

4

Artisan Designer-Makers

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

CONTENTS

Continued: Sean Barrett, Milliner	2
Continued: Tommy Cobau, Former Head Milliner at the Metropolitan Opera, New York	3
Continued: MME Jejeté, Atelier St Honoré	4
Continued: Marian De Graef, Wigs and Hairdressing	6
Continued: Nicola Killeen, Nicola Killeen Textiles London	8
Continued: Hatley Print and Maltings Fabrics: Louise Hatley and Daniel Rumsey-Williams	9
Continued: Atsuko Kudo, Latex Couturier	10
Dyeing Jargon	11

SEAN BARRETT, Milliner

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 113 of *Get into Costume* book)



Figure E4.1 Sean in his studio, surrounded by the trimmings, feathers, flowers and all the glittery bits he loves so much. © Sean Barrett

Would you design another collection?

I loved the idea of doing my own collection, but I'm not that person. Fashion is like art, you have to be a name; people will spend thousands for one of Philip Treacy's hats, which I think are exquisite beyond words, but fashion doesn't pay as well as film or theatre.

I've always found pricing mortifyingly embarrassing and difficult. I'm always late putting my bills in. In film and theatre, sometimes supervisors ask how much it will be, and I've said, 'About £300 or so,' and they'll say 'That's pretty expensive. I don't know whether we can afford that.' Then you get someone who says, 'We can only afford £1,500, will that be enough?'

What would you say to someone following in your footsteps?

I always tell students not to worry about their grades because nobody's ever asked me if I've got a degree. It's far more important to be able to do the work and to be somebody people like having around. You'll get a lot more work. I know other people that are brilliant but are so difficult to get on with. Be constantly interested in your chosen work because it is going to be your life.

See Sean's IMDb page.

TOMMY COBAU, Former Head Milliner at the Metropolitan Opera; Owner, Tommy Cobau Millinery

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 115 of *Get into Costume* book)

'Working under different artisans and learning their personal techniques is the best way to learn how to make something yourself. I am constantly striving to improve my work. My hope is that every hat I make is better than the last.'



Figure E4.2 Tommy with his collection of hat blocks. Typically made of wood, they are used to mould the felt, straw and other millinery materials to form the desired shape.
© Tommy Cobau

How long did it take you to reach where you are now?

It has taken a lot of time, a lot of do-overs and many nights spent researching and studying the work of other

milliners. I have an entrepreneurial side – I need to. It takes constant drive to make it in this business, especially in New York. You must be focused, driven and a go-getter. However, what has gotten me my connections and success so far has been my work itself. I like to let things happen organically. Of course, in the beginning, I had to put myself out there, but after that initial jump I feel that my work has spoken for itself. Focusing on quality and keeping a positive and amenable attitude has caused people to recommend me to others, and that word-of-mouth continues to be a catalyst for more work.

Your tips to newbies?

Never stop striving to improve your skills, but remember to cut yourself some slack. Your stitches could perhaps be more even, or you could be a little faster, but we all move at our own pace and have different skills and strengths. Study the work of others who do what you want to do. See if you can figure out how they make things and then try for yourself. I've found if you work hard and keep a positive outlook, the work will come to you and opportunities will arise.

Find Tommy on Instagram.

MME JEJETTE, Atelier St Honoré

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 127 of *Get into Costume* book)



Figure E4.3 Handmade period costume, intricately – and exquisitely, decorated by Mme Jejette.
© Atelier St Honoré/Cezary Pomykała

◀ ***What is your experience of making period costumes for performance and how different is it to working for individuals?***

I learned theatre and film set design at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and started working in theatre and opera, which have a completely different work and design philosophy to that of a fashion house like mine. Film and theatre costumes are not about historical accuracy, rather the interpretation of the subject and artistic creation. Theatre is my great love, and within it we create a new world in which everything has symbolic meaning for the interpretation of drama. Scenography and costumes are how we communicate a vision of this world to the viewer.

Is it possible to be successful as a costume designer/maker outside the world of film and TV?

I would love to work as a costume designer again, but since starting Atelier Saint Honoré in 2016, I'm a fashion designer now. I make vintage-style evening and wedding dresses, but most of our production is dresses of eighteenth-century origin. This market has really grown: reconstruction was once a niche hobby for a few, and great importance was placed on historical realism. Today, due to the popularity of film and costume series, costume events have become part of pop culture and have entered the mainstream. With more events open to all, so the attitude of customers has changed. Most people who order dresses are not so interested in fashion history; they do not expect accurate reconstruction but an original artistic interpretation that references costume history, created just for them with a high level of craftsmanship.

