

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

- Frames
- Panels
- Materials
- Ring-sets
- Adhesives
- Trimming
- Textiles
- Tools
- Manufacturers & Retail Packs
- Free Help & Advice
- Fabric and General Printing





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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!

Vanessa

Copper Dust

Spotting a gap in the market, Vanessa of Copper Dust used her eye for interiors and her gut instinct to start out in the world of lampshade making. Inspired by the bold colours and stand out prints of her mixed heritage, she began creating gorgeous statement shades. From then to now, Vanessa has gone on to successfully develop her business by retailing a range of beautifully curated lifestyle products and offering first-class interior design services.

We chat to Vanessa to find out more about the journey she's taken with Copper Dust and the influences behind her stunning shades.

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

I take a lot of inspiration by what's around me, and most definitely travel when I can. I usually have a concept in mind, then dig a little deeper and create a narrative around the concept.

How would you describe your style?

My style is African inspired bold vibrant colours, but as of late I want to look at the more earthy tones from Africa inspired by materials such as woven baskets and wicker.

We can see you love a statement lampshade. Do you follow trends or do you just go with your instinct on what will work for a lampshade?

I never follow trends, especially in interiors as it changes so fast, I like to see myself as a pioneer experimenting with textiles and different materials.



Which part of your background or training has prepared you most for making lampshades?

I would definitely say my degree in Interior Architecture & Design played a major role, in understanding the scale of design.



When and why did you start making lampshades?

In 2014, after working in Design & Build, I wanted to be in a more creative environment. When shopping with a friend I realised there was gap in the market for beautiful African

inspired lampshades. I wanted to bridge my British and Ghanaian heritage, so I quit my job to pursue my passion. In between that period I was signed to a modelling agency which allowed me to travel the world and experience different cultures. I loved modelling, but I wanted to follow my passion and find more stability which began the journey of Copper Dust.

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

Seeing all the different steps come together.

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

Volta lampshade
Copper Dust follows the philosophy of #slowdesign.

How is this integrated into your products?

I strongly believe in investing in design for quality and sustainability, I take care in the fabrics I source, our entire range is limited edition, once it's sold out that's it. I limit the amount of collections that are released, investing in one statement piece will last ten times over than a fast item product.



We couldn't help notice your love of tiered lampshades, especially with a tasselled layer. How did the tiers and the tassels come about?

I always knew I wanted to create something unique, so the designer in me couldn't help playing around with materials and sketches. I've had an obsession with fringing for as long as I can remember, so I decided to bring the two together, and it's been a bestseller ever since.

Any tips for new lampshade makers in business?

Research, research and when you feel tired of research, research again!

How do you fit in your shade making around the other services you offer at Copper Dust?

Keeping organised is the key to success. I have a number of apps that I use, and always create a priority list of what needs to be done. When I have larger projects on, I work with a team of freelancers.

And your favourite sustenance when you're working?

Not a sustenance, but I love to have a documentary on in the background.

Where would you like to be in 10 years' time?

To have a larger studio/workspace for people to come and visit. To have opened a Copper Dust division in Ghana.

To work with the hottest up-and-coming interiors, and collaborate with household names.



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

Preparation is key, the more you prep and stay ahead of the game, the easier your creative process becomes.



Copper Dust

www.copperdustlondon.com
[@copperdustldn](https://www.instagram.com/copperdustldn)

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 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. 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?

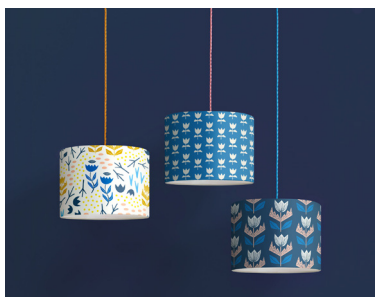
I am inspired by so many things! I have done quite a bit of travelling, taking inspiration from the colours, architecture, nature, and prints I have seen in India, the Middle East, South America, and Southern Spain. And I love Scandinavian design for its clean graphic shapes and colours. So, my aesthetic 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 moodboards 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 co-ordinating 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?

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

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Helen

Made by HRM



In this interview we get to know talented lampshade maker Helen of Made by HRM, who's a whirlwind of creativity with a passion for bright, colourful fabrics and quirky prints. Her love of making lampshades and Needcraft clocks has allowed her to build a successful retail craft business from her home, where she also enjoys teaching workshops, all while juggling her new family and her studies!

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

I am not a fabric designer, so I rely on the talents of others for my lampshade and clock collections. I love to support indie fabric shops – so I keep a close eye on new fabrics they are stocking, and as soon as something catches my eye, I grab it!

How would you describe your style?

Bright! I love a colourful and fun print, if a fabric makes me smile, then I want to share it with the world.

Do you follow trends or do you just go with your instinct on what you think will work for a lampshade?

I keep up to date with the latest releases of fabric designers, but I tend to go with my gut and choose fabrics I love, which luckily tend to be the fabrics that my customers love too!

When did you start making lampshades?

I learnt to make lampshades the afternoon before running a lampshade course when I worked as a manager for Cath Kidston in 2012. I am self-taught, and have refined my technique over the past 9 years (I no longer balance the wires on my head before I start to roll!)

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

The final tucking of the seams and finishing off is my favourite part of the lampshade making process.

It's the final part of the process and gives my shades that professional finish, showing how much I care about the products I make and giving my customers a beautifully finished piece for their homes.

What's your most popular selling shade in your online shop?

My best sellers are the animal print lampshades, everyone loves a woodland critter or a safari scene to make them smile.

