

Falling Into Fall

WHAT'S NOT
TO LOVE ABOUT
THIS TIME
OF YEAR? pg.22

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photograph by Kevin Cruff

A Shade Above

Jil Smith lights up a room like no one else

by Nicole Meoli


during an interview for a waitress job several years ago, Jil Smith was asked what she looks for when she goes out to eat. After careful consideration, Smith replied, "I want it to be lovely and beautiful—and the lighting should be warm and yummy." The answer that would have gotten her the job was "great food and service."

"I think I went into lighting right after that," Smith, 42, says.

It's a good thing she did, because if you own a lampshade made by Jil Smith of Insatiable Studios, you have an original piece of artwork in your possession.

After wrapping about four layers of rice paper soaked in glue around a sturdy frame, Smith hand cuts pieces of more rice paper to create complex patterns and figures using nothing more than her X-Acto knife. This is not to say that what she does is simple, however. One custom-ordered shade takes the Pratt Institute graduate eight to 10 weeks to complete.

Smith has become the Chihuly of lampshades since moving to Seattle 16 years ago. Her shades are aglow all over the place. The Seattle Art Museum commissioned Smith to make shades, in conjunction with the Picasso exhibit opening in October, that will be for sale in the museum's gift shop. Not surprisingly, given her job-interview answer, you can also dine under warm, yummy lighting in such Seattle restaurants as Luc, Cicchetti and Dahlia Lounge.

Even better, call her up and have her make one just for you. 



The Picasso shades that Jil Smith created for the Seattle Art Museum's exhibit are masterpieces in their own right.

get one: Smith makes custom-ordered shades or you can choose a shade right off her studio shelf. Studio hours by appointment only. (206) 781-3810; www.insatiablenstudios.com.