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Europe's No. 1 Style Magazine

GRAZIA

Easy Chic

Volume 15 Issue 4
July 2022



OUR EASY GUIDE
TO LOOKING GOOD
IN THE RAIN

PSA:
It's all
about
that hair
health

**A NEW
PULSE**
6 VISUAL
ARTISTS
EXPLORE
REALITY
THROUGH ART

LET'S
TALK ABOUT
KIARA



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From the EDITOR'S DESK

It's six months into the new year, and everyone's due a timeout. But rather than reflect and reassess resolutions made at the start of 2022, a pat on the back for having made it halfway through yet another rollercoaster year is just what's needed. We're still in a somewhat flux, and checking in with ourselves is the need of the hour.

This July, the buzziest colour of the season (which has taken over the runways and the red carpet) meets the girl of the moment, Kiara Advani, whose films have certain distinct markers, regardless of who makes or stars in them. For starters, they are unabashedly Bollywood. Beyond the song and dance routine, her films make the cash registers ring. In her first cover interview with *Grazia*, the actor talks about the many hues of the film industry, how deeply overwhelming a performance in a film can eventually get and finally, about coming into her own.

Fashion's had a hot pink summer, and for the gloomy, rainy months ahead, we're

relying on this colour *du jour* to add a shot of dopamine to our wardrobes.

The issue is also packed with inspiring stories of individuals clearing the space for themselves: Meet Himachal Pradesh-born mountaineer Baljeet Kaur, who's accomplished an incredible feat of climbing five 8,000-metre peaks in one season and Andhra Pradesh-born aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla, the third Indian-origin woman to travel into outer space.

We've also profiled a new generation of visual artists who do not hold back in their ambitious experimentation and soaring creativity. Spurred on by their personal experiences, they've used their work as a visual bridge to change how we view art.

Until next month. Stay safe.

Mehernaaz



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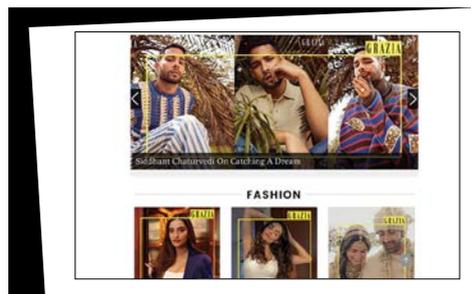
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Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO



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Have you logged onto grazia.co.in yet?

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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Celebs' global spotlight creates resonance and finally getting the grand spotlight they deserve

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Celebs' global spotlight creates resonance and finally getting the grand spotlight they deserve

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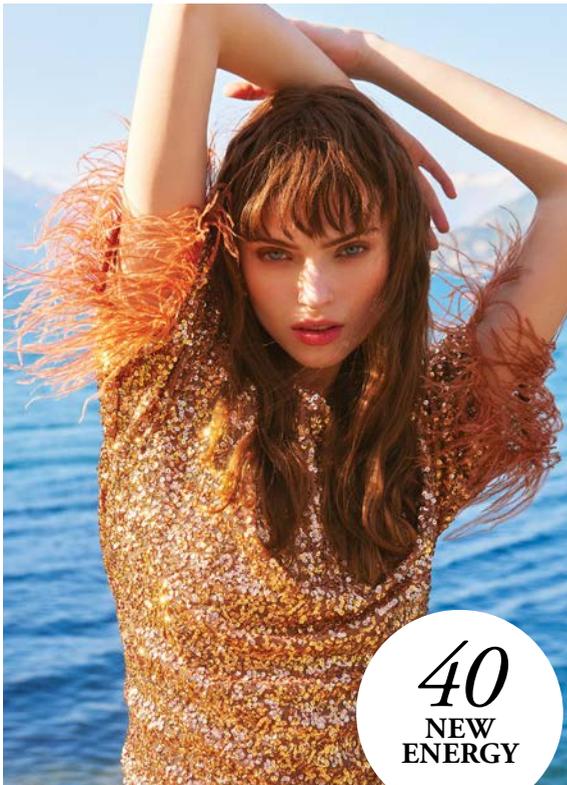
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Europe's No 1 Style Magazine

GRAZIA JULY 2022 VOLUME 15 ISSUE 4



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KIARA is wearing One-shoulder ruffle dress, Malie; heart earrings, brass bracelets, all Radhika Agrawal; knot ring, Azga

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FASHION CHARTS

Your best buys in stores right now



1

PUFF SLEEVE DRESS, ZARA, ₹ 3,990

Embrace fashion's obsession with all things Barbie pink in an unexpected bohemian and airy silhouette. Add a pair of strappy flats to complete the look.



