



## Jeannie Fraise

### LOTUS BLEU

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*"I started my interior design business in 2003 and opened the store this year. I was inspired to start my business after traveling extensively around the world with my husband during the past 15 years. He is French and his family is from Madagascar in Africa. We travel regularly to France and Southeast Asia, exploring new sources for art and home decor."*

### INSPIRATION/MOTIVATION FOR STARTING MY BUSINESS

In addition to my travels, I was also inspired to start the business by my art history background. I went to graduate school in art history at Stanford (received M.A. and Ph.D. candidacy), and worked in several museums, included the Cantors Arts Center at Stanford and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

### MY ROLE MODELS/MENTORS:

I appreciate the work of designers like Sherri Donghia of Donghia who updates and modernizes Asian textile traditions, and Liz Galbraith and Ephraim Paul of Galbraith and Paul who update and revive hand block printing techniques in a workshop environment.

### ADVICE I WOULD GIVE TO WOMEN STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESS:

Talk to people in the business before starting, don't be afraid to think out of the box, research your products well and make sure you're bringing something new to the scene, and constantly expose yourself to new designs and environments.

### WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT OWNING A BUSINESS:

I like the flexibility and creative potential. I mix my time between working on residential design projects and developing sources for my retail shop. I'm always learning and experiencing new challenges.

### WHAT I LIKE LEAST ABOUT OWNING A BUSINESS:

I don't have "fixed" hours and end up working a lot. There's always something new to do or pursue. Since my vendors are in France and Southeast Asia, it's sometimes harder to communicate and make sure they understand my design requirements and concerns.