



Visibility Podcast



Rap, Rainbows and the Rag Trade episode transcript

Fiona

Hi everyone and thanks for listening to Visibility, the monthly podcast produced by CID, the Council for Intellectual Disability.

Here, we will be telling our stories, and exploring some of the issues that impact people with intellectual disability. To find out more about our work visit <http://www.cid.org.au>.

Now, settle in and enjoy.

Music

[CID's podcast tune]

Adele

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Council for Intellectual Disability acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



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Alex

Hello and welcome to Visibility. This is the last episode in our extended Arts and Culture podcast series where we have been talking to creative professionals about their life and work. Today we will hear about the world of fashion and micro business with Ben Paior-Smith who has created and operates Hazzah Apparel in Adelaide. Ben is living proof that with vision and the right support great things can be achieved.

Alex

My name is Alex Elliot. I will be your host today. With me is my co-host Adele Tashkin.

Adele

Thanks Alex and welcome Ben. It is really great for you to join us today on the Visibility podcast.

Alex

So what is your latest business news?

Ben

Well, we do have a winter range. We have jackets and we have long sleeves.

Alex

And is this the first time you have launched a line for the season?

Ben

It is not the absolute first. We did autumn also. We are working on our spring at the moment.



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Alex

How many new designs have you released for winter?

Ben

We did seven.

Alex

What other kind of clothing do you design make and sell?

Ben

We do caps hats. We have O necks. We have V necks and many more to come. We have got childrens size sibling size baby sizes. Any size you could imagine.

Adele

That is great. So Ben can you tell us maybe a little bit about some of the designs? I kind of noticed that there was things like astronauts and rainbows.

Ben

I love rainbow. I love anything rainbow. And lately we have been using the astronaut. He is our mascot and we use him a lot. Well our Crescent Tune is one of our most popular designs that we have.

Adele

And what does that look like?

Ben

It is of a man laying down on a crescent moon with headphones playing.



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Adele

And so have you always kind of liked doing drawing and designs specifically.

Ben

Well I did high school. I enjoyed doing art drama and maths.

Alex

Did you have a connection with clothing and fashion when you were younger?

Ben

My mom got me the job at a retail store and that retail store got me the idea of doing apparel. It was a surf and ski shop, and I used to wear stuff like that a lot.

Alex

So you were working in that cool environment. Did you get ideas from that experience?

Ben

At that time I never thought of it like that. And now I have gotten into it having energy drinks. One of my passions was energy drinks. The colour of it all.

Alex

Do you have any other influences like other designers, graffiti or in music?



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Ben

I love graffiti. I love a musician called 6ix 9ine. Another musician that I enjoyed his fashion is CJ SO COOL. My first love was Red Foo. He was my inspiration for eight to ten years.

Adele

So you were influenced by Red Foo who is a rapper and personality. And so what about him inspired you?

Ben

His clothing. I love his clothing. Very fashionable.

Alex

You yourself have some experience in that world too.

Ben

Yes I am a musician also. Party Animals is the name. We create music all about emotions. Rap. I rap. When I was in high school that is how I got my love of music.

Alex

So where did the name Hazzah Apparel come from?

Ben

It was from the Viking age. It is like a victory call. That is how Norse gods created friendship. By going into battles and getting on their back and helping them out.



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Adele

How would you describe yourself?

Ben

I am more an active person. Very chivalrous. Very charismatic. Very charming at times. And I love to have a good laugh or two. But my humor is actually not the kind that you might like. It is more dark disgusting hilarious hysterical.

Alex

So how do you create your designs?

Ben

Jordyn is a personal assistant that actually helps me to actually get the designs up and running. She did it on paper. Which is actually quite interesting.

Alex

Who does what. In designing your work?

Ben

I get already ideas. Jordyn does the recreating recasting of it.

Alex

And what apps do you use?

Ben

We use Procreate for the designs.



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Adele

So do you find new design ideas hard or do you have lots of ideas?

Ben

I have a lot of ideas and it is actually pretty hard to actually get one design to the next. I am just like I got this design. Then after that oh then comes back up and go to the next design. I have ideas all the time and it is hard to project it out.

Adele

So having an idea of how long this has taken becoming an independent business owner and designer how old are you now?

Ben

I am 22 years old.

Adele

When did you start Hazzah Apparel?

Ben

I started when I was 19 years old in September.

Adele

You left school and and you just started following your career from there?

Ben

Yes.



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Adele

So what was your dream when you were starting the business back when you were 19, Ben?

Ben

My dream was actually to own a house.