2

ACETATE SUNGLASSES, BURBERRY, ₹ 18,990

This bright pair of sunnies will add some citrusy cheer to your everyday looks. The chunky rectangular frame and matching tinted lenses make a nice variation to your usual go-to black or brown.

3

'G-TIMELESS' WATCH, GUCCI, ₹ 84,089 APPROX



We're big fans of animal-inspired accessories here at the *Grazia* HQ. This mixed metal timepiece with a Mystic Cat surrounded by bees, hearts and stars, which all feature in the house's menagerie of motifs, has our vote this month.



4

DENIM MINI SKIRT, JACQUEMUS, ₹ 28,996

The mini has undoubtedly been S/S 2022's standout piece. Take the plunge with this high-waist bubblegum pink number that's accentuated with subtle orange topstitching.

5



'POPPI' EARRINGS, outhouse, ₹ 14,950

Handcrafted in 22k gold, this pair of statement earrings is the ideal plus one for everything from your classic LBD to a printed co-ord set.



**COTTON BLOUSE,
TRENCH COAT,
PRINTED
TROUSERS,
ALL ALBERTA
FERRETTI, PRICE
ON REQUEST**

Part jungle safari, part city slicker, we've narrowed down on a great layered look for when the weather is unpredictable.

6

7

**RATTAN EMBOSSED
LEATHER
MINAUDIÈRE,
MICHAEL KORS
COLLECTION
₹ 1,44,000 APPROX**



While the basket weave has been a constant in our bag closets – this new minaudière avatar is a refreshing take on the classic material. Go hands-free with this wristlet and your fave printed summer dress.

8

**PRINTED TROUSERS,
MANGO, ₹ 3,990**

Beat rainy day blues with a 70s-style printed pair that will perfectly accompany your oversized Tees and crisp button-downs.



9

**CORSETED BLOUSE,
TED BAKER, ₹ 6,500**

Embrace the playful style of the 90s with this abstract printed corset. Add low-slung jeans, a mini shoulder bag and platform heels to complete the look.



10

**WOVEN ESPADRILLES,
CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN,
₹ 68,780**

While the maison might be best known for its vertiginous heels, the brand manages to translate its signature glamour into these 'Espananou' espadrilles. Wear with all white for maximum impact. 



BEAUTY CHARTS

The best beauty buys we are eyeing right now

1

LOVE BEAUTY & PLANET ONION, BLACK SEED OIL & PATCHOULI HAIR OIL, ₹ 550

Are your Sundays still reserved for champi sessions? You are not alone! We all love it, not just because it is so relaxing, but because our hair has also been reaping the benefits of oil massages. Keeping this in mind, Love Beauty and Planet adds a new hair and scalp oil to its existing Onion, Black Seed, and Patchouli range that helps reduce hair fall and breakage. The oil is paraben-free, sulphate-free, and 100 per cent vegan with recyclable packaging. Thus, being kind to your hair and the environment.



2

CALVIN KLEIN EVERYONE EDP, ₹ 4,700

Today's youth plays muse to the newest CK launch, Calvin Klein Everyone, which takes its inspiration from the fearless new generation who are not constrained by boundaries. The citrus-woody, gender-neutral fragrance houses a vegan formulation that contains 77 per cent of ingredients from natural origins and also naturally-derived alcohol. Thus, continuing CK's commitment to environmental awareness.



