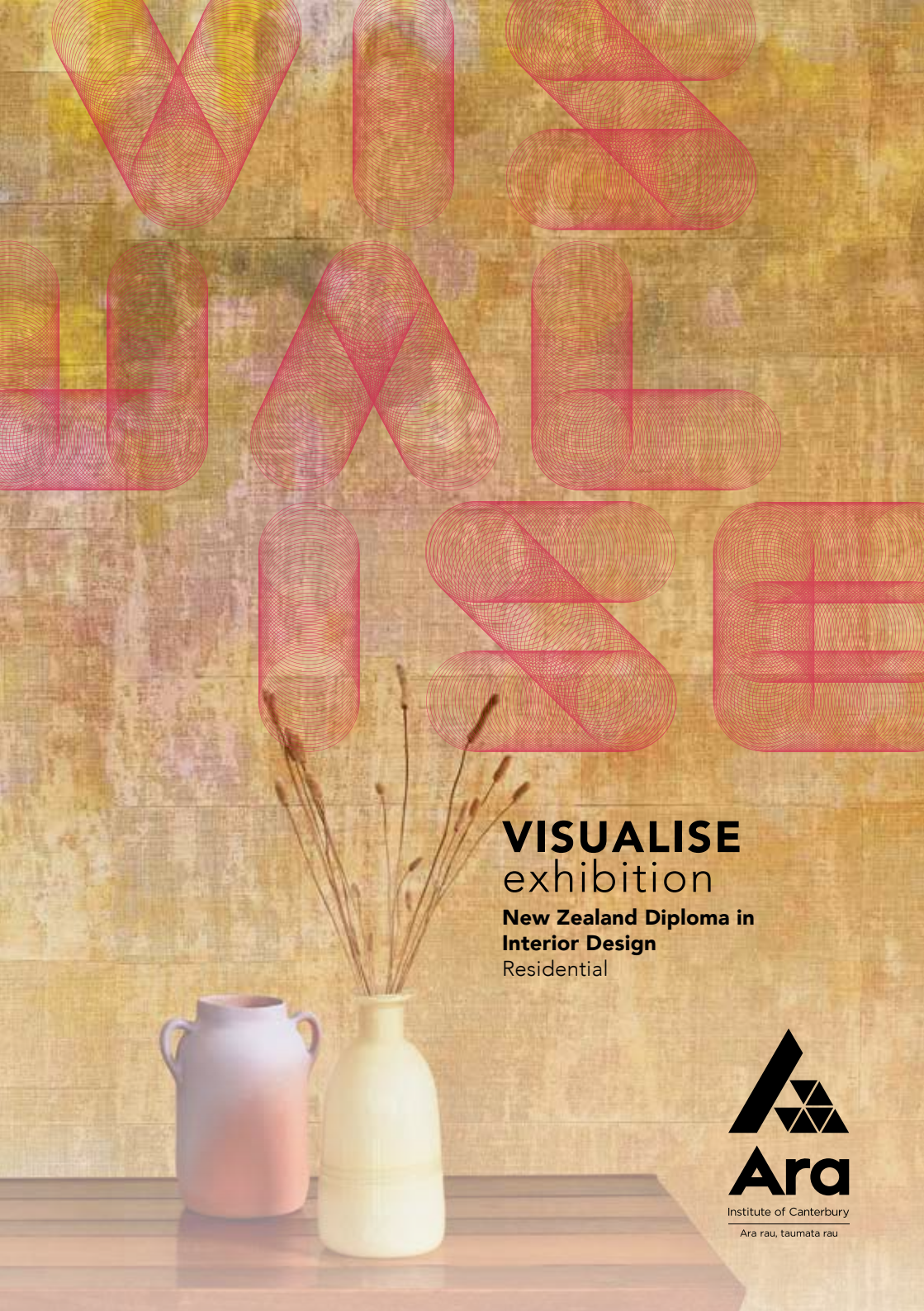


VISUALISE
exhibition

New Zealand Diploma in Interior Design
Residential

Ara
Institute of Canterbury
Ara rau, taumata rau

New Zealand Diploma in Interior Design (Residential)

Skill and imagination are key ingredients for creating beautiful, functional interior spaces and this exhibition by our talented New Zealand Diploma in Interior Design (Residential) students showcases plenty of both.

