

# Sew content: Costume designer loves her film roles

24 May 2012 03:06

There are various ways to forge a career in costume design, with long or short courses and degrees available throughout the country.

14

Like

12

Send



Happy at work: Camilla Benda fitting clown mask

T McGrillis

AN obsession with clothes and shoes blossomed into an exciting but demanding career for film costume designer Camille Benda, whose 1970s-style creations for a gritty Newcastle crime thriller are set to hit the big screen.

When a trailer of *Harrigan*, starring Stephen Tompkinson, was unveiled to potential buyers at the Cannes film festival in France this month, Camille chuckled knowingly at those who used to tell her: "Don't do it unless you can't live without it."

Despite her success, Camille uses the same mantra for anyone wanting to follow in her footsteps.

She says: "Costume design is a hugely satisfying career but it is also very tough.

"The hours are long and you have to be resilient and definitely not afraid of hard work.

"You can be on set for 14 hours a day, six days a week and it requires stamina to keep going.

"You need to be ambitious, creative and love the collaborative process of filmmaking."

Camille, who was assistant costume designer on the 2007 fantasy adventure *The Golden Compass* starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig, loved her role on *Harrigan* - a TallTree Pictures project shot at locations around the North East.

She says: "Every day on *Harrigan*, as with any film project, was so varied.

"Before the film started shooting I met the director to talk about his thoughts and inspirations for the film.

"Then I went away to research the history of that time in that place.

"I needed to see what people of different social classes and in different jobs would be wearing and the look he wanted to create."

Camille then had five weeks to organise costumes for all of the actors in every scene.



Login with Facebook

## RECOMMENDED IN MONEY [Why?](#)



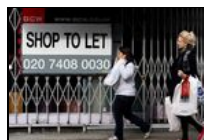
[Job losses](#)  
[Empty shops](#)  
[black spot of Britain revealed: One in three premises in area of Morecambe vacant](#)



[Banks](#)  
[PPI scandal: Lloyds poised to set aside ANOTHER £1billion to cover mis-selling](#)



[Crime](#)  
[G4S to be handed contract to monitor thousands of dangerous criminals](#)



[New Year](#)  
[Bleak Christmas: High street sales dip fuels triple-dip recession fears](#)



[Transport for London](#)  
[On the right lines: Chris gets fast track back to work](#)



[Politics](#)  
['Big failure' on growth: MPs' damning report blasts George Osborne's lending policy as disaster](#)

[House prices](#)

[Keeping the](#)



Stamina needed: Camille works long hours

T McGrillis

"I went shopping and I went to costume houses to hire outfits needed and, in the case of Harrigan, we had suits tailor-made to reflect Stephen's - character.

"The clothes help tell the character's story and for Harrigan we wanted an iconic look.

"He is a man who hasn't moved on from a tragedy in his life and his clothes reflect that.

"While the other characters are wearing outfits of the 1970s, Harrigan's costume is placed in the mid-1960s".

There are various ways to forge a career in costume design, with long or short courses and degrees available throughout the country.

Camille took a masters in theatre design then a history of dress masters at The Courtauld in Central London.

"Not everyone does this though," she says. "An innate sense of design is a must and I was always creative but some people are lucky enough to get a trainee position and work their way up.

"Sewing skills can help but that is something that can be taught. For upcoming designers, the most important attribute is a sense of style."

Finding work can be difficult as projects do not necessarily dovetail but Camille works for eight to nine months a year so averages out her earnings and, although she is married and based in London, takes work all over the country.

"Most of the jobs I get are from personal recommendation from people I've worked with before.



**house keys:**  
**Number of home repossessions at a five-year low**



**City News**  
**Netting a profit surge:**  
**Manchester United finances boosted by bumper sponsorship deals**



**Petrol prices**  
**Jump at the pump: Petrol prices have risen 5p a litre in a month**



**Energy bills**  
**Watt a cheek!**  
**Two energy firms reveal profits of nearly £3bn**

## MOST READ IN MONEY



### Job losses

**Empty shops black spot of Britain revealed: One in three premises in area of Morecambe vacant**

### Banks

**PPI scandal: Lloyds poised to set aside ANOTHER £1billion to cover mis-selling**

### Save money

**How to save money in 2013: Six ways to improve your finances this year**

### Crime

**G4S to be handed contract to monitor thousands of dangerous criminals**

### Petrol prices

**Jump at the pump: Petrol prices have risen 5p a litre in a month**

"Some people have an agent, which helps with getting meetings. You can go to meetings for new projects coming up, like actors.

"When not working on a film project, most people are employed in TV, commercials or music videos so the work is varied.

"Budgets are also often different, which means you face different challenges."