Do you use vintage or contemporary materials, or a combination of both, and is it easy to find the fabrics and trimmings you need?

I often use vintage materials such as lace, buttons and ribbons, but my experience as a fashion historian means I have great respect for historical objects. I allow myself to use lace from the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, because a huge amount has

survived, but I never use lace and other materials from the eighteenth century or older because of their rarity. It would be unethical to do so as their place is in museums and private collections.

Do you dye your fabrics or can you find the colours you need?

We buy the colours we need as the dyeing process requires high temperatures that destroy taffeta and satin, although we have used experimental techniques that are similar. For example, one of our mantua gowns was decorated with a silvering technique that involves creating abstract paint spots on the surface of water and then reflecting them on paper or fabric. The same method is popular in Japan (suminagashi) and used to decorate kimonos. This dress was also decorated with shells, which I made from many layers of natural mica. It was an amazing experiment. Another time, we made hand-painted fabric inspired by space, courtesy of the experimental fabric studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. I personally decorated this dress with thousands of tiny crystals, which took two months, but it was one of our most spectacular dresses ever. These projects are risky for the company's finances, but I consider it an investment in my portfolio, and I don't regret any of them.

Do you see yourself designing in other periods and for different markets, or have you already reached your goals in costume?

As far as historical fashion is concerned, I most eagerly create in the style of the late Baroque, and all styles of the eighteenth century, but we also make dresses inspired by other epochs. There are many contemporary but vintage creations, which is what I love most. My favorite designers are Dior, Balenciaga and Charles James, and I'm very happy when someone orders a 1950s or 1960s style dress. My dream is to create my own collection of contemporary fashion inspired by history.

Find Mme Jejette on Instagram.





Figure E4.4 Embroidered appliqué made entirely by hand by Mme Jejetette. © Atelier St Honoré/Cezary Pomykało

MARIAN DE GRAEF, Wigs and Hairdressing

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 131 of *Get into Costume* book)

Should hairdressers also be make-up artists, or is it better to focus on only one?

A contentious subject! I feel that although most people are able to do both, many are better at one than the other, be it a slight difference, so for me, the best quality work is separated. Of course, there is often pressure from companies who would rather pay one person than two!

The importance of hairstyling history to those wishing to work in wigs?

I love to work on real period design. I was still working at Wig Creations when *Elizabeth R* was made for TV,

and I dressed all of Glenda Jackson's wigs. It was true period. The designs simply consisted of all her portraits. It was an exciting challenge to get them right and to make educated guesses about what was going on at the back of the head! I have always studied portraits and especially sculptured busts as reference. However, for those working in the business today, there currently seems to be slightly less call for 'real' period and more for 'catwalk period'. But it's still good to know the basics.



Figure E4.5 The powdered wigs worn by the male chorus of *Don Pasquale* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 2013) were made from yak hair (a mountain goat), as they were in the eighteenth century. Set and costume designer: Julia Hansen. Wigs dressed by Marian De Graef and the Glyndebourne wigs department. © Alamy/Donald Cooper

What is your favourite period for wigs?

I just love getting any period right, knowing the differences, for example, between ringlets in sixteenth, early nineteenth and late nineteenth centuries. But given a wig with the right amount of hair, I love to dress the Edwardian era, especially from the illustrations from *The Gibson Girls*.

How do you flatter a performer with a wig?

There is much that can be done to flatter the face, body and head shape, with the performer's own hair, possibly even more so with a wig. The hairline, the colour and the thickness can be altered, and, if a role calls for somebody to appear less attractive, hair can play a big part in that too.

Your advice to people coming into this profession?

You need a quiet, calm nature to sit for the approximately forty hours that it takes to knot the average wig. Many people enjoy the introspective concentration of it. The main advice I give those coming into the business, whether with degrees or college certificates, is to get weekend work in a salon for a while, to work in a practical way with many types of hair and heads in a short space of time. It's important experience because different types of hair react in different ways to different processes so it is invaluable to have been hands on. And to go to portrait galleries!

Visit Marian's IMDb page.

NICOLA KILLEEN, Nicola Killeen Textiles London

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 135 of *Get into Costume* book)



Figure E4.6 Protect those lungs! Spray-painting emits a fine mist which can be inhaled, so the appropriate mask must always be worn.
© Nicola Killeen Textiles/Kevin Meredith

What is the ratio of creative to management in your work?

