

# Hollywood costume maker cottons on to her own sustainable business

A North East costume maker who has worked on Hollywood blockbusters has returned to her roots to set up her own business.

Rosie Bath has rubbed shoulders with some of the biggest names in the movie business, having created costumes for the likes of Aquaman and James Bond. But after coming home to Newcastle she has swapped the film studio for her own design studio, launching sustainable homeware brand Cera Cotton.

The Northumbria University fashion graduate now produces a range of plastic-free, vegan wax cotton homeware products and accessories, including peg bags and plant pouches, travel kits, toiletry bags and gift boxes. She set up the business after a camping trip with friends opened her eyes to the number of polluting plastics used in every-day travel essentials and accessories.

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Using her skills as a costume maker, she began experimenting with plastic-free fabric alternatives and many prototypes and late nights later, she created the waxed cotton solution. She said: "I was going camping and wanted to make some bunting to go around the tent. I noticed that there was a lot of plastic and I just thought, 'surely there's a better way?'"

"I searched for hours online and couldn't find anything, so I had to make do, however that was what really kickstarted everything.

"Working as a costume maker, I'd made outfits for the likes of

Bridgerton, the Little Mermaid, James Bond, you name it. At times, this meant producing items using traditional forms of manufacture with materials which aren't widely used today, such as wax cotton.

"I still remember the first time I used it. I was producing a wax cotton jacket and just loved working with it. Historically, British sailors used it to produce the sails on ships due to its water resistance and incredible durability. It's a tried and tested 500-year-old fabric. I have a real passion for looking back at how we lived before and how we can use old materials and means of production to live better lives, without sacrificing the convenience and quality that we have today, so it was a perfect fit."

Ms Bath sought advice from the Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing (SAM) Project at the University of Sunderland. After attending a series of workshops to understand manufacturing best practice and how to set up a production space, she was able to put her ambitions into practice.

Since the launch of its online store in August, Cera Cotton has launched eight core products with more set to follow. The company is also looking into supplying the retail sector, after hosting successful pop-up stores at Boots and Harvey Nicholls.

She said: "The ultimate aim is to become the home of wax cotton. I want to be selling a wide range of products and to employ local people. I'd love to work with local universities too, to provide opportunities to other creative graduates, but we'll take it one step at a time.

For now, it's about continuing to grow the business by spreading the word of what we're doing and educating people about the benefits of buying sustainable products, and I'm confident that the pop-up stores will provide us with the perfect platform to do that."

Neil Taylor, automation and robotics specialist at the SAM Project, added: “The SAM Project was set up to help SMEs better understand the manufacturing process and Rosie is a great example of the impact the programme has had.”

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