

GEORGE

ISSUE TWO



COLLARTS
FASHION
MAGAZINE

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FROM THE TEAM

GEORGE is for the students, by the students. GEORGE is an opportunity for our students who want to write about fashion, photograph fashion, think about fashion, examine fashion, create fashion, market fashion and work in fashion.

Welcome to Issue Two of GEORGE, spotlighting fashion, creativity, and the power of industry connections at Collarts. In this edition, we feature inspiring industry collaborations, career insights, and alumni stories. From sustainability-driven student projects with Thread Together to the industry wisdom of Liz Sunshine, fashion journalist Cait Emma Burke, and the team from Permanser recruitment.

GEORGE continues to champion emerging and current voices shaping the future of fashion.

COLLARTS

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LIGHTS ON Industry & Collarts news

Whether you're into fashion, art, or design, these events have something special for everyone. Follow Lights On for updates, tips, and all the details you need!



Martin Grant Exhibition at NGV

17 28 March 2025 – 26 January 2026

17 NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3000

Step into the world of one of Australia's most iconic fashion designers at this retrospective exhibition. Discover the elegance, sharp tailoring, and career highlights of Martin Grant, brought to life at the National Gallery of Victoria.

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/martin-grant/>



Life Instyle – Retail Trade Event

17 31 July – 3 August 2025

17 Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens, 9 Nicholson St, Carlton VIC 3053

Life Instyle brings the best in design, homewares, fashion, and lifestyle products to Melbourne's retail trade professionals. There are sections dedicated to sustainable fashion and homewares, a whole area just for kid-related products, and some amazingly beautiful ceramics and glassware.

<https://www.lifeinstyle.com.au/melbourne/en-gb.html>



Kimono: Refashioning Tradition at NGV

17 4 June – 5 October 2025

17 NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3000

Immerse yourself in the timeless artistry of kimonos. This NGV showcase explores the garment's evolution from traditional Japanese attire to a global fashion statement, blending history with contemporary innovation.

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/kimono/>



Flinders Keepers

Autumn Winter 2025 Market

17 11–13 July 2025

17 Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens, 9 Nicholson St, Carlton VIC 3053

This vibrant market is your go-to for unique Melbourne and Australian creative finds from emerging designers, local artisans, and one-of-a-kind treasures. There will be 270+ exhibitors including lots of food and drink options.

<https://thefinderskeepers.com/>



The Nanny Exhibit

17 11 April - 04 July 2025

17 The District Docklands, Shops SEG10-15, 101 Studio Lane, Docklands VIC 3008

If you love the 90s, and you love fashion, you can't miss The Nanny Exhibit that features over 100 significant costumes from the famous TV show. Expect to see Fran's outfits from iconic fashion brands like Moschino, Dolce & Gabbana, Anna Sui, Dior, Christian Lacroix, Versace and more.

<https://thenannyexhibit.com.au>



Metro Muse Fashion Show by Revival Runway

17 25 May, 2025

17 Q Events, 123 Queen St, Melbourne VIC 3000

Expect fabulous womenswear brands featuring smart suits, stunning occasion wear and pretty work dresses for women of all ages and sizes. Revival Runway is a non-profit volunteer organisation where everyone gives their time, experience and energy free of charge to create professional opportunities for brands and emerging fashion industry talent.

<https://revivalrunway.com/>



The Big Design Market

17 23 - 25 May, 2025

17 Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton Gardens, 9 Nicholson St, Carlton VIC 3053

Another one of Melbourne's favourite markets, 'Almost Winter' by The Big Design Market will bring over 250 of Australia's most coveted designers and makers to Melbourne, alongside the new addition of decadent gourmet food and drinks.

<https://melbourne.thebigdesignmarket.com/>



Fashion Thrift Society Melbourne

17 19 July, 2025

17 State Sports Centre MSAC, 30 Aughtie Dr, Albert Park VIC 3206

Australia's biggest fashion market, offering a festival of style, music, and community, with a wide array of preloved and vintage fashion items.

fashionthriftsociety.com.au



PHOTOGRAPHER: CHARLOTTE COMBS
Model: Brandi Pham

ALUMNI NEWS

Having an eye for fashion and a marketing mind are 'hard skills'

Garrett Skein has always been creative, but without what he calls 'hard skills', like drawing or sewing, he wasn't sure what career path could serve as a creative outlet.

