

Dannell's[®]



Meet our Makers

Read the inspiring stories of our Makers that have turned lampshade making into flourishing handcrafted businesses, perfect for working from home or adding new skills to existing trades!



We supply everything you need to manufacture Lampshades

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At Dannells Ltd we have been manufacturing Lampshade Materials for Lampshade Makers since 1982.

Over the past decade, we have dedicated our business to mentoring, nurturing and helping build a new generation of British Lampshade Makers and our efforts have successfully inspired thousands of Makers across the country and worldwide.

We are really proud of our customers who have built their businesses, creating careers, employment and beautiful innovative products. Here we share the stories of just a few of our Makers. Discover their journeys, how they started, their techniques, tips & tricks and be inspired!

Anita

Hearts & Glitter

Nestled in her studio in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales, Anita has built up her successful lampshade making business, Hearts and Glitter, after a career break to have her three children.

She now specialises in beautiful bespoke lampshades made from British fabrics in soft pastels, traditional florals and conversational prints, styles that marry perfectly with her rural studio, that adjoins her family home. We chat to Anita, to find out more about her lampshades, her customers and what a day at Hearts and Glitter looks like.

How are you today and what's on your workbench?

Hello! The sun is shining, I'm back from the school run and I'm looking forward to a morning in my studio working on some beautiful bespoke lampshade orders.

How do you start the design process and where do you get your design inspiration?

I just love working with beautiful British fabrics and creating something special with them. The majority of my lampshades are made to order. Customers tend to come to me with an idea of what they'd like, either from seeing previous lampshades I've made and posted pictures of on Instagram, or with a colour or fabric in mind to coordinate with their decor.

I tend to discuss size and shape options with the customer first and then together we decide on the fabrics which would work well with that particular style of lampshade.

How would you describe your style?

I think my style could be described as 'classic with a modern twist'. I love the traditional country style but with a fresh twist. For example, my linen Liberty of London lined floral lampshades which are very popular.



How did your business Hearts and Glitter come about?

After a career break to raise my children, I wanted to return



to work doing something I really enjoyed.

I've always loved being creative and making soft furnishings for our home. So, I completed a lampshade making course in York, and began sourcing my favourite fabrics to make lampshades for ourselves, and then for family and friends. I now take great pride in producing professional, bespoke,

handmade lampshades for all my lovely customers.

My daughter came up with the name 'Hearts and Glitter' and I also love it because it is shares the same initials as my three children!

When did you start making lampshades?

Three years ago.

What's your favourite part of the lampshade making process?

I just love turning a roll of beautiful fabric into something special and then seeing my lampshades in place in people's homes. I also find making them very therapeutic.

What's the mix of shades you make to sell online versus lampshade commissions, as part of your business?

The majority of my orders are commissions, but I do sell some on Etsy and in a few local shops.

What's your favourite shade that you've made for a commission?

Oh it is so hard to choose! There is one particular pair of shades I made for a beautiful country cottage. They chose two ceiling drums in a beautiful grainsack fabric, lovely and simple, but then with a contrasting classic floral linen lining. I particularly enjoy making lampshades with a contrasting internal fabric lining as they always look so special.

Any tips for new lampshade makers in business?

I would say work hard at getting your name out there once you have decided which direction your business is going in. So choose local shops to approach which are in keeping with the style of shade you would like to make and promote yourself on social media. Also, be prepared to be patient as it takes a while to build up a client base.

How do you fit in your shade making business around your family?

I have three young children so am always fitting work in around their needs. More so than ever over the last year with lockdowns and home schooling! You will often find me working in the evenings and weekends, whenever I can squeeze in some time! It's always a juggle, but I love it and thrive on it too.

When are you at your most productive?

I feel most productive in the mornings, when I'm back from

the school run, having walked the dog in the inspirational North York Moors where we live.

And your favourite sustenance when you're working?

Good coffee, always coffee!

Could you let us take a peek at your workspace?

We have recently moved house and I finally have my very own studio which feels like such a luxury having worked for so long at the kitchen table.

"I just love turning a roll of beautiful fabric into something special and then seeing my lampshades in place in peoples' homes. "



What have you learned that's been invaluable to your creative process?

Forming friendships and making connections with fellow small business owners. There is a huge community of amazing Makers out there and I have found it so helpful and inspiring to learn from each other and share our experiences.



