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Europe's No. 1 Style Magazine

# GRAZIA

Easy Chic

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June 2021







# From the EDITOR'S DESK

The last few weeks and the ferocity with which it unfolded, have spared almost no one. Even if you managed to stay safe, then the collective grief of what was happening all around the country definitely took its toll. As we gradually emerge from this second wave with definite unease and no clear answers in sight, if there's one thing that's comforting it's the thought that when all else failed humanity stepped up. Amid mostly grim news on Twitter and other social media timelines, a bunch of voices rose above the noise with users and popular personalities alike taking on SOS calls and connecting those in need with precious and scarce resources, inadvertently saving many lives. Our cover this month is a reminder of this absolute compassion and humanity from which hope springs.

This issue, we're taking all our cues from you – we've reacted to your responses (mapped via the polls and questionnaires we ran last month on our social media platforms) on how the pandemic has affected your skin, body and self-care drive, on how Covid-19 has impacted you and your relationships, including the way you think and feel, to even your changed shopping habits and smart investments, and figured out all the expert and timely advice in sync with your main concerns.

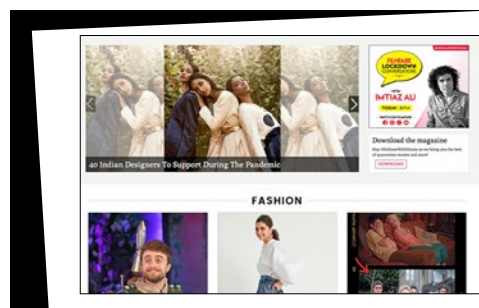
Until next month,

*Mehernaaz*



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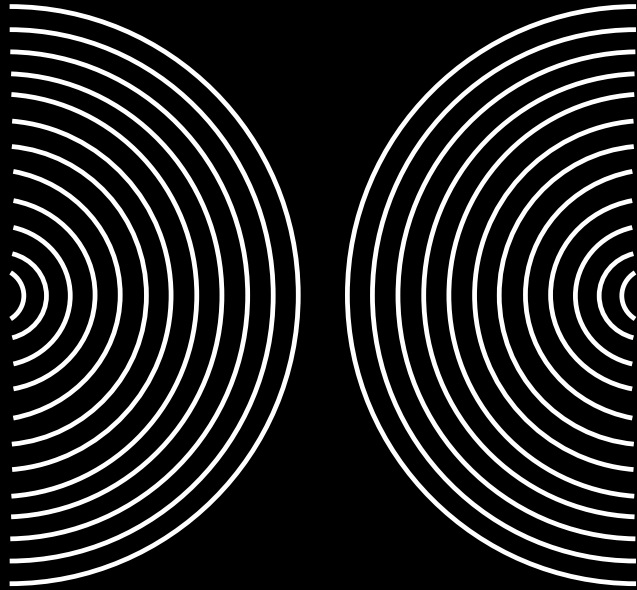


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Our website is our complementary arm, combining the best of what the magazine offers with its own flavour and take on current events around the world. Fashion news haute off the press, beauty product reviews, DIY hacks, and previews and reviews of the biggest dos around the country – we've got it all covered in easy reads.

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GRAZIA  
S.O.S

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24  
THROUGH  
IT ALL

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PULL UP A  
CHAIR



Illustration  
GAURAV OGALE

# FASHION CHARTS

*Your best buys in stores right now*

1

## DROP EARRINGS, SWAROVSKI, ₹ 9,890

This take on mismatched earrings is a subtle nod to modern architecture and design. Wear them on or offline with a chic pulled-back top knot and a swipe of your fave red lipstick.



4

## MESH BRA AND HIGH-RISE BRIEFS, GUCCI, PRICE ON REQUEST

Say goodbye to your sensible cotton inners and treat yourself to this lush jacquard set, whose pattern is inspired by the house's 1930s archives.



2

## PRINTED DRESS, TED BAKER, ₹ 20,461

This vibrant slinky dress instantly transports us to sunnier days filled with regular al-fresco dinners.



3

## BUCKLED SANDALS, MICHAEL MICHAEL KORS, ₹ 13,500

We love a pair of sandals that are as good looking as they are hard working. From worn-out sweats to a jeans-and-Tee combo for errand runs, these flats will form the crux of your look.



5

## PRINTED TROUSERS, TORY BURCH, ₹ 28,873

Printed separates are shorthand for summer and this scarf print pair works just as well for lounging on your couch, binge watching TV, or (eventually) for a brunch date with the girls.







**DRAWSTRING PARKA,  
UNITED COLORS OF  
BENETTON, ₹3,999**

Bubblegum pink is having a huge fashion resurgence and we can't think of a better way to welcome the monsoon than with this bright piece.

6



**PVC WATCH, SWATCH X  
MOMA, ₹ 5,803**

A special edition watch inspired by Gustav Klimt's iconic work 'Hope, II (1907-08)' brings his signature Art Nouveau detailing to your wrist. It's like a piece of art you can stare at even if you're on the go.

7



**'TWIST' HANDBAG,  
LOUIS VUITTON,  
PRICE ON REQUEST**

Big enough for just the essentials, this colourway of the now cult 'Twist' style is sure to liven up any look.

9



8

**MIDI DRESS,  
MISSONI, PRICE  
ON REQUEST**

Our dream summer wardrobes are far from minimalistic. It's all about making a case for dressing up again, this year, and we're embracing plenty of joyful colour. This knit midi is just the ticket.

10

**SHIRT DRESS,  
CARDIGAN,  
BATSHEVA,  
PRICE ON  
REQUEST**

In this world of wishful shopping (and therefore, dressing), we're drawn to statement cardigans that can be thrown over almost everything. Paired with a oversized shirt-dress – this look is a winner in our books. [link](#)



# BEAUTY CHARTS

*Skincare and make-up on our radar right now*

1



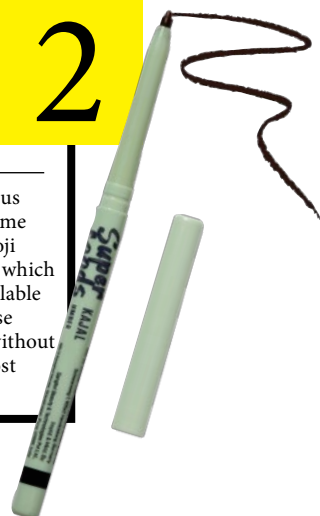
**CETAPHIL BRIGHT HEALTHY RADIANCE BRIGHTENING DAY PROTECTION CREAM SPF 15, ₹ 990**

If you're in need of light hydration, even on humid days, try this hero product from the brand's new Radiance Range – along with moisturising, it also offers sun protection and promises to start fading sun spots in under four weeks.

2

**MYGLAMM SUPERFOODS KAJAL, ₹ 395**

Make-up that cares? Sign us up. These waxy pencils come enriched with avocado, goji berry, and sunflower oils, which help soothe the eyes. Available in three shades, the intense colour will stay in place without smudging even on the most sensitive waterlines.



3

**MON GUERLAIN EAU DE PARFUM, ₹ 9,500**

The fifth iteration in the series celebrates femininity and a woman's fierce sense of self – now that's signature scent material. It also features top notes of lavender and bergamot, a heart of jasmine, iris, and notes and finishes with a woody base of vanilla and sandalwood.



5

**DR. SHETH'S ASHWAGANDHA & ALPHA ARBUTIN SERUM, ₹ 695**

If you've tried everything for spots and scarring without success, then this may be worth a shot – this combo of active arbutin and Ayurvedic superhero, *ashwagandha* eases inflammation while tackling pigmentation. It's formulated specially for Indian skin, fit to be used even by sensitive skin types. **IT**



4

**SCHWARZKOPF PROFESSIONAL ROSE FINISHING OIL, ₹ 1,750**

Precious rose oils come together for some scalp care and style with this unique finishing oil. The weightless blend is ideal to tame frizzy ends while soothing a hot and bothered scalp with its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties.





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# 10 HOT STORIES

EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT



1

## CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

*The fashion industry is stepping forward to do its part during turbulent times*

The fashion landscape, like all others, has been greatly impacted by Covid-19. For brands, retailers, and consumers alike, the discretionary purchase has become a layered experience, where ethics play as important a role as the aesthetics. Over the past month, fashion brands have been wearing their ethics on their proverbial sleeve as they rallied their efforts to help the country rise out of the clutches of the deadly second wave of the pandemic. From homegrown brands like jewellery label Olio Stories, which raised 1,240,974 over a three-day sale for organisations like Khaana Chahiye and Hemkunt Foundation, to established brands like Tarun Tahiliani, which will be donating a percentage of its May and June sales to Dastkar's Artisan Support Fund – the industry is moving beyond consumerism to take on a more humanitarian stance.

Olio Stories held a three day fundraiser for organisations contributing to Covid relief



La Fuori holds workshops for their craftspeople and also provides accommodation and food

### RALLYING FOR THE CRAFTSMEN

While numerous fashion brands are directing proceeds from sales towards larger Covid relief foundations, a section of designers and brands have been focusing their efforts on ensuring the craftsmen, who are at the heart of fashion, are protected from the drastic effects of the pandemic. Clothing label La Fuori has been providing accommodation, food, and medical aid to the craftspeople and tailors at their workshop in Rajasthan. Talking about the decision, founder Vidur Adlakha said, "It is a curious time. Not just due to the fear of Covid, but a lockdown of all social and economic activity. For the craftspeople, who are dependent on daily production and sales, life had come to a halt – there were no *melas*, no sales, no raw materials, and no money to feed their families. We have worked with them for decades, and so, we decided to share their pain. Outside the safety net of regular salaries or social security, they were helpless and demotivated. It is our social and moral responsibility to take care of their heritage and crafts."

### FASHION FOR A PURPOSE

For some brands, rallying for their fellow citizens in the time of need was a natural step. Designer Payal Singhal had already started reposting calls for help and donating funds when the second wave hit; but recently her brand set up the #PSFundraiser to aid the Helping Hands Foundation for Covid relief work. The virtual fundraiser will feature a specially curated collection at a 20 per cent discount, where a 100 per cent of the proceeds will be donated. The looks will be featured on the brand's muses like Juhi Godambe and Shibani Dandekar, whose massive audience will help amplify the efforts. "I felt that since we had the network of PS girls who

Juhi Godambe in an outfit from the #PSFundraiser Collection





had major influence, it's only natural that we should come together to provide Covid relief, and that's how the idea of the fundraiser was born," says Singhal.

Olio Stories, founded by Aashna Singh and Sneha Saksena, exceeded their three-day target to raise 2,00,000 and procured six times the amount instead, with 100 per cent of the proceeds being donated across five organisations working towards Covid relief. However, this isn't the first philanthropic endeavour by the brand. "We believe anyone who has a large platform has the duty and responsibility to use it for good. Our country is only going to rise if its marginalised and underprivileged sections are supported monetarily. We started this initiative last year, to give back to different organisations every month. Each month, we spotlight an issue we care about on social media and donate a portion of our profits to an organisation working in tandem with it. We have recently donated funds to the farmers' protest, animal endangerment, LGBTQIA+ representation, providing clean sanitary products to young girls, and more. With our Covid-19 donation drive, we were initially going to donate the money directly, but we put it out to our community and were able to raise more than what we expected. We donated to organisations who were providing oxygen and food to migrant workers, trans people, and other marginalised sections of society. Logistically, it is not easy at all. We decided to donate 100 per cent of the proceeds, not profits. So essentially, we were giving out free products for donations. The cost of goods, shipping, packaging, and the GST amount was entirely on us. We were astounded by the ripple effect. Numerous small brands have also started similar initiatives, inspired by us. Every little bit is going to make a difference, and we're amazed by the impact we were able to have," shares Singh.

## GOOD FOR BUSINESS

A look through the pandemic-skewed lens at the fashion industry offers a clear upheaval of business structures. The global lockdowns that led to the shuttering of stores, bankruptcies, and countless workers suffering due to delayed or halted productions; contributed to consumers further rejecting the escapism that fashion usually offers. As the heart at the core of fashion was highlighted, fashion didn't stand a chance unless tethered to a deeper meaning. While the brands raising funds for Covid relief in India did so out of their moral responsibility, it can't be denied that their ethical fundraisers and charitable endeavours will become embedded in the brands' identities going forward.

Besides the obvious benefits it creates for a brand's image, Singh emphasises on the importance for homegrown labels to voice their opinions and create dialogue to really connect with the consumer, "Fashion, world-wide, has always traditionally been apolitical, it reflected the times. Talking 'politics' is not deemed polite conversation. But now consumers, millennials or Gen Z, demand accountability from their brands. They only shop with brands that align with their personal values. Today, brands are increasingly presenting themselves as 'influencers' on the pressing issues in society. Ultimately, what society wants is for us to be authentic, they want brands that they can trust," she says.

New Delhi based Ronak Kapoor, founder of emerging accessory label Mistry, is taking things a step ahead. After donating a percentage of their sales proceeds to the Hemkunt Foundation for the entire month of May, Kapoor launched the #GetAJab campaign that offers customers 50 per cent off a bag of their choice if they are willing to furnish their vaccination certificate, "The only way to push our products was to create a campaign that would benefit the society and help us stay afloat during this tough time. People weren't looking to purchase bags but if they knew that they could get a bag while supporting a small business, it brings in the 'feel-good' factor. We didn't know the strategy would be so impactful, we had a bunch of consumers telling us that it really pushed them to go get the vaccine. Through this initiative, we raised 1.60 lakh, of which we have already donated 40,000 to the Hemkunt Foundation, and we're going to send the next three installments in the coming week. We also donated 35,000 to individuals in need around our neighbourhood. This didn't start out as an ethical marketing strategy, it was just a basic 'hustle'. We used the trial and error method, the response was overwhelming, and we also generated good revenue," he shares. **LI**

Words HITANSHI KAMDAR and TANYA MEHTA

## FASHION LABELS CONTRIBUTING TO COVID RELIEF

### VEG NONVEG

The popular sneaker collective is launching a series of online raffles encouraging customers to buy multiple tickets in a bid to win a coveted pair of sneakers. 100 per cent of the funds will be donated to organisations like Goonj, that provides ration and medical kits to the needy & Khalsa Aid which supplies oxygen concentrators.



### TARUN TAHILIANI

The bridal couturier is directly aiding artisans struggling during this testing period by tying up and donating a percentage of sales for two months to The Dastkar Artisan Support Fund.



### ANDAMEN

The menswear label is donating 10 per cent of their sales to Hemkunt foundation and for customers who have donated to any of the initiatives of Hemkunt foundation since 1st April 2021, will receive 25% of the amount donated as reward to redeem on Andamen.



### AMPM

The womenswear label has partnered with Give India to raise the critical funds that are required to help underprivileged people get vaccinated and pledge to give 30 per cent of their sales towards this initiative.



### AMIT AGGARWAL

In a truly novel way, the veteran designer is selling printed artwork of his sketches, signed personally by him. 100 per cent of proceeds will go to MCKS food – an organisation serving single mothers, destitute children, and out of work daily wagers.



# WAVE AFTER WAVE

2

*A brand new collab that interprets an iconic logo pattern, viewed through a 70s style psychedelic filter*

Words **PASHAM ALWANI**

With warmer and happier days (hopefully) on the horizon and a feeling of collective hope, Italian fashion house Fendi serves up a vibrant capsule collection just in time for summer. Drawing inspiration from the care-free spirit of the 1970s, the collection is the result of the brand's second collaboration with New York-based multidisciplinary artist Sarah Coleman, who is best known for her tongue-in-cheek fusion of fashion's most recognisable logos and prints with everyday objects.

By fusing 70s references with a 90s street-style vibe, the eye-catching collection aims to inspire a "joyful and uplifting mood" through a vibrant melding of psychedelic prints, searing hues of yellow and blue apt for the tropics, and a brand new warped logo conceived by working in tandem with accessories and menswear artistic director, Silvia Venturini Fendi.

The duo reinterprets the iconic monogrammed logo pattern through a trippy and twisted 70s lens, resulting in the first variant – 'FF Vertigo' – a wavy new motif that's prominent throughout the capsule and boldly emblazoned on everything from watches, handbags and even water bottle holders. Additionally, Coleman and Venturini Fendi also brought to life the 'FF Fisheye' motif – wherein the house's signature logo becomes distorted and fluid, "as if seen through a fish-eye



Clip-on pouches, watches, classic bag styles and even a Polaroid camera are all decorated with the 2021 version of the 'FF' logo



lens." Stand-outs include the new 'Baguette 1997', a re-edition of the iconic bag style designed by Venturini Fendi, featuring slimmer sides and a flappable handle, as well as new interpretations of the 'Peekaboo ISeeU' design, now also available in a version for men.

In keeping with the theme of hope (where we can *finally* spend time out of our homes post-pandemic), the capsule offers a limited run of outdoor and travel essentials: A tent, a vintage Polaroid instant camera, a bento box, and technical backpacks, all, of course, elevated with house iconography thanks to Coleman. The outdoor theme also runs through the jewellery selection, where interlaced leather is matched with both lacquered metallic details and hiking ropes – a subtle nod to the bright, sunny and most importantly – the outdoor future we're all looking forward to. ■





# ON THE FACE OF IT 3

*It's becoming increasingly clear that the fallout from the pandemic is a challenge to our identities*

Words **GAYATRI JAYARAMAN**

**H**ere's the thing about identity: You wear it, it doesn't get to wear you. Sometimes, it takes a major event, like a pandemic, or the loss of a role – personal or professional – to wake us up to the difference.

We go through life on a trajectory that accumulates labels. We can begin by being 'good at art', and then become 'artists', 'contemporary artists', and so on. We continue until our carefully constructed lives perpetuate the identities we most claim. This is great when it's something progressively cool, but what if it's 'funny' or 'overweight' or 'depressed'? We risk becoming prisoners of the name tag. We teach people who we want

to be known as, and therefore, how we want to be treated. It allows us to define who we are in the room, the attention we garner, and that ties into how we feel about ourselves.

Like an actor who knows his performance by the applause, we locate who we are by social feedback. Who are we without it? If we change, we may alter our most comfortable equations. So we continue, and the gap between our projected and real selves expands. And that's where we lose ourselves.