Now working as the brand manager for independent Melbourne fashion brand Justin Tong, Garrett has worked his way up from design assistant at Kennedy Marketing + PR via Junior Brand Manager at Torannce and Marketing Manager at East Side Clothing.

We recently sat down for a chat with this graduate student from COLLARTS' Bachelor of Applied Business (Fashion Marketing).

What aspects of your university studies prepared you most for the realities of working in the fashion industry?

Juggling workloads and possessing the ability to quickly switch between disciplines. But, on a more enjoyable note, probably understanding the customer journey's relationship with the marketing funnel.

Did you find it challenging to break into the fashion marketing industry in Melbourne? If so, what were the biggest hurdles?

I found the prospect of entering the industry from ground zero challenging (and daunting). In my experience, the key to unlocking opportunities in the industry is hands-on experience (no matter how small) and networking.

Did you use any specific strategies, networks, or job platforms to secure your first role?

In addition to my existing job, my placement also helped me enter the industry. I also interned for the @collartsfashion Instagram account and at Revival Runway fashion shows.



What was one of the biggest challenges you faced when transitioning from university to the workforce?

Sadly, realising that the industry doesn't always share the same values of sustainability and cultural/size representation as your peers at university. I am proud that since I started my career, I have developed into roles that oppose these systemic issues, notably with Justin Tong.

Is there anything you learned on the job that university didn't prepare you for?

I am of the belief that university is meant to give you a small taste of everything, so you know what direction you want to pursue when you start your career. The rest you learn on the go.

How important has networking been in your career? Do you have any tips for recent graduates looking to build connections?

Networking is essential. My advice for recent graduates is to face every task, situation, and hardship with blind, unwavering optimism. People within the industry (no matter how jaded they may be) will enjoy the positivity of your presence and will invite you to be involved in more opportunities/projects because you cut through the negativity in the room.

Are there any Melbourne-based fashion or marketing events, workshops, or organisations you'd recommend for aspiring professionals?

Revival Runway.

Follow Garrett on Instagram at [@garrettskein](https://www.instagram.com/garrettskein) For information about Justin Tong, go to [justintong.com.au](https://www.justintong.com.au)

COVER STORY STUDENTS USE DESIGN TO INSPIRE SOCIAL CHANGE

Milla Muntz

Asiah Marumaru wearing
Sophie Blackney shot by
Angel Borg



This was not the first time Collarts Fashion and Sustainability students have had the opportunity to collaborate with social enterprise Thread Together, and it won't be the last. However, this time it was particularly special for Fashion and Sustainability student Sophie Blackney.

In her final trimester at COLLARTS, Sophie took on the opportunity to produce two garments in collaboration with Thread Together and Melbourne Fashion Week, on top of the work she was already doing for her final Capstone project. The final outcomes were a top and jacket made entirely of secondhand ties provided by Thread Together.

As a deadstock clothing distributor, Thread Together has no shortage of ties, suit

jackets, and dresses. Anthony Chesler, CEO of Thread Together, believes that "partnering with organisations like Collarts allows Thread Together to showcase the value of what can be done" with the surplus of products received. Alongside Thread Together's main mission to re-distribute deadstock products to people that need clothing, through collaborating with emerging designers they are also exploring how clothing can find new value through re-use and repurposing.

Anthony praises Sophie's designs as a unique style that supports Thread Together's values around keeping clothing out of landfill. "A lot of people do not wear ties anymore, so it is a great example of showcasing what can be done and creating something that is fashionable and functional."

While Sophie's designs are inherently sustainable, she credits the opportunities she has received to collaborate with Thread Together as a challenge which forced her to think outside the box.

"When collaborating with Thread Together, I have always created the most insane pieces." Sophie does not feel hindered or constrained by the materials but instead uplifted by Thread Together's support and the platform provided by Melbourne Fashion Week to showcase her values as a designer.

As mentioned, Sophie and fellow

"It was for a cause, but it didn't need to look like it was for a cause."

fashion design sustainability students have collaborated with Thread Together before, but this time students had the opportunity to sell their work through the Melbourne Fashion Week Threads Regenerated Marketplace.