Hearts & Glitter
Handmade in Hawnby

www.heartsandglitter.co.uk
[@heartsandglitter_](https://www.instagram.com/heartsandglitter_)

By capitalising on her talents as a print designer, Sian Ellin is being stocked by and collaborating with high street stores, as well as receiving national press accolades and presenting lampshades on live TV.

With so many hats to wear, we find out what it's taken to build her brand, the inspiration behind her gorgeous designs and her tips for other homeware businesses.

You were named the 'Print Queen' by Katrina Burroughs in the *The Sunday Times*. How did you start out designing textiles prints?

Hello! I used to work in book publishing as a designer for Oxford University Press and Penguin. Part of my role was to commission illustrators and through this I discovered surface pattern design. Always with a keen interest in interiors, pairing illustration with textiles seemed the perfect combination to me. So, I left my full-time job and started up my homewares business in 2012.

Where do your creative influences come from for your bold and colourful prints?

I am inspired by so many things! I have done quite a bit of travelling, taking inspiration from the colours, architecture, nature, and prints I have seen in India, the Middle East, South America, and Southern Spain. And I love Scandinavian design for its clean graphic shapes and colours. So, my aesthetic leans towards this, taking inspiration from design greats such as Stig Lindberg, William Morris, Anni Albers, and Josef Frank.

Which part of your background or training has prepared you most for becoming a print designer?

I think working as a graphic designer has been great training in this. It teaches you how to communicate with clarity and I think a print should do this too. When design has clarity, it engages people and makes them want to have it around them.

How do you prepare when designing a signature print?

I think about what I want my print to represent or say – where would I imagine it, in what kind of house and what room? Do I want it to be joyful or restful, daring or understated? I am always aware of design trends and enjoy being a part of a larger global design context. So, I will think about where I may fit into that and relate that back to what I want the print to represent. Then I will gather primary research and set about creating quick non-fussy sketches that familiarise myself with the subject. I'll progress to mark-making and motif drawing to explore a design language. I find that it is important to work in an iterative way and not settle on my first concept. Referring to my mood-boards and research, I'll work towards a final collection that



Sian Ellin

answers my original brief.

How many collections do you produce in a year?

This alters dependent on stock and market needs. Sometimes this can be up to 2 collections a year, and other times I'll do mini drops consisting of 1 or 2 designs.

How did you set out to turn your talent for design into a business?

I started out by creating my first collection and exhibited at The London Design Festival. It was a fantastic experience, and I met a lot of press and trade people which really kick-started everything.

Which products came first in your homewares business?

I started out with cushions, wallpaper, and tea-towels.

How have lampshades played a part in expanding your range?

Lampshades have proven very popular for me – customers love how they can totally change up a scheme because they can have such impact in terms of colour and pattern. They have enabled me to reach more of the homewares accessories market and they have also been another way to let me create coordinating schemes with my prints. Last year I started selling lampshade-making kits with my fabrics, which was a great way to reach the craft market.

Did you start out making lampshades yourself?

I did! It was great for a bit, but I just couldn't sustain making as well as designing and selling – there weren't enough hours in the day, and in order to expand I needed to outsource the manufacturing.

What do you have to consider when designing for lampshades?

There is quite a bit to consider when designing on a 3-D object – it isn't necessarily just a case of plonking an existing print on a lampshade. You need to think about the scale of the print and what looks best. Scale can affect the placement of the design – sometimes a print can look odd if it isn't positioned correctly. You can really alter the way a design looks and feels with scale and placement. You also need to think about the seams – sometimes, print dependent, it's important that the pattern matches seamlessly.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in homewares?

Think about how your designs are going to stand out and develop your own handwriting. What does your business or brand stand for? Think about how you want to represent that in every aspect of what you do. Figure out how you are going to manufacture or make your products and pay very close attention to the quality, as Charles Eames said, "Design is in the detail."

As well as being a designer you're also a communicator, teacher and writer. How do you manage your time between the different roles you play?

It can be tough! I like writing and talking about what I do because I love colour, pattern, and interiors so much. It helps me to think about how I do things myself. I think designing and communicating feed into one another nicely and help to spark ideas. It's important to keep that balance right though, else one or the other can suffer.

What's been the most exciting part about seeing your brand develop and grow?

I think seeing my products and photography develop has always been the most satisfying. Watching a new collection come to life and then seeing that in magazines has been very exciting.

And the most difficult part?

Trying to juggle everything! When you work for yourself, you wear so many hats and it can be hard to switch seamlessly.