"Being able to provide something custom for someone, searching out specific fabrics and designs to their specifications is really fun."



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

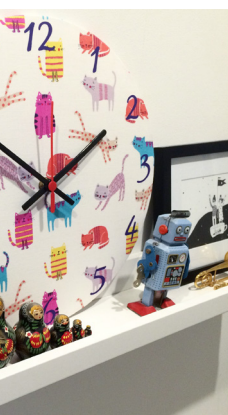
I would say about 70% online vs 30% commissions. I keep a wide variety of fabrics in my collection, so I try to have something that will suit most people! Being able to provide something custom for someone, searching out specific fabrics and designs to their specification is really fun, and it's always great when you find the perfect thing to make your customer happy.

And you also make our clock kits. How did this come about?

I love making lampshades, but when you go to markets and fairs, lampshades can be a little niche! Selling clocks along with my other textile gifts gives me a wider product range and something for those who love an LED downlight instead of a shade!

What do you like about the clock kits?

The clock kits are very simple to use but effective. They allow me to make a



product that compliments my shades, and they're much smaller and easier to store than a

lampshade!

Any tips for new lampshade makers in business?

The manufacturers kits are brilliant! Having the backing plastic flat instead of rolled makes life much easier, and the seam tape is super strong, which means your shades will last forever.

How do you fit in your shade making with the other things in your life?

I am a wife and a new mum, I balance HRM with family life, with training for ordination in the Church of England and completing a second degree – I actually wrote this interview with one hand whilst breastfeeding our new born!

When are you at your most productive?

I am a morning person, but I work whenever I get a spare moment!

And your favourite sustenance when you're working?

Chocolate and copious amounts of tea! I also need a good film or podcast in my ears to keep me company.

Where would you like to be in 10 years' time?

I would love to be pushing the boundaries of my creativity with HRM, perhaps even taking a leap of faith and designing my own fabrics to use for my shades.

I love to teach, and am looking forward to being able to get back to running workshops and meeting with other creatives again when the Covid-19 pandemic is over too.

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

Having a creative outlet is so important for my mental

health and it makes me really happy to share my creativity with others. One of my biggest lessons has been not to compare myself to other people; it doesn't matter what everyone else is doing and whether they have more Instagram followers than me, I am still good at what I do and grateful that I have the opportunity to share it with others.



@madebyhrm

Joanna

Lume Lighting

Combining her passion for clean and simple design and talent for detailed printing, Joanna of Lume Lighting creates lampshades that are nothing short of beautiful. Ranging from intricately patterned modern drums to ombre traditional shades, along with her fabulous new wooden pendant lights, Joanna has built up a successful lighting business.

We go behind the scenes to find out about her creative influences, what her days look like and why she loves lampshade making!

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

My inspiration usually comes from being outdoors and travelling to different cities or countries. Usually something I see sparks an idea and I start by drawing that, whether it's a building, a tree, or a motif, then from there I will add in other elements and start playing around with patterns and repeats.

How would you describe your style?

Clean and simple.

It's clear you have an eye for detail. Do you follow trends or do you just go with your instinct on what



will work for a lampshade?

I have always tried to trust my instincts and go with what I love! I like to keep an eye on trends, however being a fabric designer too, it wouldn't be sustainable to keep designing new prints every time there's a new trend. Therefore I try to create designs that have longevity.

When did you start making lampshades?

I started making lampshades about 7 years ago. I used to make other interior products and thought that lampshades would make the perfect addition to my collection. After making my first ones, I fell in love with the process and it eventually became my whole business.

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

My favourite part of the lampshade process is rolling the fabric onto the rings, this is where you really see the fabric

and print come to life!

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

My Starlings design. It has a simple and neutral colour palette, and proves to be one of my most popular designs as it works well with a variety of interior styles.



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

I would say that 70% of my business is making and selling my lampshade either online, through retailers or directly, and the rest is made up from commissions and recoverings.

Your lighting business includes a wide range of shades from drum shades, to fairy lights to traditional shades. Do you plan ahead to expand your product range?

I am always looking to expand my product range, whether it's creating a new design for a shade or designing a new lighting product - I currently have quite a few ideas in the pipeline!

What's the best thing about running lampshade making workshops?

I have been teaching lampshade making workshops for over 5 years now and still absolutely love teaching people a new skill. The best part is when they see their finished creation and are so proud of what they have made, especially when they have come along saying that they aren't very creative, and by the end they are so pleased with what they have achieved!

Any tips for new lampshade makers in business?

There are a lot of lampshade makers out there so try to make your lampshades stand out and find that niche!

How do you fit in your shade making with your other commitments?

I'm very lucky that my lampshade business is my full-time job. However, for the past year and a half my partner and I have been renovating our house ourselves. So I have had to adapt to working on my business less than what I normally would.



When are you at your most productive?

I'm definitely not an early morning worker! I get into my studio for about 9am and get my easy tasks out the way before moving onto the trickier ones. I know that I am definitely more productive later in the day and this is when I can get my products made.

And your favourite sustenance when you're working?

Always tea!

Could you let us take a peek at your workspace?

Of course, although I would say it doesn't always look this tidy!!

Where would you like to be in 10 years time?

I'm not someone who has a 10-year plan, but I would hope to still be doing something that I love and that brings me joy!

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

I also would say that finding a local group of creative small businesses has been invaluable to me! To be able to share experiences and learn from one another is great! I also share a studio space with another amazing business who is a good friend, and this has really helped me and my business grow.



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