Aligning with a closed loop clothing system, students were able to see their work being given a new life. "It was great to get a taste of what it could be like collaborating with other brands in the local industry." Fashion

and Thread Together as a way to "stimulate creativity in the sector, because we do not need more garments, but we do need more people re-using garments." Thread Together acts as a catalyst for both creative expression and innovation. Andrew explains that as a garment moves through the waste hierarchy, creatives can take on the role of showing how to transform a garment into a new form of clothing or even a new form entirely. By acting as a catalyst for re-purpose and

"Life is short, stunt it. No matter what it is, it's all part of your journey"

and Sustainability Program Leader, Meg Parry, supported Sophie's work by renting the tie jacket to match Sophie's top for the first night of Melbourne Fashion Week. "The free publicity" was unexpected but greatly appreciated by Sophie. The garments attracted attention from *The Herald Sun*, *Fashion Journal* and photographers alike.

"It opened my eyes to the idea of hopefully making it in this industry with doing what I want to do. Yeah, it was a good uplift."

Attention and interest equal advocacy for Thread Together. Andrew believes that emerging designers can contribute to Thread Together's overall mission by 'demonstrating what can and can't be done' with using excess stock. Anthony emphasises the collaboration between COLLARTS

up-cycling, Thread Together can further close the loop on a garment's lifecycle.

As Sophie and Anthony have shown, these types of collaborations are both important and beneficial. Thread Together encourages emerging designers to reach out at any time if they need materials to re-purpose, up-cycle, and deconstruct. If you feel apprehensive about collaborating and sharing your work publicly, Sophie has some advice: "Life is short, stunt it. No matter what it is, it's all part of your journey. It may not be great at that moment, but if you share it with people, they can follow along your journey, then you can look back and appreciate where you started and where you are now."

For more about Thread Together, go to <https://threadtogether.org>

FEATURE

Liz Sunshine's advice on how to capture the energy of change in fashion photography

Milla Muntz

For Melbourne-based photographer Liz Sunshine, "fashion photography was not only creative but a way to feel part of an immense global energy, an energy that has sustained me for over 20 years."

For many creatives, the recent rise in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is anxiety-inducing and cultivating unease about job instability. So, how has Liz Sunshine kept her cool long enough to sustain a 20-year career as a fashion photographer during the rise of the internet and the growing sustainability issues that plague the fashion industry?

It was the beginning of the digital age and Liz was starting to make the switch from loading film into enlargers in dark rooms to RAW images, colour spaces, Lightroom and E-com. Digital photography was the future and Liz was onboard. Impatient to start, Liz volunteered to assist photographers and learn on the job. That curiosity and an eagerness to learn by doing allowed Liz to become a full-time photographer by the age of 24.

"Learning new skills in a world of rapid change is essential," Liz advises young photographers. While adapting to rapid change was pivotal to finding early success, having a strong values base has defined Liz' more recent career. As a lover and consumer of clothing, Liz believes in the power of fashion both personally and professionally.

As a documentary fashion photographer, Liz sees first-hand the way that how we dress can uplift and connect us. Through her observation skills and love of fashion, Liz has carved out a space within the local industry by capturing the everyday street style of Melbournians. By seeking meaning in the mundane, Liz is able to find a "depth that isn't measured by



product sales". Although documentary fashion photography is her creative voice, it has also provided her a platform to advocate for fashion sustainability. Liz's form of activism is influenced by her parents' conservation-focused lifestyle. Using photography as her voice, Liz's environmental advocacy results in what she describes as "soft activism imagery".

"Creating soft activism imagery aligns with what I think is missing in the sustainability conversation," explains Liz. "It acknowledges that our relationship with clothes is complicated and that saying 'sustainable clothing is good' and 'fast fashion is bad' doesn't allow for the many nuances, limitations and individual approaches to dressing required to create change."

In an era defined by constant posting, sharing and content consumption, Liz recommends that finding confidence as a creative will come from "understanding why you create and who you are as a creative". Liz suggests young photographers look inward and not outward, saying that by determining what you like and value, you will then be able to stay true to your aesthetic and remain uninfluenced.

Having confidence in your work and creativity is a necessity as Artificial Intelligence becomes more normalised Liz, explains. She wants to remind creatives that technology posing a threat to an industry "is a tale as old as time" and that adapting to the fast-paced digital landscape is a sign that creatives are willing to grow and learn.

"Change happens. AI is here. In my opinion, our jobs as creatives are not to try and keep the world as it was but to be creative with what we have."