What an event like the pandemic does is it removes the venues of these projections. Social circuits have evaporated, the settings in which our identities sparkled are gone. We are no longer able to put on 'a show'.

We are left with our original selves, and all of it isn't pretty; some of it is quite flawed. Many of us have been forced to confront our basest emotions for more than a year now: Anger, resentment, inadequacy, loneliness, insecurity.

Not all of us dwell on our vulnerabilities. We cope by binge-watching, eating, having compulsive thoughts or earworms. We feel resentful towards parents or partners that block access to our identities. We can feel stuck, overwhelmed.

Alignment is when how you feel is what you think is how you express yourself. When your body feels tired, you sleep and your mind rests. When misaligned, our body is tired, we try to sleep, but the mind just races. By the time the mind stops, the body is exhausted. Multiply that by all the identities we try to keep up with, all the feelings we keep down, and you can see how internal dissonance builds. To align, we bear witness to feelings and identities we have pushed back. The difficult side of us is also the side that most needs a hug. In time, it will stop curling up into a ball like a kitten under the couch.

Self-acceptance is the greatest antidote to inner fragments. It doesn't mean you don't get to be a jokester anymore; it just means you don't internalise being one. You communicate your authentic self to circuits worthy of it. You become aware of the identities you wear. They're just something to slip into, like a cocktail dress and heels. You can change out of them and do you, flaws and all.

*(The writer is the author of Sit Your Self Down: A Novice's Journey to the Heart of Vipassana, and the forthcoming Anitya.)*

10 HOT  
STORIES



SCHIAPARELLI A/W 21

SCHIAPARELLI H/C 21

SCHIAPARELLI H/C 21

SCHIAPARELLI A/W 21

SCHIAPARELLI H/C 21

SCHIAPARELLI A/W 21

4

# SHAPE SHIFTER

Words **LAURA ANTONIA JORDAN**



It's December 2018, in New York: Daniel Roseberry would wake up on the floor of a friend's SoHo apartment where he was crashing and head off to a cold, dusty studio in Chinatown. There, as the Manhattan Bridge above the building shuddered with trains, he would spend the day sketching, compiling a project for a role he was in the running for. He had left a job he loved, as design director at Thom Browne, terrifying, he admits, "but I knew I needed to create a void in my life in order for something to come fill it".

It did. Fast-forward to Paris, July 2019, and these sketches had sprung to life as Daniel's first collection for Schiaparelli – and the new artistic director's first-ever couture offering. In under two years, he's not just made his mark, but established himself as one of fashion's most exciting talents. Even a global pandemic can't halt his momentum; this awards season Schiaparelli has been a hit among A-listers who prioritise looking interesting rather than predictably pretty: See Emma Corrin in a black dress festooned with gigantic, glinting teeth, Beyoncé in a leather LBD and gloves with trompe l'oeil fingernails.

For the Christmas holidays, Kim Kardashian West chose a Hulk-ish, fully-abbbed green bodice.





How did it feel the first time he, then largely unknown, walked into the Schiaparelli headquarters on the Place Vendôme, the first American to head a French couture house? "It's so fitting it was at Schiaparelli because there really is no word other than 'surreal,'" he says on a Zoom call from Paris, where thanks to the lockdown he has lived a largely "monastic" life since arriving. Indeed. Surrealism was integral to Elsa Schiaparelli's work. Her lobster hat, skeleton dress, and signature colour – shocking pink – remain iconic today, as do her collaborations with artists like Salvador Dalí.

Taking on a house with such illustrious heritage comes with a hefty helping of pressure. "I knew going into it that most relaunches of houses do not work. A big question for me was 'why?'," says Daniel, adding that impersonations "feel disingenuous and fall flat". So, artist collaborations were out and, although he spent a day at the Met looking at archival pieces, none was referenced in his first few collections. "I wasn't like 'let's burn it down' but I really didn't want it to feel nostalgic at all," he says. "The primary focus was let's 180 the house, make the conversation completely different and just make a scene."

While the clothes do make a scene, Daniel – composed, thoughtful, affable – is the antithesis of the theatrical showman. Raised in Dallas, the son of a minister, his earliest memories of clothes are of his mother getting ready for church ("it's kind of drag-ish; I love the performative, ceremonial aspect"). He admired the "intersection between the way my mom dressed and her graciousness to other people. I've never been inspired by bitchy people who look good. It's much more interesting and modern to be someone who looks incredible but is also full of grace for the people around you."

As a teenager, Daniel would pour over *Vogue*, marvelling at John Galliano's Dior, Karl Lagerfeld's Chanel. "But it never felt like something I could even dream to be a part of. When I started here that was one of the first things I said: I really want to open the doors up of the house, to our process, to my process, to seeing the way that clothes are made so that people might feel more invited to be a part of (it) with us." He wants young people to give themselves

permission to participate. It was fashion, he says, that inspired him to move out of his hometown. Its impact can be formative.

It's odd that the relevancy of couture is so often questioned in a way other arts aren't. It's the ostentation, the extravagance, the princessy gowns that can distract from the intimacy and artistry of the craft.

Rather than be shackled by the rigour of the craft and heritage, Daniel has been emboldened, liberated even, by it. "(We can be) perverse and joyful in an interesting way, and not precious about things. These clothes are made on the fifth floor in the Place Vendôme, we have nothing to prove to anybody. They are so elevated but then we get to redefine what elevated looks like." There's something irresistibly punky about this attitude. "It's that weird thing because it

is one of the grand couture houses but it's also a lot about questioning the rules."


He doesn't shy away from wit, absurdity, even the ugly. It's a pertinent message for now, a reminder that people can be both silly and cerebral, sexy and serious, glamorous and provocative. "I like the dichotomy of a personality," he says. "I love that there's a performer inside us and then I love that there's an introvert inside us."

It's this duality, coupled with the "why not?" attitude spurred on by the pandemic – life is short, just take the damn risk, have fun with it – that emboldens his fans to try something different. "When people choose things that are that strong and look that good it's so encouraging," says Daniel. "All I want to do is serve and amplify that moment."

Perhaps Daniel's biggest moment to date, however, has been the sweeping red silk faille skirt and navy cashmere jacket – embellished with a gilded dove of peace brooch – that Lady Gaga wore to the presidential inauguration. He still gets chills thinking about it. "The fact that we got to be a part of that in such a beautiful way will always be shocking to me."

The inauguration was charged with hope, and there is a sense that globally we're on the cusp of something new. It's time to shake up the system. With fashion in introspection mode, there is space there too for change, curiosity. This fever-dream year, sartorially defined forever by trackpants, however, has left us all questioning the purpose, relevance of fashion, asking whether clothes matter.

"Do clothes ultimately matter? I don't think so. I don't think in the grand scheme of things what you put on your back is ultimately what you're going to remember before you die," Daniel says. "But dreams matter, beauty matters and vulnerability matters and confidence and humour, those abstract ideas that can be channelled and captured in moments and visual elements, like clothes or in any of the arts. I'm not obsessed with making gowns for the rest of my life.

I love that Schiaparelli is about ideas first. She really just asked people to think about fashion in a broader sense and if I even get to 1 per cent of that mark I'm thrilled." 



Above and left: Elsa Schiaparelli and sketches from the archives

# IN FULL BLOOM

*A distinctive monogram design makes its way onto fine jewellery*

## DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

In terms of design, Amfitheatrof works with spheres and circular elements that compliment the modern interpretation of the Vuitton star-flower for a playful yet modern effect. Set in soothing easy-on-the-eye tones like white agate, pink opal, onyx, and malachite in both polished yellow and rose gold finishes, it's very obvious that the star of the show still remains the four-petalled pavé diamond encrustation.

## AS YOU LIKE IT

From bauble-shaped rings, slim bracelets and bangles, pendant necklaces, to dangly earrings and even smaller studs – the good news is that these pieces can be worn solo but, are also ideal for stacking and layering (here, less is *not* more) – take your pick.

## A DUALITY OF SORTS

"In combining strength with gentleness, audacity with refinement, like a coat of arms, the house's distinctive monogram flower is enveloped in a medley of coloured stones carefully selected for their cheerful tones," says the brand, of the collection. These beautiful and delicate pieces that are inspired by a series of juxtapositions are akin to the person who wears them – someone who lives a layered existence, dons several hats, and often tends to reach out to jewellery for its instant ability to alter a look and a mood. A modern woman. **W**

The second 'B Blossom' collection sees Francesca Amfitheatrof's work with spherical shapes and the iconic floral logo

'B Blossom' earrings in malachite, yellow gold and diamonds

'B Blossom' pendant in pink gold, opal and diamonds

'B Blossom' open bangle in yellow gold, white gold, onyx and diamonds

The pandemic and Zoom have ushered in a new era of joyous waist-up dressing that has subsequently put jewellery in the spotlight. It's all about decadent pieces that strike a fine balance between being a classic heirloom and something that's decidedly modern. Possibly keeping that sentiment in mind, Francesca Amfitheatrof, Louis Vuitton's artistic director for watches and jewellery, chose 2021 to expand her range of 'B Blossom' jewellery, which was first launched in early 2019.

## RETRO REVIVAL

Taking fashion's preoccupation with all things nostalgic – the Parisian maison's iconic floral design, created by Georges-Louis Vuitton in 1896, is re-imagined through a diamond-encrusted unit that can be seen across the range.



## STRAIGHT-TALKING

*Fashion brands will need to rethink their offerings to consumers, in a pandemic world, but how do they go about doing it? Bhaane's **Nimish Shah** weighs in*



Over the last decade, the fashion industry has come under fire, several times, for its adverse socio-environmental impacts. Climate change, farmers' penury, the Rana Plaza factory collapse: All these elements highlight the complex – and often problematic – nexus between designers, producers, suppliers, distributors, and consumers.

And with limited compliance and varying interpretations of sustainable practice, the fashion industry continues to get away with a little more than a slap on the wrist for even the most egregious transgressions. And while we have seen an increase in awareness, token offerings have also led to a lot of green-washing.

Up until the pandemic hit, brands were designing as many as eight collections a year, feeding an insatiable appetite for frivolous demand caused by over-exposure and competitive prices, often at the cost of contributors and workers. An overhaul in mindset was long overdue, and lockdowns around the world exposed global fault lines, linearity of supply chains, and sustainability challenges. Hopefully,

we'll all heed the wake-up call Covid-19 has served.

#### SEASONALITY

The rise of Instagram influencers and instant curation calls into question the very role of a traditional fashion buyer. Small businesses and start-ups are challenging set-in-stone fashion weeks, opting for a more malleable, direct-to-consumer calendar, one

with shorter lead times. They are speaking to smaller interest groups on the whys of their brands, gaining the spotlight via storytelling.

Seasons are being replaced by 'drops', signaling a system that can adapt to changes in the supply chain much quicker than conventional buying patterns. Better prices, smaller and extremely coveted ranges, and good old marketing build-ups are being deployed effectively. The tighter availability of drops limit liability and give brands high chances of success. This model survived the Covid crisis, and in fact, even clocked growth. Limited drops may, after all, be the answer to notorious heavy-discounting formats.

#### ESSENTIALS

A great example of how the design mindset has shifted is the re-branding of classics as essentials. Panagia and Entire World are useful case studies of effective responses to the fast fashion paradigm. Here, over-designing takes a back seat while sourcing and manufacturing agility become the epicentre of businesses. Indigenous brands like Itoh and Eka have championed this space from the very beginning.

#### MATERIALS INNOVATION & TRANS-SEASONALITY

Uniqlo has been the poster brand for modern tech materials and trans-seasonality. They have invested in signature sustainable raw materials that are stockpiled and re-introduced in new colourways in tried and tested silhouettes, which manage to excite consumers, season after season. Reformation and Ganni have a similar working model, and are a step ahead in their fashion ability, and excel at publishing the merits of the product – reassuring customers why it's okay to shop with them.

Here at home, Karnataka-based manufacturer, Himatsingka has launched a cotton traceability platform where all fibre is tagged at the farms and can be audited for

purity through process. Transparency and trans-seasonality in supply chain are also very close to Bhaane. Our collection already uses end-of-line fabrics and indigenous textiles, while all our T-shirts are made in organic cotton, and our e-shop will soon feature environmental and social certifications for all merchandise, along with raw material sources.

#### THE RISE OF CUSTOM & SECOND-HAND CLOTHING

Indie brand Korra champions affordable bespoke denims, our second skin. Customers are excited to participate in the design process as an opportunity to express their individuality, which has become more and more important in the post-pandemic world, where every dime spent must make noise and show real value. Free Society, No Borders, and Carol's Shop all sell a curation of one-off second-hand, vintage pieces – this format is sticky, and the cooler Gen-Z crowd are glued in. These are all good studies on cost-value dynamics.

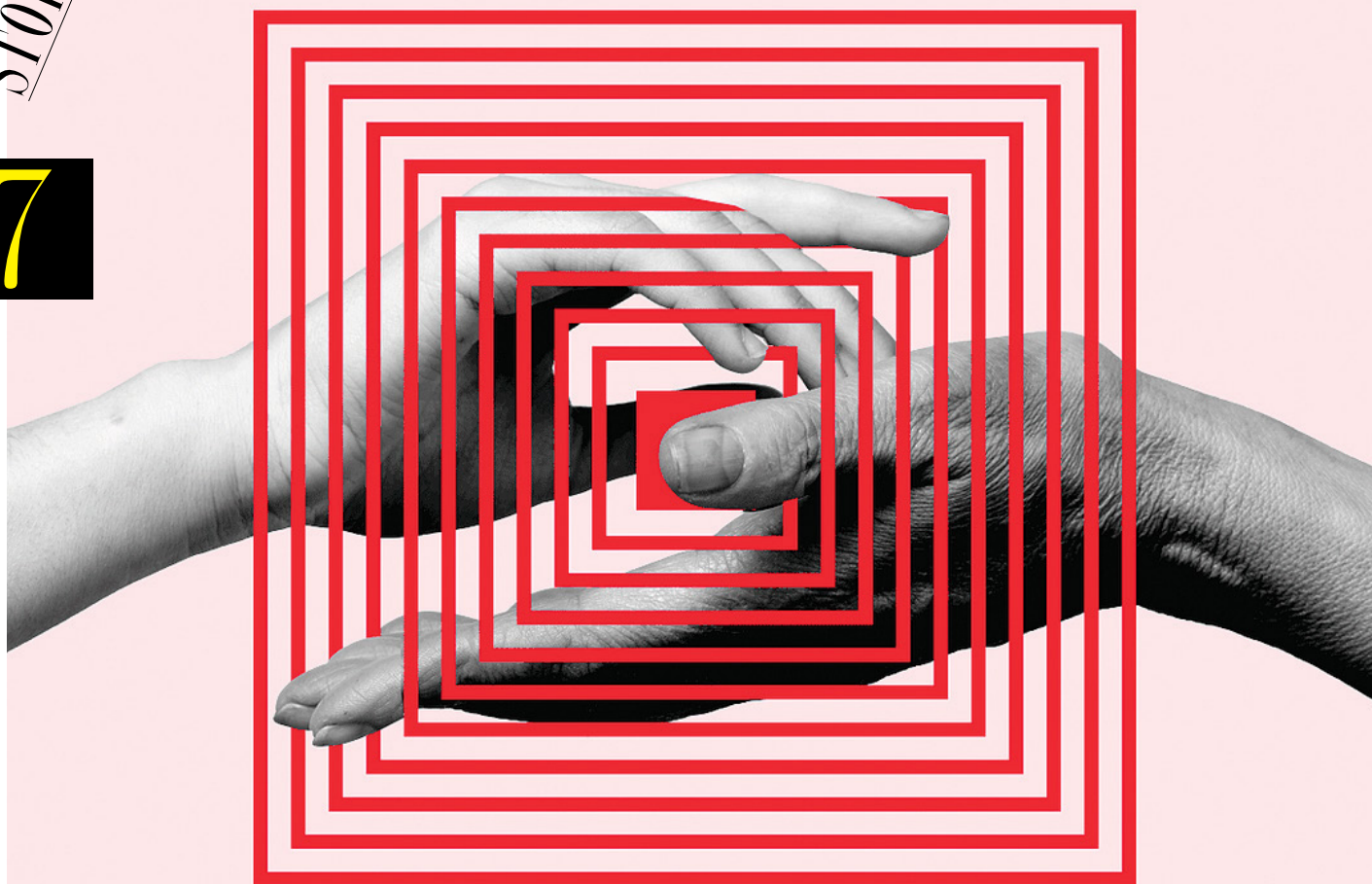
#### CRAFT & STORY-TELLING

Given the skill and opportunity available, it has always made sense for Indian brands to associate with craft. 11:11, Pero, Nila, and Good Earth tout their labour-intensive products, but the pandemic has also highlighted the vulnerability of craftsmen; if these brands are to grow, they must find ways to support their fragmented suppliers, who need protection now more than ever.

Overall, brands must be more articulate, woke and responsible, if for no other reason than the fact that their consumers are becoming more conscious. Platforms like Clubhouse are the new jury box, where morals, claims and authenticity of stories are unabashedly audited at midnight every day. It's a jungle out there, and in the long run, brands must be able to stand up to this relentless scrutiny to survive. ■

Bhaane uses end-of-line fabrics and indigenous textiles, while T-shirts are made in organic cotton





# TWO'S COMPANY

*Couples are facing changes they most certainly did not ask for*

“I think you can blame this on the pandemic, without having to feel any guilt,” I joked recently, and rather unhelpfully, when a friend informed me that she had (finally) ended her on-again, off-again relationship after two years of indecision.

“In my case, it’s totally the virus’ fault,” she replied, rather pointedly and with an air of (rightful) annoyance, detectable even via Instagram DM.

While I joke about my friend’s predicament, I have come across many pandemic tales centred on the married couple who suddenly

realise that they can’t stand each other thanks to unprecedented lengths of time spent together in quarantine. In fact, the pandemic has also posed a unique, potentially more precarious, set of challenges for couples irrespective of where they fall on the spectrum of relationship tenures.

Whether driving a long-distance wedge in their relationship, forcing them into a premature state of domesticity in shared quarantine, or compelling them to rethink their life goals, the widespread effects of Covid-19 have heaped additional stress

onto the uncertainty already inherent in relationships.

