

## Who to hire *Get the job done*

Ask anybody in retail about the future of the industry and they'll tell you shops need to become spaces for "experiences", not transactions. They're probably right but that doesn't mean you should rush out and fill your shop with interactive screens or turn it into a gimmicky playground. All you need to do to create a lasting – and positive – impression is to stimulate your customers' senses.

Plump for tactile wrapping paper, a subtle scent and a layout that sparks curiosity and you'll have the best kind of "experiential" boutique. Don't forsake the basics: a warm wooden floor, well-angled spotlights and mannequins that show off your clothes can seal a purchase. Here's our round-up of the specialists you can rely on to take care of all the details in a fledgling shop. Whether you're after a sensitive refit of a historic space or looking for something a little more cutting edge, here's who to hire for the job.



### 1 Kiiya *For model mannequins*

**Preface:** Sometimes a hanger just won't do. For the most fitting mannequins for men, women, children and more, Japanese company Kiiya has you covered.

**In numbers**  
1919 founded  
66 students

Few fashion retailers can do without mannequins. In Japan, shop-owners who care about the most minute of details go to Kiiya for "Made in Japan" models of the highest quality. "Recently, more and more companies are ordering custom-made mannequins to better display their clothes," says Fumiko Koizumi, general manager of the company's planning department.

Founded in 1919, Kiiya is headed by two *genkeishi* (master prototype makers): Takahiro Suga and Yujiro Uzura. From its headquarters in Tokyo, the company produces 20,000 mannequins a year for countless fashion labels (both designer brands and fast fashion) as well as retailers, no matter how trivial the order. "Small retailers in the countryside also place orders," says Koizumi. "Their order can be as [tiny] as one or two mannequins but we cater to meet their requests."

Over the decades, the company's dedicated staff have honed their skills

and accumulated second-to-none expertise. The models they build are manifold and the range includes 600 different designs for men, women, children, babies and seniors – plus bespoke custom shapes.

"One millimetre more or less makes a big difference," says Suga, tapping the nape of the neck of a dummy at the company's atelier in the Sendagaya neighbourhood. Many manufacturing companies in Japan may have shipped their factories offshore but Kiiya's sixth president, Kazuo Hamada, knows how essential it is for his business to stay close to home. "It is important to preserve our knowledge – and keep learning," he says.  
[kiiya.co.jp](http://kiiya.co.jp)

#### **Monocle comment:**

A behind-the-scenes, unsung hero of the Japanese fashion scene, Kiiya is the industry's go-to for a reason: unparalleled precision and unequalled quality.