



Making room

Sarah Lock waxes lyrical about space and colour with Abi Cox in her sun filled studio.



front of the building!). She greets us at the door, beaming in her paint splattered apron and brush in hand, she apologizes for the building site inside: “but I have made my space all lovely for you!”

In the open plan studio, which is currently occupied only by herself and a recorder maker (“I would like to get some jewelers in”), the afternoon sunshine streams into her colourful corner. “Other than my lathe, light and space are the most important things when I work. I love having this large window, and finally having the physical space allows a lot more mental space!” For the last few years, Sarah shared the studio with her husband, a furniture maker: she counts him (or the piles of waste wood mounting up) as the inspiration to start her lamp making. “There is always a lot of excess wood in furniture making, so, as there was a lathe available, I thought it would be a little enterprise I could do in my spare time.” Sarah’s always been a maker, starting by studying fine art (a practice she brings to all her work now), she’s gone through a long list of crafts over the years: “ceramics, sewing,

knitting, painting, stained glass... I haven’t done much metal work yet, but I plan to.”

Six months ago, her husband moved out of this studio, giving her the freedom she’s been looking for. “Before, if I didn’t come in for a few days, something would be put in front of my lathe, so there’d be a lot of moving to do and I’d be really pushed into a corner. It’s so much easier now as I can spread out, put pictures and inspiration up.” In that time, she’s been slowly filling up the rest of the studio with other makers: she already has people upstairs, plus the recorder maker, “I thought it would be lonely on my own, but the more time I had to work on my space the more I liked it. It is very inspiring having people around again though, we can bounce ideas off each other.”

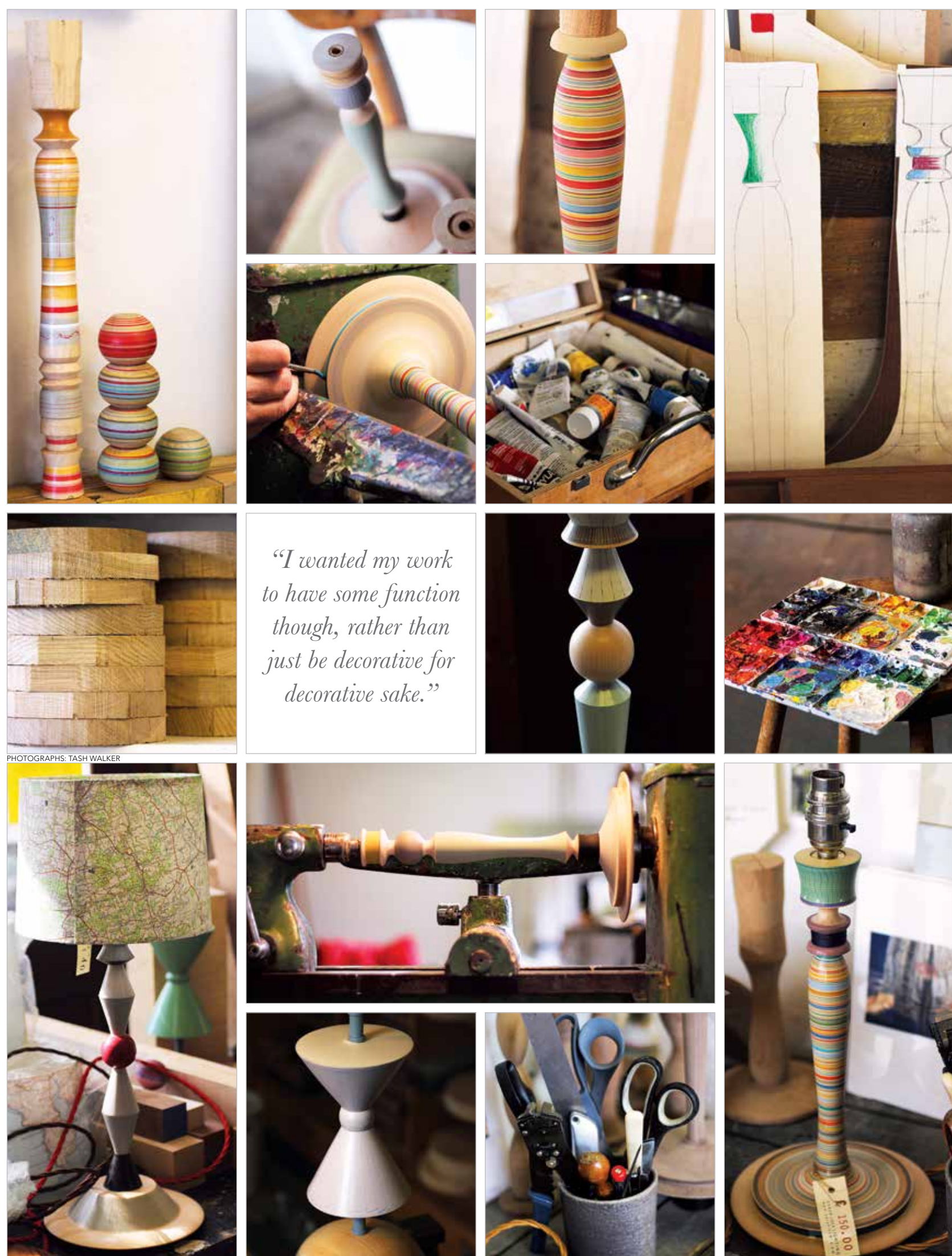
It’s only in the last few years that Sarah has been able to focus her efforts entirely on the lampshade bases, developing her signature, stripy style. “The majority of bases are made from lime: it’s a beautiful surface to work with. It’s traditionally used for carving rather than furniture making because it doesn’t have a very strong grain, but it takes the paint really nicely.” She still tries to use as much waste wood as possible, all of which have different properties: oak, “a much bigger grain,” and walnut, “much harder to work with; it takes a lot of care to get a nice finish.” The type of wood often influences and inspires the design she paints on top; her oak bases are given a much sparer treatment than the lime stands, and sometimes “the wood is just too nice to paint, so I just put a simple wash over the top.”

Colour is an important feature in Sarah’s

work, dotted around her space are pages of rainbow sketches and paint palettes. She reels off a list of artists and sculptors, including Barbara Hepworth, Miró and Picasso, whose work is primarily preoccupied with colour and shape, and she credits with her main inspiration. “I wanted my work to have some function though, rather than just be decorative for decorative sake.” The mental space she mentioned earlier has clearly allowed her to create more sculptural designs: she shows me a pastel coloured base with a ‘skirt’ motif and entirely different shape to her previous work. “I haven’t quite resolved the design yet. My usual lampshades won’t work, but I’m not sure what it needs. I love it, but I’ve been sitting on it for a while now.” She seems quite happy playing around with colour and form for now, while also returning to her classic bases in between, “it’s easier to repeat things, but new ideas do emerge, influences just come to you.”

Despite her background in fine art, Sarah finds it easier to settle down to a day of wood turning than a day of painting: “the transition is quite difficult, self doubt can set it and I worry I’ve forgotten how to do it. So I do tend to procrastinate, but I always have a lot of dusting to do, so it’s productive faffing!” Although she maintains the first one she paints is ‘dodgy’, I find that very hard to believe. From everything I’ve seen, she’s a master of her craft and is going from strength to strength with the space she’s finally been given. I can’t wait to see what happens next!

To find out more, visit www.sarahlock.com



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PHOTOGRAPHS: TASH WALKER