Time as a student

Anna Skodbo graduated from the University of Hertfordshire in 2010, and is now the owner and Creative Director of a highly acclaimed and successful clothing line, Phannatiq Ltd. Anna chose Hertfordshire as the course was new, and Hertfordshire offered the best facilities, space and equipment compared to other institutions offering a similar course. Anna felt her time at Hertfordshire was highly beneficial in a number of personal and professional ways.

“The degree was important to me personally as a way to prove myself and the opportunity to learn practical skills. Through them, I not only learnt about practical pattern cutting and designing skills, I also got a chance to work in the industry whilst studying and gaining innumerable contacts and experiences. My advice to current students would be get as much work experience as possible so when you graduate you have the contacts to find paid work.”

Big break

During Anna’s first year studying at Hertfordshire, one of her tutors arranged for her to work for a company dressing backstage at London Fashion Week. The following year she was offered a full time internship in the same company, assisting at another Fashion Week venue and with the Britain’s Next Top Model promotional tour. In her third year she was offered a management position in the company, and ran their presentation room at London Fashion Week. She was then offered a job by Norway’s Tina Steffenakk Hermansen, or TSH, a leading Norwegian fashion designer, notable for dressing the Norwegian crown princesses amongst other glamorous clients. She worked for TSH at their Oslo Fashion Week.

Entrepreneur

She began designing her own clothes alongside this work experience, and now runs the successful company, Phannatiq. Anna does much of the work singlehandedly: “I design and pattern cut the collections and oversee production. I am responsible for sourcing, managing and accounting. I outsource manufacturing, textile printing, PR and website design but I have to keep on top of everything and everybody”.

Anna’s clothes are worn by a wealth of celebrity names including Stella Creasy, Little Mix, Natasha Bedingfield and Alexandra Burke. Running Phannatiq takes up most of Anna’s time, though she also manages to squeeze in some freelance lecturing in Fashion at a number of university and colleges. Her plans for the future include further developing her new online shop and building up the retail side of her business, which is currently predominantly wholesale. Phannatiq has recently featured in Vogue, Glamour, The Evening Standard and Mail Online. www.shop.phannatiq.com

One of my favourite memories is when the university shut because of snow. A small group of us brought mannequins, ironing boards, irons and sewing machines to the LRC and set up there. The LRC staff were utter heroes!