

# TBI Q&A: Adrienne Whitewood

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Fashion designer Adrienne Whitewood tells about her work and Cult Couture 2012 Supreme Award winning design 'Taniko', inspired by the piu piu and bodice worn by Kapahaka performers.

Fashion designer Adrienne Whitewood (Rongowhakaata, Ngai Tamanuhiri) says winning the Cult Couture supreme award has affirmed her dedication to culture and craft.

She tells us more about the design 'Taniko', inspired by the piu piu and bodice worn by Kapahaka performers.

"I had the idea to transform it into a wearable street dress and I gave it a Lady Gaga splash of colour along with thousands of tiny stitches woven on board."

Cult Couture was on Saturday 20 October TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre, Manukau, as part of the **Southside Arts Festival** (<http://www.southside.org.nz/>).

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## **During what hours of the day do you feel most inspired?**

I get most inspired in the middle of the night. I get an idea and I manipulate it in my head until I get to my workroom and put it out on a mannequin.

## **How would a good friend describe your aesthetic or style?**

An eclectic mash of Culture meets dynamic cut and colour meets soul.

## **What aspect of your creative practice gives you the biggest thrill?**

I get the biggest thrill from seeing someone on the street wearing a piece I designed. People buying your product is the ultimate recognition of your work.

## **How does your environment affect your work?**

Living in Rotorua has affected my work greatly we have a rich culture and it's everywhere, the scenery, sights, Maori art and language is promoted everywhere. Clothing for me is naturally inspired by all these things.

## **Do you like to look at the big picture or focus on the details?**

I think part of being a designer is having foresight. I have to look at the big picture and where I see myself going, the industry relies on the innovative you can't cut it if you don't think big.

## **What's your number one business tip for surviving (and thriving) in the creative industries?**

Be innovative, look at where your location is and who your audience is, for me it's tourism and tourists. I understand the seasonality, the story behind the piece is just as important as what you are selling. Knowing who your customer is, is key

## **Which of your projects to date has given you the most satisfaction?**

Cult Couture has been the best thing I've done by far. I worked tirelessly on my Taaniko inspired piece to win the award was the ultimate satisfaction. For me it affirmed the dedication I have to my culture and craft so it was so gratifying.

## **Who or what has inspired you recently?**

I am currently being inspired by Maori Icons which will be featured in my next collaborative collection at the upcoming Te Matatini Kapahaka Festival.

## **Tell us a bit about your background.**

I graduated in 2009 from AUT with a bachelor of design in fashion. I established my label Adrienne Whitewood in 2010 I have shown at NZ Fashion week for the last two years and I am currently based in Rotorua with my work/showroom at the Local Arts Village (RAVE) my Adrienne Whitewood Clothing **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/AdrienneWhitewood?ref=ts&fref=ts>) page and **website**