Adele

And so how far are you away from that dream?

Ben

When I was 21 years old. My mum bought a property which is where I am right now. We will be demolishing the house creating twins like 44a and 44.

Adele

Pretty soon you will have your own place which means that you will have achieved one of your dreams. Really quite young.

Ben

Yep. Thanks Adele.

Alex

Thanks Ben for sharing your story with us. We will now take a short break before returning to hear more of Bens experiences creating and operating a fashion micro business.



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Alex

Welcome back everyone. So I understand Community Living Project in South Australia helped you figure out what you wanted to do. So can you tell us about that?

Ben

Community Living Project is how I got my business. Well one of the ideas was actually having a talent agency and we had apparel instead. Which is actually a really really good choice.

Alex

I understand you had a facilitator help you build a project group of volunteers. Who were they?

Ben

Wendy Butler. Justin. Graham. Chris. Me. My mum. And Jordyn. I had my mum Sam owns her own business called the Growing Space. She helped me getting this idea up and running.

Adele

You are saying that you have got the support of of your family.



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Ben

Family and friends.

Adele

And friends. Yeah. Great.

Ben

Well technically just one of my friends. Neighbors. Yes. Graham Justin and Chris are all in the neighborhood.

Adele

It is so important to have lots of different types of input and support in your life isn't it?

Ben

I completely agree with you Adele.

Adele

Did some of your NDIS funding help you to first set up your business Ben?

Ben

Yes it did. My mum helped me the whole entire way.

Alex

How is mum helping you along?



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Ben

My mum takes me to events and I am thinking Oh this might be interesting for Hazzah. I did a university course in doing event design and management.

Adele

What sort of event do you think Hazzah would put on?

Ben

Any event like a romantic getaway. And I am thinking of getting a marketing agent. We have difficulties in organizing events.

Alex

So when you entered the world of fashion design you had Down Syndrome. Then later on you were diagnosed with autism.

Ben

When I just realized that I had autism emotions mixed emotions everywhere. The very first day on Monday I was really, really depressed. Did not know what to do. I had to go out of my own shell and did it from there. Well from me not accepting it to someone that loves a part of that is the people who has got autism.

Ben

The community part. And now welcome to the community of autism.

Adele

Do you find that you deal with things a bit differently now or you approach things a bit differently in any way?



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Ben

Well, first off I am more of a social person, so that never changed me because of that. The part that changed me was actually what has been going on in the world. The world has got many bad things and very sad things going on that caused a lot of problems. Most of my days when I am with people, I am really happy.

Ben

It looks like that I am really happy. But inside I have an amount of pain that I do not know what to do. All I do is laugh. Laughter and laughter. All of the time. That shows up how much pain I am in.

Adele

Yeah, it is the human existence isn't it? So is that why you have got that dark sense of humor Ben?

Ben

Yes yes. That is why.

Adele

How many days a week do you work with your assistant Jordyn Ben on your business?

Ben

Three days a week. Monday. Wednesdays. Thursdays.

Adele

How does that make you feel? Running your own business?



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Ben

I am just going to say I just love it. I am very passionate about it. I would do anything for it. Every single thing that I watch see hear eat. Every single thing in life.

Adele

What would you say to anyone out there who thinks oh gosh I do not think that I would be able to start up my own business thinking I cannot do this. I cannot follow my dreams?

Ben

I would probably would say stop what you are doing. Just get on to your own passion. Do it now. Do or do not. There is no try. Yoda.

Alex

Are you exclusively online?

Ben

It is all online. We do it to America. To Australia. To New Zealand. Australia to New Zealand it is free shipping but everywhere else might be with money.

Adele

And Ben if people wanted to buy your clothes online what is the website?

Ben

www.hazzah.com.au



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Alex

What are you using to market and promote your business?

Ben

We do Instagram and Facebook. Our username is @hazzahapparel on Instagram. Just has Hazzah Apparel on Facebook. Please have a look. And also please follow us on Instagram and Facebook.

Adele

What are your hopes and dreams for the business for the future?

Ben

My hopes and dreams are actually having all of our merchandise in stores different stores and to have our own retail store ourself. I would love to do it in Gold Coast. Las Vegas Nevada. Hollywood California. And New York. Yes.

Alex

Thanks Ben for sharing your story here today about your life and work.

Ben

You are welcome.

Adele

Thanks for joining us on Visibility.

Ben



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Thanks Adele.

Alex

And to those listening, thank you as well. Please join us next month for another episode in the last episode of our extended Arts and Culture series. Stay tuned for further updates from the podcast team here at CID.

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