Liz's inherent curiosity and adaptability led her to experiment with using AI generated imagery. She says that she doesn't view AI imagery as a replacement but as a different kind of creative work that does not mirror her documentary work. What began as a mild curiosity deepened into an obsession, so she spent three months creating 6,000 images experimenting with the limits of generated reality.

"Everything I knew of AI was fairy floss trees, etc, but the images I was creating showed wrinkles on dresses, suggesting a woman had been sitting down all day, or the sloppy shoulder of a shirt wrinkling around the body," she says.

The final 100 images became her first published book, *Future Fashion*. The collection of images show a glimpse of a universe where older women proudly embrace both their imperfections and their creative expression through fashion. The work shows that AI's ability to replicate and shape our reality is not threatening, but another way art and a creative perspective can "provoke thought and critique of the world".

Liz's work is thought-provoking, meaningful and timeless with, and without, the use of AI. She captures the energy of change within the fashion industry effortlessly. Instead of feeling insecure about the rise of AI, Liz looks to all the ways that new technology can have a positive impact on accessibility within the photography industry; like generative fill and Photoshop.

"The question should not be, how will AI change the future of photography? It should be, how will you use AI in your creative process, and what will the images you create say about you?"

To discover Liz's work, check out her Instagram account [@lizsunshine](https://www.instagram.com/lizsunshine), and you can buy her book *Future Fashion* at www.ourrelationshipwithclothes.com/future-fashion.

IMAGES: LIZ SUNSHINE





**SA WAKAS;
AT LAST**
BY EUNICE GALLO

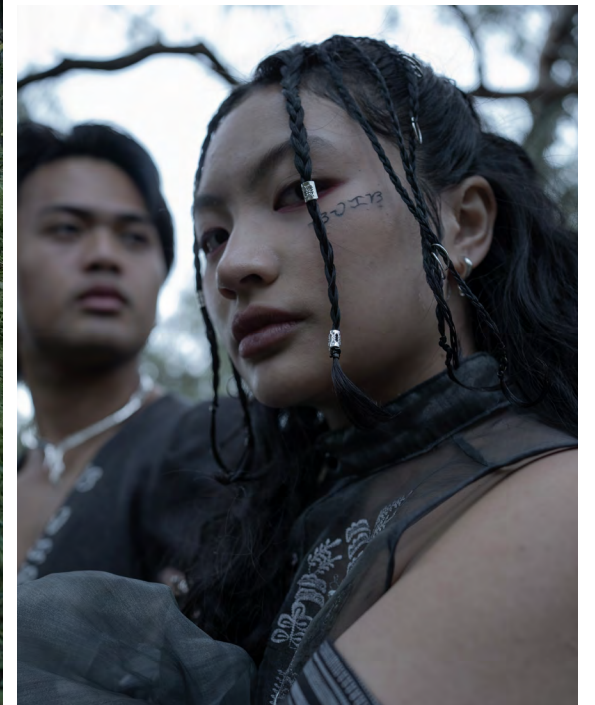


PHOTO ESSAY

Sa Wakas: Eunice Gallo Weaves Filipino Heritage and Futuristic Elegance into Sustainable Fashion

Fashion & Sustainability student Eunice Gallo's [its3un](#) graduate collection entitled Sa Wakas [At Last] embraces a journey of reclamation. Eunice's work is a tribute to the rich layers of Filipino culture, celebrating its essence through upcycled textiles, indigenous heritage and spiritual folklore. Each piece combines tailored silhouettes with modular design, embodying a genderless vision of pride and speculative curiosity. In a world shaped by colonial influence, Eunice honours their roots and explores the hauntingly beautiful tapestry of their heritage.

Photographer: Nighty Okot [@nightyokot.photography](#)



Navigating Change: A Fashion Journalist Reflects on the Evolving Industry

Milla Muntz

As a writer, second-hand clothing enthusiast, seasoned editor, journalist, and now a senior podcast producer, Cait Emma Burke has witnessed the Melbourne fashion industry's evolution. She has observed, critiqued, and celebrated its changes, watching it adapt to both the rise of social media and the growing era of climate anxiety.

She knows firsthand how formidable and demanding the Melbourne creative industry can be—as well as how to navigate it. Cait always knew she loved fashion.

