Meet Erin Gale, Shillington Graduate and Designer at Target



Erin Gale had no previous design experience, so it took her four years to "work up the courage" to study 3 months full-time at Shillington. Two years since graduating, and she's already landed competitive design roles at major companies PricewaterhouseCoopers and Target.

Read on to hear more about her Shillington experience, why she loves working as a designer and a few of her favourite inspirational design blogs.

What were you up to before Shillington? Why did you decide to study design?

Before Shillington I was working in an Art Gallery & Museum. Prior to that I was a media planner and buyer in an advertising agency.

> *It took me four years to work up the courage to apply to Shillington.*

I'd stumbled across the course in a Frankie magazine advert when I was working on a media buy for one of my clients back in 2012. Shillington seemed like the perfect fit for me as I had already spent four and a half years at university studying advertising and creative writing, and another long university course just wasn't for me.

I wanted a technical design course where I could learn practical and world class skills from day one. Shillington had a great reputation and I had friends who had studied with

Shillington in Brisbane and loved it. What inspired me the most to apply though was the prospect of starting the course a complete novice and walking out work ready in three months (full-time). If I was going to change my career I wanted to be 100% devoted to it, and I wanted it to happen now. I couldn't afford for the course to take a long time. Applying to Shillington was the best decision I've ever made and I only wish I'd done it sooner!

You recently landed a job as a Creative Graphic Designer at Target. Tell us how you landed the role!

I had just finished a nine month contract at PwC as a Graphic Designer when the role at Target appeared on LinkedIn. I had been working freelance and contracting for nearly a year and I was looking for something more stable. I'd always loved branding so working in-house at a great local brand was going to be the best fit for me. I applied, and a couple of days later I had my first interview with their team in Geelong. A week later I had a second interview with their Head of Creative, and half an hour after leaving my second interview, I had an offer to join the team! I was stoked.

> *My current portfolio is a mixture of real world work and Shillington projects, and I've felt confident with it from day one.*

I update it regularly and make sure that I am personalising each version I send out to each potential new client or employer. The course really helps you to develop your ideas, push them into new and unique places and then present them confidently. This is a skill I still use everyday to sell my work to others.



What's your typical day like?

My role is so diverse that I don’t really have a typical day! As a Creative Graphic Designer I work across a wide range of design tasks. Typically my role is brand communications and point of sale (in-store) design but I also frequently get the opportunity to work with the catalogue and packaging designers in my team. This means that on any given day I can go from designing billboards for new store openings or creating collateral for Target corporate events, to designing a new suite of in-store navigation panels, or helping design the packaging concept for next Christmas. Each day is different and I really love it!

Why do you love working as a designer?

I love creating work that has meaning, purpose, and tells a story. It’s really that simple. I have always been a storyteller, even in my previous roles in advertising and the arts, and I really get a kick out of bringing stories to life no matter how big or small they are. I also love that design is so versatile. I like to keep my skills well rounded across all types of design, so I don’t stick to one medium or concentrate on just one area. If I did, I’d get bored. I love that I can spend my day working on a variety of print, packaging or large format ideas, and then with my freelance work I can work on a new logo or website design. The versatility keeps me on my toes and pushes me to be a better designer.

Can you share the process behind a recent professional project?

I’ve recently been working with an exciting client to revamp the website for her handmade moroccan tile business Tiles of Ezra based in Elsternwick. This was a really collaborative project, as both me and my client Georgia love being hands on, and love a challenge. Much of the design and imagery in the

layout for the Tiles of Ezra website, was influenced by Georgia's own personal style and home, and I worked with her to help write, update and customise the content from her previous website into her new one. It was a great project to work on and I had a lot of fun making our vision for the website come together.

What was your favourite Shillington project? Why?

My favourite projects at Shillington was a branding concept and identity for an arts centre in Abu Dhabi, which I called Ruea. The brief was to develop the branding to reflect the architectural stylings of the Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG). My work on this brief is some of my favourite design work to date and I have landed design jobs based on these designs alone.



What advice would you give to a Shillington student on day one?

Learn as much as you can! From the teachers, from the other students, from the design world. The course is intense but so worth it!

Where do you go for creative inspiration?

I seek inspiration online through websites like The Dieline or DesignInspiration, and Instagram and Pinterest. I have to do a lot of trend research and interpretation in my job so a lot of inspiration comes from looking at the research, or new products, and developing my own interpretations. I also love feedback and have trusted friends from Shillington and work colleagues that I discuss ideas or send work to for feedback. Design shouldn't happen in a vacuum, and you should always be looking for new inspiration.



Huge thanks to Erin for sharing her Shillington story! Be sure to visit her website and follow her on Instagram for frequent updates.

Do you want to change to a creative career like Erin? Study design 3 months full-time or 9 months part-time at Shillington in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, New York, London or Manchester –> www.shillingtoneducation.com

Meet Erin Gale, Shillington Graduate and Designer at Target