
FASHION & TEXTILES

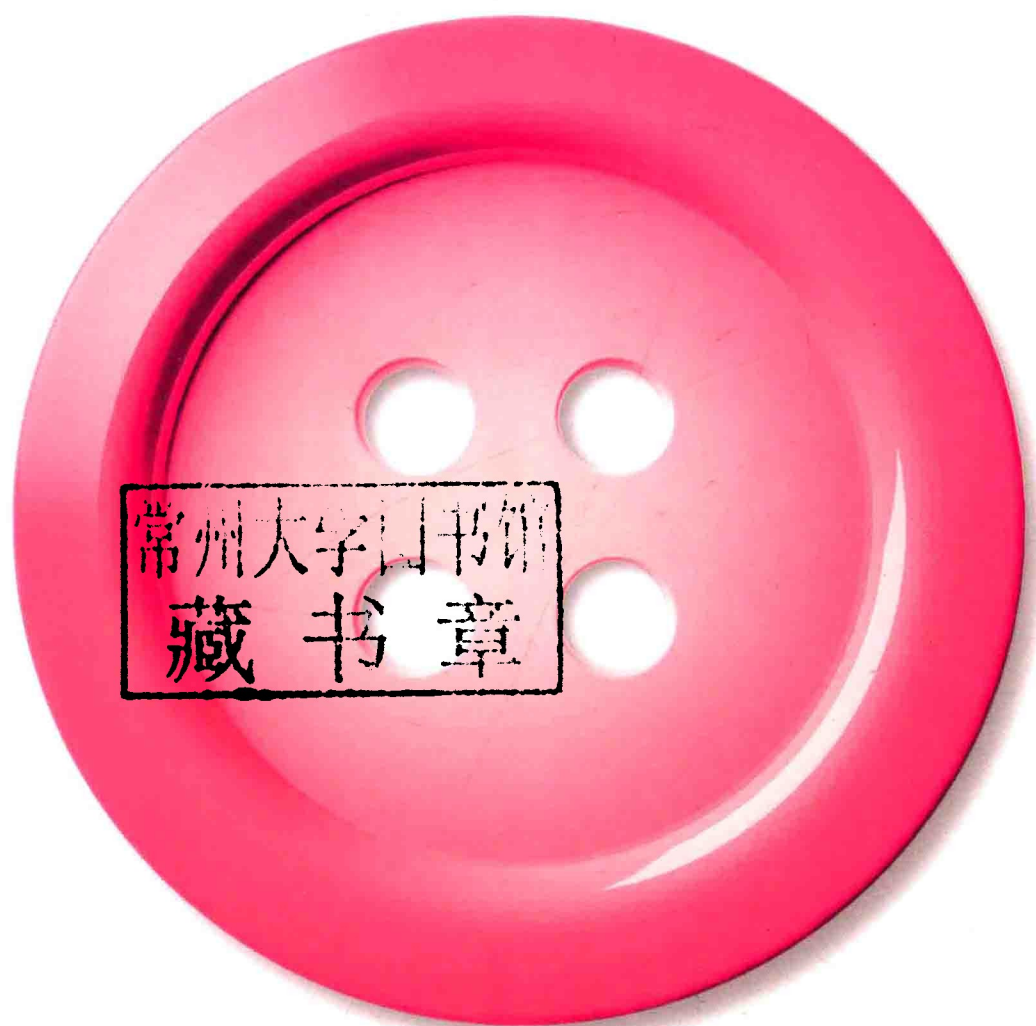
The Essential Careers Guide



CAROL BROWN

FASHION & TEXTILES

The Essential Careers Guide



CAROL BROWN

Laurence King Publishing



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Foreword

Fashion has long been my drug, a potent elixir that – mixed with one part perseverance, two parts imagination and shaken with a dash of reality – has taken me on a crazy rollercoaster ride to a place where dreams can come true. Carol Brown's book is a must for anyone thinking of a career in fashion and textiles. It will provide you with the practical tools to navigate the various career appointments available within the industry, and inspire you. With ambition, anything is possible...