She worked at a consignment store called Recycle Boutique in New Zealand (where Cait is originally from). As a journalist writing about fashion, she naturally drew from her love of pre-loved clothing. Over her five years at Fashion Journal, moving from writer to editor, Cait has witnessed a “real groundswell of love and support for local labels.”

Slow fashion is the bread and butter of Fashion Journal, positioning the local magazine as a pillar of support during these challenging times for designers and brands that have been “decimated by fast fashion and offshore production.”

Cait has also noticed a change in consumption habits of Melbournians who seem to be opting for locally made investment pieces over a multitude of fast fashion pieces. Nevertheless, she can't help but notice the brands currently struggling—a reminder, she believes, for consumers to support local fashion, “if they have the means.”

On a lighter note, Cait has felt uplifted by the women in the industry who are thriving and surviving by uplifting and nurturing each other. Cait has “always felt creatively inspired by other women” and has been

fortunate to be able to “always surround [herself] with creative, interesting women.” Especially in an industry where success is reliant on connections and kindness, where women are often undervalued and “taught to not believe in themselves in the same way men are.”

In much the same way Cait had to overcome imposter syndrome, her experience mirrors that of many other creative women. Through the experience of being thrust into a role as editor at Fashion Journal with a lot of responsibilities, Cait emerged from it with greater confidence and a sense that she had truly proven herself.

Even so, she still feels a sense of disbelief, often thinking, “How am I here?” as she steps into her new role as senior producer at Shameless Media. Though some might consider it “toxic,” Cait has “always been a very fake it to you make it person.” This technique and coping mechanism has helped propel her career forward. By pushing through the anxiety, Cait has come to notice that “people are kinder and more willing to help you out than you might think”.

“People are kinder and more willing to help you than you might think”

Cait tends to use her anxiety and imposter syndrome as a “driver” to continue to prove herself, believing that “each little bit of experience builds on the last bit of experience.” She also uses running as a coping mechanism; and if not that, she finds that “therapy helps.” Cait encourages creatives at the beginning of their careers to start learning what your way of coping with anxiety is, and with time and experience, you will feel much more confident in your skills and abilities.

Having managed the internship program during her time at Fashion Journal, Cait has plenty of advice to share with creatives applying for internships locally.

“Don't be afraid to ask people to coffee”, reaching out to industry professionals is “one of the best resources for building your career.”

“Don't be sloppy and have a lot of attention to detail” Cait advises, “look over your application, like, 10 times, get another pair of eyes on it” to avoid spelling mistakes. Doing that “little bit of extra work like addressing your application to the right person is really appreciated.”

She also emphasises the importance of understanding the brand and “tone of voice for the publication that you're applying for.” Cait uses Fashion Journal as an example, advising that if you're applying there, you should “go read their articles and look at their social media” and with that knowledge, she suggests “coming up with relevant ideas that align with the vibe, tone, and persona of the publication.” Finally, she stresses the importance of being clear about what you can offer: “hone in on what you believe you can contribute to the brand.”

Much like the media industry, Cait has had to adapt to the growing relevance of chronically online cultures and conversations. It is also the nature of working in the modern media landscape – it involves “reading and thinking a lot about other content.”

Besides having a natural curiosity about the world, Cait tailors her social media content in order to stay in the loop and keep up with broader cultural conversations. Following relevant Instagram and Tik Tok accounts for instance. As well as subscribing to email newsletters which “are a great way to stay up to date with what's happening.” As a fashion magazine, leveraging social media platforms is “definitely key” to maintaining a voice within the media industry. Social media has given audiences “insight into how the media world operates.”

As a 15-year-old, Cait knew she would work for magazines, but a career as a magazine editor, for instance, seemed so inaccessible - it was a “closed off world” before social media. However, Cait has noted

the potential resurgence of print, saying, “It's making a comeback, which is super exciting.”

Cait has come to utilise both the physical and the digital worlds as sources of inspiration for her writing. “It is really important to make time to consume offline content.” A good book or a conversation with a friend about dating, fashion, body image, or mental health, will “feed into [her] articles.”

Cait acknowledges the significance of support, inspiration, and guidance for young creatives starting in the industry. She recommends her friend Arabella Peterson's newsletter, The Forward, for career advice from admirable women in various fields, noting that it features “a really nice variety of people spread across different industries.” Another source of “biased” career advice is Fashion Journal. During her time there, Cait established the ‘How I Got Here’ column as “a space where women can talk honestly about their careers.” The Creative Independent is another great source of advice from industry professionals.