For social media influencers Chandreyi Bandyopadhyay and Joydeep Mondal, the pandemic has prompted them to put their marriage plans on the back-burner – but they aren’t complaining. The couple, who’ve been dating since 2016, decided to postpone their nuptials till further notice despite having initially set a date for end 2020. “Our families are not particularly happy that we’re living in together despite not being married. In fact, they’ve told us categorically that they



will only visit us when we tie the knot,” says Chandreyi. The couple decided to shift cities (moving from Mumbai to Goa) smack in the middle of the first lockdown, a move, they believe, helped strengthen their bond. “We’ve been enjoying our time together without the burden of having to worry about a wedding dictated by Covid restrictions. We were very clear to our families that we wanted our wedding to be a get-together of sorts. We didn’t want a virtual affair because Chandreyi and I have family in the US, whose presence is required at our wedding. So, till things don’t sort of normalise here, we’re happy to go about our lives without putting a ring on it,” says Joydeep.

## ON PAUSE

In the case of Pune-based couple, Kuhoo Rawat and Avaneesh Arya, while the pandemic did bring them together (they tied the knot in November 2020), it has forced them to put their ambitions on hold. “Avaneesh and I have always been in a long-distance relationship, so while we did not see each other all of last year, it did not affect us. But once we tied the knot, we decided to stay together. I moved to Pune earlier in the year in search of a job. But, things sort of flipped for us (in a good way) when we both were in the final stages of negotiation for new jobs in Gurugram. It worked perfectly for us because I have my home there, and Avaneesh had worked there in the past,” says Rawat. But with the second Covid wave ravaging the country, Rawat and Arya had to rethink their plan of shifting base. “Everything imploded over-night. I got the job in Gurugram and was on my notice period in Pune when the country went into lockdown again. To top it off, my mom fell ill and the society in which I live became a micro containment zone, with new cases

popping up every day,” says Arya. While he did request his new employer in Gurugram to allow him to work from home indefinitely, he was told he’d need to report physically by June 1st. Rawat, too, was forced to give up her offer because she knew it wouldn’t be possible to shift base anytime soon.

The couple decided to rough it out, sans employment, in Pune. “It was tough, especially for Avaneesh because he was worried the job scene in Pune wouldn’t pick up anytime soon. I was mentally prepared for another year of unemployment as I had consciously taken a break from the corporate life in 2020,” says Rawat.

And while they both may be unemployed momentarily, the fact that they’re seeing this through together has been a boon. “Putting our lives on hold has not been easy but it helps

this year, the couple decided they did not want to bring a new soul into this mess. “I was scared. Everything would be marked by fear,” says Priya, adding: “And that trickles down. Babies sense these things. The terror associated with having a baby in the current environment is existential – what if I contract Covid while pregnant? Lose my job? Or my baby catches the virus?”

With so many doubts nesting in her mind, the couple, who are parents to a three-year-old, decided to put things on hold till further notice. “It’s been quite taxing having to worry about our elderly parents, our little one, family, friends, and my job,” says Shlok, an auditor. “We spoke and agreed that we didn’t want the extra stress that comes with taking care of a child during this time and making sure they are okay, too.”



*“We spoke and agreed that we didn’t want the extra stress that comes with taking care of a child during this time and making sure they are okay, too”*

when you’re physically proximate to your significant other. It would have been doubly hard to nurse a rejection without her by my side,” says Arya.

## NO BABY BOOM

Bengaluru-based Priya Jain and her husband, Shlok, were among those who joked about a baby boom when the first wave of Covid hit in 2020. But three months into the second wave, with no end in sight, they’re not in a joke-y mood anymore. Although they were among several couples who decided to have a second baby when things improved earlier

With the current uncertainty looming in the air and a vaccine hard to come by, the couple has even contemplated not having a second child. “If it happens, it happens,” says Priya. She admits, however, that there are days when she’s convinced of the exact opposite position. But even in pandemic times, it should be noted, some things never change. The couple’s families can’t stop asking when they’re going to give their daughter a little brother or sister. “If we even tell them that we’re thinking against it,” she said, “it would become a thing with my mom,” says Priya. **LI**

# LITTLE THINGS THAT SPARK JOY

*Ditch your everyday staples for extras that are having a moment in the sun*

It's time to switch up your cosy WFH look with Zoom-ready accessories that are guaranteed to make you feel good about the mid-week blues. From silky headbands and amulet-like charms to novelty earrings and even fluffy slippers for your feet – we've got you covered from head to toe. Here are all the happy extras to get you prepped for your Zoom meetings or that weekly errand run.



Ruched headbands, (set of two), ONLY, ₹ 719



Printed silk scarf, Zara, ₹ 2,790



Silk scarf, Nicobar, ₹ 2,450

## WRAP IT UP

Conceal your bad hair days with silk scarves and headbands. Wear yours like a bandana or wrap it around your head, and you're good to go.



DIOR



DOLCE & GABBANA



Charm bracelet, Swarovski, ₹ 7,090

## SHINE ON

There's nothing better than a classic charm bracelet to add some shine to your look. Stack them or wear solo, these little charms won't disappoint.



Beaded charm bracelets (set of five), Forever 21, ₹ 399



Charm bracelet, J. Crew at [www.darveys.com](http://www.darveys.com), ₹ 4,950 approx



SIMON MILLER

## HAPPY FEET

Complete your loungewear game with a pair of cosy slippers. Whether it's fluffy slides or ultra-chic suede slip-ons, it's essential to give your feet the comfort they deserve.



Slides, H&M, ₹ 799

Quilted slippers, Madewell, ₹ 4,680 approx

Slides, Uniqlo, ₹ 999

Fluffy slippers, Accessorize, ₹ 2,650

## EYE CANDY

While trusty gold hoops were all the rage a while back, novelty earrings are our favourite 'It' girl accessory this summer. Cutesy candy earrings that'll go with everything from WFH basics to cosy loungewear? Yes, please.



Beaded earrings, Deepa Gurnani, ₹ 9,800

Checked earrings, Cha-Ching, ₹ 11,320



Pantone inspired earrings, Rum & Raisin, ₹ 720



SAINT LAURENT



DARE  
TO BE

*A new film shows us  
how skateboarding  
fosters community*

Skateboarding has, over the last couple of years, migrated from being a casual outdoor exercise in self-expression to becoming a 'sport' that gives people the freedom to be expressive. Even as the discipline makes its debut at the Summer Olympics, in Tokyo, this year, it has found a tenuous balance – riding between popular culture and counter-culture. It's a mix of no rules, punk, and pop. There's no uniform, only socks to the knees, or no socks at all. Beanie or ball cap, shaved head or dreadlocks. Or in some cases, a salwar kameez – going by the visuals in the trailer for the new coming-of-age movie, *Skater Girl*.

Director Manjari Makijany hopes that her debut feature will spark a conversation about skateboarding groups in India. "The rising skateboarding movement across the country caught my attention in 2017. Vinati (my sister and co-writer) and I took a journalistic approach and met the different skate communities in India. We discovered that skating has been creating incredible change and uplifting communities. In our research, we also found the story of Skatesitan, a community skate-park in Afghanistan. I was blown away by how something like skateboarding could break through so many barriers, giving children the hope to dream, an education, and an outlet for self-expression. So, we took our inspiration from what skateboarding was already doing in real life," she says. Makijany doesn't necessarily see Perna's character (the protagonist played by newcomer Rachel Saanchita Gupta) as



Manjari (seated) and  
Vinati Makijany



A still from *Skater Girl*



Rachel Saanchita Gupta (centre),  
who plays Perna, with the other  
skate kids in the film

impoverished, on the contrary she sees her as a strong character – "a reflection of the reality of so many girls in India who need someone to believe in them."

## NO SKID MARKS

Set in a rural district of Rajasthan, the film claims to be the first to narrate a story on skateboarding. It looks to smash the patriarchy and expose the limits on the rural women who are restricted from participating in simple activities like skateboarding. Makijany, who has directed several award-winning short films, and has also been an assistant director in Bollywood as well as on huge Hollywood films, working with the likes of Christopher Nolan on *Dunkirk* and *The Dark Knight Rises* and Patty Jenkins in *Wonder Woman*, did not stop there. Makijany and her team went about building a skate park, called Desert Dolphin, over 45 days in Khempur (a village in Udaipur) in 2018 for the film, which was then handed over to the residents after the shoot ended in 2019.

"After Sanjeev Maurya, our casting director in Delhi, sent us Rachel's tapes, she was invited to one of our workshops. She was

the perfect clay for us to mould into Perna's character and after the workshop, it became clear to me that she was our lead. She had never stepped on a skateboard before. So, she had to train in skateboarding and acting while also spending time with the local community, and even experiencing the local school life with the girls. Our approach was to film the locals and the village as is with minimal interference and bring in our actors to blend in. We didn't want to make it look like any of them were acting so we organised theatre workshops instead of doing casting calls," says Makijany.

In addition to ensuring the film is as authentic as possible, Makijany believes that gender was never the prime consideration when she set out to make *Skater Girl*, despite the film being presented as a tale of female empowerment. "Stories are stories and if they are good, they move us at some level. It's important to represent diversity both on screen and behind the scenes because those perspectives are different and need representation. It's reflective of the larger world we live in. Leaving those unique voices out would be saying the world is limited to only a certain kind of storytelling." ■





# Label ALERT

10



*This month, we're turning to palette cleansers for our wardrobe through minimalist, fuss-free, and classic designs*



**IF YOU LOVE:** Minimal handbags.  
**THEN YOU WILL LOVE:** STEM.

**WHO:** A graduate in leather design from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi, Mahima Sethi went on to study millenary at the London College of Fashion. Fuelling her love for heritage and sustainability, STEM was born after years of understanding local craftsmanship and researching about ethically and responsibly sourced materials.

**WHY:** The brand sources leather that is a by-product of the meat industry, which is further processed using chrome-free and vegetable tanning methods. The latest collection, 'URBANE', is an ode to the conscious choices of the new world – an amalgamation of functionality and style. Mirroring the changing norms of a pandemic reality, the handcrafted pieces are subtly drenched in ombré shades with a play on asymmetry in pattern.

**WHERE:** [www.stemindia.in](http://www.stemindia.in)

**PRICE RANGE:** ₹ 1,250-16,999



Compiled by TANYA MEHTA

**WEAR:** Available in delectable shades of forest green and bright yellow as well as neutral black and coffee, these handbags are perfect for everyday use. They go with everything – from a white summer dress to a linen pantsuit. **LI**



**IF YOU LOVE:** Airy summer separates.

**THEN YOU WILL LOVE:** Reistor.

**WHO:** Mumbai-based Mehma Singh, a fourth-generation textile and fashion entrepreneur, built her labour of love in the midst of the pandemic. After launching her first label, Phera, which creates contemporary Indian-wear for South Asian bridal parties abroad, in 2017, she desired to make a more significant change through her design and production process by conceptualising a brand rooted in sustainability. Reistor (pronounced 'restore') is the brainchild of her, and her brother, Harjas.

**WHY:** Centered on a sense of timelessness, the clothes are crafted in premium quality hemp, an ideal fabric for the humid Indian climate. Hemp is natural, more sustainable than cotton, and is lightweight and breathable. For their first collection, 'Flow', Singh designed relaxed blazers, embroidered shift dresses, and an array of summer blouses in soothing shades of ivory, butter, and beige, elevated through pleats and pin-tucks.

**WHERE:** [www.reistor.com](http://www.reistor.com), [www.nete.in](http://www.nete.in), [www.ogaanmarket.com](http://www.ogaanmarket.com)

**PRICE RANGE:** ₹ 2,800- 7,200

**WEAR:** There's a refreshing sense of beauty in a pared-down look, and these versatile ensembles look best when accessorised with a straw hat and simple leather sandals.



# POINT OF CARE

Social media has, over the last few months, become a hotbed of helplines, with common users and many popular personalities alike setting aside time and effort to connect those in need to the right resources. While it is important to recognise their selfless labour, they all agree that the next few months will feel like an unknown, and kind of exhausting. It would mean navigating new situations, re-establishing relationships, and dealing with the mental health burden of Covid fatigue. So, what happens when we have to face it?

Words **BARRY RODGERS**



# THROUGH IT ALL

*Bhumi Pednekar talks about Covid relief work, revival, and why it's important to come to terms with loss*

**A**ctor Bhumi Pednekar is currently grappling with a quieter form of soul-wrestling. Having retreated to the hills of the North-East for some downtime, the actor says she takes walks by herself. At times, she finds moments of quiet transcendence in her solitude, especially after the life-changing few months she's had to battle through emotionally. "As I sit here, flanked by so much greenery and fresh air," she reflects, "as my body bakes in the sun that pours down on me, each breath I take reminds me that I'm not forsaken." Other times, her solitude makes her fussy and angsty. "Life hasn't been the same since I contracted the virus. But, I can truthfully say that it has allowed me to live my days with a sense of purpose," she says.

Pednekar and her mother had tested positive for the coronavirus in April, and post her recovery, she has been helping people enable facilitation and access to medical supplies, through Instagram and Twitter. Calling it a "small contribution to the huge battle that lies ahead", the actor had asked her followers to send genuine requests on her social media. "It all started with me sharing a request for help on Instagram Stories. Within 15 minutes, my DM was flooded with requests. It's our moral obligation, as people of influence, to reach out and help those in need. The desperation was palpable," she says.

Since the first plea for help, Pednekar has since rallied close to 350 volunteers



(some of whom are Covid survivors and beneficiaries of the help extended to them by the actor), who have worked tirelessly to bridge the gap in medical supplies and aid. What started out as Pednekar and her team just doing their part in giving back turned into a full-fledged exercise in humanitarian aid. Her own initiative, Covid Warrior, tied up with Ketto India to provide financial assistance to families in need. She also joined hands to ensure oxygen supply for people in Karnataka, through Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Mission Zindagi initiative. As part of the initiative, buses were installed with oxygen concentrators that provided tertiary care to patients outside district hospital emergencies while they waited for a bed.

"It's been a blur since April. While my team and I put our heads down and did what we had to do, now suddenly, when there's an opening, all these feelings come up. I remember getting just three hours of sleep every-day, afraid that if I didn't keep a tab on the requests coming in, I'd lose out on an opportunity to save someone's life. I suffered bouts of anxiety too," she shares.

It was during this time that the actor learned that she was capable of compartmentalising her feelings, although it didn't come naturally at first. "It can get very overwhelming when, despite your best efforts, some people don't make it. You start to self-doubt: 'Did I do enough to help? Could I have done better if I dedicated more time?' I'd be flooded with feelings for a few days, and then push them to the back of my mind," she says. She clarifies, however, that her ability to detach does in no way make her a cold, emotionless person. "When it's hard to accept devastating news, most people look for ways to cope, and this is how I've learned to go about it. In some cases, it can be self-destructive because it's important to process difficult emotions without sweeping it under the rug," she adds.

Much of the discussion about the coronavirus pandemic recently has been about how it will alter our relationship with people and the world in general, going forward. It's quite evident that we can't hope to go back to the status quo, not after so many cracks in the structure of society have been revealed. "This phase will change the way we did things before. Maybe things before weren't all they were cracked up to be. I don't know whether we'll fall back into old habits once social distancing rules relax or continue to live in fear. But it's here now," she says.



bhumi pednekar  
@bhumipednekar

We are trying our level best to help you. Please give us time. Have been flooded with emergency requests for ICU/ ICU ventilator/Oxygen/Oxygen beds. Our volunteers are working 24/7 to get you the help. Praying for everyone's peace & safety. Don't loose hope 🙏  
#CovidWarrior

1:17 PM · 29/04/21 · Twitter for iPhone

**"We don't talk about loss. More so now, when the massive death toll has reduced people to a mere statistic. By and large, it's all about finding ways to numb the pain...loss can linger longer than expected"**

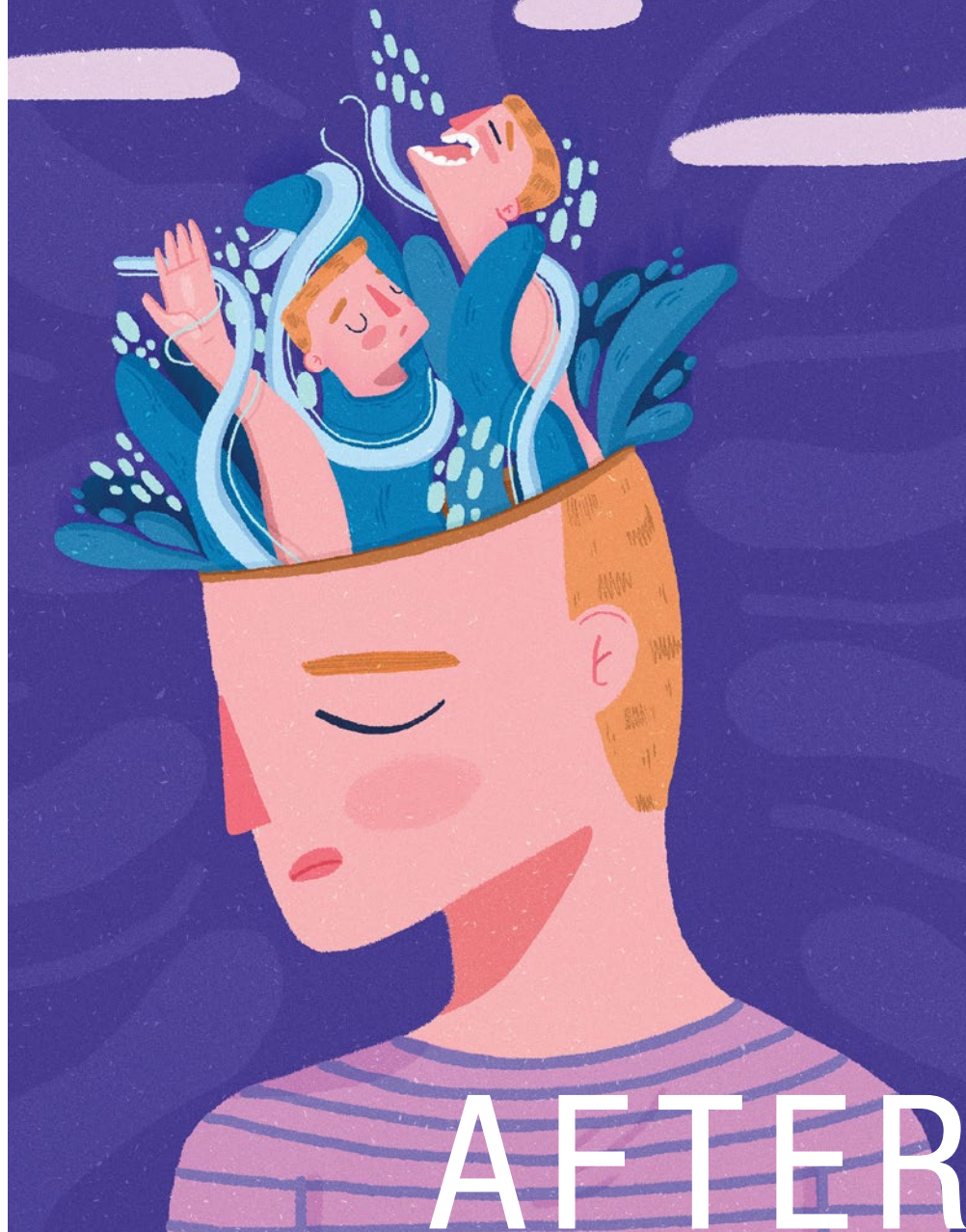
## ON THAT NOTE

While the actor and her team of volunteers have already begun discussing various ways to respond to the impending third wave in Maharashtra, which could potentially occur sometime between September and October, she says her tireless efforts to draw attention to the very real problem of climate change has not taken a back seat. "I think climate change is something that is very personal to me. I have always been somebody who had questions. When I was 8 or 9 years old I would think what would happen if our water level rises or what would happen if one day our planet becomes too hot? And so, even though Climate Warrior came into existence two years ago, I have always worked towards

the cause, I still advocate passionately for it," she says.