Cover image: 'Elitis Atelier D'artiste II Solstice VP 966 01' by Eloge Solaire

Welcome

It is wonderful to celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2026 graduates of the New Zealand Diploma in Interior Design (Residential) and to welcome you to this year's Visualise exhibition.

The work presented here reflects far more than the completion of a qualification. It represents a journey of growth, curiosity, and creative exploration. Throughout your studies, you have challenged ideas, refined your skills, and developed thoughtful design solutions that respond to the needs of the people and places they serve.

Interior design has the power to shape experiences, enrich everyday life, and create meaningful connections between people and space. The projects showcased in this exhibition demonstrate not only technical proficiency but also imagination, empathy, and a strong understanding of the role design plays in our communities. Each project offers a unique perspective and highlights the talent and dedication of its creator.

I am immensely proud of what you have accomplished and grateful to the staff, whānau, industry partners, and supporters who have contributed to your success. Their encouragement and commitment have helped foster the growth and confidence evident in the work displayed here today.

As you move forward into the next stage of your careers, I encourage you to embrace opportunity, continue learning, and remain true to the creativity and purpose that have brought you to this point.

Congratulations on this significant achievement. Enjoy this moment, celebrate your success, and take pride in all that you have accomplished.

Ngā mihi

Peter Sauer
Executive Dean – Faculty of Applied Technology

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the 2026 graduates of the New Zealand Diploma in Interior Design (Residential) and celebrate the exceptional work showcased in this year's Visualise exhibition.

This exhibition represents far more than the completion of a programme of study. It reflects a year of creative exploration, perseverance, and growth, culminating in a collection of work that demonstrates both technical capability and original design thinking. Each project highlights the unique perspective, creativity, and dedication that you have brought to your studies and offers a glimpse of the contributions you will make to the design industry in the future.

The success of this exhibition is also a testament to the commitment of our tutors, whose expertise, mentorship, and encouragement have supported students throughout their learning journey. Their dedication to fostering creativity and professional practice has helped shape the confident and capable emerging designers we celebrate today.

As you move forward, you do so with a strong foundation of knowledge, skills, and experience. The work presented here demonstrates your ability to respond thoughtfully to design challenges and create spaces that enrich the lives of those who use them.

Congratulations on this significant achievement. I encourage you to take pride in what you have accomplished and look forward with confidence to the opportunities ahead.

Vanessa Gooch
Portfolio Manager, Built Environments



Alanah Broadway



I chose to study interior design because I've always had an eye for designing interior spaces. I enjoy being creative, and I have a strong interest in how designing spaces can influence the way people live and feel in their space. Throughout the programme, I've particularly enjoyed developing and creating designs, as well as learning how to use programmes such as ArchiCAD and Photoshop, as I found it fascinating to watch my ideas come together visually. I've also enjoyed exploring different materials, finishes, colours and sustainable design solutions.

The programme has helped me build my confidence, creativity and technical skills while giving me a better understanding of the design process behind the industry. Looking ahead, I'm excited to continue developing my skills, gain industry experience and eventually create thoughtful, functional and beautiful spaces that reflect the people who use them.

Ava Burrows



At Cashmere High School I studied architectural and product design for three years. During this time, I discovered an interest in interior design, which led me to enrol in this diploma at Ara, where I've developed the skills to follow my passion.

Gaining skills such as ArchiCAD, drawing techniques and Photoshop has helped me to better communicate my ideas and expand my knowledge of design. After graduating from this programme, I would love to pursue my passion for design by getting a job in the industry to further develop my skills.

Amie Callaghan



I would describe myself as a creative, hardworking and dedicated person. When setting goals and striving for success, I always give one hundred percent effort to achieve them. My mum inspired me to study interior design. She demonstrated dedication and hard work while still loving her job, and that inspired me to pursue a career where I can be myself while doing what I love.

I'm dyslexic, but I use it to my advantage. I enjoy thinking outside the box and creating unique designs while still meeting the client's requirements. I'm strong in self-management and building meaningful personal connections. I'm also able to balance my studies, work and personal life without compromising any of them.

Mia Chen



My interest in interior design grew from my previous experience working in real estate. I visited many different homes and especially enjoyed helping owners make small design and renovation changes before putting their properties on the market. Seeing how these changes could completely refresh a home and add value made me want to learn more about design. My partner works in project management, which has given me more opportunities to learn about building and renovation.