## Follow your dreams

The first step to following your dreams like Camille is to get the right training either at college or on the job.

There are many different types of qualifications you might be able to get, such as an NVQ or a BTEC. Find out more from City & Guilds, at [www.cityandguilds.com](http://www.cityandguilds.com).

You can be any age to qualify for an apprenticeship.

Discover your options at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk).

Your next stop should be [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and click education and learning, where there is plenty of information about training.

Find a local college course through [www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcareers](http://www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcareers) service. Or take a look at The Open University, at [www.open.ac.uk/courses](http://www.open.ac.uk/courses).

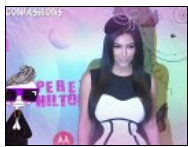
## Lights, camera, action

The UK film industry employs about 27,800 people but many more work in TV, theatre and allied areas.

To find out more about training and opportunities, visit [www.creativeskillset.org/careers](http://www.creativeskillset.org/careers).

Camille is a member of BECTU, the media and entertainment union for those in broadcasting, film, theatre, leisure and interactive media industries. [www.bectu.org.uk](http://www.bectu.org.uk).

## FROM AROUND THE WEB:



**The Seven Deadly Sins Of Kim Kardashian**  
(MyDaily)



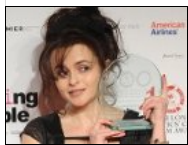
**New Evidence Comet Or Asteroid Impact Was Last Straw For...**  
(redOrbit)



**Amanda Knox Giving First Interview**  
(The Wrap)



**Florida Prisoner Who Fleed Is Killed**  
(The New York Times)



**Helena Bonham Carter Follows Lindsay Lohan Into Liz Taylor...**  
(The Wrap)



**9 year-old Gives Birth to a Baby in Mexico**  
(Everyday Family)



**China's Super League: Where are the players?**  
(The Financialist)



**Fans shocked by Olympic bombshell**  
(The Loop)

Recommended by Outbrain [?]

## COMMENTS

To leave a comment, you need to login via Facebook by clicking the button below

 Login with Facebook

14

12

Like

## RECOMMENDED ON THE MIRROR

Why?



**Capital One Cup Keeping his cool: Kevin Keegan launches limited-edition fragrance for Capital One Cup Final fans**



**Goal-line technology Camera, action! Goal-line tech WILL be standard at 2014 World Cup in Brazil**



**Kate Middleton pregnant 'Nervous? Of course I am!' Duchess of Cambridge admits to anxiety over giving birth**



**Brit Awards BRIT Awards 2013 nominations: all the names you need to know before the big ceremony**



**Cristiano Ronaldo Winker on the brink? Real Madrid 'will sell Cristiano Ronaldo this summer'**



**Philippe Coutinho Big shoes to fill: The legendary Liverpool number 10s Philippe Coutinho has to follow**



**Oscar Pistorius Oscar Pistorius sobs in court describing moment he shot model girlfriend thinking she was a burglar**

[Elspet Gray](#)

---

## RECENTLY PUBLISHED

### [Bullies are making my life hell - how do I stand up to them?](#)



I'm a 16-year-old girl and very nervous about going back to school for my final year

---

### ['Losing a talented generation to under-achievement': Young people face the toughest fight for a job in 18 years](#)

---

### [Paralysed... but still a black belt: The top kickboxer who fights from his wheelchair](#)

---

## RELATED TAGS

SEE ALSO

[Education](#)

---

---

## ADS BY GOOGLE

### [Sewing Embellishers](#)

The Original Sewing Machine Mail Order Specialists. 0800 092 52 15  
[www.sewingmachines.co.uk](http://www.sewingmachines.co.uk)

### [3D House Design Software](#)

Download Architect 3D™ 2012 Today! Easy-to-use 3D House Design Program  
[myArchitect3D.com](http://myArchitect3D.com)

---

## PREVIOUS ARTICLES

### [Stan Collymore praises police as racist troll faces justice](#)



Joshua Cryer, 21, admitted using the social networking site to bombard the football pundit with abuse in an attempt to "snare a celebrity",

---

### [A stupid, massive, massive mistake: Fabrice Muamba Twitter troll's regrets over racist comments](#)



[Fawlty Towers, Catweazle and Doctor Who actress Elspet Gray dies aged 83](#)



[Ashley Roberts 'I'm sticking to boys called Harry!': Ashley Roberts only has eyes for Prince and One Direction star](#)



[Oscar Pistorius murder charge Oscar Pistorius: Recap Blade Runner's bail hearing as he tells court 'I didn't mean to kill Reeva'](#)

**IAMS**  
Mature & Senior  
Supports healthy ageing in cats 7+  
ACTIVE HEALTH  
Mature & Senior  
BUY NOW

Like