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The Milliner

Rosie Boylan

You might not be familiar with the name Rosie Boylan but you have almost definitely seen the hats she designs and makes. Over more than 30 years as a milliner, Boylan has collaborated with Oscar-winning costume designers such as Catherine Martin to create bespoke headwear for characters in *The Great Gatsby*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Australia*, *The Piano* and *Peter Pan*.

Boylan discovered her talent for millinery while taking part in a backstage course on theatre craft.

"Hat making just came so naturally to me, as they formed in my lap. It became something that was easy for me to do," she says.

To hone her craft, Boylan trained with Betty Viazim, who had been the doyenne of Sydney fashion millinery throughout the 40s, 50s and 60s.

At the time, Viazim was in her 80s and eager to pass down her skills. Boylan was just as eager to learn and

began making her own hats and selling them to the horseracing crowd.

For the past 25 years, she has had her own studio from where she has made bespoke hats for movies, TV and fashion.

"The other day, Rick Hoffman – one of the stars from *Suits* – came in for a hat," she says. "But for me, making hats is not

about famous people, it's about creating something special for the individual, whoever they may be."

A bespoke hat can take Boylan up to 15 hours to make. She uses natural materials such as straw, felt, silk, wool and cotton. The hats are made by shaping

and moulding them over a form, using steam.

Unlike tailoring, bespoke hat making is actually flourishing.

"Hats are seeing a bit of a revival," muses Boylan. "Many see a hat as a post-tattoo symbol of individuality. It's a fabulous time to be a milliner."

rosieboylan.com

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