3

KAY BEAUTY LIQUID HD COLOUR CORRECTOR, ₹ 799

An underrated make-up product? Undoubtedly, the colour corrector. While we love using a concealer to cover dark circles and blemishes, a colour corrector is what you need to do the job well. It is created to work on different skin undertones and give you a more sculpted look. Thanks to Kay Beauty's latest launch of buildable and blendable correctors in five colours (from peach to lavender) to give you a lifted, even, and glowing base.



4

KIMIRICA GOLDEN JOJOBA OIL, ₹ 599

Facial oils have always been popular, and for a good reason. Massaging oils on your face feels incredibly soothing and gives your skin an instant, radiant glow. Hottest in the market right now: The humble jojoba oil that is known to work wonders even for oily skin. Kimirica's latest launch brings the same potion in its purest quality and is extracted directly from jojoba seeds making it 100 per cent natural, organic and vegan. The oil helps with collagen production and skin elasticity and can also be used on your hair and body.



5

ANASTASIA BEVERLY HILLS PRIMROSE PALETTE, ₹ 6,500

Looking for your entire make-up routine in a palette? Enter Anastasia Beverly Hills' all-in-one face and eyeshadow palette designed for day-to-night looks. This rose-inspired palette comes with rich matte and metallic hues for the eyes and two complexion products – a highlighter and a bronzer for the face. Tip: Use the shade 'Rouge' on the eyes with 'Grapefruit' and 'Saddle' on the cheeks for a warm, neutral look.



Words SANJANA SALUNKHE

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10 HOT STORIES

EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT

1

AT ITS CORE

The internet lexicon is littered with phrases like cottagecore, fairycore, and even bitchcore. Can we navigate these micro-trends, or is it the end of personal style as we know it?

Words **HITANSHI KAMDAR**

It's a familiar phenomenon. You wake up and start the day doom-scrolling through social media. So, of course, a new trend has achieved viral status. Overnight, the world is claiming goblincore is in. Or is it the weird girl aesthetic? Maybe it's clowncore? Does it even matter anymore? What's important is that the internet has written off whatever was cool last week. The increasingly quick nature of trends has given rise to niche aesthetics that, while entertaining, often fall prey to the micro-trend treatment, fading from relevance before you can add to cart.

Subcultures in fashion are not a new phenomenon. Fashion history has many that have influenced trend cycles – punks, hippies, and even new romantics. The only striking difference now is the frequency with how fast these trends sweep across our timelines. "I think the impact of subcultures has always affected the style of the current generation or decades now," fashion commentator Praachi Raniwala says. "But Gen Zers are digital natives. So how they think about, consume, and approach fashion is very different from how millennials do."

While these fleeting trends may tie into our increasingly shorter attention spans, it is worth wondering why these micro-trends that spawn full-blown

CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS



Cottagecore embraces a simpler, sustainable existence

subcultures of their own – think cottagecore or Y2K – capture global attention. Originating from TikTok, these trends have spilled onto other platforms making their way to India, where TikTok doesn't even exist. So how do these niche trends manage to capture global imagination?

ARE WE ALL JUST COSPLAYING?

Fashion, at its core is intrinsically tied to costume. Think about the scores of people wearing leather biker jackets who have never touched a bike, women in pleated skirts and reading glasses channelling dark academia, men in cargo pants, and worker jackets who have never performed manual labour. Fashion is essentially

cosplay. But when it is categorised into specifics, what does that spell for personal style?

"As an observer, I do feel that more people are looking similar," Raniwala says. "In a way, people have almost become clones of each other. Even though there's a lot more confidence and body positivity among Gen Zers, there's a lot of uniformity in how they look." This is evident in numerous Gen Z style icons. Take the Y2K and clean girl aesthetics championed by Bella Hadid, Kendall Jenner, and Hailey Bieber. Closer home, a scroll through the feeds of Gen Z actors Shanaya Kapoor and Khushi Kapoor would show you practically indistinguishable styles featuring a heavy smattering of more Y2K and touches of cottagecore.