During this programme, I've particularly enjoyed freehand drawing and field trips to local suppliers, where I gained practical knowledge about materials and products. I've really enjoyed turning creative ideas into designs that can work in real life. In the future, I hope to become a professional interior designer and help people create their dream homes that are not only beautiful, but also practical and comfortable.

Lily Clark



Studying interior design at Ara has been a great experience. Throughout my studies, I've gained valuable knowledge of the different processes and aspects that come together to create practical and distinctive spaces. I've particularly enjoyed using my creativity and thinking outside the box to develop these designs.

I'm passiontate about colour, and this is evident throughout my work. I look forward to applying the skills and knowledge I've gained through this diploma as I continue my studies in the arts.

Morgan Cogle



Starting interior design straight out of high school has been an exciting new experience. Over the past year, I've developed a range of skills, including using Photoshop, manual draughting, creating design schemes, selecting materials and navigating ArchiCAD.

I've particularly enjoyed learning how materials, textures and colours can work together to transform a space.

Despite the challenges along the way, I've gained confidence in my design abilities and developed a stronger understanding of the aspects of interior design that I enjoy most.

I look forward to seeing where the future takes me as I continue to explore opportunities in interior design and gain further experience.

Georgia-Mae Couch



I've had an appreciation for design from a young age. From scrolling through Pinterest to designing houses on The Sims, I always knew it was a path I wanted to explore. After initially following a different study path and working full-time for a while, I eventually returned to the passion for design I'd always had.

Since starting the diploma in interior design at Ara, I've gained valuable skills and knowledge that I'll carry with me into the workforce. The course has allowed me to develop my creativity, build confidence in my ideas, and gain a deeper understanding of the design industry. It's confirmed that interior design is the path I want to pursue, and I'm excited to take what I've learned into the next chapter of my career.

Anna Duncan



Ever since I was young, I've had a strong passion for design. When it came time to choose what to study at university, I was torn between fashion and interior design. After receiving a scholarship, I decided to pursue fashion first and went on to complete a Bachelor of Design (Fashion) with Distinction at Otago Polytechnic. Since moving to Christchurch this year to begin my studies in interior design, I've loved experiencing a new city and expanding my knowledge in another area of design.

Through my course, I've developed new skills and gained experience using industry programmes including ArchiCAD, Photoshop and Illustrator.

Next year, I would love the opportunity to take the knowledge and skills I've gained through both fashion and interior design into the industry, continue learning from experienced professionals, and further develop the way I think creatively as a designer.

Millie Dutton



At high school in Timaru, I developed a love for design, drawing and using my creativity to generate new ideas, which inspired me to enrol in the interior design programme at Ara.

One of my favourite aspects of studying interior design has been meeting new people, making meaningful connections, and continuing to develop my skills and knowledge.

Once I've completed my studies, my goal is to work in an interior design role that I'm passionate about, challenge myself to do my best, and potentially work towards owning my own business in the future.

Rob Enright



Growing up in Christchurch as a proud half-Niuean, half-Kiwi, I've always been intrigued by the form, colour and design of products and spaces. A couple of years ago, I decided to study interior design part-time, and looking back, it was one of the best decisions I have made.

Before studying, I was fortunate enough to own and establish several cafés around Christchurch. This experience, along with a few home renovations along the way, further fuelled my passion for design and creating spaces for people to enjoy. Through these experiences, I learned a great deal about the design process and the impact a well-designed fit-out can have on a space. I'm excited to take the next step and begin my career in the interior design industry.

Connie Fitzgerald



Throughout my life, I've been intrigued by interior spaces and the way they're designed and decorated. Initially, interior design was something I viewed as a passion rather than a career pathway. However, through conversations with family members and seeing my dad work in a similar industry, that passion developed into a desire to pursue further study.

Having already completed a qualification in psychology and marketing, I feel that studying interior design has given me an optimistic outlook on my future. Through my studies at Ara, I've gained a strong understanding of design principles and developed skills that I hope to apply when working with future clients.

After graduating, my aim is to build a career in the interior design industry where I can continue to grow my knowledge, develop my skills and pursue my passion as I begin the next chapter of my journey.

Iluka Gardziej



As an aspiring, creative and enthusiastic person, interior design is something I've always been naturally drawn to. From my early interests in fashion and aesthetics, I've developed a passion for creating spaces that feel personal and inviting.

Studying interior design at Ara has been a demanding yet fulfilling journey. I've had the opportunity to develop skills in areas such as ArchiCAD, technical drawing, space planning, materials and design development.

