

Gillan Johnson

Experience Designer

National Geographic has produced unparalleled media and printed content, including some of the most visually stunning photography and film the world has ever seen. What excites me most about the prospect of being an Associate UX Designer at Nat Geo is the possibility of working with this content every day, and learning new and innovative ways to create stunning and clear narratives for readers and viewers.

One of the most challenging and rewarding parts of my career as a designer has been working with content that I have little or no familiarity with. I absolutely love the process of researching a new topic, whether it's teaching kids about biomimicry or helping PNC customers with long-term financial planning. Seeing my knowledge of a concept, and my approach to communicating it to others, grow and develop into something I couldn't have anticipated is always the best part of a project. And the fact that I'm able to communicate it through visually compelling, interactive spaces makes it that much more rewarding.

Designers on Nat Geo's Product Experience Team are finding incredible ways of adapting digital environments they create and presenting content in a cohesive yet unique way. I was so impressed with the Brunelleschi's Dome story that appeared in the February 2014 magazine issue online. We so often rely on the captivating quality of film and narrative voice that seeing a piece explore 360 panoramas and layered visual graphics to unfold information was incredibly refreshing. I've never had a burning desire to study the history of domes, but I now see how it could be a fascinating area, and it's largely due to the power of thoughtfully curated, highly interactive digital experiences.

Working at Nat Geo on the Product Experience Team would give me the creative and energetic space I'm seeking to push my perspective on the possibilities of digital environments. Watching Nat Geo documentaries about the water crisis in California and reading articles on twin girls who defy racial expectations reminds me of how relevant and culturally transcendent this information is. And not only that, but also how crucial the communication of this information is to gaining public sympathy. To be part of this movement at Nat Geo would be a dream come true for me as a person, environmental advocate, feminist, and designer.