You've been stocked in many high street retailers, such as BHS, Oliver Bonas, Heals, to name a few. How did you break into selling to larger retailers?

It came about by going to trade shows and getting my brand



out there via the press. The first store to stock my products was Heals – this was such a milestone for me because they are such British design royalty. It snowballed from here, but it was a natural and steady progression.

Do you have any tips you can share with our

professional lampshade makers on how to approach large retailers?

Find out who the buyers are on LinkedIn and contact them. Or attend professional trade shows. The more you get your name out there, the more people will take note. I found that success in that respect didn't happen overnight – retailers will wait and watch for a bit and ensure that you are consistent, professional, and sticking around. I found working like this worked well because it meant I wasn't just a print trend that a buyer needed that season.

You've collaborated with a number of brands. Can you explain how collaborations work and how they differ from simply supplying lampshades to a retailer?

Collaborations can vary – you can either design a collection for a store and sign over the print rights which they then take into manufacture. Or you can design a product for a store that is unique to them which you manufacture yourself with minimum order quantities. Simply supplying lampshades to a retailer would mean that you can supply that lampshade and print to any other retailer too.

Last year you appeared on Hochanda making lampshades, using your fabrics. How did you find the experience of making lampshades live on TV?

I absolutely loved it! Again, with my communications hat on, I really enjoyed the process of talking to

the customer directly and showing how to be creative with my products.

What do you have planned for Sian Elin in the future?

I have so many plans I'd like to see through over the next year. Plans to further develop the manufacturing in terms of sustainability. And lots of plans for new prints that will tie in with our house renovation. I can't wait!

sianelin

www.sianelin.com
@sianelin_



Alison Bick

Channelling the beauty of her home surroundings in Cornwall, Alison Bick's bold and beautiful lampshades certainly pack a punch.

Using her talents in graphic design, Alison has created a unique modern floral style that translates perfectly to lampshades, both large and small and as a recent winner of our #memadeshade Instagram competition, she stole the show with her whopping one metre Bird of Paradise shade!

We find out more about Alison's inspiration, her approach to lampshade making and her successful role at Etsy Cornwall.

How are you today and what's on your workbench?

Feeling like a swan, gliding on the surface and paddling like crazy underneath! It has been incredibly busy. I've got lots of orders for lampshades and cushions which is amazing – I'm working on my order book to get everything sent out for Christmas.

How do you start the design process and where do you get your design inspiration?

I usually start the design process with a quick sketch and take lots of photos on walks around gardens for

inspiration. My designs have a story behind them, either my favourite flowers or family events. I live in Cornwall and so fortunate to be living in a coastal countryside so get my inspirations from daily dog walks.

How would you describe your style?

Bold and colourful – I'm trying to bring the outside indoors with a pop of colour!

How do you adapt your designs for lampshades?

Once I've created my initial sketched out ideas, I'll turn them into vectorised motifs using Adobe Illustrator. I can then change the colours, play with the scale, create repeat patterns which can then be used to print onto any surface – from paper to fabrics like linen and velvet, canvas or sublimated onto hard surfaces.

When did you start making lampshades?

In 2017 – I had signed up to a creative business support programme, and my mentor at the time suggested that I try out printing my designs onto fabric. I bought some lampshade kits from Dannells and gave it a go. I started off with a few designs, and after some really great feedback from customers, I gradually started selling more and more and developing new designs.

"My designs have a story behind them, either my favourite flowers or family events. I live in Cornwall and so fortunate to be living in a coastal countryside so get my inspirations from daily dog walks."

What's your favourite part of the lampshade making process?

It is the end product of my design process, I love seeing the designs that have come from my head, imagination and life experiences get printed onto fabric. Sitting quietly and making a 3D version of my design and listening to BBC Sounds. It is very relaxing.

In your online shop what's your most popular selling shade?

Without a doubt it is the Bird of Paradise Flower (Strelitzia) design. A customer who had bought shades from me in the past asked if I could design a tropical flower lampshade for her, with oranges and purples. Of course, it had to be Bird of Paradise Flower! It has been my best seller ever since!

What's the mix of shades you make to sell online versus lampshade commissions, as part of your business?

I make to order, that way I can keep my stock levels down. At the beginning of the year, I made every design as a lampshade in the different sizes that I offer and paid for a professional photoshoot to take lifestyle shots and product shots.

