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3D printed headphone brand Normal opens flagship and factory in Chelsea

By BETH STEBNER

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | AUG 12, 2014



When it comes to custom-made headphones, one size fits none.

Normal, a tech company funded in large part, just opened up shop in Chelsea, selling a single, custom-made product — a 3D-printed headphone that fits your ear, and your ear alone.

"What existed before was at an inaccessible price point," Normal's founder and gadget company Quirky alum Nikki Kaufman told the Daily News.

Custom-made headphones cost upward of \$2,000, and took weeks to get from factory to your front door. Kaufman's earbuds take only a few hours to make — and cost \$200.

Kaufman, 28, lives just around the block from her newly-opened 11,000-square-foot flagship

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"We do not keep anything secret," she said of the bright white, minimal space, evocative of an Apple store. "Everything is literally transparent."



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But it might not make business sense to some — customers can order Normal's headphones straight from an app and have it shipped to them. And opening a brick-and-mortar store in the age of sky-high rents is always a risk.

But for Kaufman, the storefront is an extension of the shopping experience. "It's an experience," she said ahead of the store's Aug. 9 opening.

"You can hang out with friends, grab a coffee, explore the High Line."

So how exactly does it work? Customers can either get measured via the app (all it takes is a smartphone and a quarter), or get sized in-store.

The young entrepreneur is banking on the experience of buying the ear buds, and the novelty of 3D printing. She also hinted of future 3D objects to come, but gave no solid details about future endeavors.

"Let's get this started first and we'll see where we go," she said.

NORMAL, 150 W. 22nd St., www.nrml.com

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