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Shoemaker puts best foot forward

A shoe designer from Chelmsford is using her passion for footwear to create bespoke designs.

Henrietta Rose Samuels set up her own label two-and-a-half years ago, after completing a degree course at the London College of Fashion.

Her shoes feature vintage kimono fabrics imported from Japan, which she discovered on a trip seven years ago.

"I found lots of little shops selling kimono fabric, which were the width to put a shoe pattern on," she said.

"I left all my stuff in Japan and filled my suitcase up with fabrics and I've been going back every year," she added.

Self-confessed footwear fanatic Hetty said she has been obsessed with shoes since she was quite small.

"I knew exactly what I wanted to do from quite a young age. Everything I did was geared towards shoes and shoemaking," said Hetty.

After taking her A-levels, Hetty completed an art foundation course in Braintree, before embarking on a four-year degree course at the London College of Fashion.

The shoes she constructed for her final degree piece were inspired by vintage materials.

Twenty-eight year-old Hetty confesses that many of the designs are from ideas that just come to her.

"There's a pair of red shoes that was a shadow on my bedroom wall in the morning, it's like a little wedge slingback.

"It sounds a bit crazy, but it inspires me to do something else. I'm inspired by other things, other than the people who the shoes are designed for," said Hetty.

However, Hetty is aware that sometimes her designs need to be tailored to the woman who will wear the shoes.

"I have to create a collection which balances my influences and inspirations and the clients that I ultimately sell to," she added.

The Hetty Rose label has been in production since 2007. She has ambitious plans for the future.

"I plan to steadily build and keep the bespoke shoes that I do, but I'd also like to introduce a ready-to-wear range.

"Still keeping the bespoke shoes as an aspirational things, so that you can buy the bag or a pair of shoes but can aspire to get a pair made," said Hetty.

She also has plans to teach and hold workshops.

Hetty is quite determined and focused when it comes to getting the job done.

"I love my work, I love what I do. It's not a burden, it's something that I want to do.

"I want to wake up and do it every day. And when I don't that's when I change it and do something else."



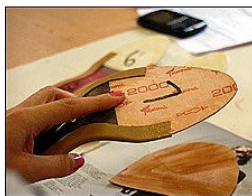
Hetty creates a new collection every season



Shoes made from reclaimed wood, vintage fabric and old ballet shoes



Hetty's Singer sewing machine was given to her by her Grandmother



Each pair of shoes takes between six to eight weeks to complete

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