“Interpersonal connections are incredibly important in the media industry,” Cait emphasises, highlighting how valuable LinkedIn can be as a networking resource. She advises, “Just make sure your profile is up to scratch,” including a polished bio, and encourages creatives to “share your work on your LinkedIn page as well.”

Regardless of how much the fashion industry has changed, for better or for worse, Cait continues to write about it. Through being honest about her career and inviting others to do the same, creatives like Cait are setting a tone of kindness and coping mechanisms for the next generation of writers, designers, editors, and marketers to thrive within.

Follow Cait on Instagram at [@caitemmaburke](#) and [@style_ishau](#)



PHOTO : COLLARTS

FEATURE

From Classroom to Career: Lessons and Opportunities at the COLLARTS Fashion Marketing Speed Networking Event

Eboni Penny & Carys Shewring

The COLLARTS Fashion Marketing Speed Networking event was organised to connect current students with alumni who have successfully transitioned to working in the industry. It offered an opportunity for them to build connections and ask questions in a welcoming atmosphere, free from the pressure of formal pitches or presentations.

Current students admitted to feeling a mix of nerves and excitement, with questions like

'what should we ask?' and 'how do we make the most of this Opportunity?' on their minds. However, as the event unfolded, it became clear that the focus was simply on meaningful conversations and mutual learning.

Sitting down with the alumni, students heard firsthand about their experiences — what they were doing while studying at COLLARTS, how they navigated the transition into the workforce, and the lessons they had learned along the way. Conversations allowed the students to delve into topics like career challenges, personal growth, and the ever-evolving nature of the fashion industry.

KEY INSIGHTS

Some of the key insights included the importance of staying curious, asking questions, and being open to new opportunities. Many alumni emphasised how pivotal it was to remain adaptable and keep learning, especially in an industry as dynamic as fashion. They also shared that building genuine relationships both during their time at COLLARTS and beyond played a significant role in their career growth.

The alumni represented a diverse range of experiences and job titles. Among them were Garret Skein, a digital marketing manager; Reene Young, a popular stylist; Chantelle Logan, marketplace coordinator for the Country Road Group; and Alice Clark, founder of Oomf Creative Recruitment. The event also featured interstate alumni who joined via Zoom, including Julz McBain, founder of the Toowoomba Fashion Festival in Queensland, and Yasym Lewis, a

marketing manager from Sydney.

Fashion Marketing Students Sara Dorne, shared her perspective on the event: "The speed networking event was a great opportunity to have a casual conversation with some industry professionals and COLLARTS alumni. It was comforting knowing each person came from the same place as myself and has managed to achieve successful careers or starting points within the fashion industry. At the time of the speed networking, I was becoming restless in my pursuit to solidify an internship. However, the professionals I spoke with gave me some great advice which helped me revitalise my motivation to keep reaching out and opening myself up."

For some students, the event led to a more tangible opportunity. Madeline Vorrias secured an internship with Julz McBain after their conversation at the event. Reflecting on her experience, Madeline said: "We had a really good conversation about my interests within the industry and she explained how her company works. After the event we added each other on LinkedIn, and she offered me an internship. Since then, I've worked on digital marketing for the organisation and written a sustainability article published on their website. Social media marketing is an interest of mine, so creating content for an amazing organisation was very rewarding, especially being able to work remotely."

The speed networking event wasn't about perfecting an elevator pitch. Instead, it was a chance to connect, listen, and learn from those who have already walked the path. Students were left feeling inspired and motivated, with new perspectives on what lies ahead for them in the fashion industry. Above all, the event was a reminder that building a career isn't just about where you're headed but also about the people you meet along the way.

BUSINESS & NEWS



Monique Montfroy's Tips

Tell us about your fashion brand?

Born out of a passion for the planet and a love for design, [Texcoco Collective](#) strives to make a positive impact on both the fashion industry and the environment. Our collection features plant-based cactus leather handbags, 100% handcrafted by talented Mexican artisans. Each piece reflects our commitment to eco-conscious design, environmental preservation, and thoughtful consumption.

How did you get into the industry?