Antonio Berardi

Fashion Designer

Introduction

I wrote this book for students, graduates, teachers, lecturers, careers officers and anyone who already works in the industry and is seeking a change of career direction. I wanted to create a resource, teaching aid and self-instructional book that would encourage the reader to become actively engaged with the content, and I wrote it in response to the continual questions asked by students and recent graduates about future careers. This book answers those questions, identifying what particular jobs involve; how the industry works; how to find an internship; the value of work experience; where to find jobs advertised; what to expect and how to present yourself at an interview; how to create a portfolio; the importance of networking; how to write an effective CV and how to complete an application form.

The first five chapters provide an in-depth review of the broad range of career options in the fashion and textile industry as well as associated industries in the areas of design, media and retail, giving clear definitions of job profiles. Also included is an overview of a wide range of alternative career paths. Throughout you will find profiles and exclusive interviews with many well-known and influential international figures in the fields of fashion and textiles, providing professional and personal insights into particular careers.

All aspects of the job hunting process are analyzed in chapters six to eleven, with practical advice that will increase your chances of success in gaining employment. The final chapter focuses on the budding careers of recent graduates and up-and-coming designers, giving a taste of what to expect in the early stages of your career.

I hope that you will find this book to be a useful and inspirational guide to taking your first steps in the world of fashion and textiles.

Carol Brown



Chapter 1: Creative Opportunities

*T*here are many exciting creative opportunities on offer in the fashion industry, from being a designer in menswear, womenswear or childrenswear to acting as a designer in a specialist field: bridalwear, corporate wear, lingerie, swimwear, knitwear, millinery, footwear, accessories or printed or woven textiles. Other creative opportunities discussed in this chapter include: costumier, wardrobe mistress, fashion forecaster, colourist and fashion illustrator. This chapter explains the breadth of employment and career opportunities within the creative fields of fashion and textiles.

There are three main areas of design: haute couture, prêt-à-porter (designer ready-to-wear) and high street fashion, which is the largest area of design with garments often being designed and manufactured in their thousands. There are many opportunities in this highly competitive market due to the fast turnaround of ranges, the vast numbers of sales of garments and the speedy response of the industry to seasonal trends.

The fashion industry is constantly evolving, with developments in technology, an ever-changing global marketplace and the transience of emerging trends. There are two main seasons per year in the fashion calendar: autumn/winter and spring/summer. Each requires a new collection that promotes a forthcoming 'look', using new colour palettes and fabric ranges. Producing a new collection involves careful research into future trends, visiting fabric exhibitions and trade fairs and reviewing the success of the past season's collection and the work of competitors, in order to produce a directional and appealing collection.

The Role of the Fashion Designer

The role of a designer varies from company to company depending on the size and type of business. In a larger company the designer may concentrate on one of the following areas: analyzing and predicting trends in fabrics, colours and garment shapes; producing concept and mood boards; sourcing fabrics, developing ranges and working with buyers and manufacturers. However, in a smaller company the designer may be responsible for every stage of creating and developing garment ranges from the initial concept of the design through to the production of garments. They may also be responsible for the manufacture of the blocks through to the patterns, supervising the making-up of samples and overseeing the manufacture of the garments.



Antonio Berardi: Fashion Designer

Antonio Berardi was born in the UK but now works in Milan, and is recognized as a key figure in today's fashion world. He studied fashion design in Lincoln in the UK and then worked as an assistant at John Galliano's studio before he gained a place on the BA (Hons) Fashion course at Central St Martins, London, in 1990. After graduating from St Martins in 1994, Antonio won a contract to design a high-street collection for a Japanese company. This contract assisted him in financing his own label.

In 1999 he moved from the London catwalks to Milan and by 2000 he was appointed Head Designer by Extê, who also became producers of his own collection. In 2006 he moved his focus to Paris where he presented his spring/summer collection, which was well received.

Antonio's work has achieved an impressive international following, as indicated by the popularity and the success of his collections, which are now available across Europe, America and the Far East. His work is regularly featured in top international fashion and lifestyle magazines such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, *i-D*, *Numero* and *Marie Claire*.

An Interview with Antonio Berardi

How would you define your style?

There are two parts to my style: elements of Sicilian culture – romantic, ultra feminine, frou frou, Baroque – and the other element is British: Royalty, Rock 'n'

Left: Antonio Berardi collection on the catwalk, autumn/winter 2008–2009

Right: Portrait of the designer



Roll, Madonna—where; creating a play against masculine and feminine.

What inspires and influences your designs?

Absolutely everything – films, music, literature – it may be a line in a book that is so evocative. Everything and anything!