Though Pednekar believes that people are resilient, and often more so than they realise, she also agrees that the societal tendency to bottle grief will do none of us any favours. "We don't talk about loss. More so now, when the massive death toll has reduced people to a mere statistic. By and large, it's all about finding ways to numb the pain. I think some people believe we've pressed 'pause,' and we'll go back to the way things were before, as if we didn't have all the intervening experiences, as if getting a vaccine erases your memory. Loss can linger longer than expected. So, it's important we work on coming to terms with and dealing with its effects now," she says. ■

*For these individuals,  
the mental wounds of  
the second Covid wave  
are still wide open*



# AFTER EFFECTS

**T**owards the end of April, when the second Covid wave intensified in the country, content creator Rasna Bhasin decided to suspend her brand commitments indefinitely, although she still fielded requests from brand representatives, especially one who kept asking her to do an unboxing story. Instead, she used her social media influence to urge people to donate plasma and save lives. Her simple mantra: "If we as influencers have so much power that we can prompt people to buy things, why then can we not help save a life?"

Soon, Bhasin's Instagram and Twitter pages turned into Covid SOS helplines. "I started out with three other people and now we are a team of over 20 who operate across multiple WhatsApp groups, verifying and amplifying leads," she says. The first three weeks were extremely hard, admits Bhasin, because it consumed their lives to a point where they were even scared to sleep, fearing they would miss tending to an SOS call for help. "It affected us all mentally and started taking a toll physically too, after a point. I personally still try and reply to every single DM that comes my way – even if I don't manage to acknowledge it in time. But there's a lot of guilt attached to it. I know it's not my fault, but I can't help but wonder if I could have possibly tried harder," she says.



After making it through more than five weeks of fielding requests and amplifying and verifying leads for hospital beds, Covid medication, and oxygen supply, Bhasin feels that she's not yet in the right frame of mind to go back to "normal life". "How do you push this entire phase to the back of your mind? When I was in the thick of things, I'd irrationally scream at somebody or would maybe vent out. I think I'd benefit greatly from therapy and PTSD counselling, once things simmer down," she says. Bhasin knows that she will have to, intentionally or subconsciously, sit with her thoughts one day and process everything that's happened, and let it out. "It'll hit me – hard."

## ON CALL

Sid Naidu is no stranger to loss. The Bengaluru-based entrepreneur, and founder of Sid Productions, a venture which dabbles in fashion shoots, model grooming, art direction, print ads, TV commercials, and more, lost his father when he was 11, and started distributing newspapers before going to school, to support his family.

In May, the mental toll of dealing with grief and loss became all too real, again. Naidu lost three of his immediate relatives and a few of his crew members to Covid. "It wasn't easy for me to accept this. Whoever I lost, died because they lacked access to oxygen or ICU beds," he says. In a bid to do his part, Naidu decided to make public his personal number on Instagram, with an open call to help anyone looking to access medical aid and hospital beds," he says.

That night, Naidu personally fielded 300-plus calls. "I couldn't handle everything by myself, so I asked for help through an Instagram Story," he says. Naidu soon had the support of 120-plus volunteers.

He set up a process whereby he would personally verify a patient's information before posting it on a WhatsApp group. Soon after, someone from the team would call up a ground volunteer and get updates on the number of patients discharged, and those on waiting lists at various hospitals. If the team hit a roadblock at one hospital, they had 2-3 back-ups ready. After verifying with the hospital about bed availability, Naidu and his team would then pass on the lead to the patient's family.

He believes that the Covid death toll was far greater than the numbers that news channels and newspapers reported. "The pandemic has been a singular disaster – a recurring series of traumatic events that have eroded the very social trust and connections that help communities bounce back," he says, and opines



**“The pandemic has been a recurring series of traumatic events that have eroded the very social trust and connections that help communities bounce back”**

that we may never completely adjust to the current predicament we find ourselves in. “We can't expect everyone to come out on the other side being fine.”

## COME TOGETHER

Digital creator Aanchal Agrawal's outlook on life is rather optimistic and full of taking things as they come. However, when the Covid surge in April intensified, the Indore native realised that her optimism couldn't masquerade the fact that the country was reeling from the effects of a national health emergency.

“You cannot work for the greater good by staying in your comfort zone. What has kept my team and I going is the success and positive messages from patients and their families thanking us for arranging resources, or someone telling us that our verified lead helped them,” she says.

In Delhi, designer Shweta Kapur, whose line, 431-88, is tailored for women who embrace their sensuality with a sporty flair, decided to trade in sketching designs for creating Instagram posts highlighting various Covid fundraisers people could donate to.

“I started collating verified data because I was Covid positive and isolating. I felt helpless thinking about what was going on outside,” she says.

Kapur admits that there was a brief period when the constant SOS calls and messages upset her. “There was an instance where someone who I could have helped didn't make it and it wasn't the best feeling in the world. The important thing is that you tried and that's what I tell myself and my friends who are going out of their way to help strangers and get upset when things don't work out,” she says.

Her efforts also took a toll on her creative pursuits. She couldn't be mentally present during meetings because her mind was always somewhere else. “I had to manage my time better. Somewhere, I also became numb to a lot of things happening around me and I think, in some twisted way, it helped me function 'normally'.”

The designer thinks that only a handful of us will come out of this unscarred. “There were two weeks that were especially rough because I kept getting updates about people in my close circle who were affected in a bad way, and there wasn't really much I could do to help besides try to organise beds and oxygen. But my experience, in no way, can be compared to what the frontline workers are going through. I'm super grateful that I have work, friends, and family to distract me and give me something else to think about when it gets too much,” she says. **11**

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# THE GREEN INDEX

Sustainability is a complex, multi-faceted term. And navigating it in today's age is no mean feat. Here, we tackle some of the most important conversations related to the subject with an aim to enlighten, educate, and create a shift in mindset of the modern consumer. Whether it's about cultivating a strong voice towards cleaner choices, the power of shopping pre-loved in a world of over-consumption, brands that support struggling communities or regenerative farming – a practice that's about giving back to the planet

Words **TANYA MEHTA**

# UNPACKING THE TRUTH

*Sustainability, consumerism, and the wide expanse of social media are all interconnected in today's digital age. With information overload and consumption at an all-time high, how do we make the right choices without feeling overwhelmed? Content creator, photo-journalist, and sustainability advocate, Aditi Mayer breaks it down for us*

In 2014, when Instagram was still gaining momentum in the fashion space, Los Angeles-based Aditi Mayer decided to embark on a personal journey with sustainability. It all began with an emotional response to the 2013 Rana Plaza building collapse that claimed the lives of over a thousand factory workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Mayer knew she didn't want to follow a cookie-cutter format with her blog, instead, she used it as a platform to voice her opinions and create palatable information covering various important topics such as fair trade, systemic racism, and labour exploitation – all of which she beautifully interspersed with imagery and interviews with sustainable brands and designers. Seven years later, the 24-year-old has become a champion of and spokesperson for several pressing issues plaguing the fashion industry today. “Fashion, for me, is a vehicle to unpack culture and beauty. It's also a tool to unpack systems of oppression and power,



Sustainability advocate Aditi Mayer sheds light on the myriad issues plaguing the fashion industry



while acting as a subversive method to capture audiences, because, at face value, if we talk about the politics of labour and the environmental impact of fashion, it might be overwhelming, but if we talk about a pretty dress that's inherently tied to those topics it becomes a lot more approachable. Fashion is our second skin, we either use it to conceal or express something, this became a democratic medium to unpack that,” she explains

But the topic of sustainability can often feel daunting due to its complex nature, and social media during a pandemic can turn into an involuted space. Here, Mayer elaborates on the intricacies and relevance of both topics and explains how small changes can go a long way with responsible consumption.

## SELF-EXPRESSION VS TONE DEAFNESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

“Everyone must check their privilege and embrace the fact that there are different levels to it, so the goal shouldn't be hiding that self-awareness, there is a level of transparency one should always maintain on social media. For instance, think of influencers getting PR packages every day, some folks who aren't familiar with the concept might question how they are constantly able to buy new products. In terms of what to post, we need more intentionality across the board, you need to question how much of what you have to say is original and not just a regurgitation of information. Social media is very output-oriented, and I've been challenging myself to absorb the news without having knee-jerk reactions. It's been important for me to understand how it is tied to a larger



Mayer speaks at an event about access and strategy in fashion, food and sustainability





A matriarchal farming community in Nepal created to gain financial liberation, photographed by Mayer

narrative. From the ongoing pandemic, farmer protests in India to the attacks in Palestine, I see my role as someone who can show the interconnectedness of oppression across the world and that doesn't mean I have to be an expert.

As far as self-expression and a nasty show of privilege goes, we need to deviate from using Instagram as a highlight reel of aggregating products. Case in point: Clothing hauls. I find them extremely tone-deaf and excessive considering we're all sitting at home in our sweatpants. Anyone can be a fashion blogger in the sense of showing off new clothes, but with true sustainability, it is important to have a personal style. Within the space of thrifting and buying second hand, there is no mannequin in a store window to imitate, it takes a certain level of creativity which translates into a more authentic display of self-expression."



By curating beautiful imagery the blogger aims to widen the conversation around sustainability



Mayer showcases her north Indian heritage through a unique personal style

## SUSTAINABILITY IS A TWO-WAY STREET

"Capitalism often makes consumers feel like the onus of addressing the climate crisis is singularly on them, but a brand has equal responsibility. There are a lot of extremes in the sustainability narrative. On one hand, as consumers, we're discouraged from using plastic straws because of their ill effects on marine life, but on the other hand, consumers can argue that large corporations contribute to 70 per cent of climate emissions. These two binaries overwhelm and create apathy. Brands need to recognise if they are following a dominant fashion model rooted in exploiting people and the environment; one that is degenerative. However, they also have the potential to become regenerative and care about people and the supply chain by implementing practices and techniques that are native to that ecology, with a lesser environmental impact."

## THE ACCESSIBILITY CONUNDRUM

"If even a handful of brands are truly doing sustainable work then their price points are inevitably going to be higher and while that competes with the issue of accessibility, prices will be high if you compensate people equitably. We must also divest from the mass greenwashing carried out by fast fashion brands that have made us believe that purchasing a ₹ 350 T-shirt is normal. We can address this issue by not perpetuating the narrative that in order to be sustainable you can buy your way into a new sustainable reality. Unchecked consumerism is what got us into this and it won't get us out. A truly sustainable consumer buys less. Reusing what you have, passing down family heirlooms, and purchasing from second-hand markets are sustainable practices that are easier on the pocket. The second-hand market was created for low-income communities, who are stewards of sustainability through not only cultural norms but also economic necessities. Once we opt out of this mindset of excessive consumption, we will realise that we don't need to create more clothes."


## BEHIND THE FABRIC: HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A BRAND IS TRULY SUSTAINABLE?

"Sustainability is an umbrella term that covers various facets, you should question what is important to you. For me, I entered the realm with an acute awareness of human rights abuses, so that was at the top of my list. The natural progression of that was the huge environmental impact created by toxic dyes and fossil fuel-backed polyester, and so forth. To understand how a brand is sustainable, observe what they're showing and not just telling. Look at their 'About' page – how they produce fashion as well as their direct line of communication. If the brand is not transparent enough to answer questions it means they are hiding something or aren't being entirely open. Sustainability, at its core, is all about how the brand respects people, the planet, and culture. It's important to look at brands that are attributing to respective communities and are not just hoarding wealth."

## CONSUMPTION DURING THE PANDEMIC – SHIFTING MINDSETS

"The pandemic has been an interesting period to study consumer behaviour. For people inclined towards retail therapy, it has further exasperated the inclination to consume without consideration. On the other hand, individuals who were on the precipice of sustainability have developed a more tangible relationship with it – like starting a garden, planting herbs, or upcycling. But, there's a class and privilege dimension to this. I would encourage people to use the pandemic to re-orient what they need as opposed to what they want. Given the current situation in India, where a sizeable part of the population is just hoping to survive, most people have just stripped down to the essentials. We have so many distractions to escape the turmoil, but we also need to become comfortable with being uncomfortable and question: 'What do we really need?' Covid-19 is a symptom of a broken system, it's linked to deforestation and extraction, so let's think about that."

## BECOMING A CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

"Think of your closet as an art gallery. Before you buy a piece of art, you probably question if it's worth the investment or if the artist's values align with your own. The relationship you have with the brand or with the creator is important, which fast fashion fails to fulfill because it is tied to exploitation, it creates a disconnect between wearer and producer. During the pandemic, I have seen so many people learn how to sew and use things that they already have. It's also important to think about the timelessness of clothing. You're probably wearing a very small percentage of what's in your closet so, audit it down to what you really wear and from that, you will be able to devise an aesthetic that is truly you – a capsule collection of sorts. It's a process so it won't happen overnight. We need to be more graceful with our relationship with sustainability, there's always a conversation around it steeped in shaming and guilt. People need to alter their lives. This outlook needs to change so it is received and embraced more positively." 



# A SECOND CHANCE

*Pre-loved clothing is becoming a sought-after stream of fashion e-commerce for a young audience seeking exclusivity in style. The benefits? Affordability, uniqueness, and a conscious wardrobe – all accessible through Instagram*



A leather bag sourced in Milan by @gonvintage



An 80s Tommy Hilfiger shirt reworked into a cropped silhouette



A vintage peasant dress by Folkpants

I remember the first time I procured a thrift buy – a pair of baggy denim overalls from a dinky little store in New York, in 2016. It was equal parts boyish and comforting, serving me well on multiple occasions. Back then, the concept of buying vintage and thrift pieces hadn't gained popularity in India, but it was only a matter of few years before shopping accounts run by young entrepreneurs began cropping up – providing stylish clothing harnessed by the power of social media, for a consumer looking to buy more sustainably, while on a budget.

Today, Instagram has become a thriving

market-place for pre-loved clothing in the country, and the variety is endless – from 90s Tommy Hilfiger jeans, Austrian dirndl blouses, and oversized men's shirting – the list goes on.

Born and raised in the town of Ukhrul, Manipur, sisters Lumri and Linno Jajo grew up as part of a cultural landscape that's steeped in the practice of up-cycling and buying second



Sequinned tank tops sold by @bygoneechoes



hand. They started Folkpants, their online vintage store, as a space that amalgamated their interest in fashion while embodying their childhood values of consuming fashion more responsibly, “We wanted to create a source for others who don’t know or have access to pre-loved items. Our diverse customer base includes college students, bloggers, working professionals, homemakers, and vintage and sustainability enthusiasts between the ages of 18 and 34,” shares Lumri.

Most garments are hand-picked and sourced from street markets and local second-hand stores, keeping in mind an aesthetic that would appeal to a fashion-forward audience.

New Delhi-based fashion stylist Dennis Hauzel started his thrift account @bygoneechoes during the pandemic. He credits a sense of novelty as a major driving force behind the purchasing mindset, “Beautiful prints, lots of colours, and interesting silhouettes are what attracts the consumer. Shirts and dresses bearing artsy, quirky prints have been best-selling items.”

## ONE FOR THE GRAM

A deeply ingrained feature of social media is the optics – the optics of looking good. And that extends to the online thrift market. To differentiate and bring in a true sense of branding compared to the cacophony of accounts, these entrepreneurs are making added effort to create alluring imagery for their sales. The Jajo sisters routinely collaborate with photographers, models, and make-up artists to produce professional imagery shot against the lush backdrop of North-East India.

For Pune-based Shreya Jain, founder of @gonvintage, shooting products out of her living room doesn’t restrict her from curating a distinctive aesthetic. While working in Milan, the vintage enthusiast had amassed an impressive archive of pieces hand-picked from Italian flea markets. Upon her return to India, she decided to elevate her passion project and sell to a local audience. Jain researches the brand and fabric of the pieces that epitomise European chic. If you scour her account, you will find linen skirt-suits, slip dresses, and she even reworks silhouettes to give them a more contemporary appeal. She also goes the extra mile to style each piece with accessories and footwear while conducting a drop, “Each time I photograph a piece, I think about how I would style it to make an outfit that’s modern even though it may be from over 30 years ago. I am a big fan of combining vintage pieces

with luxury ones from my own wardrobe, which gives the outfit a sense of balance,” she says.