The rising problem with trend-cores isn't the lack of personal style but the algorithm's skewed priorities that dictate social media. It filters personal styles and often groups similar



Emily Ratajkowski is a proponent of dark academia

content, so coincidences and small similarities blur together in waves of an aesthetic where everything neutral, deconstructed, or Rick Owens may be avant-apocalypse and all bold prints, dramatic volumes, and whimsical silhouettes, à la Christopher John Rogers, are labelled clowncore. Sonika Phakey, fashion and beauty partnerships manager at TikTok, says a personal style movement revamps niche aesthetics on the platform, “Creators who have a bold personal aesthetic are mixing and matching styles rather than following trends or being attached to a specific aesthetic. You could go as far as to say having no aesthetic is becoming an aesthetic in itself!”

IT ALL GOES BACK TO THE RUNWAY

While these micro-trends can be overwhelming, they help fashion writers and creators make new collections palatable to a broader audience. “Collections have always been categorised into trends because that’s how the public consumes it,” says Raniwala. “Today, it makes its way easily onto the internet because that is where many shoppers get their information. The era of closed-door runway shows or fashion limited to an insider circle is over.”

Additionally, the rise of platforms like TikTok has given way to a wider range of voices and fashion commentators. “The power of the ‘For You’ page means that any creator can build an audience that could easily match the scale of brands, fashion titles, and even style icons using

TikTok. Additionally, because of the video-first nature of the platform, there is a depth of personality, discussion, and nuance within trend commentary and analysis,” Phakey says.

If these trends go back to designers’ collections, does fashion’s cyclical and symbiotic nature mean that these rapidly changing trends influence the design processes? According to Pranav Misra at Huemn, that is decidedly not the case, “The nature of fashion is that it keeps changing, evolving and recycling. We’re not following trends because they come and go; we like to represent and reinterpret whatever is in front of us in our times.” Huemn, whose aesthetic has been labelled androgynous, athleisure, and even streetwear, has connected to the Gen Z zeitgeist despite not consciously playing into specific trends. “That could be

because the brand has always been willing to understand the nerve of the community,” Misra elaborates. “If your senses are open, you’ll always be relevant because you’re going to be reflecting the society around you.”

SENSE OF SELF

Arguments can be made against the vicious cycle of new trends leading to the erasure of personal style and adding to the burgeoning over-consumption problem. But these trends have truly given rise to the validation that you can dress up in any costume representing your self-identity, and you’ll probably find a community for it. The possibilities are endless, and acceptance comes in every style. **11**

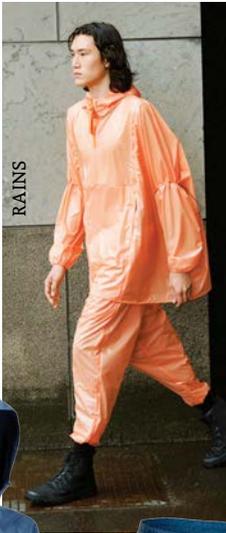


Shanaya Kapoor, Janhvi and Khushi Kapoor living in their Y2K era



Bella Hadid in vintage Vivienne Westwood

RICK OWENS



RAINS

ALL WRAPPED UP
 A childhood keepsake, the raincoat is the ultimate utility cover-up when stepping out during a downpour. There's plenty to choose from – parkas to playful knee-length raincoats, and eclectic coloured rain suits.



HERMÈS



JIL SANDER



Waterproof hooded, Decathlon, ₹ 899

Drawstring trousers, Decathlon, ₹ 699



Cotton blend, JW Anderson, ₹ 1,30,386 approx



Jersey lined, Uniqlo, ₹ 2,990

Flap, Remain at www.farfetch.com, ₹ 32,930 approx



2

RAIN CHECK



TODS

With the monsoon upon us, here are all the wet weather essentials you can stock up on



KOCHÉ

While the dreary weather makes it easy to make up excuses to stay in and default to your pyjamas, we've got you covered (quite literally) with a guide to everything practical yet chic that will help you assemble your monsoon wardrobe. From chic cover-ups to hardworking boots and brighter-than-sunshine umbrellas, you no longer need to worry about rainy day blues.



