



'Stitching pages can be laborious, but clients' reactions make it all worthwhile'

**Kate Rochester, 34, from East London, crafts limited-edition books.**

'Ten years ago, I was working for a book shop when I met an artist who showed me how to print with a Victorian letterpress. Watching him apply the inks and sprinkle the gold leaf, I thought, "Forget book-selling: I want to *make* books."

'My dad, Ralph Rochester, a writer, kick-started my passion for books. And, having worked for years among blockbusters sold in their millions, I was inspired by the romance of one-off books, and decided to learn everything I could about bookbinding. I bought a letterpress and taught myself the basics, then took an evening class in order to learn more.

'At the beginning of this year, I set up my own publishing company, which I run from my studio on London's Brick Lane. I began to break even when I published a limited-edition collection of my dad's stories for children, called *The Climbing Boy*. Stitching pages and cutting fabric is laborious, but clients' reactions make it worthwhile.

'I've just come back from Thailand, the best place to buy the most vibrant coloured papers and silks. My latest project is to make copies of a directory of 19th-century Parisian courtesans. I'll make them with French binding, which means you'll have to slice open the pages to reveal what's inside – just like a 19th-century peepshow!'

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