My journey into the fashion industry started with my love and passion for photography. I studied photojournalism at university that led me to self-fund numerous projects in various countries.

What's your top tip for being successful in fashion?

My success in fashion and my career has come from following my intuition and trusting myself and backing my ideas.

What's one thing people don't know about working in fashion?

Working in fashion takes just as much business knowledge as it does creativity. There's a huge amount of strategy, logistics, spreadsheets and problem-solving involved.

Top tips for dressing more sustainably?

When op-shopping, it is best when you go there with no intentions. If you need to find a very specific piece you're not likely to find it. If you go with no expectations and open eyes, you can find the best hidden gems.

Tell us one thing you wish you had known before you started working in the fashion industry?

Don't try to start anything by yourself. It takes a team and a community to build and sustain a business.

Monique Montfroy is Program Coordinator Fashion Marketing and WIL Coordinator Fashion at COLLARTS. Discover Monique's brand [Texcoco Collective](#) at [texcococollective.com](#) and follow Monique on Instagram at [@moniquemontfroy](#)



So very Frankie!

As part of an assignment for her Styling Unit, Fashion Marketing student Lucinda Collins created this fun cover shoot based on the now infamous JW Anderson Cardigan worn by Harry Styles. Lucinda created a crochet replica of the knit cardigan to feature in the photo shoot. So very Frankie!

Insights from Fashion Industry Recruitment Experts

Carolina Maciel Melo

Have you ever stalked someone on LinkedIn and wondered how they managed to land a dream job?

While social media might make it look effortless, the reality of breaking into the glamorous – or not-so-glamorous – fashion industry often involves a combination of grit, strategy, and a lot of hard work. It's easy to daydream about being in someone else's shoes, but how do you go from aspiring to achieving? What lessons can we, as fashion students, take away from those who have made it?

To help answer these questions, we spoke to four recruitment professionals from Permanser Consulting – Tanya Anderson, Amy Ashford and Natalie Young, and Jackie Turner. Permanser Consulting is considered to be Australia's leading fashion industry recruitment agency with more than 40 years experience. Their advice for fashion students highlights the importance of building essential skills, understanding cultural nuances,

“In such a visually driven industry, your personal brand speaks volumes.”

— Permanser Consulting

and adopting strategies that work within Australia's competitive job market.

What key skills should fashion students focus on to catch the eye of recruiters and stand out in a competitive job market?

“As recruiters, we value candidates who demonstrate genuine interest, engagement and initiative,” Tanya explains. “This could involve taking a sales role with a fashion brand while proactively seeking opportunities to shadow professionals in areas like buying, styling or management.” Amy emphasises the importance of showcasing a unique perspective and strong sense of style: “In such a visually driven industry, your personal brand speaks volumes.” Meanwhile, Natalie highlights foundational skills:

“Pattern-making, sewing and digital design are highly sought after in the fashion industry. They're the building blocks that enable you to bring your creative visions to life.”

What's the best way for someone just starting in fashion, even if they don't have much experience, to build industry connections and gain experience?

“Explore the many fashion meetups available – they're fantastic for networking,” Jackie advises.

“You might be surprised at how valuable these relationships can become.” Amy adds, “Finding a mentor is another excellent strategy. They can guide you and introduce you to others in the fashion industry, expanding your opportunities.”

Is it true that writing a cover letter is a key way to grab the attention of recruiters or companies? If so, what approach can help ensure success in an interview?

“Absolutely,” Natalie confirms. “Cover letters remain a key part of the Australian recruitment process. Tailor them for every role you apply for.” Tanya elaborates: “Use your cover letter to showcase your personality. It's a great way to stand out and make a lasting impression. Ensure it highlights your genuine interest in the role and clearly explains why you're a strong fit by linking your relevant skills and experience to the job requirements.”

What are three common mistakes you see candidates make when applying for jobs, and how can they be avoided?

“One of the most common mistakes is applying for jobs without thoroughly reading the job ad or tailoring the resume and cover letter,” Amy shares. “Focusing on fewer applications but investing more effort into research and personalisation can significantly improve your chances.” Tanya highlights the importance of preparation: “Researching the company before applying or interviewing shows genuine interest and initiative. It also helps you highlight how you can add immediate value.” Jackie adds: “Leverage personal connections to position yourself as a top candidate. Relationships are incredibly powerful in the fashion industry.”

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