LACOSTE BCK SZ2 007



Waterproof, Superdry, ₹ 12,999



Logo, Karl Lagerfeld, ₹ 41,377 approx



HAPPY FEET

While your trusty sneakers have served you well, it's time to replace them with a pair of utilitarian gumboots. A forever-favourite for the rainy season, the humble gumboot is equal parts comfort and fashion. Be it a pair of lace-ups or glossy vinyl, they will lift your outfit and spirits like no other.



Water-repellent,
H&M,
₹ 2,699



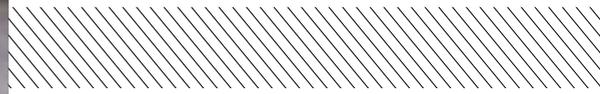
Rubber,
Rag & Bone at
www.net-a-porter.com,
₹ 49,220 approx



Lace-up,
Melissa,
₹ 14,999



Polyurethane block heel,
Truffle Collection,
₹ 7,699



Mini,
Zara,
₹ 1,590



Translucent,
Nuon,
₹ 799



Oversized,
Marc Jacobs at
www.revolve.com,
₹ 19,371 approx



PVC,
MM6 Maison Margiela,
₹ 34,274 approx



UNDER COVER

There's nothing more functional than an umbrella for unexpected rains. There's something for everyone – like basic black for minimalists or hyper prints for maximalists who get excited about the season. [6]



Printed,
Versace,
₹ 25,100

Top handle,
Staud,
₹ 16,433 approx

ARM CANDY

Ditch your everyday tote for something more practical this monsoon. Instead, let a chic PVC bag take center stage as you go hassle-free during the monsoon. Oversized, mini, or crossbody, these splash-proof bags check all the right boxes.

3

STRAIGHT-TALKING

With its myriad of visual possibilities and rich history, it's no surprise that contemporary textile artists showcase the vast differences possible when dealing with fabric, thread, and yarn. Kissa Goi's creative director, Anushri Agarwal weighs in

One only has to go through the geographical indication (GI) tags to appreciate the rich legacy we have been bestowed with. In Gujarat, 13 distinct art forms are GI identified, including and not limited to *patola* from Patan and embroidery from Kutch.

The list is endless, with many art forms from all the states. While these historical crafts and artefacts are tangible reminders of our beautiful past, they also readily serve as proof of concepts. Solid truths are abundant in possibilities – in weaving, embroidery, yarn spinning, and dyeing too.

Like many other artists and designers, we also look to the past for inspiration. And ever so often, during research, we encounter a find that serves immediately or later, directly or indirectly. Just the awareness of this luxuriant heritage can be both a source of comfort and inspiration for the artists. Comfort in the unencumbered availability of skills and craft to draw ideas from and the inspiration to contribute, to add some value to what we are presented with, to our history.

Experimentation with fabric, thread, and yarn allows designers a sense of distinction and differentiation. The play of the warp with the weft and the multitude of yarns brings to the foray an art limited to visual and tactile sensibilities. Silk. Cotton. Silk plus cotton. Wool. The colours of the yarns only brighten the composition



Anushri Agarwal



Kissa Goi's narrative driven wearable art inspires conversation

further. Changing just the form of the weave allows the same yarn to birth fabrics in different textures and strengths. Its beautiful how the math does and doesn't add up.

We started out exploring threads with a singular base fabric – linen. Over time, we have also incorporated *kala* cotton and organic corduroy in our latest edit. Though the urge to step up, explore and do things differently served as primary drivers to explore these new fabrics, it was not the only factor. The increased access also helped us connect with the weavers and embroiderers and the skills they have so carefully perfected for generations.

FINDING REACH

The widespread adoption of social media

has helped us reach out to artists unavailable earlier because of distance, inconvenience, or ignorance. Likewise, contemporary textile designers are now benefiting from the increased access and making the most of this proliferation through collaborations with not just other designers and artisans but also scientists to develop yarns that combat pollution or fabric that is technologically fitted and meshed with wires woven into it. The latter includes denim jackets that track your Uber's location and tracksuits that can bathe your body in infrared light for better muscle recovery and relaxation.

