.

"I really like the look of the three tops combined, and when I move you can see the layers. It's a similar idea for the winter collection: there are so many layers, and they reveal my process."



She describes her design aesthetic as a kind of nostalgic streetwear. "It definitely has a street influence, but it's a bit more homely, with block colours and soft tones."

Easy-wear summer options from the Colour Me collection.

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It definitely has a street influence, but it's a bit more homely, with block colours and soft tones. I want to look nice and be comfy!"

New Zealanders throw away 100 million kilos of textile waste each year, according to the Ministry for the Environment. It makes Anderson determined to keep working sustainably, though creating a collection completely from rescued materials has its challenges.

"Initially I wanted to make everything out of sheets from op shops! But it was really hard to maintain a sense of consistency. Now I combine recycled and upcycled fabrics with offcuts and organic fabric I've bought."

Texture Me went on sale in early July (inkycat.co.nz), and Anderson is running a pop-up shop in Auckland's St Kevin's Arcade

(July 9-22). Clothes are sold until fabric stocks run out. She will release two collections a year, a deliberate contrast to the speed of mainstream fashion.

"There's no time for pauses or giving back. Every two weeks it's common to have releases of new clothes, so you get no time to appreciate and live in the clothes you've just bought," explains Anderson.

"It also puts so much pressure on vulnerable garment workers. It's an unhappy cycle." This kaupapa (ideology) comes so naturally to her that she doesn't think of it as innovative.

"Māori thinking influences me as a person, which influences everything I do. I didn't know this was a thing – the idea that you give back to the land, you take what you need and not more – that made me passionate about ethical fashion. It was just how we grew up."



These pages: Comfort and a street-smart edge shine through in outfits from Inky Cat's Colour Me collection.

Anderson's first collection, created as part of her final-year project, was named Colour Me. She showcased the colourful, easy-wear summer range in November 2017 during a fashion show she masterminded at Auckland's Studio One – Toi Tū gallery.

That caught the eye of Creative Industries Academic Leader Paul Woodruffe, one of two lecturers who nominated Anderson for the scholarship.

"The way she staged the fashion show was very professional. Atarangi is a very hard worker and very active in research," says Woodruffe.

"She wasn't afraid to explore new territory. She saw a market where you can have something original, and it's affordable. She looked at high

fashion and asked 'What is it?' – it's boutique, not made in a factory, and instead of using expensive new fabric, she's using recycled fabric."

He describes Anderson's creative practice as "a wonderful combination of artistic sensibility and practical production design. She's not afraid to do her own thing, but at the same time she realises there is a system in place for making and selling clothing, and she's quite happy to engage in that."

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“I think the world is ready for this, in terms of sustainability. It’s becoming a trend and hopefully it will turn into a way of life.”

Marcus Williams, Dean of Research and Enterprise, helped choose the scholarship winner, and says Anderson exudes entrepreneurial spirit.


“When she staged a full fashion parade in her final year, which was highly successful, she found sponsors, and had students building the stage, modelling, doing design, lighting and filming it all. She is highly outgoing, highly collaborative, and unafraid to ask people to help her – and people just do.”

In her workroom, surrounded by piles of fabric and images for inspiration, Anderson



acknowledges there’s a risk in using secondhand fabrics.

“The life in it is a bit shorter, so you have to choose the fabrics you use quite carefully. People often associate secondhand fabrics with The Sound of Music, making clothes out of curtains, and I have to say no!” she laughs.

“I think it’s a beautiful thing, to give something a new life. While it can be risky, I think it’s cool and it’s worth the risk. And I think the world is ready for this, in terms of sustainability. It’s becoming a trend and hopefully it will turn into a way of life.” 

contact

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