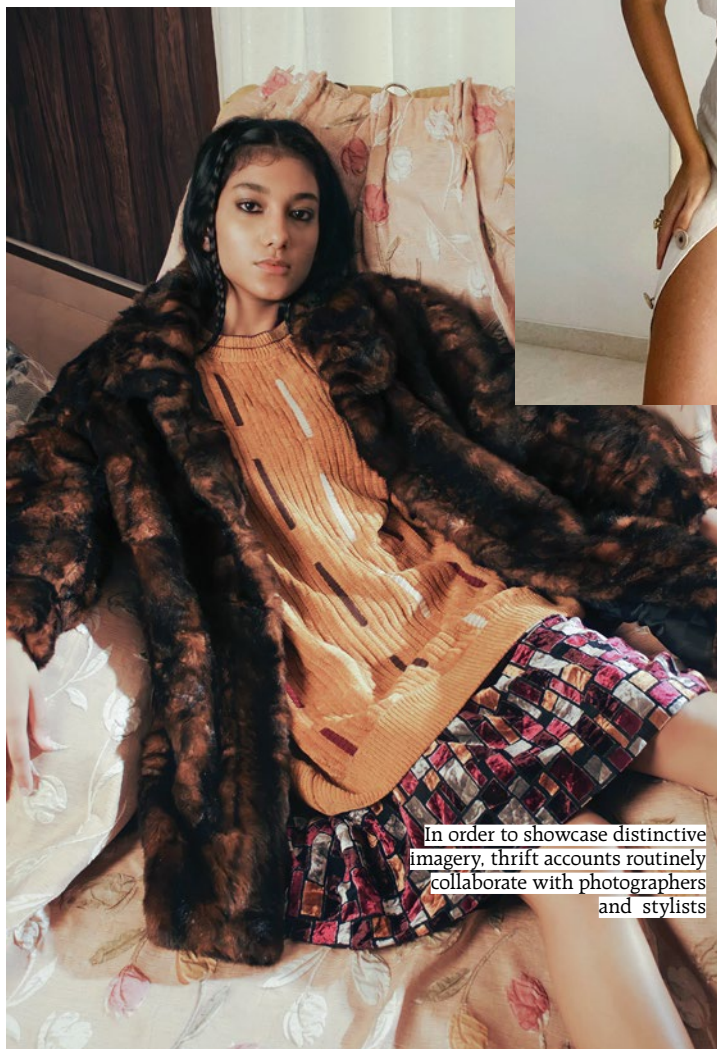
## DROP IT LIKE IT’S HOT

Product drops – a sales tactic usually adopted by streetwear and sneaker labels, catering to the world’s hype market – have also been embraced by the luxury sector in recent years. The sight of people lined up on sidewalks and camping overnight outside stores in a bid to get their hands on a coveted, limited edition item was considered normal in a pre-pandemic reality. However, online, the sense of urgency and excitement is equally palpable – an adrenaline-added game of hitting refresh in the hope of a successful check-out. The hype-market is also one fuelled by expensive price-tags and skyrocketing resale price points. While the online thrift market in the country resides on the other end of this spectrum, the drop model has curiously worked in its favour, and has created a space where individuality and the excitement of a retail experience can co-exist in a more democratic manner. “Shopping from thrift accounts has been a bit like getting into a virtual stampede,”

shares Nida Naeem, a student of fashion communication from The National Institute of Fashion Technology, Bengaluru. “The fact that most of these garments are one-off pieces gives them an air of exclusivity. This kind of model of skewed demand and supply has worked well for luxury brands and in this case, the drop culture is built by a community of people looking for more Pinterest-y, trendy clothes that are perhaps a lot more expressive than those from the average fast fashion brand, and is available at extremely competitive prices. Cute, handmade freebies also form a part of the charm for a lot of these pre-loved shopping accounts. Several of these small business owners take out time to add artsy stickers, some candy, and a personalised note – creating a wholesome experience.”



A linen skirt set recreated from a vintage dress by @gonvintage



In order to showcase distinctive imagery, thrift accounts routinely collaborate with photographers and stylists



Most Indian thrift accounts function based on a weekly or bi-weekly drops, offering their loyal followers a sneak-peak of what to expect with information on fabric and size. Once the drop goes live, items can be purchased via comments or direct messages. “Every week, we usually put up 6-8 pieces of curated clothing and accessories based on a set theme or style. Showcasing try-ons of the pieces ahead of the drop ups the curiosity of the consumer and since they know that a certain piece is one-of-a-kind and won’t be around for long, it urges them to get their hands on it stat. Doing weekly drops has also helped clients have a definitive idea of a set day and time that they need to look at the shop to find what they want instead of randomly scrolling through a chaotic page where they need to go searching for available pieces,” explains Jain.



A vintage Balenciaga blazer layered with a crochet vest, by @bygoneechoes

## THE CIRCULAR WARDROBE

A burning question, constantly asked, within the fashion industry is, “Where do our clothes go after we’ve discarded them?” A large portion that hasn’t been recycled ends up in landfills where textiles can take over 200 years to decompose. In light of the pandemic and through several rounds of wardrobe de-cluttering and downsizing, many fashion enthusiasts are reassessing how they can bid farewell to their clothing while lending it a second lease of life. For Manpreet Kaur, a Bengaluru-based fashion stylist, an opportunity presented itself during the lockdown, “I realised there were so many pieces in my wardrobe that I’d barely worn and many pieces that I didn’t see myself wearing again. All of them were in almost mint condition, so I started posting mood shots of them on Instagram Stories, interspersed with old pictures of me wearing them. All the pieces were priced between ₹ 1,500 and ₹ 3,000. The response was wonderfully overwhelming.”

Through her first sale, Kaur managed to sell all the pieces in 24 hours to people from various parts of the country, most of the items were from fast fashion brands that didn’t align with her sensibilities anymore and she parted with them in the hope of investing in good quality, sustainable pieces.



@bygoneechoes

Mumbai-based writer, Meera Ganapathi took a similar route, where instead of donating or gifting clothes from her annual spring cleaning exercise, she tried out a different approach, “I genuinely like these clothes which is why I’d hoarded them – a dress by Naushad Ali, in particular, I’ve held onto for four years and have not worn it even once because it just doesn’t suit my body type. I felt it was time to be sensible and not sentimental. The clothes were all in great condition and deserved to be used.” She went on to conduct a sale via Instagram and announced that all the proceeds from the sale would be donated to Goonj, a NGO that works for women welfare. Her clothing sold out quickly, owing to the



Coveted thrift pieces shot against the lush backdrop of Ukhrul, by @folkpants



A button-down dress from Kaur's personal wardrobe sold via Instagram

short period last year where the pandemic restrictions were loosened, and people were making short trips within the country. The humanitarian and sustainable intention further solidified the concept, one that Ganapathi wishes to carry another round of. **IN**



# GREENER PASTURES



Collection 7 by Oshadi is a refreshing take on the brand's signature tie-dye

ecosystems. It's an ancient practice that has existed for decades.

While most of sustainability aims to preserve and lessen the ill impacts of the fashion industry on the environment, regenerative farming is an actual medium of renewal. To simplify it, this form of farming eliminates pesticides and plants crops in a strategic manner, where they nurture each other, which aids in topsoil regeneration, where the soil absorbs more



Cotton grown on Oshadi Studio's regenerative farm

carbon that, in turn, promotes biodiversity and decreases global warming. Nishant Chopra, founder of fashion label, Oshadi and the brains behind Oshadi Studio, is transforming the fashion supply chain through this fail-safe method, at his farm in Erode, Tamil Nadu. The entrepreneur sheds light on his vision, and why he believes that the past is the future.

**GRAZIA:** How did the idea to implement regenerative farming come about? What are pre-emptive factors required for it to work?

**NISHANTH CHOPRA:** Belonging to a textile family myself and being well-versed in its adverse impacts, I wanted to build a close and humane connection with our supply chain, which started with directly working with weavers, dyers, spinners and eventually leading us to the beginning of it all – farming. Land and some water are the only two constants to start farming. Everything else has to be incorporated based on the local climatic, soil and social conditions.

**GR:** What's your criteria when partnering with other brands?

**NC:** We started Oshadi with an aim to try and create an alternate fashion supply chain. In due course, the artisan and farmer communities we fostered for our own collection started to garner interest from like-minded brands whose work I admired, and working with them eventually led to the formation of a collective. A similar vision and thought process are the only key elements we look for when we collaborate with brands.

**GR:** With regard to regenerative farming, what active role can a consumer play to support the practice?

**NC:** Making considerate choices in everything we do. Instead of just looking for labels, consumers should consciously verify the outcome of the labels. For example, if something is labelled as 'fair trade', does the company have more information available on the fairness tag? How fair is fair trade or how organic are their organic standards? When we keep looking for more information, we eventually start understanding the reality behind things. Moreover, this is a way of life that extends beyond clothing – it's about making more collective choices in everything we do. Buying groceries from regenerative farms and skincare with thoughtful ingredients are the other areas that we can explore as consumers.

**GR:** How has the pandemic impacted the studio?

**NC:** Fortunately, we were not impacted all that much. We're a tight-knit community, so, most of our employees and workers live and work in and around our studio, which is a big advantage. We also had enough savings to share with our community when the pandemic forced temporary closure. I am happy that we didn't have to run one of those 'let's devour into public money to support our community' campaigns. Most brands have enough savings to share with their community. So, I find it debilitating that they run these campaigns to drive sympathy towards artisans, when we really should be respecting them for their exceptional skills, and share what we can with them. Regenerative farming is a collaborative effort, it's not an 'aiding programme', but entails collaboration, which creates a sense of equality. ■

*Regenerative farming is quickly moving beyond a complex buzzword into a practice that's actually giving back to the environment. And one fashion entrepreneur is opening his studio to other brands who want to integrate this unique supply chain into their businesses*

**W**hen it comes to sustainability in fashion, we often think about technologically-advanced fabrics, re-created from everything ranging from recycled plastic, tyres to coffee-ground fibres. But what about the act of slowing down? Cue in: Regenerative farming – a holistic approach to farming; fostering soil health, animal welfare, water management, and restoring local



*Wondering how to make a transition to ethical fashion that's not too heavy on the pocket? This non-profit brand works directly with rural artisan communities to bring the best of homegrown craft to the fore*



## FROM INDIA, WITH LOVE

Change is never easy, especially when you're trying to make cleaner choices with your wardrobe. There are multiple factors on your check-list that you look to tick off before hitting 'add to cart', whether it's the aesthetic, fabric, craftsmanship, silhouette, and most importantly, the price. Sustainable brands often get a bad rap for being monotonous and overpriced. Okhai proves to be an exception. Launched by the Tata Chemicals Society for Rural Development, it aims to empower female artisans in rural India, socially and economically, by promoting traditional handicraft techniques that are in danger of dying out with increased industrial growth and rapid urbanisation. What began as a programme to support 350 women in the Okhamandal region of Gujarat, impacts more than 2,300 artisans around the country, today. Kirti Poonia, CEO of the organisation, talks about the unique business model that looks beyond profit and consumerism.

### WORK FROM HOME

The pandemic witnessed the saddening reality of many migrant workers losing their jobs overnight and planning arduous travel to make it back to their villages and hometowns, only to return to financial instability. Okhai has worked to eliminate this problem by collaborating directly with artisans in their indigenous environment, through a complex distributed manufacturing system. As a result, artisans don't have to leave their villages in search of work but can have work come to them instead. "For many female artisans, going

out of the house is still an issue primarily because they have domestic responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children. Travelling from one place to another is quite expensive in rural areas and so, they cannot travel far for work. The focus on education is still far less for the girl child than the male child, but through our work with the community I've observed that the day the mother starts earning, she invests that money into her girl's education to become at par with her son," shares Poonia.

While many fashion houses and designers suffered due to the unavailability of labour and dwindling sales during the pandemic, the remote working model proved to be an important pivot for the brand – it went from a product company to a marketplace for artisans whose orders from physical stores had been cancelled, resulting in the entire supply chain coming to a standstill. Through frequent video calls, they fostered a sense of self-sufficiency by educating artisans on how to photograph their products, make excel sheets, and gradually onboarded them onto the Okhai programme.

### FULL DISCLOSURE

The discerning consumer of today looks at fashion beyond the surface, not only is he/she looking for a relatable back-story but also transparency in the production process. Through Okhai's non-profit model – all the proceeds from its sales can only be used to benefit artisans. It has further used social media

as an effective tool for generating awareness. "Anyone that follows us on Instagram has immediate knowledge of which artisan in the country is working on which products. And we also have a number coding system through that helps us trace which design was made in which village and by which group," says Poonia.

### A DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHIC

Any retail experience is further elevated if a dedicated consumer can fulfill several purchasing needs on a singular platform – a one-stop shop. Okhai gradually transitioned from womenswear into a lifestyle brand, powered by local arts and craft. A major driving factor is the accessible price point which brings into play a diverse consumer who is interested in traditional Indian-wear but is equally enthusiastic to buy a boiler suit, "Our hand-embroidered products are competitively priced compared to any fashion brand with double the price. However, to employ so many women we cannot sell only 10 dresses, which then makes us focus on volume for impact and hence reduces the cost. We want to break even and hence have fair pricing for customers and fair wages for artisans," explains Poonia.

In an endeavour to be sustainable, brands often overlook the perils of wasteful packaging, recognising the importance of creating a holistic process from start to finish, Okhai provides natural packaging through a compostable wrapper for the garment, a fabric carry bag that can be reused and a box that's made with recycled paper. **■**





# HOME BOUND

While the last year has changed a lot around us, it's also forced us to look within, and re-think our spending habits. In an attempt to understand consumer behaviour, what current needs *actually* are, and what new buying trends exist, we put forth a survey to help navigate these uncharted territories. Our findings proved to be interesting – with home decor, athleisure, and even sleepwear ranking high among things people are spending on. So whether you're a new plant mama, hopefully looking to stock up for future holidays or are just in the market for the comfiest bra you can get your hands on, we've got you covered

# ATHLEISURE

With more time than ever being spent indoors, our readers voted that most purchases during lockdown were geared towards comfort. That's where athleisure steps in. Here at *Grazia* HQ we're all about hard-working separates. So slip on a comfy yet breathable lounge set that might even motivate you to work out later in the day or throw on a light layer for a movie marathon that can also work double duty on an errand-run.

## LAYER UP

A good cover-up is a must have in every closet. Ranging from gilets to cropped hoodies and even a windsheeter, we're spoiling you with choice.

Patterned jacket,  
United Colors of Benetton.  
₹ 5,000

Printed vest,  
Ultracor.  
₹ 23,000

Cropped hoodie,  
Adidas by  
Stella McCartney at  
[www.farfetch.com](http://www.farfetch.com).  
₹ 13,091 approx

Tie-dye hoodie,  
American Eagle.  
₹ 3,999

Sports bra, floral tights,  
both *The Upside* at  
[www.farfetch.com](http://www.farfetch.com).  
₹ 7,791, ₹ 11,578 approx  
respectively

Graphic t-shirt,  
Asics.  
₹ 1,299

Jersey trousers,  
Zara.  
₹ 1,890

Short sleeve t-shirt,  
Nike x Paris Saint-Germain.  
₹ 2,195

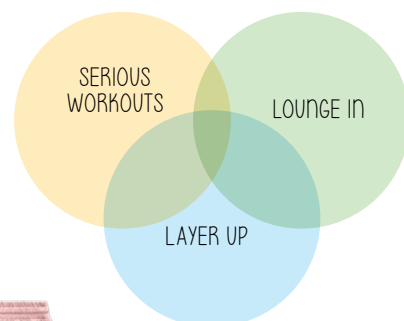
Crop top, shorts,  
both Myriad Activewear.  
₹ 3,000, ₹ 2,000  
respectively

Airism printed tights,  
Uniqlo x Futura Laboratories.  
₹ 1,990

Sweatshirt, shorts,  
both H&M.  
₹ 1,499, ₹ 1,299

Track pants,  
Puma.  
₹ 3,999

Grandma t-shirt,  
Croquis.  
₹ 1,699



## LOUNGE IN

Loungewear has replaced the trusted jeans and we're not complaining. A pair of comfy tracks with a baggy t-shirt or even a sweatsuit is now a closet must have.

## SERIOUS WORKOUTS

If you've joined the workout bandwagon but aren't motivated enough to exercise we're sure some new clothes may help.



# Smart Watches

While being coiled up at home has lead to being fit and healthier than ever before, what's better than tech wearables that allow you to stay on top of your health and activities all from your wrist? From activity trackers to hybrid and fitness luxe watches, there's something for everyone this month and if you already own one, now is the time to upgrade.

Thinking of buying a smart watch

33%  
Already invested in one

67%

Luxe watch,  
Fitbit,  
₹ 10,099

Mesh smartwatch,  
Fossil, ₹ 18,495

GTS 2,  
Amaze Fit,  
₹ 17,999

Gen 5E MKGO,  
Michael Kors,  
price on request

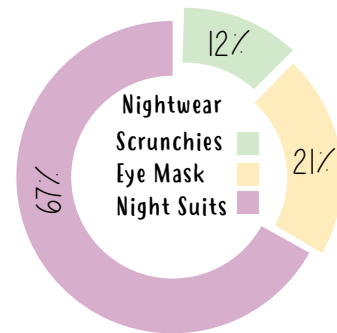
Dual toned band,  
Fastrack,  
₹ 2,995

Smartwatch series 6,  
Apple,  
₹ 40,900

Smartwatch,  
One Plus,  
₹ 16,999

Galaxy watch 3,  
Samsung,  
₹ 32,990

Smartwatch,  
Garmin,  
₹ 39,990



Bedtime Prerequisites



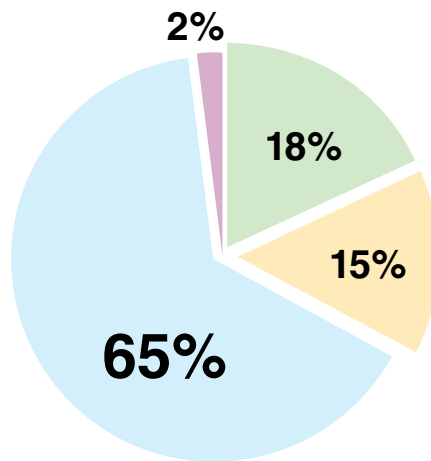
## Nightwear

While the pandemic had us under house arrest, it also forced us to take better care of ourselves. Most of you, like us have had a total overhaul of our sleepwear. Gone are the days of falling into deep slumber in ratty oversized Tees. We're stepping up with slinky camis, cute PJ sets, dream-inducing sleep masks and luxe scrunchies. You asked. We delivered.