Globally too, there has been a trend towards backward integration. Be it the joy of discovery, the itch of curiosity, or the legacy of the lockdown, we are now more inclined to dig deeper into our roots to not only source, embroider and stitch but also paint, weave and knit, ideally, with yarn from recycled ocean plastic or upcycled banana peels. We feel we are in the middle of a collective consciousness to create harmony and, just as importantly, an ever-present mental note not to flood the existing market. Almost a low-key revolution or a start to one that will make history and preserve it. **||**



Eco-conscious fashion with a story in every weave

4

GLOBAL LOCAL

Gaurav Gupta's avant-garde couture creations are finally getting the grand spotlight they deserve



Megan Thee Stallion on the Oscar red carpet



Gaurav Gupta



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan



Cardi B wears Gaurav Gupta in a music video

GG's Amporphous Shapeshifter gown in her music video remix of No Love. “[stylist] Kollin Carter came and saw the dress and wanted to add on – so we decided to custom make it.” He’s not always sure if the short-listed dress will finally get the outing it deserves. “It’s a mix actually – when you’re custom-making, there is a bit of awareness – but there will be a bunch of brands doing the same thing. Eventually, you leave it there, knowing you’ve done your best to make it happen.”

While Cannes was a big moment with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan taking over the red carpet in the GG Venus Sculpture gown, Gupta lets us in on the fact that he set up a showroom suite at the famed Martinez Hotel, a practice followed by global luxury brands since many seasons. Working alongside Bose, his creations found their way onto a diverse clientele – Italian actress Catrinel Marlon, who wore an emerald Shell Sculpture gown, actor-YouTuber Liza Koshy, who picked a 3D archival couture piece and also Indonesian actress Raline Shah.

While making sales is always the end game of celebrity dressing, Gupta is aware that it takes time for a brand to be known and settle in, specially in the global market. “I’m handling a massive business in India and all its functioning. Global couture clientele and expansion via global stores will happen in time.” For all his plans, as of now, Gupta is one of the few Indian labels in which a business house hasn’t acquired a stake. “It’s too early to say. I think corporatisation is healthy and good – it’s long due, and I’m glad it’s happening in a structured way. Creating business needs infrastructure.”

Country of Honour at Cannes was a badge India didn’t wear lightly this season. Global best-dressed lists were buzzing with Indian celebrity names, and Indian designers also found their spot on these hallowed lists, particularly those whose whimsical, sculptural styles have found many global celebrity fans. From the Oscars to the Grammys and, most recently, the Time100 Most Influential People gala, the Gaurav Gupta Couture label has had a busy season on the red carpet.

Global GG couture sightings started in 2019 before the pandemic brought the red carpet to a big halt – rapper Saweetie at a 2019 pre-Grammys party, former Miss Universe and actor Olivia Culpo at the 2019 Miss Universe pageant, and Wyclef Jean at the Grammys in 2020 got the buzz going. “People had started noticing the brand at that time,” says Gupta, whose innovative move of working with Maison Bose, a Los Angeles-based luxury communication consultancy firm run by entrepreneur Hema Bose, also a friend of Gupta’s from Central Saint Martins, paid off. “When I signed on Gaurav, I wanted to start with a bang. I wanted everything we did to be fresh and exciting, a surprise of sorts. I told Gaurav that he could not repeat and

that all creations had to be an evolved version of him,” says Bose, a London College of Fashion alum, whose extensive fashion resume includes work with Alexander McQueen and Julian McDonald. Gupta says that with Bose, the duo made a selection based on the award seasons or film festivals of note coming up and put together a line-up that included archival GG couture pieces. “Every dress has a process and a different story. There’s a strategy in place about who we aim to dress,” says Gupta, a sentiment echoed by Bose, who takes on the mantle of being a brand architect and ensuring consistency with all placements.

NEW TERRITORY

Gupta says he’s never seen so much press around a dress when Megan Thee Stallion (styled by Eric Archibald) made an appearance at the 2022 Oscars in his GG Fantasy Biomorphic gown. “For me, it was like Halle Berry and the Elie Saab dress – A-listers on the red carpet in Louis Vuitton and Dior, and then your name is right next to that. Next thing you know, you make it to the best-dressed lists, the stars and stylists reach out to us, and it’s a snowball effect.” Jennifer Hudson was next in a gold vintage-inspired GG ensemble for the 2022 Producers Guild Awards in LA. Cardi B followed it up in



Mary J Blige in a mint green GG gown; Catrinel Marlon in the Gaurav Gupta Emerald Shell Sculpture Gown

5

SOUND CHECK

Is virality choking the music industry?