During my studies, I discovered that I enjoy working through design challenges and creating spaces that feel rewarding to bring to life. This year has also taught me the importance of designing for the client and striking a balance between creativity and functionality. It has been a year of significant personal and creative growth.

Paige Gibson



I grew up in a creative household. My mum is a graphic designer and my dad is a painter, so I've been surrounded by design and creativity all my life. I've always enjoyed design in its many forms, as well as photography, and these interests eventually led me to discover interior design.

Throughout this course, I've particularly enjoyed designing kitchens and bathrooms and I look forward to pursuing this area in the future. The programme has encouraged me to expand my creativity by incorporating bolder colours and statement pieces into my designs.

My goal is to combine the skills I've gained through this course with a real estate licence and, in the future, work alongside my partner in Australia to renovate and flip houses.

Maddie Goodenough



During high school, I was often asked what I wanted to do when I was older. My answer changed a few times, but interior design was always in the back of my mind. After finishing high school, I started looking into this course and watching shows about interior designers, which made me realise it was something I wanted to pursue.

I decided to study at Ara and haven't looked back. I've enjoyed everything I've learned this year and have gained many new skills, including ArchiCAD, space planning, and selecting materials and finishes. I've also developed a greater understanding of how to create functional and well-designed spaces.

After graduating, I'd love to enter the industry, continue learning, and keep developing my skills and experience.

Serena Hansen



Before returning to study, I spent 10 years building a successful career in hospitality. Making the move into the interior design industry felt like a natural step, as it's something I've always been interested in.

Throughout this course, I've thoroughly enjoyed learning how to create spatial designs that are practical, efficient and suited to everyday living, while also incorporating creativity and a natural flow. I've also greatly expanded my knowledge of how to communicate design ideas visually and effectively.

Once I complete my studies, I'd love to work in a role that involves creating ergonomic and environmentally conscious designs for smaller spaces and tiny homes. I'm particularly interested in projects where sustainability, functionality and practicality are at the heart of the design.

Piper Hartley



Studying interior design at Ara this year has been my first experience of study since leaving school. It's been great to learn about something I've always been interested in. I've loved interior design and styling from a young age, so this year has been amazing as I've been able to bring those interests to life. Studying has been challenging at times, but overall, it's been a rewarding experience and one that I've thoroughly enjoyed.

Throughout the year, I've gained valuable skills including using ArchiCAD and Photoshop. I've particularly enjoyed creating concept boards and experimenting with colours and patterns. I'm now ready to start the next chapter and look forward to seeing where my interior design journey takes me.

Coral Hedley



I've always loved being creative and have been interested in interior design from a young age. When I was little, I frequently rearranged my bedroom, moving furniture around and finding different ways to make my space look better. Studying interior design at Ara has helped me turn something I've always enjoyed into something I'd love to do as a career.

Throughout the course, I've learnt so much - from using ArchiCAD and creating floor plans to choosing materials, colours and putting together design ideas. I've really enjoyed being able to be creative and seeing my ideas come together into a finished design.

I'm excited to keep improving my skills, gaining experience and hopefully starting my career in the interior design industry.

Morgan Hofmeyr



My background in graphic design has strongly influenced the way I approach interior design. After completing a degree in fine arts, I chose to study interior design at Ara, drawn to the idea of working with different people and creating homes that respond to how they live and what they value.

This year, I've enjoyed building a deeper understanding of materials and finishes, particularly how these choices can shape the character of a space. I've also strengthened my ArchiCAD skills and developed a greater understanding of the technical and practical considerations involved in interior design.

Moving forward, I hope to gain industry experience while continuing to develop my own approach to residential design.

Stella Johns



I've been a creative person from a young age, with an interest in the spaces around me. When I was little, whenever I was bored, I would rearrange my bedroom and try different layouts because I was always coming up with new ideas for how I wanted it to look and feel. Even now, I still find myself thinking of ways I could change or improve my room. Looking back, I think that's where my interest in interior design began.

Studying interior design at Ara this year has allowed me to turn that interest into something I can see myself pursuing as a career. I've developed skills in ArchiCAD, technical drawing, colour, materials and finishes, and I've especially enjoyed taking ideas and developing them into a complete design. This year has made me more confident in my creativity and design decisions. I'm excited to gain experience in the industry and continue developing my own ideas and style.