## Bras

Whether you're lounging in or working from home, choosing the right bra is essential. While most women are sticking to their trusty basic bras - cotton or lace, underwired or non-wired, a bunch of them are also picking the feel/good and sartorial style that a bralette delivers while the other few are keeping it practical with a sports bra.



Classic Bras  
Bralettes  
Sports Bras  
Going Braless

## BRALETTES

Fashion meets function, these bralettes work double duty- they ensure the comfort you deserve and are the perfect alternatives to your trusty crop tops.



V-neck,  
Commando at  
[www.matchesfashion.com](http://www.matchesfashion.com),  
₹ 4,945 approx



Lace,  
La Senza,  
₹ 3,521



Printed,  
H&M,  
₹ 999

## CLASSIC BRAS

The humble classic bra is our forever companion in everything we do. Be it Zoom meetings or a trip to the supermarket, these bras support you like no other.



Floral print,  
Nayomi available at  
Shoppers Stop, ₹1,249



Lace,  
Marks & Spencer,  
₹ 1,299



Cotton,  
Hunkemoller,  
₹2,495



Printed,  
Wacoal,  
₹2,495



Racerback,  
Nike,  
₹1,895



Heathered,  
Under Armour,  
₹ 2,187



Tropical print,  
Superdry,  
₹ 2,599

## SPORTS BRA

Whether you're sweating it outdoors or doing a HIIT sesh in your room (thanks to online streaming services), investing in the right sports bra is crucial. From light support bras to something sturdier and high impact, we've got you covered.



Colourblock dress,  
Malie,  
₹ 17,000

Highwaist shorts,  
1101 - Eleven.O.One,  
₹ 1,400



Off-shoulder blouse,  
1101 - Eleven.O.One,  
₹ 1,200

Crochet dress,  
Zara,  
₹ 4,590



Reversible bikini set,  
Guapa,  
₹ 8,900



Floral swimsuit,  
Hunkemoller,  
₹ 4,495

DIY necklace kit,  
H&M,  
₹ 699



Tote bag,  
Tory Burch,  
₹ 14,483 approx



Striped jumpsuit,  
Bershka,  
₹ 3,189 approx



Mini heart bracelet,  
Olivia Dar,  
₹ 2,500



Organic earrings,  
Valliyan by Nitya Arora,  
₹ 6,500



## WISFUL CLOTHING CHECKLIST

- SUMMER DRESSES ☒
- HATS ☒
- SWIMWEAR ☒
- ACCESSORIES ☒
- SANDALS ☒
- BEACH TOTE ☒

Silk organza dress,  
Zimmermann at  
[www.net-a-porter.com](http://www.net-a-porter.com),  
₹ 61,881 approx



## Wishful Clothing

It's a no brainer that we're all hopeful. Over 80% of readers reported that they're making wishful purchases. While we're all travelling virtually through Instagram, there's nothing wrong in collecting pieces for your beach holiday in 2022. If you don't want to wait that long, wear these to your next Zoom sundowner.

Rope sandals,  
Ann Demeulemeester at  
[www.farfetch.com](http://www.farfetch.com),  
₹ 44,342 approx



Strappy sandals,  
Steve Madden,  
₹ 7,999



Straw hat,  
Myaraa,  
₹ 2,199



Crochet bucket hat,  
Artsy,  
₹ 950





'Neverfull MM' tote bag,  
Louis Vuitton,  
price on request



'Cleo' shoulder bag,  
Prada,  
price on request



'2.55' handbag,  
Chanel,  
price on request



'Marmont' shoulder bag,  
Gucci,  
price on request



'Baguette' bag,  
Fendi,  
price on request



## Luxury Investments

At this time when shopping for the future takes the spotlight, a majority of readers reported that investing in timeless classics that elevate an ensemble seems like the right choice. Whether it's the Rolex or the understated Chanel 2.55, these works of art age gracefully and are the perfect family heirloom.

'Constellation' watch,  
Omega available at  
Ethos Watches,  
price on request



'Tank française' watch,  
Cartier, price on request



'Datejust' watch,  
Rolex,  
price on request



'Serpenti' watch,  
Bulgari,  
price on request



Watches  
45%

55%  
Luxury  
bags

## Home Decor

We spend most of our time in our safe haven and a lot more than usual since the pandemic. Our Instagram poll suggested that all our readers are interested in buying home decor to spruce up their space. We at *Grazia* bring to you small yet appealing home decor essentials that will instantly transform your house.



Canvas wallart, both Blkbrd Store, ₹ 1,599, ₹ 1,152 respectively



Contemporary Art 'Life in a Foot', Viraj Mithani, price on request

Framed wall art, India Circus, ₹ 3,999



Abstract art (digital on paper), Jaypore, ₹ 799

Bright city wall art, Zufolo Design, ₹ 3,150



### WALL ART

Art is a subtle yet impactful way to express yourself and a good piece of art can help bring character to your house. If you're new to this and still figuring out what fits your space, you can easily rent art.

### Rent Art

- Floating Canvas: an Art-on-Subscription service that helps you promote and support emerging artists. ([www.floatingcanvas.co](http://www.floatingcanvas.co))
- Art and Found: if you're buying art for the first time or are a seasonal collector, Art and Found has made buying art easy and affordable. They also assist in styling spaces with art. ([www.artandfound.co](http://www.artandfound.co))

### CANDLES

A scented candle can transform your mood in seconds and is known to soothe the mind. What better way to unwind after a long day of work with some lo-fi music, your favourite sheet mask and some candles.

'Douceur Immortelle' candle, L'Occitane, ₹ 2,350



'Madurai' scented candle, Kama Ayurveda, ₹ 895



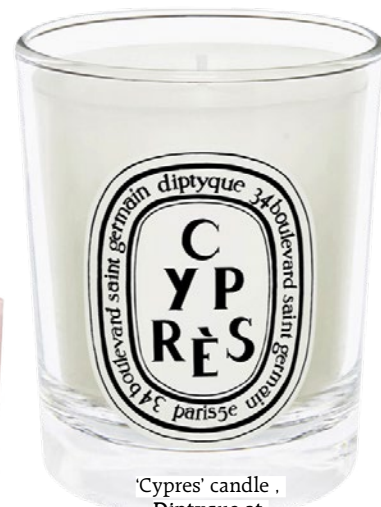
'Fresh Cut Lilacs' three wick candle, Bath & Body Works, ₹ 2,599



'Breakfast Leipzig' candle, DS & Durga available at Bhaane, ₹ 4,500



'Moon' set candle, Bombay Perfumery, ₹ 1,600



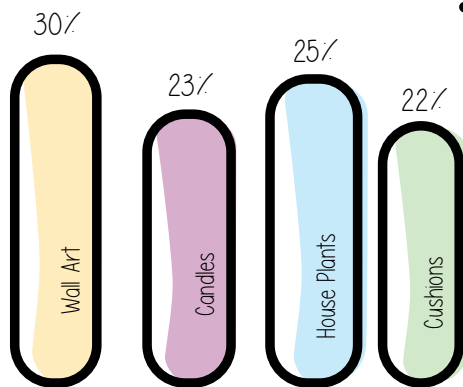
'Cypres' candle, Diptyque at [www.moonriverstore.com](http://www.moonriverstore.com), ₹ 6,100





## CUSHIONS

Cushions are a great way to add a splash of colour and texture to your couch and bedding. Ranging from prints, different fabric and embroidery - there are tons of options to choose from.



Home Decor Must Haves - 2021 Edition

## HOUSE PLANTS

In the past year many of us have officially become plant moms. To the new (and old) mommies out there we've put together a list of brands that cater to all sorts of plant needs.



1. Coco Jungle - Their motto is to make it easier to live next to nature, their ceramics are a work of art and same day delivery in Mumbai is a win-win. A feature of theirs that we absolutely love is, you can choose a plant based on your requirement and how much time you can give it.  
Price Range - ₹ 3,250 to ₹ 18,000  
[www.cocojungle.co](http://www.cocojungle.co)

2. Kensho Greenery - A plant boutique based out of Oleander Farms (also home to Saltt), Karjat - Kensho has you covered when it comes to curating the perfect gift or party favours. Ranging from exotic crates which you could customise as per your needs or their original plant crates which consists of a handmade wooden crate, plants and care cards, the options are numerous.  
Price Range - ₹ 999 to ₹ 2,299  
Instagram - @kenshogreenery

3. My Bageecha - Their moss frames work great as art and bring a touch of dense green to your walls. These are perfect for you if you can't keep your plants alive as they barely need any attention or water.  
Price Range - ₹ 1,050 to ₹ 9,550  
[www.mybageecha.com](http://www.mybageecha.com)

4. Nurturing Green - The DIY gardening kit teaches you to take care of plants from when the seed sprout to grow. This eco-friendly kit makes a unique gift for all your plant mom friends out there.  
Price Range - ₹ 999 to ₹ 5,999  
[www.nurturinggreen.in](http://www.nurturinggreen.in)

5. Ugao - They create subscription boxes to help you through each step of gardening. Each box is carefully curated with exotic plants and plant care cards which help build your confidence in gardening.  
Price Range - ₹ 2,249 to ₹ 7,499  
[www.ugao.com](http://www.ugao.com)



# ARTFUL ESCAPISM

*Is it just us, or are wallpapers continuing to shine bright?*

Designer label Shivan & Narresh is known for its signature prints that incorporate vibrant colours, intricate motifs, and striking accents. The designer duo, Shivan Bhatiya and Narresh Kukreja, is now extending their nuanced design to interiors with a line of luxury art wallpapers. Drawing from the brand's five evocative stories – Seoul, Araki, Edomer, Patu, and Wilding 20's, the wallpapers feature 10 unique prints that evoke picturesque stories of travel and culture reimagined through the kaleidoscopic lens of the designers. We spoke to them about their newest offering.

**GRAZIA:** What inspired you to diversify into wallpapers?

**Narresh Kukreja:**

For an artist, the ambition of scale is one of the most exhilarating parts of the design journey. Starting with the smallest of surface areas – be it swimwear, ready-to-wear to now decorating giant walls as our canvas – we've constantly been

inspired to narrate the sense of artistic growth and impact brought to life – from a woman walking into a room to all the men and women within that room whose lives we can touch upon and influence at once, with our designs.

**G:** Translating prints meant for clothes for a 2D medium must involve an interesting creative process, how did you go about working on this?

**Shivan Bhatiya:** We started with shortlisting signature artworks that would lend striking accents and seamlessly blend into modern spaces. Each of these prints were then elaborated up and down multiple times to finalise the right scale that would give a sense of comfort, boldness, and elegance to the surroundings.



The new collection aims to capture the warmth of intimate gatherings



**G:** How do you ensure your signature design grammar comes through on diversified products like wallpapers?

**NK:** Any design that we work on aesthetically resonates with the language of print and because every art print by Shivan & Narresh has a distinct recall factor, it translates effortlessly to any product we

want to imply it to. While this helps with diversification across different categories, the key inspiration lies in the boldness of our universal philosophy.

**G:** The inspiration for the wallpapers is drawn from stories of travel. In your opinion, will travel serve as a major theme for fashion in 2021?

**SB:** Absolutely. Once the situation normalises, people will naturally elevate to a relaxed state of mind and rejoice through fashion. The idea of breaking away from the monotony and once again travelling will be a top priority on each one's mind. Hence, travel is going to be a huge influence not only in terms of inspiration but also for fashion in the coming months.

## ON THE STYLE RADAR

### SYMBOL OF HOPE



*This capsule collection symbolises solidarity*

George Floyd's death in May 2020 initiated a worldwide conversation about racism, police brutality, and systemic injustice. Amongst the voices that used their platforms to fuel these conversations were Idris and Sabrina Elba. Their discussion with Opal Tometi, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement sparked the interest of Christian Louboutin who reached out to them to discuss ways to truly give back to society. "I felt so proud of my friends, the Instagram live was such a powerful and intense moment for me. So, the day after, I called them, first to tell them I was proud but also to discuss about what we can do to help the cause," Christian shared.

This inspiring decision was channelled into a two-chapter collection. The collection features colourful motifs inspired by the Mandala's Gold flower. According to Sabrina, the flower is a symbol for peace and hope for people around the world. Another highlight of the collection is the powerful statement – "walk a mile in my shoes", which appears through the collection in a script font in the signature Louboutin red inspired by Idris' visit to the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial. The motto isn't a literal invitation but rather a call to action to support the charities the proceeds of the sales will go to.

A brilliant initiative partnered with an acutely creative design sensibility, the collection is an impactful and necessary step. As Christian succinctly puts it, "Everyone has a responsibility. I asked myself - How would you like to be remembered? I believe that I do not want to be remembered as a designer necessarily. I would rather be remembered as a nice guy who actually tried to help people when he could."



# HAPPY HEARTS

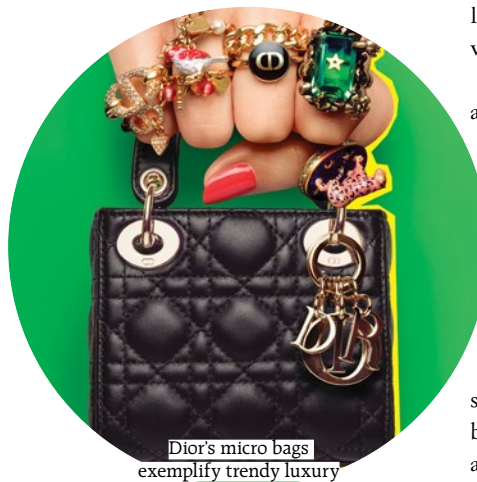
*Celebrating the spirit of strong, courageous women*



Florals for spring? They can be groundbreaking when they form part of Chopard's all-new take on their 'Happy Hearts' collection, which features the two classic emblems of the house: Hearts and dancing diamonds. Arranged in a floral pattern, the dancing diamond is nestled in the centre with a corolla of five red, diamond-set or mother-of-pearl hearts around it. The classic floral motif is infused with a touch of modernity owing to the bright colours. Crafted in ethical 18-karat rose or white gold, the collection includes a bangle bracelet, a ring, a pair of earrings and a pendant which are meant to be worn separately or stacked together.

# LUXURY ESSENTIALS

*These buzzy 'It' bags have already risen to cult status*



Dior's micro bags exemplify trendy luxury

Micro bags have been topping the trend charts for a few seasons now and it looks like Dior is finally offering its delectable bags in miniature versions. The luxury design house has reinvented its iconic 'Lady Dior' and '30 Montaigne' alongside the 'Dior Caro' and 'Saddle' in a series of enchanting mini iterations. The signature curves and graphic lines of these bags have been adapted to a smaller version for a modern touch.

The micro bags will be available in an assortment of classic shades like black, red, and latte along with a softer palate of pastels like rose des vents, sky blue, and mint or tundra green. Additionally, a heart-themed interpretation of the iconic 'Cannage' motif will adorn the 'Dior Caro' and 'Lady Dior' bags. The 'Lady Dior' bag will also be made in a delicate version embroidered with pearls. These trendy and effortless fashion statements will be available starting June 23rd, 2021 so go ahead and bookmark these for your post pandemic nights about town.



JADE by Monica and Karishma's design grammar extends to their stores

**NEW BEGINNINGS**

*This Indian label is going global*

Couture label JADE by Monica and Karishma just traversed international waters with the opening of their new store in Santa Monica. Celebrating the 12th anniversary of the label, the brand expanded their retail presence with the new Los Angeles as well as Delhi flagship stores. We spoke to Monica Shah about the new store and what goes into adapting their design grammar for a new audience.

**GRAZIA: How different is your flagship store in Los Angeles from the one in Delhi?**

**Monica Shah:** Our brand ethos and DNA is common through all our stores and studios. However, each store carries its own unique

personality too, depending on where it is located and who it's catering to. Our Los Angeles store has ensembles that are more tailored to the modern, contemporary, international bride.

**G: Tell us about the collection at the LA store**

**M:** We're showcasing a selection of our bridal ensembles that are the perfect blend of modern and traditional aesthetics, where craft meets a more contemporary handwriting.

**G: What trends do you see changing in bridal wear post-pandemic?**

**M:** There will be a focus on comfort, versatility, and mindfulness. Clients are already looking for ensembles that they can feel perfectly at ease in. Brides want something they can find ways to use again in the future too while proudly wearing the craft heritage of the country.

# X MARKS THE SPOT

*This updated collection is a study of style distilled to its very essence*

Tiffany & Co.'s iconic 'Atlas' collection exemplifies endurance. First introduced in 1995, the collection drew inspiration from the Roman numerals on the iconic clock at the Tiffany Fifth Avenue flagship store. Now, 26 years later, the brand has launched an updated version of the original Atlas designs, dubbed 'Atlas X'.

Crafted from 18-karat gold, sterling silver, and pavé diamonds, Atlas X will feature three motifs – 'Closed', 'X', and 'Open' on an assortment of rings, bracelets, pendants, and earrings. The 'Closed' and 'Open' designs possess cleverly manipulated knife-edge profiles. The exaggerated bevelled edge rising to a precise edge gives the collection a bold finish. The 'X' styles focus on the X motif and features a criss-crossing element.