For me, it's 70 per cent management/logistics. What I like about my position is that if I don't want to do something, I can ask someone else to do it. Like my love-hate relationship with *Cats*: although I love painting the suits when I'm in the moment and can get into the flow, I'm often doing them around everyone else and the demands of whatever crucial project is going on for them. I get pulled in all directions, but

when I can focus on creative work, I remember why I do it and feel actually this is good.

I couldn't manage the shop and dye as well though because you can't be disturbed. My job is to give my staff the work and let them do it without interruption. That's the only way of getting a good job done. I'm the one being interrupted, and that's fine when I'm organizing, but when I'm painting, I take it home and paint it in my basement undisturbed.

Visit Nicola's website.

Hatley Print and Maltings Fabrics: Louise Hatley and Daniel Rumsey-Williams

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 139 of *Get into Costume* book)



Figure E4.7 Dan digitally printing butterfly wings for quarter-scale fairies made by Vin Burnham for Flower Fairies™. © The Estate of Cicely Mary Barker, 2024

How affordable is digital printing?

A bespoke printed textile is a special product. Whether screen or digitally printed, to have a unique artwork/

design/repeat for costume or set dec is, for its relative cost, incredible value. Costs for digital have constantly changed/evolved over time, both increasing and decreasing as technology within the digital discipline changes and screen-printing becomes a rarer skill/offering. The amount of design development that can be achieved in a very small quantity and short time with digital is so far removed from screen-printing that it's mind-boggling: with screen-printing, one is required to colour-separate a design and engrave a silk screen per colour. Just to get a four-colour screen-print might cost over £1,500 before you even start, and before any sampling! With digital, on a typical fabric sample panel, you could try, say, 100 different colourways/designs or anything else for around £85. This stage would be six months' labour with screen-printing, costing tens of thousands of pounds. Incomparable, really.

However, there is still a place for screen-printing. There are some special finishes such as metallics, flock or devoré that are only possible with screen. Aside from these, if one prepares artwork for digital in the same way as they would for screen then there is no reason why it shouldn't look exactly like a screen print.

Visit the Hatley Print website.

Visit the Maltings Fabrics website.

ATSUKO KUDO, Latex Couturier

Continuation of Close-Up interview (p. 143 of *Get into Costume* book)



Figure E4.8 Lady Gaga, wearing an Atsuko Kudo design, meets Queen Elizabeth II backstage at the *Royal Variety Performance*, Blackpool, in 2009. This was an impactful cultural moment of how a latex costume design achieved worldwide headlines and shifted the dial for the perception of latex fabric in the eyes of the general public. The dress was sketched by Atsuko after Gaga's then stylist, Nicola Formichetti, asked for something Victorian. Atsuko also added a filigree ruff which meant that the whole look referenced the style eras of two royal queens – Elizabeth I and Victoria – in a kind of mash-up. The Queen was evidently 'amused', and she had this image on display in Windsor Castle for a Diamond Jubilee exhibition! On stage, the outfit included an extremely long train (approximately 10 metres) that hung down to dramatic effect as Gaga's piano was raised almost to ceiling height during her set. Leon Neal/AFP via Getty Images

◀ *Did you have any training in latex and how have your techniques developed?*

I am largely self-taught, but I had some basic training when I first came to London. I was a trainee gimp hood maker at one point, but I got sacked for being too slow! I started practising at home as I realized I wanted to work with latex but not in the same ways it had always been done. So, I started developing new techniques such as hand-cut filigree and other ideas for making a more feminine statement. I wanted to make sure that the styles I created made women feel beautiful, feminine and strong.

I was not the first to print latex. It had been done before but perhaps not in such detail as the prints we've used. This took a lot of experimentation as latex is a challenging material for printing as it repels moisture and because of the stretch. There are still not many people with the skills of latex production, but there is so much more help now online. When I started, it was pre-internet, and there were no video tutorials. So, to get started, look online, but for more advanced training you probably need to work in a proper studio – but there aren't that many!

Visit Atsuko's website.

Dyeing Jargon

dipping/dip dye	dipped in and out of the dye quickly, a wash, not a strong or solid colour
dirty water	weak grey/brown dye to 'knock back' or dull bright whites and colours
ombré dye	shaded, graduated dyeing from dark to light or from one colour to another
patch dye tech	an aesthetically patchy, uneven finish in more than one colour to stop white 'popping', using tea bags, potassium permanganate (with caution) or 'dirty water'

Please note: Dyes are chemicals which must always be used with appropriate safety measures.