

EMILIA HANUSKA

CUSTOM MADE FOOTWARE, RMIT

Why did you choose to study this course? After 6 years of watching staff at CCW (@MickRuss @Eamonn, shame on you), walk around wearing shoes they would classify as professional I decided to take things into my own hands. This is nothing personal boys; I just want you to have some self-respect. You're worth more than Target & Kmart. Invest in yourself; invest in a good pair of RM Williams. Please, no more pointed toes; it's literally the most unprofessional thing you can wear. Walk with authority and confidence. It's the 21st century. Quick shout-out to my boy, Tony Loorham, the best dressed bloke at CCW.

I always knew that I wanted to do something hands-on and creative. I studied Studio Arts and always tried to incorporate creation and creativity within my other subjects. I was also extremely interested and curious about history and studied History Revolutions with the amazing Tess MacRae (#SelfConfessedHistoryBuff??? @Mandy). Not only did I learn the ins-and-outs of the Russian and American Revolution and fall deeply in love with multiple deceased men, but I also learnt that all great men and women in history always dress well. If you're going to overthrow a political institution you may as well do it in style and look good. Revolution or not, behind every powerful figure was a tailor and a cobbler.

It was my experience at P Johnson Tailors last year that steered me into the direction of bespoke, as it's a personalised and intimate process, which is the thing I most enjoy about creating; creating something for someone and making it truly theirs. The relationship you get to build with your clients is relaxed, personal and collaborative which appealed to me as well. The craftsmanship and skills of bespoke incorporate the historical and hands-on elements which I was interested in pursuing and the Custom-made Footwear course at RMIT gave me the opportunity to start building these specific skills and to get an idea of what the industry was like.

Note: there are lots of strong men in shoemaking.

What is your course like? The Custom-made Footwear course at RMIT is an industry focused program that is completed full-time over the duration of one year. There are two types of classes throughout the week, the practical crafting of the shoes and CAD (Computer Assisted Design). The majority of the time is spent in the workshop making shoes under the guidance of Andrew Robinson, who has over 20 years experience in the footwear industry. A living and breathing definition of a legend.

In the first semester you learn how to make a court shoe, an oxford, a derby, a high-heel and a sandal. You are introduced to industry based processes and machines as well as bespoke skills. This includes pattern making, cutting leather both by hand and with the clicking press, learning about the qualities of different leathers and materials, skiving by hand and with machine, folding, sewing and construction, lasting and finishing. You build skills using programs such as Photoshop and Illustrator for design and you learn about the history and development of footwear, as well as various design elements to consider when creating your own design. You look at creating an online presence and different branding strategies.



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In the second semester you create a folio of designs for a range, building on the skills you learnt from semester one. From those designs you then create your final shoe to display at the end of year presentation where industry members are invited to come and view your work. Throughout the year you visit suppliers and workshops to get an inside look into the industry and to explore possible pathways.

It's an extremely short course considering the amount there is to learn, it goes very quickly. They need to give Andrew the 4-year course of his dreams.

What are some of the highlights from your year?

Getting my tools, learning new skills, learning from the Master, Big Chief: Andrew. Realising that he owns only blue sweaters.

Watching two strong men pull my boots off the last.

Meeting Bruce Miller, the only last maker left in Australia. Love at first sight, he's a charmer.

Sinking whiskey with the boys and winning an arm wrestle.

Seeing Sando & Tony.

Jake wearing a cool hat.

Running a block or two to have a VB and ciggy with the boys, I think the P.E department would be impressed with my time.

2018 plan: Tailoring apprenticeship.