Since Lockdown One, I have taken part in virtual fairs, live streaming from my Facebook page from my sitting room or workshop – so it is great to have stock for that, as it gives people a real flavour of all the different designs I do, and they create a strong identity of my style when they are all together. I'm really clear on my website and Etsy shop that all my shades are printed to order, and take two weeks to make, so each one is bespoke and made especially for my customers. It is about managing my customers' expectations so that they know that I'm not going to be sending their lampshade to them overnight after placing an order.

Any tips for new lampshade makers in business?

If you are a designer-maker then make to order, try to keep your stock down so you don't end up with lots of shades and no space to keep them all!

Start small, do your research into your ideal customer, find your niche and make sure that people want to buy your shades before you invest a lot of money.

Join the Lampshade Makers advice Facebook group!!

You've been very instrumental in setting up Etsy Makers Cornwall, how do you fit this role in with your business and designing?

I co-founded the Etsy Makers Cornwall team with some other Etsy sellers, initially to host Etsy Made Local fairs in Cornwall. We organised four events to date, which got so popular and we built up a reputation for hosting quality and magical events. I always positioned my stall near the



entrance and loved hearing the gasps of delight as visitors walked in through the doors. We moved the event from St Ives to Penryn in 2019, to a bigger venue and had 5,000 visitors who spent £78K on our stallholders. This year we have organised online events, but really miss the buzz of the face-to-face events. It has been hard juggling my business and the organising over the past four years, and it's a lot of hard work! I also run a Facebook group called Etsy Makers Cornwall, which has become a supportive networking group where small businesses like mine who sell online can seek and offer advice about anything!

Alison Bick
DESIGNS

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Laura Evans



Laura Evans, a fine artist, collagrapher, printmaker and of course lampshade maker from the Isle of Purbeck. As she takes on her first retail space, we're excited to chat with her about how this will make a difference to her creative business and where she draws her inspiration from for her range of beautifully delicate printed shades.

How do you start the design process and where do you get your design inspiration?

My design process usually starts with a sketch. I then cut my printing plates to size and play with my pressed plants and other materials to get the design and shape I like.

I like to combine fine art printing techniques, so at the moment I'm working on linocuts and collagraphs together.

I've collected materials from the strand line and flowers out of the garden and I'm really looking forward to putting together my designs for my range. It's been great to finally start to move my studio into its new premises. I get my inspiration from the environment around me and the actual materials I work with.

How would you describe your style?

I work with nature, so my work is generally soft and natural.

You clearly like playing with different printing techniques. Can you tell us a little more about them and which is your personal favourite for making shades?

My favourite is collagraph. I enjoy the process of building a printing plate, layering and shaping the plants, cutting into the printing plate to create backgrounds. It's just such a fun process, a bit messy and you never know how it's going to print. I also love it as no matter how many times you use the same printing plate, each print is different, making them unique.

When did you start making lampshades?

Almost 4 years ago now.

What's your favourite part of the lampshade making process?

Making the plate and printing the fabric, and if it's a commission, handing the shade over to the client - this I love the most. I know it's a cliché but seeing a client's reaction when they see their shade for the first time, is what makes it worthwhile. A lot of my work is commission based and generally it's creating shades for pre-loved lamp bases, some of which

have great sentimental value. Making them 'shine' again is great.

I also love working with clients on a one-to-one basis, creating colour and print samples, and tailoring the shade to fit in their house with existing furnishings, it's a more personal service and I love that.



What's the mix of shades you make to sell versus lampshade commissions, as part of your business?

I would say it's about 65% commissions and the rest shades I create for shop space. Each shade and base is unique and the ones I create for the shop are a good way of showing clients what I can create for their home.

We understand you're moving into a new space to retail your lampshades? Can you tell us all about it and what difference this will make?

Yes I am and I'm very excited. I have gradually built the business up over 4 years from home. Two years ago, I tried a small studio space but it wasn't big enough so I moved back home.

I have since taken to painting, which I love and need more space to grow. Being a parent and working from home has its challenges, so the new space will make this so much easier.

The space and ability to have a small retail space on the high street is going to enable me to expand my business and really give clients the ability to be able to see different fabrics and works in progress. I will also be able to display my lamp bases, showcasing locally sourced wood used. I'm hoping to expand into other textiles to match my shades, so having this new space is going to make a world of difference and I'm so excited for the future.