Vielle Lagasi



My creative interests have always been wide ranging, from art and fashion to architecture and interiors. As a kid, I remember lining up monoblock chairs, adding pillows and draping blankets over them to make my own little sofas. I also loved noticing the beautiful homes and intricate interiors in films and TV shows, which eventually grew into my interest in interior design.

I chose to study interior design because I love how it brings creativity, design and architecture together. Since starting the course, I've especially enjoyed sourcing fabrics, materials and finishes, planning layouts, bringing furniture into a space, and designing joinery. I hope to work in residential design and eventually have my own business, creating spaces that balance sophistication, comfort and character.

Ava Lawrence



Creativity has always been a big part of who I am. When I was younger, acting was my avenue for this, which led me to studying a diploma in screen production. I love film and the way all its elements must exist cohesively to create each shot. This fascination for collaborative art and compatible design led me to studying interior design here at Ara.

I've enjoyed every second of this diploma and loved being able to use my creativity to design functional and unique spaces. I always knew I had interest towards interior design but studying this year has made me realise that it's my true passion. Between learning about all the different materials and finishes, to figuring out how to build a kitchen on ArchiCAD, each piece of information I've learnt has been invaluable.

I'm excited to be a part of the interior design industry next year and to continue to pursue my passion.

Ruby Lennox



I've always loved interiors, and studying interior design has been a goal of mine for as long as I can remember. I've absolutely loved my time at Ara. It's been a very fulfilling year, learning to work with schedules, stay organised, make decisions and prioritise my time.

I've learnt so much and gained many new skills. I'm now confident using ArchiCAD, have learnt about buildings from the ground up, and can create beautiful, functional schemes within a budget for different rooms and clients.

I look forward to following my passion for interiors within the industry, continuing to learn and furthering my knowledge through hands-on experience.

Janet Luka



I've had a long-standing interest in designing spaces, from rearranging my room and watching The Block to redesigning my family's kitchen at home. Accounting and finance was the path I'd originally planned for myself, as it felt stable and straightforward. During my final year of high school, I realised I was following a path based on what I thought I should do, rather than what I truly wanted to do. With that realisation, I decided to pursue a genuine passion of mine.

Changing direction isn't about giving up on original goals. It's about recognising that success means different things to different people. I wanted to pursue something that excites me, challenges me, and feels like success to me. Studying interior design has allowed me to do exactly that.

Phoebe McLoughlin



I've been a creative person for most of my life. Before coming to Ara, I completed a course focused on creativity and worked in the retail side of the furniture industry. Through these experiences, I realised that combining my creative interests with my passion for furniture could lead to a career in interior design, which inspired me to study at Ara.

Throughout this course, I've developed many new skills, including drawing techniques, material selection and designing functional spaces. I've enjoyed expanding my knowledge of the design process and exploring how creativity and practicality work together.

After completing this course, I look forward to exploring career opportunities within the interior design industry and continuing to develop my skills and passion for design.

Emily Mitchell



Interior design has always been an interest of mine. When I was younger, I would spend hours looking through house interiors on Pinterest and houses for sale on Trade Me. This interest turned into a passion for pursuing a career in interior design.

Studying interior design at Ara has been a rollercoaster, but ultimately it's been such an enjoyable, rewarding experience. I've gained a deeper understanding of interior design and discovered there's much more to designing spaces than I initially expected, which has deepened my interest more. I've gained valuable industry skills like ArchiCAD, design processes and spatial ergonomics. I'm eager to see what next year holds for me and to continue to expand my knowledge and skills as a designer.

Ignacio Olmedo Navarrete



I've been working in the kitchen design industry for nearly nine years, including completing a number of freelance projects along the way.

Originally from Santiago, Chile, I spent several years studying industrial design, where I developed my passion for creativity. Outside of my studies and work, I also enjoyed performing in theatre whenever time allowed.

For several years, I considered furthering my education to fill gaps in my knowledge, and in 2025 I decided to take that step by enrolling in this course. Throughout my part-time studies, I've been fortunate to make great friends and colleagues, and I'm excited to apply my new knowledge to creating inspiring and innovative interior spaces.

During my two years at Ara, I balanced 30 hours of work each week while performing in four theatre productions. Although it was a busy and demanding period, it was incredibly rewarding and helped me develop strong time management and organisational skills. I'm now looking forward to the next stage of my journey and, perhaps, having more free time again.

Merrin Rodgers



I'm a design enthusiast in the final stages of my diploma in interior design and preparing to commence Ara's Bachelor of Architectural Studies.

