

Growing Appetite

ON ERIN ALBIN'S FIRST VISIT to the Portland Saturday Market in 2004, she had an epiphany: "I saw young people like me selling things I might make, and it sort of clicked that I could make money at this," she says. Three months later, the 24-year-old silk-screener scored one of the market's coveted booths, and her business, Appetite, was born.

Now 28, the New Mexico native's business is thriving. She clocks in six to seven days a week silk-screening dozens of hand-drawn blossoms, birds, and branches onto textiles. She then hand-sews them into bags, pillows, curtains, napkins, and other lovely accessories for the home.

Albin sells Appetite products on her Etsy website, www.appetite.etsy.com, and also through stores in New York and San Francisco, as well as five Portland shops, including Cheeky B, Foundation Garments, and Presents of Mind. And, of course, there's the Saturday Market booth, where customers flock to Albin's freehand creations.

Since May 2007, Albin has worked in a breezy 600-square-foot studio in the Towne Storage building in Southeast Portland. Though it's brimming at capacity, she hopes Appetite will grow; her ultimate goal is to provide fair employment for local women. "Hable Construction [a textile design company in New York] works with a Hungarian women's cooperative to sew," Albin says. "I like that idea of paying women a living wage with flexible hours."

Until she can hire more employees, though, Albin is blazing her own path. "What I'm doing—and what I think a lot of successful women artists are doing—is staying passionate about my work," she says. "I'm driven enough and happy enough to do it every day." ■

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A local textile artist finds success with her original designs

