

## **Fashion, Beauty and Lifestyle: An Interview with Alumni Paris Richardson**

Paris Richardson studied English & Creative Writing at Falmouth from 2013-2016, then became the university's Communications Graduate Intern for a year. Since 2018 she has worked in various roles at Trinny London.

**Rupert Loydell:** Hi Paris. I keep coming across Instagram pictures and videos of you partying at fashion events, but apparently it's your job now? Can you tell us what you are actually doing apart from having fun?

**Paris Richardson:** Hello Rupert, I can, although I'm afraid it might be a bit of an anti-climax. I currently work within the beauty industry, specifically for a brand called Trinny London. My role is Community Strategist. And, if I am honest, it's quite hard to define exactly what that means, mainly because it's a new role within the marketing world as a whole. My main aim is to ensure that as a brand we are actively listening, engaging, and building the brand's community via clicks and bricks. And in order to do that, I manage a team of 7 in-house and work with a group of 50+ global Brand Ambassadors.

In layman's terms, I spend a lot of my time talking both online and in person, and recently in some pretty cool places across the world.

**Rupert:** Can you tell me how you got from graduating at Falmouth University to your current work?

**Paris:** I can. I don't know if you remember, but for a few weeks of the year I would go missing. I wasn't ill, although I may have let a few lecturers believe I was (although I am pretty sure you knew that I wasn't) but interning at various fashion weeks. (Although karmically I would then usually catch fashion flu – it's a thing, don't believe me? *Vogue* wrote about it [here](#).)

I spent my time during fashion weeks drinking as many ginger shots as I could stomach, but more importantly covering every show I could worm my way into and making connections with designers, writers, makeup artists - anyone who was willing to chat back (and not throw a hanger in my face – designers are temperamental during Fashion Week). During that time, you form friendships with many people doing the same thing and, one day, one of my connections asked if I could be her assistant for a month at this beauty start-up in South Kensington. I didn't live in London at this time but said yes anyway and sublet and sofa surfed for 2 months until I convinced the CEO, Trinny Woodal, that I should stick around permanently.

**Rupert:** How did an English and Creative Writing degree help with any of that? I mean, I remember teaching you to write lyrics, collage things together, and study texts! That seems quite different from the world of fashion. (Though, as I'm sure you can imagine, I don't really know much about that.)

**Paris:** Whilst admittedly I don't write much poetry in my day job, I do an awful lot of writing. Admittedly it's not necessarily thought-provoking or lyrical prose, but it is integral to my job. I start discussion topics within community groups (that I have helped grow) on topics of beauty, lifestyle and wellness. I also produce and host a monthly exclusive video interview series with the CEO and that takes creative thought and prep. And there are other areas I am sure, but admittedly they aren't springing to mind.

**Rupert:** I know you used to write a fashion blog back when you were a student, and you used to be able to review clothes and makeup and get to some of the big fashion shows too. Did that help prepare you? Do you still have your blog?

**Paris:** That helped prepare me enormously, but not in the way I would have expected. Yes, it gave me industry-relevant knowledge and insight, and even helped me make the connections that helped me land my current job. But more importantly, I was able to see behind the emerald green curtain, and I saw first-hand that it takes a lot of sweat, blood and tears to keep the cogs turning.

I have many fond memories from Fashion Week, but also some not so – I was once tasked with following a 7ft Jeff Koons-inspired latex conceptual artist around a showroom simply wiping up their sweat – google 'Pandemonia' and imagine the many bright lights on a catwalk and you'll understand. I saw models crying in toilets tending to blistered feet, designers' dreams dashed by a few simple words, and other fellow interns unable to physically contain their emotion once they heard the words 'you can go home now' spoken by their boss.

I remember in particular managing to track down a writer from *Vogue* and asking her every question I could think of. I found out she was on £19,000 and had 2 other part-time jobs to supplement her income and we bonded about how we had both been referred to as the lunch bitch at least once that week.

As a young girl, I had only ever wanted to do two things in my life: be an astronaut and the Editor in Chief of *British Vogue*. Now, it's not to say that I wouldn't turn the job down if offered, but those experiences removed the shiny shimmery filter for me, and I was able to see the sharp cold edges.

That's what made me jump so enthusiastically to the beauty side – not too far away so that I could never make the switch back, but close enough that I can still see what's going on without the risk of being asked to grab the tissues to wipe up the leftover bodily fluids from the brow. Although that's not to say the beauty industry has it all figured out either. Last year I discovered the true meaning of jet lag after flying to Sydney, Melbourne, Toronto and New York across 3 weeks. And I'm not complaining either, I love my job.

I no longer update my blog; in fact, I am unsure if I still have the webpage. I couldn't keep it up with my full-time job – working for a start-up is full on, and I wanted to use my free time to explore London. There are times where I miss having it, but ultimately it was a tool for me; it helped me get to where I am now, so I think it served its purpose.

**Rupert:** Any thoughts or advice for our current and prospective students?

**Paris:** I loved my time at Falmouth. I learnt so much not only about English and Creative Writing but about life. (I feel a little embarrassed about how corny that sentence is but it's true! I made friends and memories for life.)

So I thought about this question for a good 20 minutes, and I think the best thing to do is to list:

- 1) Say yes to all opportunities and figure it out later.
- 2) Don't wear heels in Falmouth town centre – people will laugh at you and you'll break your ankle on the cobblestones and/or fall down the stairs at the entrance to Club I. (I speak from experience.)
- 3) The jacket potato with beans, cheese, coleslaw and salad in The Stannary will solve any hangover. (There should be scientific studies conducted.)
- 4) Collaborate with others on different courses; you can learn so much. (Surprisingly, I made a lot of friends with the Fashion course students.)
- 5) Make the most of being by the sea.
- 6) Real life experience is one of the most important and valuable skills you can get.

**Rupert:** Thanks for your time, Paris. Good luck with everything!

**Paris:** Thank you for asking me to be a part of this!