

## cover story



Jenny Pinto sits amongst her paper light 'installations'

### JENNY Pinto

One of the few paper makers in the country, this former filmmaker started out with the aim of reconnecting to the earth. Her projects and products stand testimony to her success. Out to create handmade stationery paper from natural waste fibres like banana, pineapple, sisal, river grass and mulberry, Jenny began by learning how to make paper. Before long, she was conducting craft classes at Rishi Valley and working with NGOs to empower rural women. The stationery stopped as "no one in India wanted to write on expensive handmade paper," according to Jenny.

So from creating paper for stationery, she moved to accessories and lamps. "I guess the progression into lamps was due to my film background. Lighting always excited me and I love the look and feel of the paper we make. The banana fibre paper is my favourite," says the 46-year-old designer, who works out of a studio on the outskirts, made of unplastered mud bricks and with water and waste harvesting taking care of the garden and lotus pond. She says, "Paper making is an expensive process. So it can't be a hobby; it has to be a business. Though you can do it on a small scale by working with your kitchen mixer and simplifying the process." Her cus-

tomers are invariably people looking for something out of the ordinary. It's easy to see why. Twisted into various shapes, the paper forms exciting shadows when mounted on wood, metal or stone and looks more like an installation than lighting.