While these elements add a modern touch to classic designs, the collection also has an infusion of glamour as it features designs with sparkling diamond accents. For a truly opulent option, the 'Atlas X' wide bangle and ring boast an intricate honeycomb pattern featuring hand-set pavé diamonds. The collection's versatility in sizes and textures makes it perfect for stacking and styling. **W**



*A shoulder bag that doubles  
up as a crossbody is every girl's  
dream — say hello (again) to  
the updated & iconic 50s  
Horsebit style*

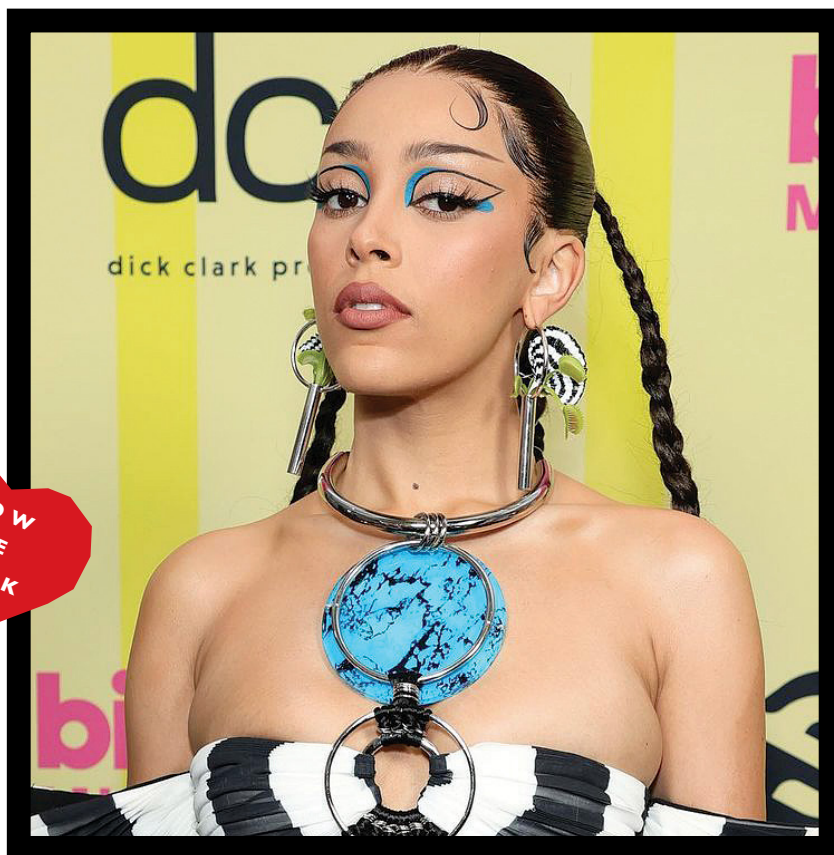
'Horsebit 1955' shoulder  
bag, Gucci,  
price on request

LOVE  
LOVE  
LOVE

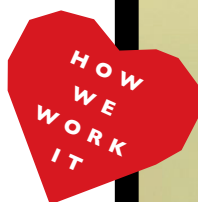




# BEAUTY



Photograph INSTAGRAM/DOJACAT. Compiled by HENA DESAI



## Where we spotted it

On American music artist Doja Cat, at the 2021 Billboard Music Awards.

## Why we loved it

After months of no make-up looks, this punchy graphic liner is giving us life. To help you get the look, we've rounded up locally-made beauty products so that you can have fun while still supporting homegrown labels.

## Ways to work it

1. Pat some concealer on your eyelids as a make-up primer. Buff a nude eyeshadow all over and in the creases, especially if your lids tend to get oily.
2. With a black liquid liner, draw a basic winged tip, and then create an exaggerated squiggle to form the base of your graphic eye. It can be as abstract and imperfect as you like, but try to keep the shapes consistent on both eyes.
3. If you're a beginner, use a blue eye pencil to add a pop of colour to the inner and outer corners. Pros can switch it up with hydra liners for more intense pigment. Opt for blue like Doja did, or any pop of colour you like – we'd recommend a sunny yellow to help you bid farewell to summer.
4. Go OTT with false lashes or keep it simple with two coats of mascara to finish. As a rule of thumb, keep the rest of the face minimally done, so that nothing clashes with the eyes.

- 1 Kiro Waterproof Soft Matte Eyeliner Pen, ₹ 900 2 Colorbar 24Hrs Wear Weightless Liquid Foundation, ₹ 995 3 SoulTree Ayurvedic Mascara, ₹ 625 4 Lakmé Absolute Micro Brow Perfector, ₹ 800 5 Asa Beauty Hydra-Matte Lipstick, ₹ 1,750 6 Tinge Multi-Shape Sticks, ₹ 750 7 SUGAR Cosmetics Eye Lit You So! Vivid Eyeliner in 'Yellow Bird', ₹ 699





Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO/  
FEMINA INDIA Words HENA DESAI

*Navigating  
undiscussed  
problems of  
the pandemic*

GRAZIA

S.O.S



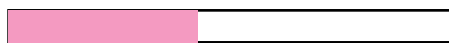
**A**fter months of house arrest, I decided to check my reflection in the mirror. Here's what stared back at me: A pale complexion, stringy hair with my first-ever greys peeking through, undone brows, and some serious screen-induced dark circles – almost like a withered houseplant that hasn't seen the sun for long. Truth be told, I couldn't be bothered about how I look right now, when there are bigger things to worry about in the world – but I have to admit that this lockdown version of myself doesn't feel very good, confident or even happy in this skin on most days. As a beauty writer, I'm a firm believer in the transformative power of make-up and skincare routines – they offer moments of comfort, calm, and a rare sense of control in a chaotic time; I feel like if I can control how I look, I can control my life too. Studies have shown that though worrying about vanity feels frivolous, it has far-reaching implications on your mental health and well-being. Like everything else, Covid-19 has disrupted this notion, and with it, our headspace.


Over the last few weeks, we spoke to you, our readers, and learnt that most of you'll have become victims of the unspoken side-effects of the pandemic – hair loss, auto-immune flare ups, Zoom fatigue, and stress-induced menstrual disruptions. Take a look at all the findings of our social media survey ahead, along with stories of five women who are here to remind you that you're not alone in these experiences, and that this too shall pass.



 **38%**

ARE HAPPY IN THEIR  
**OWN SKIN!**



**77%** 

BATTLED **STRESS  
BREAKOUTS**



**77%**  

AGREED THAT THE  
LOCKDOWN AFFECTED  
THEIR **HAIR AND  
SKIN NEGATIVELY**



**“I started  
feeling  
dull and  
low”**

*Simran Shah, celebrity make-up artist*

“As a woman myself and a professional who deals with celebrities and brides as clients, I know that having good hair is very important to people. Managing hair without professional help through varied weather conditions is tough enough, with Covid making it worse. I tested positive a couple of months ago and a week into it, I found myself losing my energy and more strands than I could keep count of, at an alarming rate. I felt like my hair texture had also changed; it felt dry, weak, brittle, wavy, and lackluster. Along with losing hair, I was also losing confidence – I started feeling dull and low. The medication and loss of taste and smell meant loss of appetite, so I wasn't eating healthy too. It took a toll not only on my body, but my mind too, just like it did with many other girls. With a lot of self-motivation, I was able to turn things around – I started oiling my hair, taking vitamins like B12, eating nuts and trying home remedies like onion juice. Slowly but surely, I have seen improvements; have patience, be consistent, and focus on your overall health too, to see changes.”





Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO

# “Stress hormones = interrupted cycles”

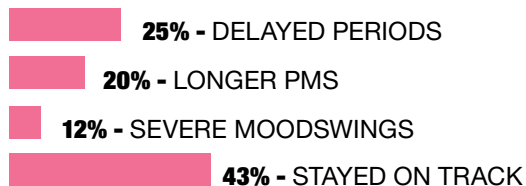


*Dr Tanaya Narandra, doctor and sexual health expert*

“A lot of people have reported changes in their periods after getting Covid, or getting vaccinated. Thankfully, these changes are temporary. Lots have seen deviations in their cycle even without this, and that’s a result of stress caused by a dramatic change in our daily routines. Our menstrual cycle is controlled by things like stress levels, nutrition levels, and our sleep cycle – all of which are impacted by hormones. In a high stress situation, our body releases more stress hormones, which lead to interrupted menstrual cycles. Many of us are not sleeping properly, and the disruption in the rhythm of rising with the sun directly affects your cycle too. Another thing that we’ve noticed is that since the lockdown, we’ve stopped daily physical activities. We don’t get enough exercise, and as a result, fat cells accumulate. A lot of hormones that control or regulate our menstrual cycle are made in these fat cells. If we have more fat cells in our body there can be an increase in production of these hormones, which can impact our cycles. This is similar to what happens in PCOS as well. I’ve experienced some of these issues first-hand – when I had Covid, my period lasted for 13 days, with 10 days of spotting and three days of actual bleeding. A lot of people have reported experiences of short, longer, lighter or heavier period than they normally do. As I mentioned, these changes are temporary, and though it’s a small side-effect of the vaccine, it doesn’t in any way mean that you shouldn’t get vaccinated – go ahead and get it without worrying because all of this will fall back in place as we return to normalcy.”



## REPORTED MENSTRUAL TROUBLE





# 66%

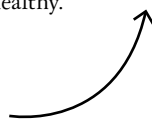
FACED SEVERE HAIR  
FALL POST COVID



## “The hair fall is real, but thank god it’s temporary”

*Dr Geetika Mittal, dermatologist and founder, ISAAC LUXE*

“I faced hair fall after recovering from Covid. I also have hypothyroid, so I was aware that this was bound to happen, although temporary. I didn’t let the stress of it affect my mental health. I dealt with it by improving my protein intake and by applying hair growth serums on my scalp every day. I let it take its due course, and that has helped; the hair growth has resumed. This sort of hair loss is called ‘telogenic effluvium’, which is a condition brought about by stressful experiences, and thankfully it’s reversible. It can be due to the stress from illnesses, childbirth, physical trauma or an infection like this which can push your hair follicles into a resting phase, making them switch from the growing to the shedding phase. I’ve seen a number of these cases progress as the pandemic intensified. Typically, it takes 12-18 months for your hair to return to its normal appearance and state. But there are things you can try to slow down the loss and boost growth. For starters, keep in mind simple things like using gentle drying towels, avoiding vigorous massages, pressing pause on chemical treatments, and avoiding excessive combing. Focus on a healthy diet; try consuming lots of raw vegetables and herbs (the Mediterranean diet is your best bet) to reduce the risk of androgenic alopecia (male or female patterned baldness). Speak to experts and start taking multivitamins, protein and biotin supplements and consider options such as PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma Treatment) if your hair fall is severe. Whatever you do, remember to relax – it’s important to curb stress as it’s the biggest factor that contributes to most Covid-related side-effects. Do breathing exercises, meditation and yoga to stay calm and healthy.”



Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO/ FEMINA INDIA

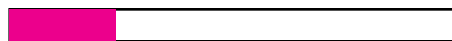
# 62%

ARE BATTLING  
ZOOM FATIGUE



23%

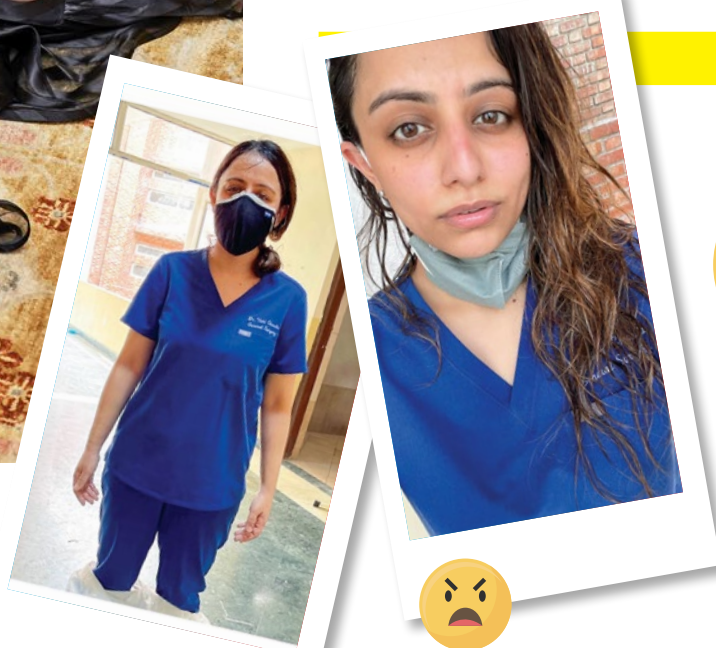
BATTLED  
MASKNE



## “Personal hygiene is impossible to maintain”

*Dr Vani Dutta Chawla, resident surgeon*

“While on ICU duty, you’re covered in layers, from head to toe, for complete protection. Hours later, the insides of your scrubs, triple masks, hair and even PPE kit are drenched in sweat. Needless to say, you have to shower before and after every round of duty, and this includes a hair bath. I’ve had to deal with hair fall because I shampoo twice a day. Facial skin infections like molluscum leave my face with pearly bumps that can only be controlled by a dermatologist. But the most nightmare-ish experience is reporting on duty when you’re menstruating. Personal hygiene is impossible to maintain, and I also run the risk of contracting a UTI (urinary tract infection) every time my duty coincides with my period. With a wave that comes every two months, it’s impossible to maintain any kind of skincare or hair routine. Such problems seem insignificant in the larger scheme of things, but they can’t be ignored. I’ve learnt to accept my flaws in the process.”



Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO



# 43%

WOMEN REPORTED  
AN INCREASE IN  
**AUTOIMMUNE SKIN  
CONDITIONS**



## “Inflammation troubled me for nearly a fortnight”

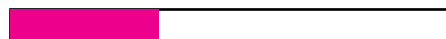
*Mehernaaz Dhondy, Editor, Grazia*

“A few days into last year’s lockdown, I developed what was a minor itch behind my ears and on my forehead; but within a matter of hours it turned into a full-blown eruption of hives and red patches on my entire face, ears and neck – with scratch levels at a max. The inflammation troubled me for over a fortnight, to an extent where I could not concentrate on anything other than the itch and overall intense irritation. Many anti-histamine doses and ice-cubes later it finally subsided, but only to recur through the year at the slightest provocation – whatever that is, since my dermatologist hasn’t quite figured out what triggers the contact dermatitis outbreak and has, for now, put it down to a combination of stress, possible food allergies, and possibly even contact of foreign objects like masks and face shields on my skin. Apart from medication, I’ve been prescribed the use of purely hypoallergenic products, Cetaphil works well, and sometimes even pure, unscented aloe products help calm my skin.”



# 31%

BATTLED  
**SKIN RASHES**





Ever since we watched the *Friends* reunion episode, we're knee-deep in 90s nostalgia, crushing hard on everything about the show, especially 'The Rachel' – Jennifer Aniston's iconic hairstyle that saw women clutching her photos and making a run for the salon, begging to copy her cuts and colour for nearly a decade. But sitting at home with limited access to salons, there's only one thing that comes to mind: How do you maintain that gorgeous colour and sheen at home? Luckily for us, Jen's own hair colourist and co-creator of the iconic hairstyle, Michael Canale has stepped up to help us out. One of Hollywood's favourite hair artists for well over two decades now, he counts everyone from Penelope Cruz, Shakira, and Kate Hudson as his clients. Ahead, he shares his unmissable tips to maintaining hair health at home and making the most of your hair colour, through lockdown and beyond:

**GRAZIA:** With no access to salons, how do we take care of hair at home?

**MICHAEL CANALÉ:** If you know you aren't going to be able to make it to the salon for quite some time, you should do a few things to elongate either the cut or colour. For instance, chop off an extra quarter inch to let the cut last. As for colour, wash with cooler water and use sulfate-free products.

**G:** If we \*must\* colour at home, especially to cover greys, what should we keep in mind?

**MC:** If you're colouring your hair at home with box colour, keep in mind that upon returning to the salon you may need some colour correction. If you already see a colourist, ask them

## BEAUTY REPORTER



Jennifer Aniston sporting 'The Rachel'

## HAIR MASTER

*Colourist to the stars on how to maintain your hair at home*

for a take-home colour kit. They will include instructions on how to apply your product and how long to leave it on for. Using hair concealers such as a root cover-up or spray is great. Demi and semi-permanent hair colours are also highly recommended.

**G:** How can we maintain the vibrancy of the colour?

**MC:** Washing your hair with cooler water definitely helps maintain the colour and prevents fading. Canale products has created three signature glosses that seal in your hair colour, provide UV protection, and create an overall shine. It lasts 20 shampoos, so every two weeks or so you can apply a gloss and have salon-quality hair with shine.

**G:** What kind of low-maintenance colour trend should we try in 2021?

**MC:** You can choose any colour you like

as long as the upkeep is minimal; the colour should grow out well with less touch-ups too. When my clients came back after Covid limitations, they all had a beautiful grow out. I think that's part of my technique as I always want to achieve the best natural-looking colour.

The grow-out isn't harsh or extremely noticeable and their hair is healthy thanks to good home-care products.

**G:** How do you recommend battling hair loss from the inside out?

**MC:** A healthy diet and a healthy scalp helps produces healthy hair. I have created a topical and ingestible vitamin, used to promote hair growth and health from the inside out. The Canale Vitamin Replenish and Boost Vitamin contain micro proteins such as blue green algae and spirulina that are stimulants for healthy hair.



Michael Canale



## HAND HEROES

*Extra TLC for home care*

Eat, sleep, sanitise, repeat – that's literally our schedule right now. We're washing our hands more times than we can count, and while essential, it'll have left your hands feeling dry, stretchy, and irritated. But it doesn't have to be that way – not if you have good quality products by your side. This hand-care duo in particular is a favourite – it's made to cleanse and hydrate your hands so you're never left uncomfortable. The hand wash and lotion are vegan, paraben-free, lightly scented and designed to look super-smart on your shelf.

Kimirica Bouquet Hand Care Duo, ₹ 2,195





# HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT CLOUD SKIN YET?

*It's almost like putting on the Paris filter, IRL*

The world of K-Beauty is fast-evolving, and before we could get on the perfect glass or dumpling skin bandwagon, there's a new trend that's doing the round – cloud skin. While its predecessor was all about the mega-watt gleam, this one's more about a soft, diffused glow, with a hazy focus that looks like the sun coming out to hit your face through the clouds (that's where the name comes from). The whole idea is to blur out any imperfections and with a clever mix of techniques and textures to give you filter-like skin in real life. You have to start off with a super hydrating base – it's essential that you apply a moisturiser and top it off with a face oil. Next, blend a dewy foundation, followed by a concealer where necessary. Now comes the important step to get the blurry action going – grab a fluffy brush and buff it onto areas of your face like the cheekbones, nose and chin, leaving the rest untouched. This contrast in the matte and dewy textures creates the dreamy hazy effect that's key to the look. You can choose to further accentuate the glow by adding a highlighter where necessary too. remember not to overblend and let the different textures show through for a dreamy, ethereal glow.



