

LAMPSHADE MAKER ROSI DE RUIG

Exquisite decorative and marbled papers are the hallmark of this designer's hand-crafted shades, sought after by those looking for something out of the ordinary

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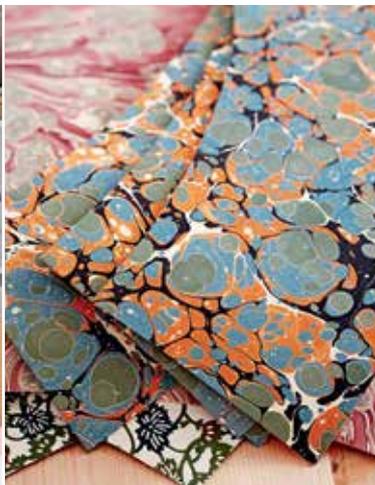


THIS PAGE At her worktable Rosi attaches a black cotton trim to an Italian lampshade.
OPPOSITE PAGE Rosi keeps samples of many of her designs in the studio for clients to see.





ABOVE A pair of recently completed lampshades. **BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT** Rosi traces the outline of a template onto orange book cloth, which will be used as the lining for her Italian lampshade; a selection of current papers; a corner of Rosi's sitting room features a new design she is trialling; rolls of paper are stored in chests and bins ready for use.



With a passion for sewing and crafting, Rosi de Ruig started producing intricate paper lampshades three years ago, following a career in arts and media recruitment. She now provides beautifully crafted shades for private clients and interior designers alike, undertaking both bespoke and off-the-peg commissions.

“ I was brought up in a home full of warmth, colour and pattern. That was very inspiring and even though initially I pursued an interesting career in recruitment, I seemed to fill my spare time with crafting. Increasingly, these creative elements were more satisfying than any office-based job. A few years ago, after having my first child, I decided the time was right for me to explore a different avenue, mainly using the sewing skills that I'd developed over time.

Interesting, affordable designs are hard to find. That's what I discovered when I moved house six years ago and couldn't source the right lampshades. I realised that I could produce them myself, so I enrolled on a variety of courses and began making them for my home as well as for friends and family. The business grew from there.

Every step of lampshade making is delicate. There are four main stages: cutting the shape using a template laid flat on cream or double-sided card; attaching the paper, which is often fragile; building the lampshade to the frame, which involves using clothes pegs and other tools; and finishing the process with handmade trims to bind the whole piece together.

I've learned to slow my pace over time. Often, the smaller lampshades are harder to construct as they are fiddly to work with. Also, the papers I use require careful handling, especially some of the decorative ones which can tear or wrinkle very easily. I have white cotton gloves that I sometimes wear when smoothing the papers or gluing. I also have a wide selection of scissors and Stanley knives, which I keep sharp for maximum precision.

I have a secret address book of suppliers that I've built up over the years. For example, the cottons I use for trimmings are sourced from the brilliant fabric shops in Shepherd's Bush. Another of my go-to suppliers is Shepherds, a classic bookbinding store in London's Victoria; its beautiful papers are ideal for lampshades. I also love exploring further afield – my husband is Dutch and I've discovered that the Netherlands produces wonderful papers, as does Japan. I'm also about to travel to Jaipur to unearth new designs.

I embrace Britain's current passion for craft. At the moment, there's a welcome craving for authenticity to counterbalance more mass-produced, highly branded products. I feel hugely lucky to collaborate with talented specialists, such as marbling artists, pattern designers and interiors experts, on a daily basis. I'm also very aware that the internet has allowed makers like me to exist in a way that may not have been possible even ten years ago.

My home has become a great testing ground. I like trying out unexpected colour combinations, shapes and patterns – I currently have a pair of marbled Pink Stormont lampshades on the bedroom mantelpiece. Clients often visit me, which is helpful as they get to see my designs in situ, as well as where I work. Next on the agenda is potentially to run courses and produce my own papers.”

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