

## ENTREPRENEUR

Bedtime buddies by textile  
printer Yasmine Louis

**P**illows are the most intimate of home accessories — shouldn't their look reflect that? Such is the belief of textile printer Yasmine

Louis, whose satin-covered creations, emblazoned with images from 1950s retail catalogues, have excited the decorative pillow industry. The key to her product's charm? The captions that accompany their design: "She really thought buying a few new bras would solve all her problems," beneath the image of an ample brassiere, or "She was ready for anything," below a seductive slip. "Because pillows are personal, the sayings should be intimate," explains Louis. The designer also sources material from her own impulses: one series of pillows heralds a girl's desire to buy shoes.

With an Egyptian father, Swiss mother, and sojourns in Lausanne, Cameroon and Montreal (where she studied fine art at the Université de Montréal), it's no coincidence Louis's craft is so unique. She recently completed a three-year term at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre, where she had won studio space with which to jump-start her career.

And that she has. Louis has already caused a sensation at trade shows and several boutiques; on the way, she's attracted a faithful clientele. "Those who like my work are touched by it," notes Louis. Last Christmas, those patrons kept her busier than ever, right through Valentine's Day, her most lucrative sales time. Luckily, like the message on one of her favourite pillows, Louis is ready for anything. *Yasmine Louis, Toronto (416) 531-0692.*



**Top:** Yasmine Louis pauses before a selection of her screens at the Harbourfront Centre textile studio. **Left:** "Screening on satin creates a perfect image," says Louis, who uses retro catalogues for subject matter. **Below:** When customers expressed concern that their throw pillows clashed with their upholstery, Louis devised this silver bull's-eye cushion (\$35). "A one-of-a-kind pillow isn't supposed to match. It's a conversation piece. It should stand out." The red "slip" pillow (\$40) is one of Louis's racier numbers.



The silver pillow didn't match my sofa at all. It didn't matter to me as long as it matched my rings.