Working in the design space has been a lifelong goal. I'm driven by creative problem solving to maximise functionality, beauty and lived experience in every space. I especially enjoy carrying ideas from initial conception through to completion, translating abstract concepts into compelling, resolved designs. With a strong focus on visual communication, conceptual thinking and detail-focused direction, I aim to create thoughtful, human centred and enduring spaces grounded in earth-centred design.

I'm eager to bring my curiosity, collaborative mindset and foundation in interior design to architectural challenges on a larger scale.

Tiarna Scarlett



Creativity and design have always been a big part of my personality, leading me to develop a strong passion for interiors and colour. After studying visual arts at Ara, I continued to explore my creative interests through my work at Resene Paints, where I helped customers coordinate suitable paint colours and finishes for their spaces. This sparked my interest in pursuing interior design as a career, leading me to return to study at Ara.

Studying interior design has been an amazing experience, teaching me so many valuable skills and expanding my knowledge. I love incorporating natural elements and interesting textures into my designs, creating spaces that feel organic, warm and inviting.

I'm excited for my transition into the industry and can't wait to continue developing my knowledge and skills while collaborating with clients and industry peers.

Somer Taylor



Studying interior design at Ara has been a valuable learning experience, helping me develop both my creativity and technical skills. I discovered a particular interest in the CAD and technical aspects of design, especially seeing an idea evolve from an initial concept into a detailed drawing.

Learning ArchiCAD and developing the ability to communicate my ideas through technical drawings has been one of the most rewarding parts of the course. I've gained a greater appreciation for the level of detail involved in creating successful spaces. I look forward to taking these skills into the industry, gaining practical experience, and continuing to grow as a designer.

Danielle Tennant



Interior design has been an interest of mine from a young age. Designing new, creative and practical spaces brings me joy and excitement. After studying fine arts, I was inspired to study interior design at Ara and learn more about the industry.

Throughout this programme, I've enjoyed exploring the many aspects of interior design, with a particular interest in bathroom design. I've also enjoyed developing my own design style and perspective.

I'm looking forward to discovering where I fit within the industry and what I can contribute as a designer to the wider interior design community.

Phoenix Tipler



Being surrounded by architecture and fashion design for most of my life sparked my fascination with creativity and the possibilities of what can be designed and developed. Interior design felt like a natural choice because it combines two fields I've known since childhood, having grown up with a fashion designer mother and a father who owned a building company.

School was challenging for me, but I was always motivated to begin my professional journey early and work towards my dream career. During my time at Rangi Ruru, I developed a strong interest in product and spatial design, where I learned about perspective, created 3D models, and worked on unique design projects.

In the future, I hope to start or run my own design studio, creating thoughtful and individual spaces that reflect the people who use and enjoy them.

Jade Todd



I have a strong interest in creating spaces that are both visually appealing and practical, with a particular focus on ergonomics and the ways people interact with their environment. I'm drawn to retro-inspired design, especially the use of colour, unique details, and character, while still incorporating modern functionality. I enjoy finding ways to balance creativity with practical solutions to create spaces that feel comfortable, functional and personal.

After completing my diploma, I'm interested in exploring a career in either the paint and colour industry or the tiny home sector. I'm particularly interested in the creative possibilities of colour, finishes and materials, as well as the challenge of designing comfortable and functional spaces within smaller footprints.

Lucy Tunley



Interior design has always been an interest of mine. I enjoy the creativity involved in the design process and the ability to change how people feel in spaces. Subjects in school that involved working towards an architecture-focused career were a favourite of mine, but I was always more interested in the interior side of designing.

Studying this diploma here at Ara has allowed me to gain knowledge and experiences of different aspects in interior design. I'm looking forward to exploring the industry and seeing where my passion for interior design takes me.

Georgia Winkler



I've wanted to become an interior designer from a young age. Growing up, I loved watching The Block and was always finding ways to redecorate my bedroom, even though I shared it with my sister. This passion inspired me to study for interior design at Ara.

Throughout the course, I've developed a wide range of design skills, including ArchiCAD, rendering, material and finish selection, colour scheme development, and space planning. I've particularly enjoyed working on residential projects and learning how to create spaces that are both functional and visually appealing.

After completing my diploma, I'd love to work in the interior design industry, where I can continue developing my skills, build my confidence, and gain valuable industry experience.