In your opinion, what makes a successful fashion designer?

It is important to stay true to your vision; it's about believing in yourself and what you do. Most people tend to have a vision; to be successful it's about creating something that's totally yours.

What is the key to your success?

Perseverance and never giving up, continuing to do what I do.

What is the most difficult part of designing a collection?

Editing the collection, narrowing it down, making sure there are not too many things going on, having clarity of vision.

When and why did you start your own business?

After showing my degree collection at Central St Martins, my work received a lot of publicity. A La Mode and Liberties in London bought my collection and people wanted more, so I took out a £500 bank loan and that was it.

What is your greatest achievement to date?

Receiving an Honorary Degree from the University of Lincoln, UK.

What has been your biggest career challenge to date?

I produced some work for Emilio Pucci; there was little money available and it was a challenge to make it work, but it was a challenge that paid off.

What next?

A period of growth – attracting investors and making the label a brand with accessories, international stores and menswear. Consolidating what I have been doing.

What advice would you give to an aspiring fashion designer?

Never say never!

To be a successful fashion designer you need to be creative with a good working knowledge of the technical process of garment development, as well as range-building. The designer usually works very closely with buyers, product developers, garment technologists, sample machinists and manufacturers (often based overseas). This is to ensure that designs are reproduced accurately to the garment specifications.

The majority of designers study fashion design at college or university. There are many fashion- and textile-related courses offering a varying degree of specialism. Some courses offer a broad programme; while many others are subject-specific, focusing on a specialist area of design, for example costume design, surface patterning or fashion marketing.

Graduates usually enter a company in a junior role as an assistant designer, supporting the designer and design team, and, with a successful work record and one or two years' experience working in this position, progress to a position of designer and then senior designer.

Womenswear Designer

Womenswear is one of the largest sectors of the fashion market. Whether working for a fast-moving high street design brand producing casual jersey ranges or in the luxury market sector producing tailored modern classics, a womenswear designer must have an excellent understanding of trends and be able to translate customers' requirements. In the planning and development of garment ranges they must give consideration to season, silhouette, colour and fabric range, creating ideas appropriate to the target market.

Employment opportunities will vary from company to company. You may work for a small, independent fashion label, possibly as the sole designer, managing all aspects of the design process from the initial concept to the execution of the finished product. Alternatively, the position may involve working in a larger company within a design team and having a creative input into each range, from researching design concepts in line with the brand ethos to designing the collection within the parameters of the range plan, producing mood boards, selecting fabrics and trims or developing products from specification sheets to final sample approval. Other positions within companies may include organizing a design office's administration relating to each design range or ensuring all pre-production checks have been completed on sample collections before shipment, alongside a contribution to designing a seasonal range. No two design positions are the same.

Typical Skills Required

- ✕ *The ability to work to a design brief with understanding of the customer and their lifestyle*
- ✕ *An instinctive feeling for fashion and ability to identify emerging fashion trends*
- ✕ *Strong creative skills with a good knowledge of design*
- ✕ *An understanding of fabrics and manufacturing techniques*
- ✕ *Commercial awareness*
- ✕ *Proficiency in Adobe Photoshop and other CAD software*
- ✕ *Ability to work under pressure, to meet deadlines to produce new collections each season or mid-season*

Menswear Designer

In recent years there has been a huge growth in the menswear market due to the accessibility of menswear labels in the high street and the growing sales of menswear magazines and journals promoting men's fashion, style, music, health and lifestyle. There are now more varied menswear styles available than ever before. These range from casual and sportswear to classic tailored and more refined styles and are available in many high street outlets and designer boutiques. Men now demand a greater variety of styles from which to choose including edgier looks, functional clothing with sportswear overtones, casual clothing and tailored suits with great attention to cut and detail.

Typical Skills Required

- ✕ *Possessing a good understanding of the customer base and competitor market*
 - ✕ *Ability to work within a clearly specified design brief*
 - ✕ *Strong design skills supported by good technical knowledge and understanding of manufacturing techniques*
 - ✕ *Good communication skills*
 - ✕ *Ability to work in a team, as well as independently*
 - ✕ *Proficient with CAD software, such as Adobe Photoshop*
 - ✕ *Ability to spot a trend*
 - ✕ *Capacity to work to tight deadlines to produce new collections*
-