

# COCKPIT ARTS 3 YEARS

## **Nadia-Anne Ricketts - BeatWoven®**

- *Digital weaver*



Imagine your favourite piece of music transposed into fabric – this is the work of visionary weaver Nadia-Anne Ricketts who combines innovative digital technology with traditional weaving skills to create luxury bespoke woven pieces. Nadia's gorgeously rich fabrics offer a wide range of applications from large-scale art installations and upholstery to fashion and home accessories. Her business, BeatWoven®, produces fabric by the metre and one-off commissions for the V&A, Southbank Centre, Harrods and ABC Carpet & Home in New York.

Following a successful career as a professional dancer, Nadia studied BA Hons Textiles Design, specialising in Weave, at Central Saint Martins. She arrived at Cockpit Arts in 2012 with a passion for dance and music and a fledgling business idea. She had been awarded a studio thanks to the Cockpit Arts/Clothworkers' Foundation Award, which provided a large dedicated studio space for six weavers at Cockpit's Deptford incubator. This subsidised studio space played a vital role during the formative years of Nadia's business.

"BeatWoven® was extremely expensive to set up as there was a lot of research and development in the early stages," explains Nadia. "Initially I was not in a position to sell product or make any money back, so being able to keep my costs down with a subsidised studio space helped me incredibly."

Cockpit's Business Development Team helped Nadia successfully apply for a School for Start-ups' Launcher Loan and the UAL Seed Fund. Along with a further year's funding from the Cockpit Arts/Clothworkers' Foundation Award in 2013, this enabled her to continue to develop and research her brand. But the real breakthrough came when Cockpit Arts' CEO, Vanessa Swann, introduced Nadia to Creativeworks London's Voucher scheme. This enabled her to team up with two researchers from Queen Mary University of London to explore the legal and technological challenges of the business. "I'm really grateful to Vanessa for helping me to successfully apply for the voucher," says Nadia. "The result of this collaboration will allow absolute assurance that I, and future businesses exploring these areas, will have a commercial concept to take forward and grow into a viable business."



During her time at Cockpit, Nadia has benefitted from a raft of business support. Through one-to-one coaching sessions with Cockpit's Business Development Manager, Madeleine Furness, Nadia has been able to hone in on her three main revenue streams: selling fabric by the metre and cushions to interior designers and wholesalers; collaborative projects; and bespoke work and art commissions.

One recent project is particularly fascinating as it demonstrates the possibilities of the technology Nadia has developed. In collaboration with Savile Row tailor David Mason, Nadia created a musical jacket for singer/songwriter Beatie Wolfe. And yes, when you touch a smartphone to the jacket, it actually plays Beatie's latest single! "I'd always wanted my fabric to be used in fashion," says Nadia, "so it was great to be involved in this amazing project."

It's this totally new and innovative approach to a traditional craft that most excites Nadia, and she hopes to work on similar projects in the future. "I'd love to focus more on the art element of my work," she says, "collaborating with musicians and sound artists and pushing the concept in different ways."

The support and access to funding that Nadia has received through Cockpit Arts has taken her on a journey from initial idea to a viable business. It took three years to fully realise her business plan, which led to the official launch of BeatWoven® in the UK at Decorex 2015. She now employs a sales agent and studio assistant, plus regular interns, and has relocated her studio to Cockpit's Holborn incubator in central London, a move she finds more convenient for meeting clients.

"Being at Cockpit has given me structure, guidance and a level of professionalism," she concludes. "It's a fabulous platform for me in terms of PR and marketing, plus it has allowed me to have a reputable hub from which to deal with suppliers, manufacturers and clients."



[www.beatwoven.co.uk](http://www.beatwoven.co.uk)

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