# SCENT OF LUXURY



*This fragrance will almost literally take you places*

At the very tip of Cap d'Antibes, in the French Riviera, stands the majestic Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc – its earned cult-status because of patronage from some of its famous guests like F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemmingway, Elizabeth Taylor, and more. This year, the property celebrates its 150th anniversary, and the equally famous French design house Dior is marking the milestone by launching a new fragrance specially for the occasion – Dior Eden-Roc. François Demachy, Dior perfumer-creator, has tried to bottle the magic of the iconic palace, such that a single spritz can take you on a far-flung adventure to the south of France. He says, “When creating Eden-Roc, I was imagining an arrival at the hotel by sea. The salt, the sun, the rocky shore and the lush vegetation. It is a delight of a fragrance, inspired by the serenity of this unparalleled destination and custom designed in its honour.”

To evoke the essence of the grand hotel, the Eden-Roc perfume takes shape in three colours: Blue like the sea or pool, yellow like the sun hitting the cliffs by the beach and sun-tanned bodies and, green like the freshness of the pines standing tall in the hotel's lush garden. It's got notes of sea salt, citrus, jasmine and woody pines; basically everything that'll make you smell like you just got out of the ocean and onto the deck chair for some serious summertime lounging at the most fashionable and luxurious locale in the world. While we can't actually grab our passports and live out the dream yet, we'll just have to let Dior's fantastical whirl of notes take us there for now. **LI**

# Playing With Fire

*Make-up remover wipes might seem like a lazy girl's best friend, but are they really just sheep in wolf's clothing?*

In the quest for convenience, we've learned to lean on multi-tasking products and condensed our 10-step routines. It's no doubt that the world of skincare has spoiled us with countless solutions to lengthy routines, but one such product comes with a hefty price to pay. If you're no stranger to blurry Saturday nights, you've probably committed a cardinal skincare sin by using make-up removal wipes. And who wouldn't take the easy way out of removing make-up at 3 a.m.?

While they may make your life easier, the same can't be said for the planet. As far as the sustainable factor of make-up remover wipes goes, they've proven to be excessively damaging to the environment. "Make-up wipes often contain synthetic materials, such as plastic and polyester, to keep them durable," reports Dr Jason Emer, cosmetic dermatologist for Canadian brand Nudestix. No matter how they are disposed, they're a major pollutant to wildlife, oceans, and other water sources.

Estimated to be one of the most wasteful products in the world, a shuddering 20 million pounds of single-use wipes are dumped in landfills daily in the U.S alone. The average remover wipe is far from



**NUDESTIX Vegan Bamboo-Derived Cleansing Cloths**, ₹ 2,176 (approx)

biodegradable and takes about 100 years to completely decompose.

But that's not all. While these wipes are damaging the environment, they are also wreaking havoc on your skin by doing more harm than good. With its sole purpose being to remove make-up, you'd think that wipes would be extremely efficient at their jobs. When compared to a humble facial cleanser, water, and make-up towel, wipes are nowhere as thorough at cleaning. "Most times, they leave behind dirt, grime, and oil, all of which lead to clogged pores, breakouts, and even irritated skin," says Namrata Soni, celebrity make-up artist and founder of Simply Nam.

The chemicals used in wipes aren't particularly friendly for your skin. They contain harsh actives like sodium lauryl sulphate, paraben, alcohol, and other surfactants that aim to give the wipes their cleansing role, as well increasing their shelf life. Prolonged use of face wipes can lead to dehydrated skin, stripping it off its natural oil content, challenging the pH of the skin.

Poorly made wipes have proven to damage the surface of the skin as well. Dr Chytra V Anand, celebrity cosmetic dermatologist and founder of Kosmoderma says, "Cheaper wipes are made with a coarse cloth that when used

on the skin's surface causes micro-tears due to the rough texture of the cloth, almost like using a scrub on the skin."

They can also dry out the skin. Dr Jamuna Pai, cosmetic physician and founder of Skin Lab, advises that one should use a gentle foaming face wash, topped with a suitable moisturiser to combat that.

So where does this leave us with removing make-up? When it comes to wearing heavy products, it can be argued that make-up remover wipes are a lifesaver, especially in a double-cleansing routine. You can explore many eco-friendly alternatives that the market provides, like the ones made from bamboo or the kind that are fully compostable. Don't fret yet because there are many effective methods that'll come to your rescue. The plus point is that they're devoid of harsh chemicals too. But if you're planning to ditch single-use solutions altogether, then cleansing pads and towels are your best (and most economical) bet. "A good-quality cleansing towel will remove all traces of make-up, dirt, grime, and oil. You can use it with warm water or even with a remover, facial cleanser on it," chimes in Soni. A cleansing milk, cleansing butter, and cleansing balm are also effective methods of getting the job done, as they melt away even waterproof pigments easily, with no potential worry of redness or skin damage from excessive rubbing or tugging. ■



**Earth Rhythm Reusable Makeup Remover/Cleansing Pads**, ₹ 175

**SIMPLY NAM Makeup Remover Towel**, ₹ 990



Words NATASHA FERNANDES  
Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO for FEMINA



# LOVE LOVE LOVE

*Roll out the red carpet for this doc-designed skincare label that's every A-listers' favourite. Supermodel Bella Hadid credits Dr Sturm for "changing her skin forever", so you know the products from this eponymous line are going to be worth the splurge*



*Dr. Barbara Sturm Glow  
14,030 (30 ml)*



# PULL *up a* CHAIR

*Food has become more than a necessity;  
it's bringing people together*

There are a few moments as special as breaking bread. In these moments, we know that the food we're eating is more than just a meal. Over the past year, food has brought us together and shaped our memories. Though easy to forget while we're rushing through our day, sharing a meal is an intimate experience, and those who sit beside us at the table can feel this intimacy. Now, food has taken on a more powerful hue. It has helped communities thrive while also driving Covid relief efforts. So, in the spirit of togetherness, we've set two summer tables for you. Let it serve as a reminder that this too shall pass.



## HOST: Brun & Babka

**ON THE MENU:** A spread comprising a whole host of baked goods, ranging from old-school butter cakes to traditional French pastries – a *gondhoraj* lemon bundt cake, a nostalgic marble cake, assorted eclairs, a chocolate orange babka wreath, lemon drizzle scones with blueberry compote and clotted cream, and a summer lovin' mango cake.

Inspired by this feeling of longing and love, this spread has been presented by Brun & Babka – an online bakeshop where old school cakes and bakes get a modern makeover with local flavours and impeccable technique, courtesy chef Heena Punwani.

“With each of us living separate lives, even while being locked down indoors, there are just a few times during the day that brings a household together. One of those times is during meals – be it breakfast, lunch, tea-time or dinner. Sharing a family-favourite dish or digging into a little something sweet has the power to make these fleeting moments even more special and memorable. Since socialising with those we live with is our only form of interaction, simple rituals like evening tea have taken on a new meaning and offer some respite from otherwise chaotic and stressful days,” say Sameer Seth and Yash Bhanage, partners at Brun & Babka.



## HOST: Paushtik

**ON THE MENU:** The Kala Goda wrap – an interactive dish in a way of its assembly of it, which includes, well, a wrap using lettuce as a base, sauce, and protein pieces. There's also the Lakadong turmeric (the wonder spice of Meghalaya) milkshake, which can help beat the summer heat. Turmeric works as an antioxidant and an anti-inflammatory and is great for the hair and skin. And lastly, milk masala and chocolate chip muffins with milk masala frosting – because, why not?

This spread, presented by Paushtik – a brand that believes in promoting all-natural, sustainable and locally sourced products, brings together the best of comfort food and Indian spices.

“Food provides a sense of comfort and warmth. So, when we prepare and share our home-cooked food, what we are extending is not just a meal but an assurance that we are right here, if you need anything. Sometimes, actions speak louder than words, and we believe that food is a language as well as a feeling,” say Aashina Kaul and Zainab Burmwalla, founders of Paushtik. 🌱





# ➔ MONTH IN MONTH OUT

MOVIES, ART, BOOKS, AND MORE, HERE ARE OUR TOP PICKS OF THINGS THAT GOT US TALKING THIS MONTH

## THE MUSIC OF TURMOIL

*For his new album, this singer is at his vulnerable and experimental best*

“We live in one of the greatest experiments ever run in the history of humanity. Never has so much been compressed into so little and forced to endure. This album is not about a country, but that experiment called India and all of its people,” says Suryakant Sawhney, aka Lifafa, on his new album, *Superpower 2020*.

He had started work on it in January of last year when he'd moved to Goa with his wife. But even he had not anticipated the monster that the album would grow into. With tracks titled *Mandir* and *Ache Din*, it could be inferred that this is Lifafa's most political artistic expression yet, but he doesn't entirely agree with that assessment. “I certainly have my political leanings, but I would be a very different person if I was



Suryakant Sawhney  
aka Lifafa

truly the political kind,” he laughs. “It is more of a social commentary. For instance, the song *Mann ki Baat* is simply about me observing the relationship between someone who controls and someone who is being controlled.”

These seemingly Indian political references then become entry points to talk about the larger ideas of our social fabric from the lens of philosophy inquiry. He agrees that the album transcends individuals, political leaders, and even nations. But, the decision to exclusively release the album on Bandcamp and Instamojo for three weeks from the release date and to share 50 per cent of its proceeds to various Covid relief initiatives was only natural for Suryakant.

“I certainly thought about it a lot. But ultimately, the purpose of the album and

what it talks about would be defeated if I'd released the album in isolation. The songs are all well and good, but money matters to people,” he insists.

However, that is not all that makes the album unique. Because compared to his previous album, *Jaago*, even technically, *Superpower 2020* was harder to produce, mix, and master.

Although he admits that the album might not seem entirely accessible, he is, more or less, satisfied. “It took me back to my initial songwriting and music production days. The more distorted the sound, the more challenging it is and should be to the listeners.”

By and large, for Suryakant, every album is an attempt to free himself for what he calls the “rat race of commercial music cycles, buying and selling, making money”.

“You look at Kanye West. He might be all over the place now, but he has liberated himself. He can do whatever he wants to. He has reached that stage where numbers don't matter,” he says.

Suryakant would like to believe he has much more to offer to the world than just music – regardless of how much he loves it. For instance, he enjoys reading about quantum physics, and is enamoured by the beauty of chess.

We can only hope that with this album he is one step closer to the liberation he desires.



## PRESS PLAY

*The tunes that deserve a place in your playlist*



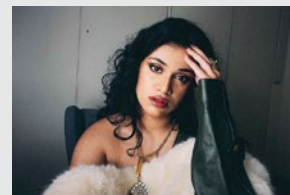
**Bless Ya Heels, Tribemama Mary Kali**

This fun, groovy tune comes with the message that we are more than our physical appearance.



**Wake Up to Your Love, The Auduo**

The young music duo showcases their delightful vocals and mature songwriting on this cool track.



**Wolf, Nikitaa**

The pop/R&B artist channels a bit of Beyonce, soul, and a few childhood fairy tales on her latest single.



# REAPING BENEFITS

*A mother-daughter duo is trying to solve the problem of providing nutritious food*



Keerthi Priya (left) and Odapalli Vijaya Laxmi

It's always heartening to see a small business flourish due to originality and sheer hard work. Nurture Fields is especially remarkable because it was conceptualised and is being run by a mother-daughter duo. Hailing from rural Telangana, Keerthi Priya belongs to an agricultural family. While studying away from home, Keerthi's mother, Odapalli Vijaya Laxmi, used to send her sun-dried vegetables, like tomatoes, to help her cook with ease. This led to the inception of Nurture Fields, and the beginning of the mother-daughter duo's entrepreneurial journey. Today, they employ and provide training to at least 30 local women and source produce from numerous farmers in nearby villages, helping reduce post-harvest food wastage and generating employment for rural women. Last year, the duo was inducted into Project Her&Now's entrepreneurship support programme in partnership with WE Hub, which benefits women entrepreneurs in Telangana, thereby helping them secure additional capital and is now helping them expand operations. We spoke to Keerthi Priya about her journey so far and plans ahead.

**GRAZIA:** What led to the conception of Nurture Fields?

**KEERTHI PRIYA:** I've been exposed to both rural and urban life. From a very young age, I wondered about

the inefficiency in the supply chain and the cost difference between, say, groundnut that we buy in the village and the groundnut that we buy in the city. There's also a lot of food wastage at the field level, especially during harvest because in India the cold storage infrastructure is not up to par, it's maybe 20 per cent lesser than what is needed. The markets and transportation aren't very accessible to marginal farmers. So, what happens to perishable goods when the weather or prices offered aren't sustainable? All their effort, money and resources tend to go to waste.

That is when I started exploring ways to reduce this wastage and convert it into some sort of value-added product. When I lived in Mangalore, my mom used to send me a lot of dehydrated and dried vegetables, like tomatoes. Those were extremely easy to use and nutritious also. When I read up on the market, I found out it's a 90 billion-dollar market worldwide. So, my mom and I started this venture in 2018 on a small scale. We bought a solar drying machine and employed local women in Telangana, and did B2B orders, and put it on a different online channel.

We were then incubated at WE-Hub and was selected for Project Her & Now. This helped us expand and that's when we successfully raised some capital. We will be setting up a factory that can produce 2.5 tonnes per day.

**G:** Has your formal education with getting an MBA and a degree in B.Pharm helped prepare you for the venture?

**KP:** Having an MBA under your belt adds a lot of structure in the way you do things as well as in the way you plan. It also helped me build a network of people who helped guide me in the initial process.

**G:** What made you decide to employ primarily women?

**KP:** I wanted to do my

part in employing rural women. I'm not generalising but I've found you can rely more on women. These women also possess the knowledge and know the intricacies of sun-dried produce since it's a practice they've adopted at home.

**G:** How has it been exploring a professional relationship with your mother?

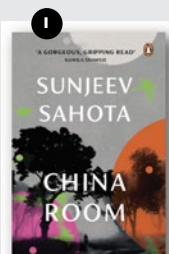
**KP:** It's been good. There are some instances where I can't behave the same way that I would with an employee. But it has its pros where the commitment is even higher, and we're working towards a shared vision and goal. **G**

## On the Bookshelf

### China Room

Penguin Random House India  
Sunjeev Sahota

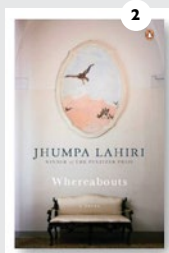
A multigenerational novel of love, oppression, trauma and the pursuit of freedom, inspired in part by the author's own family history.



### Whereabouts

Penguin Random House India  
Jhumpa Lahiri

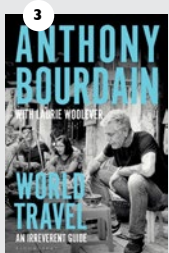
Exuberance and dread, attachment and estrangement: In this novel, Lahiri stretches her themes to the limit.



### World Travel: An Irreverent Guide

Bloomsbury India  
Anthony Bourdain  
ft. Laurie Woolever

Featuring essential advice on how to get there, what to eat, where to stay and, in some cases, what to avoid.



# BIG BYTE

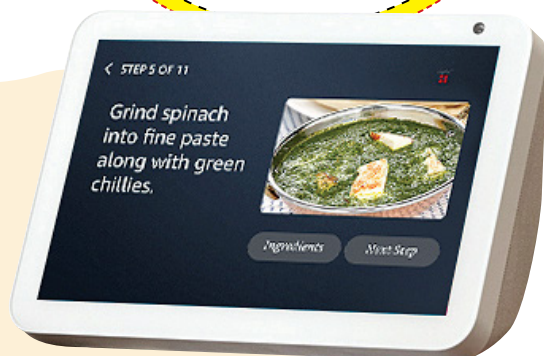
*All the tech we're crushing on this month*

## SAMSUNG AIR DRESSER ₹ 1,10,000

This tech-enabled closet comes loaded with features and multiple options, helping you sanitise and refresh your clothes everyday – especially relevant during a pandemic. It comes equipped with a unique dehumidification function, which helps in keeping clothes in ideal conditions as it draws in air from the room to extract moisture and maintain humidity at an ideal 50 per cent level. It offers twelve cycles geared to everything from suits to any leather to a quick 24-minute steam refresh. There's even a low-heat drying cycle that solves the issue of drying wet clothes, which will come in handy during monsoon season.

## AMAZON ECHO SHOW 8 ₹ 8,999

Your favourite voice-controlled companion, Alexa, gets a new fit through the recently launched Amazon Echo Show 8. This device extends the power of Alexa to people with disabilities. The Echo Show brings ease of use to not only people with mobility challenges, but also those who have low vision, and even people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Being a device powered by voice, not only can you play music, set timers and alarms, or check the news and weather, you can also hear stories, order food, create shopping lists, and even control supported smart home devices like an air conditioner or the TV through voice command.

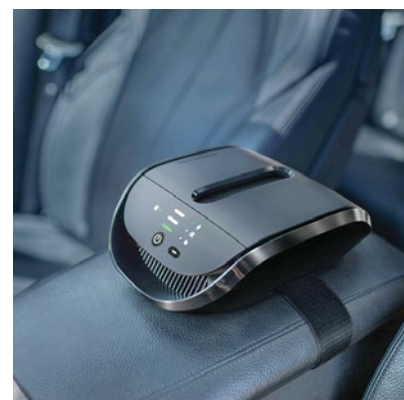


## CLICK AND GROW SMART GARDEN 9 ₹ 19,990

Fancy some fresh fruits or effortlessly grown vegetables? This smart garden incorporates full-spectrum LED grow lights that automatically measures the optimal level of water and light needed for plants and oxygen. It also comes with its own patented 'Smart Soil', which keeps oxygen, water, pH, and nutritional ingredient levels at an optimum for each plant. It even waters itself so you don't have to. In short: If you're a gardening geek, you can now grow your own small patch within the confines of your home. **11**

## ATMOSPHERE DRIVE CAR AIR PURIFIER ₹ 30,000

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