

## #PEAKPLASTIQUE

Fiona Clements



Figure 1. Fiona stands in zero-waste offcut red dress in front of the humans who responded to the call to be clothes-bearers. Fiona is introducing herself and calling forth her ancestor Motoitōi: "Nau mai Motoitōi, e tōku tīpuna, ki tōku taha i au e tū ana hei māngai māu. Welcome Motoitōi my ancestor to stand at my side as I stand as your mouthpiece." The humans are sans plastique, having released themselves from their plastique constraints.

Senorita AweSUMO is a platform for activism, a space that is ever changing and adapting to current needs. The name came from extenuating circumstances when Fiona Clements needed an outlet for creative expression while working through the effects of workplace-related harm; having to stand up for self in a threatened place – physically, emotionally and socially. Senorita AweSUMO is Fiona Clements' protective moniker, a bullet-proof vest to enable space between the active front and the person of vision. A constant engagement with participatory aspects, making a difference through activities and challenging people to activate and create; to bring that action into their daily life through the use of imagination. The zero-waste philosophy that drives the platform is a pathway to the circular and regenerative economy. It is a bite-sized, chewable concept that consumers can try on for size in order to adapt their lifestyle. To break our take, make, waste cycle and shift it to a circular one, we need more awareness from consumers about purchasing and product stewardship from producers. Designers serve their community by providing solutions to problems. Having seen the amount of waste created by commercial fashion production, Senorita AweSUMO is about creating solutions by finding opportunities to create unique garments and providing a local solution to a problem facing the fashion system globally.

## TOITU TE AWA TOITU TE WHENUA TOITU NGA WAHINE

As part of Dunedin iD Fashion Week 2018, and alongside two other Ngai Tahu designers, Amber Bridgeman of Kahuwai and Darlene Gore, Senorita AweSUMO took part in a fashion event titled “Toitu te awa, Toitu te whenua, Toitu nga wahine” which was held at Toitu Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin. The collection designed under the Senorita AweSUMO label was named #PEAKPLASTIQUE.

The zero-waste collaborators in this avant garde collection were staff at the Otago Museum, which donated material from the “Who Cared? Otago Nurses in WWI” exhibition which was developed and delivered in collaboration with the Otago Polytechnic Bachelor of Design (Communication) students and, complicitly, the citizens of Dunedin. Senorita AweSUMO collected the ‘plastique’ aspects of this collection from the streets. It was this daily action that drove Senorita AweSUMO to integrate a performance element into the fashion collection #PEAKPLASTIQUE.



Figure 2. Tent canvas goddess tunic stuffed with the leftover handles from 800 plastic shopping bags that were used to create the plastic-bag monster inflatable sculpture by Zoe Fox.

The disposable nature of plastic is inherent to our throw-away, single-use society. Senorita AweSUMO created a conversation with the audience about product stewardship, both visually and as a spoken word performance. We have hit peak plastique on a global scale. Plastic wrapping litters the earth and suffocates our oceans. Our animals are trapped in nets and eat plastic, which cannot be differentiated as not-food. New Zealanders use 1.6 billion plastic bags per year –, 40,000 an hour go into our landfills. Recycling is no longer a satisfactory solution to the problem as the #PEAKPLASTIQUE collection and performance demonstrate. Senorita AweSUMO issued a clarion call to halt the use of single-use plastic and follow the example of countries which are banning its use.



Figure 3. (left) The broken plastique umbrella. Everyone knows the story of the broken broly, used once, blown inside out, broken and thrown away – where is away? Figure 4(right). Discarding the plastique T-shirt. Plastique clothing suffocates the skin, causes endocrine disruption, does not break down in landfill and creates microfibre pollution. This is not a healthy space for humans. The long-term effects on the environment and our bodies as we evolve will be detrimental.



Figure 5.(left) Asymmetrical goddess tunic in plastique filled with single-use cups, which were discarded in the plastique midden that grew at the end of the runway throughout the performance. The 'away' space. Figure 6.(right) Fresh off the shelf, yet consumed in a single-use minute, everything on our consumptive shelves comes in plastique.

about what we throw away and how we value our resources. The #PEAKPLASTIQUE inflatable plastic bag monster made by Zoe Fox was a surprising physical disruption of the event space. This challenge to the 'normal' in the midst of a runway laid down the wero for commitment by all humankind that kaitiakitanga is the most important mahi and one that we must undertake immediately.



Figure 7. Sexy AF silk dress with a plastic bottle skirt made from all the juice bottles I drank while creating the collection. This was the only plastique I was allowed to buy while making the collection in order to get uniform circles. I gave them another single use.

He hononga mahi iti – a global collaboration made up of tiny actions.

Kei a tatou te mana – we have all the power.

**Fiona Clements** Pakeha, Kai Tahu, clan Gordon, craftivist, zero-waste textile practitioner and fashion activist. She grew up in Waitati, Dunedin. Connected closely with nature and environmentally minded, her beliefs are reflected in her zero-waste textile designs.

Photographs by Andy Thompson Photography NZ.