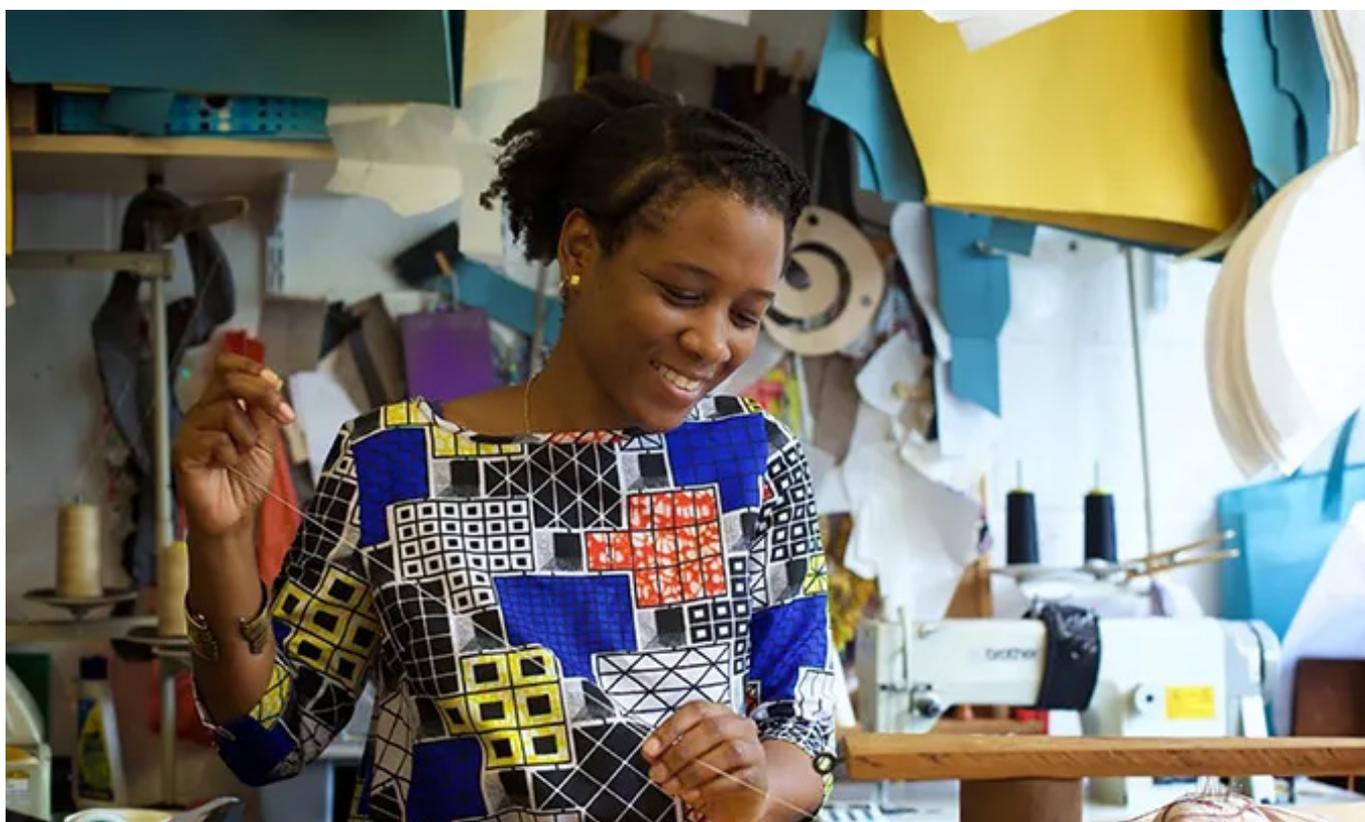


Crafts Council / Education

Craft Journey

Jasmine Carey / Pattern Cutter



Jasmine Carey in her studio
(all images courtesy of the artist)

What I do

I do multiple roles within the fashion and craft industry:

As a designer maker I design, develop, construct and sell my products. I create all the patterns for my products. I test them by either sticking or pinning the patterns together with card or paper to check the shape for thicker leather. For softer leather and fabric, I test the product by sewing a toile in calico or a subcloth. Once I am happy with the prototype, I construct the final product using hand or machine stitching.

As a freelance pattern cutter I create patterns (paper templates of the pieces needed to make a garment) either manually or with specialist pattern cutting software. I have worked with a wide range of companies from high street retailers to established designers.

As a lecturer I teach pattern cutting (mainly manual, occasionally digital) and construction.



Jasmine Carey, ribbon coat

Jobs in fashion

There are so many! Here I will focus on a few of the technical jobs that are involved in the construction of a garment.

