Case Study: Design Assistant - Louise

What do you do?

I am a studio design assistant at Harlequin in Loughborough. This involves drawing up/creating designs for new fabric and wallpaper collections.

I also help with any jobs that need assisting in the studio. I could be CAD colouring, proofing in the factory, even making lunch for a meeting. Every day differs.

What is your background?

Always been creative throughout my school years and studied art and textiles at A level. Before I started this job I was a student at Loughborough University studying Printed textiles. This lead me on to presenting my work at New Designers in London, where I happened to meet Harlequin.

What characteristics do you need to be successful in your job?

You need to be able to apply your drawing skills in many different ways as each new collection has a slightly different feel to it.

You need to be willing to stop any job and move onto another job if it happens to be more urgent at the time.

You need to be able to express your own opinions and be confident with what you produce. And you need to be able to keep track of what is happening in the studio around you, and be sociable!

What other jobs could you do using the skills from this job?

You could become:

• a freelance designer
• an artist
• a colourist
• a CAD colourist
• a set designer.

You could also work for a fabric agency, and become more involved with the weave side of textiles.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

Having the confidence to proof a collection to go into production. Also using your own initiative and insuring a design is perfected enough to pass off into production.

Are there many opportunities to enter this career?

I believe if you work your absolute hardest to get a good portfolio together, showing a wide variation in drawing and design skills, and produce a coherent final project that demonstrates your skills to the best of your ability, then you will have the chance to display your work and get noticed.

Companies like to see your willingness to adapt to different roles, and if it doesn't happen to be exactly where you want to be initially you will always have the chance to work your way up and learn new skills as you do so.

What do you like about your job?

I love the friendly studio environment; there's never a chance to be bored. I also really like the variety of work I get to do here.
What are your ambitions?

I hope to be able to develop more responsibilities within the company, and work more closely on a whole collection from start to finish, which is what I am starting to do currently. And learn as many new skills as I can!

What advice would you give to someone interested in your career?

See 'Opportunities.'

A day in the life

Arrive at 8:30 am or just before. First thing I do is check emails, then get on with whatever is needed to be done. This could be painting, proofing work down in the factory or colouring on CAD

Lunch around 1:00 pm or whenever I'm hungry! Then back to my jobs until 5-ish, sometimes later depending on the amount of work.