Also with Covid-19, my working practice will have to change. It isn't going to be as easy to visit clients' homes, so having a base where they can come to me and bring paint samples, and old shades, is really going to help sustain my business.

Do you have any tips for new lampshade makers in business?

Research, research, research, you need to discover your USP (unique selling point), what makes you stand out from the rest, and what are you able to provide that others can't. Don't copy designs, make yourself different.

What kind of creative workshops do you run?

When time allows, I run lampshade making workshops and printmaking workshops. I haven't been able to run these the last 12 months and I'm hoping the new larger space will enable them to start up again.

How do you fit in all your work?

Hmmmm I get asked that all the time, as I have 3 children. I have a very supportive husband and we juggle time between us. I tend to do admin at night and the daytime for making.

Do you have a routine or do you work in a more 'free flow' style?

This is a difficult question! Pre Covid-19 it was usually pretty fixed between school hours, but now I have new premises, it's going to enable me to work more efficiently and on weekends.

When are you at your most productive?

After I've walked my dogs! I am lucky with where I live. The countryside and coastline are stunning, a walk before the start of the day in the forest or by the sea helps me clear my head and start the day running. Look at the market you are aiming for and think about how your work will fit into this.

Don't over price to start with, but at the same time be sensible and work out time and costs, and make sure there is profit to invest back into the business. My first year was spent recouping the costs of equipment and material set up costs.

Have short and long term goals, and remember Rome wasn't built in a day! Anything worth having is worth waiting for. I still make mistakes and I'm still in the early years of my business, and mistakes are part of the learning curve.

Always allow 20% on purchasing materials! So buy what you need and allow 20% more! Something my dad always said "there's nothing worse than making a mistake and not having enough of what you need"!



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EDA

Ellie Davison Archer

Ellie won our monthly competition #MeMAdeShade in May 2021 and shared how she started making lampshades and set up her online shop.

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and the creative things that you do?

Hey I'm Ellie, an artist and maker based in Northumberland. After graduating from Norwich University of the Arts with a Fine Art degree, I moved back up North to continue my creative journey in a new studio space at The Old Bath House, Broomhill. I started my little business by combining my love of drawing, process led design and interiors in order to develop a series of hand screen printed homeware products that aim to bring a little bit of the Northumberland coastline and countryside into the home.

Are you a newbie lampshade maker or have you made up a Needcraft Lampshade Making kit before?

I started making lampshades from Needcraft kits a couple of years ago not only to experiment with turning my printed fabric into three dimensional forms, but I was personally finding it difficult to source a lampshade that I loved to put in my own home. I trialled my first shades at an event and they received such a good response that I've never stopped making them since and they have definitely become my best selling product!

What do you love about the shade you entered for the #memadeshade competition?

When I work on a new design, I develop it onto fabric as a screen print using a chosen colour palette. However, I often work closely with my customers to create custom colours that will make sure my designs compliment their interiors even more so. The lampshade I entered for the #memadeshade competition was a custom order with my bee design printed in a dark charcoal coloured ink, which worked so well with the industrial style lamp it was intended



for and rustic setting of the customer's home.

What do you like most about the Needcraft Lampshade Making Kits?

The Needcraft Lampshade Kits are so versatile and available in a great range of sizes and shapes which makes experimenting with my printed fabric so much fun! It's also great that I can offer my customers such a variety of customisable options, so they find the perfect shade for their home too.

Any plans to make more lampshades?

Definitely! I've been working away on some new illustrations and experimenting with different base materials and colours that will be part of my new collection for this year. I can't wait to translate these into print and then onto a series of lampshades!



EDA
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FREE Advice & Support

We offer free advice and support to all our Lampshade Makers. There are many tools and platforms online to support your new lampshade making venture.



Dannells has a Facebook group with over 2000 friendly shade makers who are always ready to answer any questions and share insider tips.



Over 40 video tutorials on Youtube.



Live Virtual Workshops.



A Blog full of educational posts and inspiring stories from our Makers.



Social Media profiles packed with inspiration and support.



Plenty of instructions and advice on the website.



A friendly team at Dannells that are just a phone call away to answer all your questions, whether you are a hobbyist or an entrepreneur in search of a new opportunity.

Be inspired



Our Blog is your best source of inspiration, discover dozens of Tutorials, Makers' Stories, Insider Tips and Business Advice!

Read about our Makers that have tapped into their creativity and have created successful businesses around their lifestyles, these articles will inspire you!

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