- A Creative Pattern Cutter creates the first pattern based on a Designer's sketch.
- A Production Pattern Cutter alters patterns based on fit comments, and often includes grading and costings.
- A Pattern Cutter creates first patterns and alters patterns based on fit comments.
- A Grader grades the base size pattern and often creates the costings, and makes the patterns bigger and smaller equally to the required sizes. Costing involves creating lay plans to work out how much fabric is needed for a garment.
- A Garment Technologist is usually more office-based, attends fit sessions and writes up comments on changes requested for the garment. They liaise with designers, buyers, pattern cutters and sometimes factories.
- A Sample Cutter/ Factory Cutter cuts out the fabric pieces needed to construct a garment.
- A Sample Machinist/ Factory Machinist constructs the garment.

Other roles include: Designer, Buyer, Bespoke Tailor, Quality Controller.

Why craft?

I honestly do not know! I have always enjoyed drawing and making things. My mum was a factory machinist when I was really young, so maybe it's just in my genes!

What I studied

I had decided I wanted to be a fashion designer when I was 12 and knew from my own research that I should do art, history and textiles as my GCSE options. The school's textiles department was not very good and very few students chose textiles as an option that year, so it was dropped. I ended up doing Science Award 1 & 2 instead. Unfortunately, my school (with the exception of my art teacher) did not value creative subjects and I got stuck doing more academic subjects. In fact, the only reason I got to do art GCSE was because she spoke up for me— Thank you Mrs Tammon!

The GCSEs it was compulsory for me to take were: English Language, English Literature, Religious Education Maths, and Science Award 2. The GCSEs I chose to do were: Science Award 1, Art and History.



Jasmine Carey, bag



Jasmine Carey, ribbon coat

Further education

I studied fashion subjects full time for 5 years.

BTEC 1st Fashion at Westminster College in Battersea: The course included design, history of art and

fashion, art, construction and a 2 week work experience placement.

BTEC ND Fashion Design and Technology at London College of Fashion: The course included design, history of art and fashion, art, construction, pattern cutting, screen printing, millinery and an introduction to

bespoke tailoring.

HND Clothing at Kent Institute of Art and Design (now known as University of Creative Arts) The course included Design, History of art and fashion, art, construction, manual pattern cutting, digital pattern cutting and grading, screen printing, millinery and a 3 week work experience placement.

I have also continued to do short courses informally throughout my career. My most recent is developing leather craft skills.

My career path

For ten years after graduating, I did numerous full time pattern cutting roles with suppliers and retailers. I now pattern cut for high street companies and also catwalk designers as a freelance pattern cutter. I became a designer maker at the same time as freelance pattern cutting and this has opened up so many other aspects to my career. I decided to retrain as a lecturer and began teaching pattern cutting, construction and for short time a small amount of design to 16-19 year olds and adults. I am surrounded by other craft people who work with ceramics, jewellery and woodturning. I taught myself how to make bags and accessories which has evolved into leather craft work, which has resulted in me getting a leather craft award to further develop my leather craft skills.

Important decisions

Choosing to do BTECs instead of A levels.

Deciding I wanted to be pattern cutter instead of a designer. During my work experience I learnt about roles other than a fashion designer. I had the opportunity to spend one day with a pattern cutter, found her role more interesting and decided that was what I wanted to do.

I decided not to accept my place on the HND at London College of Fashion and studied at Kent Institute of

Art and Design instead. I have met a lot of fellow Kent alumni working in the trade and education, including some of my managers.



Jasmine Carey, Bag

I couldn't decide if I wanted to accept my place on a degree course to top up my HND as it was more theory based and not creative. I took a year out and got a job as a design room assistant/pattern cutter, and never looked back. I worked my way up as a pattern cutter in various roles, and ended up training students from the degree course I rejected in one of my roles.

Deciding to freelance after being made redundant led to me setting up my own business as a designer maker. It has opened up so many opportunities for me including teaching and developing new craft skills. I have generally made most of these choices on my own, but have always had support from my Mum and a few close friends. I learnt very early on that if I want something I will have to be really determined as there are always lots of barriers to reaching my goals.

Challenges

- School trying to force me down an academic route.
- Learning to sew and pattern cut — when I first started I was scared of the sewing machines!
- Being an introvert in an industry that prefers extroverts.
- Being rejected so many times — more than I can remember — and having to find another route to achieve my goals.
- People make assumptions about me based on my appearance.

My advice to you

Do your own research into the craft that you are interested in. If there is a craft that you think may be the career for you try some short courses to see if you enjoy it.

A career in craft requires lots of skills including mastering your chosen craft, problem solving, communication, time management and many more. It is not an 'easy' option and being creative does not mean you have lower academic abilities. Understand that you will make mistakes, learn from them and keep going, it is all part of the process. Life is too short to spend the majority of your time doing a job because you have to rather than because you want to.

Craft Careers

Craft generates £3.4 billion for the UK economy each year, with the contribution of the wider creative industries now growing at twice the rate of the UK economy. British craft has never been so sought-after and craft skills are revolutionising industries from aerospace to architecture.

To learn more about craft careers visit:
www.craftscouncil.org.uk/learning/craft-careers



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