



Adriana Fulop and partner Ryan Webber of Plastik Wrap now call Hamilton home.

Techno Pagans

The Plastik Wrap designers talk inspiration, forest bathing, and new directions for their dark-alternative fashion label. Just don't ask them about Star Trek.

They may be dressed for the apocalypse, but Adriana Fulop and Ryan Webber are feeling optimistic. Fulop and Webber are the designers behind Plastik Wrap, the cybergoth streetwear label they founded in Toronto in 2001. It's been several years since the couple moved to Hamilton, trading a studio on Carlaw Avenue for two in a live-work building downtown. (Upstairs is living space and an office for Webber, an interactive media specialist; a second-floor studio houses the fashion business.) We talked at the nearby Café Oranje coffeehouse on King Street East.

"When we moved to Hamilton, we were able to start breathing and slow down and not just hustle," says Fulop. The designers made a name for themselves in the 2000s with their futuristic, locally made clothing and accessories. Early Plastik Wrap bestsellers — detailed, body-conscious styles in iridescent PVC — had names like EXE_cute and Crystalline, and were sold in boutiques

as far-flung as Japan. By mid-decade, they had a storefront on Dundas Street West.

Plastik Wrap grew out of Toronto's Queen West goth scene, but it was also born of the couple's complementary interests. Both studied fashion and they share a passion for electronic music. When they met, in the year 2000, Fulop and Webber were both newcomers to Toronto. Fulop had relocated from Slovakia, Webber from Vancouver. In true club kid fashion, they met on the dance floor — at Dark Rave, the monthly party hosted by DJ Lazarus.

In recent years, Plastik Wrap has contributed wardrobe to GTA sci-fi productions like the new *Total Recall* and *Orphan Black*. The original *Total Recall*, which starred Arnold Schwarzenegger, is probably an influence, says Webber. "I've always been into science fiction." Despite that love of classic sci-fi, it's new music and nature that inspire them, not mainstream geek cul-

ture. "We don't play video games," Webber says. "I don't like superhero movies," says Fulop. "I've never seen a *Star Trek* movie, even though people are like, Plastik Wrap reminds me of *Star Trek*!"

Plastik Wrap made its Hamilton debut in 2015 at the seventh annual Supercrawl, with a show called Techno Pagans. "It got rained on. It looked amazing. People looked great," says Webber. Shoppers can browse new styles online at plastikwrap.com or in person at the biannual Hamilton edition of the Bazaar of the Bizarre, the alternative craft fair they've organized for the past decade.

The move to Hamilton also freed up their time for special projects. Plastik Wrap collaborates on custom vegan stagewear for Lindsay Schoolcraft of popular British extreme metal band Cradle of Filth. As the costume designer for the Indspire Awards, Fulop has dressed Inuit throat-singer Tanya Tagaq. She also designs for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, an Indigenous troupe based in Toronto and Six Nations of the Grand River. For their new work, *Blood Tides*, Fulop is exploring a futuristic vision of corn.

Hamilton's industrial side holds a strong appeal, but they're most drawn to the city's natural surroundings. "There's lots of beautiful nature around, and I love going into nature. And waterfalls. Ha! We've been doing lots of — people call it forest bathing — these days. Which is very inspirational for me," says Fulop.

Their favourite spot? The Hermitage. Not for the ghost stories or pre-Confederation ruins, but simply to be present in the landscape. "[You] don't think about the everyday grind, but just check out what's around you. Leaves and rocks," Fulop laughs. "Moss!" A great chaser for Steeltown techno-witchery.

BY SARAH SHEEHAN