

James Wesson

# Photographer

'every employer wanted one or two years experience'

BTEC National Diploma – Visual Communication  
Degree - Graphic Design

Providing information and advice



**Who I am:** I am a photographer working in the area of retail design.

**How I work:** I currently work for Design4retail and have now got eight years experience as a designer under my belt and now deal with clients such as Puma, Adidas, Lacoste, Clarins and G-Star. I work on a variety of projects ranging from the design of simple display units through to complex store interiors. I have all the latest 3D and Graphic software at my disposal which enables me to produce high quality design solutions to client briefs.



An example of my work

**Getting there:** I enjoyed Art, 3D Design and Computer Studies at school and proved to be good at them. Nearing the end of my GCSEs, I went to an open day at a college of art and design and was impressed with the college, and in particular, the Visual Communication course. The open day exhibition had been put together by the students and it was great to talk to them and get their views. I decided this was the course for me and applied the next day.

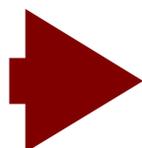
The course was great and the first year was split into different fields such as Fine art, Graphics, Illustration and 3D Design. I did three months in each which was good because I still did not know which avenue I wanted to go down. I preferred graphics and spent the second year concentrating on this area.

I then went on to complete a Degree in Graphic Design at Derby University. This was a great course which not only advanced the visualisation styles I had learnt on my foundation course, but also fine-tuned my communication and presentation skills. In general it was a more realistic interpretation of what to expect within the design industry. The three years I spent at university were some of the best years of my life. I not only gained an essential qualification but they also gave me my independence and real-world experience.

It was really annoying trying to get onto the employment ladder because every employer wanted one or two years experience, but nobody would take you on so you could get the invaluable experience. I finally got a job working for a small retail design agency as a junior designer. This role involved the design of business cards and stationary as well as posters and leaflets all under the watchful eye of the senior designer who was more 3D based. This led to my present full-time position.

Talk to past art and design students who have taken a range of qualifications in order to increase your understanding of the choices you have.

What pathways could learners follow in order to enter this career? Learners could draw a progression pathway and consider their options.



For further information please visit  
[www.design4retail.net](http://www.design4retail.net)

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