



Abi Thomas CV

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My style derives from an understanding of colour and light. I aim to enhance mood and redefine space through illustrative pieces. After flirting with lighting design and festival decoration, I stumbled across neon light making and fell in love. Having found an affinity with glass work in my final year of University, I have focused my passions on using light to create art and adorn public space.

I use installation and sculpture to encourage an audience to see the world through my eyes. I am driven by a desire to bring people joy and to change society for the better. I believe in community, representation, and narrating stories to emphasise the beauty around us, and challenge the darkness. My recent work encourages new experiences and an appreciation of Manchester city through a search for a neon parakeet, bringing a luminous game to the Mancunian population.

Education:

Higher Education: 2017 to 2021

Manchester School of Art – 3D Design

I have recently graduated from a bachelor's degree in Three-Dimensional Design from Manchester School of Art. This course offers a range of material exploration and the chance to explore an array of practices and mediums which I took advantage of. Experimenting with ceramics, woodwork, metalwork, and CAD tools. I eventually became enamoured with glass work and neon light making in my final year. I welcomed the opportunities that MSoA provided and enjoyed an enriching university experience. Whilst there I learned:

- Cooperative and collaborative working toward a group outcome.
- An understanding of materials.
- An interest and understanding of the contextual relevance of art and design practises.
- The ability to creatively find solutions to problems.
- A strong passion for the visual arts.

Further Education: 2016 to 2017

Birmingham Metropolitan College – Brierley Hill

Here, I completed an Art Foundation Level 3 Diploma. I achieved a merit grade from this course.

A Levels: 2014 to 2016

King Edward VI College – Stourbridge

I began my A levels at King Edward VI College in September 2014. I graduated with two C grades in English Literature and Classical Civilisations as well as a B in Art and Design. I was also awarded a certificate for highly commended work for my final A Level Art and Design project.



GCSE: Completed 2014

Redhill Secondary School - Stourbridge

During my time at Redhill I involved myself in school activities; I became a prefect during my last year at the school as well as being part of the media team, achieving the Castle Award, and contributing through peer-mentoring. I achieved GCSE level qualifications including two A*s, one A, two Bs, and a C. As well as an A* in English literature, A in English language, A in additional science and a B in maths. I also achieved a B grade in AS level film studies while there.

Work:

I have an extensive work history of hospitality and retail experience. Most recently, spending two years working for Whitbread at Manchester Central Premier Inn. This job has spanned from May 2019- current with roles including bar and waitressing. This job has taught me the importance of working in a team. Both relying on others and being the co-worker people can rely upon. I enjoy working with members of the public and engaging with customers. Working in a hotel, in particular, gives me the opportunity to interact with an array of people from across the globe, I think there is a lot to be learned from hearing stories from new people every day.

Urban Jungle – Manchester, UK, 2021

This was my final third year project at Manchester School of Art. It began with a love for psychogeography and walking in an unusual way. I wanted to share my experiences of psychogeography and encourage others to learn about it. Since moving to Manchester in 2017 I have been enamoured with the place. I wanted this project to reflect my love for the city and for the buzz of city life across the world. I decided to use neon light to represent this. Neons and the city come hand-in-hand and I was passionate about learning the craft of neon light. The project came together with an outsourced neon light from Neon Workshops and a conceptual game with a search for the neon bird.

Madame Tussauds – London, UK, 2020

In March 2020 I spent two weeks working with the moulding department of Madame Tussauds in London. My role there was to observe and assist the behind-the-scenes team for the attraction. A lot of the experience was repairing the figures and making spare parts. This experience also included positioning the figures in preparation of new displays which enriched my understanding of spatial design and preparing experiences for the public.

COW Vintage – Leeds, Jan 2020

Working for Carma Masson at Playground Design Studios, I assisted the making of 7 large scale cloud light installations for COW Vintage. We worked on site in Leeds City Centre to produce these lights by hand. I met the main shop interior designer Peter Masters and gained experience in networking and learning about the inspiration and the processes of interior design.





Manchester International Festival – Festival Square, Albert Square, Manchester 2019.

I worked alongside Carma Masson of Playground Design Studio to design and make over 300 decorations for Manchester International Festival. I saw this project through from brief to opening night, picking up skills along the way. The brief was to illuminate Festival Square where bars and food vendors would create an exciting site in the heart of Manchester throughout July 2019. After weeks of working with Carma to develop the designs, I met with the Festival Square Team and secured the sign off on our designs. I was then instrumental in making the decorations, transporting them to the site, assembling and hanging them, and being present to assist other workers in on site requirements. This project brought me a lot of joy and I felt very natural working on site to put together an exciting event.



Pub Signs – Various locations 2019- current

Through my connections with pub and bar work, I have often been commissioned to design advertisements at both The Longlands Tavern, Stourbridge and The Bishopsgate Table Table, Manchester. For a company-wide competition on gin displays I created large-scale replicas of the Sipsmith Gin 'swan' from materials I could find around the bar cellar. I enjoy designing and creating pub signage. I find that it ties in with my practise of spatial decoration.



Ferrious Design Shop – Ferrious, Manchester, Greater Manchester, 2017



During my first year of University I worked in a small group on a three week project in which we designed and made a paper object inspired by fashion designer Paul Smith. My group created some slot toys in Paul Smith's logo zebra shape. At the end of the project our work was selected with three other groups for Ferris Design shop which was then located in Deansgate, Manchester. Our paper zebras were on display for a week inside the shop and we were mentioned at a private event held at the shop.



British Glass Biennale – Ruskin Mill, Stourbridge, West Midlands. 2015-2017

As a teenager, I volunteered at the British Glass Biennale held at The Ruskin Mill Glass Centre. My roles on site were to serve refreshments and help visitors find their way around. Stourbridge is renowned in the design world for its history of glass blowing and involvement with the glass community. As a native of Stourbridge, I grew up with an appreciation for this work and have let it bleed into my own practise. Talking to the glass artists at these events was invaluable experience. The atmosphere and talent witnessed is one of the reasons why I am still involved in the art world today.

Skills:

Basic Graphic Design Competence – I have no formal training in graphic design; however, I am proficient in Adobe Illustrator and understand how to create a vector file for a logo for branding purposes. I created my own logo and curated my specific colour palette to fit my brand. I also have experience in communication, writing copy, and producing text through my work on bar signs. I am a fast learner and could train further in this kind of skill if necessary.

Creating 3D Visuals – I understand how to use Fusion360, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator to create 3D renders and models. I have also used Adobe Premier Pro to develop animations. A great example of this was learning how to render neon for my project The Parakeets of Manchester and creating video animations of these neons being switched on.

Communication and Team Working – I have worked as a part of a team since I was 17 and working part time as a children's party entertainer. I am hard-working and make an effort to get on well with colleagues.

Pitching to clients – My work on the MIF Festival Square project had me experiencing pitching ideas to a client and creating a channel of communication in which the designs developed alongside what the client requested.