

How Using Spoonflower For Fabric Drove the Growth of the Tiny Activist Project

By **Anne Evans** - February 19, 2021



Sarah Marsom sewing Tiny Jane. Photo by Stephen Newport.

Do you have a business idea that would really take off if you could design and print custom fabrics? That's the scenario Sarah Marsom, a Heritage Resource Consultant, found herself in a few years ago. That's also the scenario that Spoonflower hopes to solve.

"As a Heritage Resource Consultant I am always looking for new ways to help people understand the value of history and to connect them to places from the past," says Marsom. "Spoonflower has allowed me to fuse my work with my passion for creating with textiles."

Her passion for historical preservation led her to found the **Tiny Activist Project**, fabric dolls inspired by advocates for the built environment.

"I use Spoonflower fabric to sew dolls in the image of urbanist Jane Jacobs and architect I.M. Pei," she says. People can also purchase her 'sew your own kits' for a DIY experience.

Spoonflower is an on-demand digital printing company that allows individuals to design fabric, wallpaper, and decals. The company began in 2008 and has experienced huge growth. Its

mission is “to inspire individuals to make, buy and sell unique products built around color and pattern.”

People also like that Spoonflower allows for short runs, with low setup costs, giving people who are not in the textile industry a chance to see their designs and illustrations come to life.

Marsom has been using Spoonflower since 2017 for the Tiny Activist Project, and has purchased other fabrics from the company for a variety of other textile projects. She loves Spoonflower’s service for a variety of reasons and says:



Tiny Jane, a doll from the Tiny Activist Project.

SPOONFLOWER’S SERVICE OF PRINTING CUSTOM DESIGNS ON A WIDE RANGE OF FABRICS AND WALLPAPER IS WONDERFUL FOR A FEW REASONS:

- I love that Spoonflower introduces you to designers from around the world
- Fabric is printed on demand, which minimizes waste and is produced in North Carolina for North American orders
- The company cultivates a creative community through their social media accounts and weekly design challenges; they present blogs and videos that help you develop your creative skills
- It is amazing to be able to create your own design and have it printed! That is insanely empowering.

For the prototype Tiny Jane Jacobs doll, Marsom pieced together different pieces of fabric. That was the fall of 2016.

“I took the doll to the annual National Trust for Historic Preservation conference and it was a hit!” she says. “I had people asking me how they could get their own doll.”

While brainstorming ways that a doll could be easily created for others, she decided she would need an illustration and fabric.

“Fabric was easy, because I have utilized Spoonflower for custom textile designs for years,” she says. “Illustration was a

bit more difficult.”

While she considers herself a creative type, she knew she was not the best person to design the Tiny Jane she envisioned.

“I needed a design that would provide a whimsical perspective on arguably one of the most well known urbanists,” she says.

Marsom partners with her friend, [Shannon May](#), a San Francisco based illustrator, to create the original fabric that now makes up each Tiny Activist Project doll.

“It has been a true pleasure partnering with my friend for this extension of my business.”

Marsom is preparing to [relaunch her Tiny Activist shop](#) on Monday, February 22, 2021 with a larger volume of ready-to-ship dolls. Her dolls have found homes in five continents and close to forty states.

Later this year, Tiny Jane Jacobs will be featured in ‘Power in Preservation’, an exhibition in Washington D.C.

“Spoonflower has opened doors for me that I didn’t know existed,” says Marsom. “I am always excited to use their products for personal projects or professional efforts to connect people to the past.”

To learn more, visit sarahmarsom.com/tinyactivistprojectshop.



Sarah Marsom sewing Tiny Jane.

Photo by Stephen Newport.

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<https://www.themetropreneur.com/columbus/members/anne-evans/>

Anne Evans is the Co-Founder and COO for The Metropreneur and Columbus Underground. She also regularly contributes to both sites with features focusing on living (At Home) and working (At Work) in urban areas and creative spaces. She enjoys scrapbooking, parties, her family and restoring a 100+ year old home close to Downtown Columbus.



