Julija Bainiaksina won £5k funding from the UCL Bright Ideas Awards 2013

The fashion industry is notoriously competitive, and any young entrepreneur looking to break into it needs the right combination of talent and support. Luckily, UCL student Julija Bainiaksina (Civil Engineering, 2012) has just that. Last year she started FOXHUNT, a fashion line that specialises in bespoke one-off knitwear for men. Now flourishing with an expanded range and an online store, FOXHUNT is moving from strength to strength.

But how did a UCL Civil Engineering student become a fashion designer?

It’s in the genes
Julija’s family runs a knitwear company, so she grew up with a great insight into running a fashion business. And while her Civil Engineering degree gives her knowledge of a practical discipline, she wanted to use her creativity to make a difference. “It’s hard to do something on my own, but by both creating something new and creating jobs, I’m doing something that has a value for society – and that’s something that really inspires me.”

To get started, Julija was supported by UCL Advances’ Student Business Advisors (SBA’s). SBA Sherece Rainford says, “I’m really impressed with the level of her ambition and the quality of the clothing themselves. It’s been a pleasure to see the shift in scalability of the business – as well as Julija’s focus on her products being made in Britain.” She also won a Bright Ideas Award in 2013, which gave her funding for her business to the tune of £5,000, and participated in UCL Launchbox.

Launching new fashion stars
LaunchBox was a pop-up shop in Shoreditch that ran during 2013, giving students the chance to showcase and sell their creations in the real world. This helped them test their brands in the market so they could move forward on their entrepreneurial journeys. FOXHUNT made a real splash, with Julija’s creations featuring in the Mail on Sunday and the Guardian and being selected to be sold in two of London’s boutique stores.

“My designs and business models are a response to today’s culture of high street mass production and quick fixes,” says Julija. “FOXHUNT’s ethos is of individuality and quality, and unique, bespoke garments.” Timothy Barnes, Director of UCL Advances, says of Julija’s success: “When people think about UCL, they probably think first about the university’s worldwide renown in science, engineering or medicine. If they think about UCL and creativity, they probably think first about the Slade School or the Bartlett. But the UCL Advances team is passionate about harnessing and validating creativity and entrepreneurship wherever it occurs. In Julija’s case, that’s helping a civil engineering student take her first steps into the highly competitive high-end fashion space.”

www.foxhuntmenswear.com

For more information see:
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise
About UCL
UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top-ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

www.ucl.ac.uk

About UCL Advances
UCL Advances, UCL’s centre for entrepreneurship and business interaction, helps anyone who wants to learn about, start or grow a business. It’s primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries. It works to support start-ups and small businesses across London by helping them to access the technical and business expertise of UCL’s staff and students through a series of programmes to help support ambitious young companies.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise

About Student Engagement
UCL does more to help students learn about, start or grow a business than any other UK university, giving them the critical skills to get a job or start their own venture. UCL Advances offers a whole programme of support – taking them through their entrepreneurial journey. This includes access to training, mentoring, one-to-one business advice from our in-house advisors, access to loans and grant funding, placements and the use of our Hatchery space. A few of the activities are detailed below:

- **The Student Business Advisers** can provide students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and recent alumni with support to start, build and grow their businesses. Our advice is impartial, confidential and practical – we’re known for no nonsense, pragmatic guidance that fully takes their personal aspirations and goals into account.

- **The UCL Bright Ideas Awards** aim to help bridge the gap that many new companies find themselves in when they search for their first funding. The winners of these awards will share up to a total of £50,000 in funding that will be offered as a loan to help get their businesses up and running. Specifically, it is hoped that the money will allow the winners to reach the next crucial milestone in their development, whether that be the first prototype or support for landing the first customer.

- **UCL Launchbox** is a pioneering shop that launches student creativity into the marketplace. Now an online store featuring an ever-expanding range of UCL student creations, UCL Launchbox began life as a pioneering pop-up shop in the heart of Shoreditch’s famous new shopping mall constructed out of refitted shipping containers, Boxpark.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/studentengagement