Ishita, a Mumbai-based acoustic singer-songwriter with an alternative sensibility, has spent the better part of the last two years writing a unique collection of songs for an album she hopes to record soon. But, her sound has been deemed “too isolating” by established record labels that are not keen to take a chance

on an artist whose music may not necessarily be marketable on social media. She believes that Instagram’s rapid growth, especially with the introduction of Reels, has influenced what we listen to and stream, making new artists think that they can’t do without it if they want a music career.

“I don’t believe in selling my music on Instagram but suddenly it has become primarily about that. I’ve been told by major record labels that in order for them to sign me on, I’d have to be willing to create a viral moment with my music. And if it doesn’t quote-unquote work, it puts you in a real mindf**k of thinking. Suddenly it’s not about who you are as an artist but what you’re willing to sell on social media. It’s taken a toll on my self-worth,” she says.

In the past few months, there’s been a sudden shift in the music industry, which has now made musicians beholden to the algorithm set by social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Recently, singer Halsey claimed that their label wouldn’t let them release a new track unless it came with a viral moment, setting social media alight with a conversation about the way TikTok has taken over music marketing. This claim was backed by other musicians like Florence Welch, twigs, and Charli XCX.



Music labels are now convinced by the viral success that video-sharing platforms produce. Universal Music India saw signs of this back in 2018 and has been tapping into trends ever since. For frontline releases, labels have actively looked at video-sharing platforms not just as promotion vehicles but also as integrating influencers and, in some cases, even features from platforms into music videos. “There are also trends of catalogue tracks getting exposed to a new, younger audience as they re-surface on video-sharing platforms and end up getting consumed on streaming platforms. These are great signs of labels not only being convinced of but actively participating in short-video platform trends,” says Shantanu S Gangane, vice president, marketing at Universal Music India and South Asia.

NEW TUNE

Audio has become a significant catalyst for culture and trends on Instagram Reels. The connective tissue for most trends may be lip-syncing, transition, or challenge-focused. Some of these audios may be music from top artists, labels, or production houses, who release their music and have a Reels amplification strategy around it. The song *Kesariya* from the upcoming Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt starrer, *Brahmastra*, is a good example. While the song hasn't launched, its promo was released around the time the actors got married and has over 394,000 Reels created with it.

Paras Sharma, director, content and community partnerships, Facebook India (Meta) says that some music used may be original audio, which could be dialogues, covers, or original songs released on Reels and then become trending anthems for social content. Aditya A is a good example here, whose song *Chand Baaliyan* is the tune used in over one million reels. “He's a singer with a medical background and is a pathologist, and while he made the song a couple of years ago, it got picked up by people a couple of months back, in their Reels, including by Bollywood celebrities,” says Sharma.

The now go-too Reels feature on Instagram is giving retro music a new lease on life. For instance, *Aankhon Mein Base Ho Tum*, from the film *Takkar*, released in 1995, has been used in over 1.4 million Reels.

“The unique part about Reels is the discoverability it offers. It is a growing global stage and the best place to be discovered

for people and brands. This has led to a new generation of short-form video creators showcasing their talent, irrespective of where they're based, and acquiring a following across India,” says Sharma.

It's safe to say that music is a catalyst for trends on Instagram today. Established players – labels, artists, artist managers, movie makers, and emerging artists – are using it to promote their work. For many, the number of Reels created and the views on them have become the new metric for success for artists.

The pressure to create music that will form part of a content creation catalogue is something Ishita is not on board with. “I'd like to think that my music has depth and nuance. If it can't form the background score to a hook step on Instagram, does it not matter?” she says, adding: “Social media, for me, has long been another arm of my general art practice. It's another form to play with alongside music and visuals to further my point. Demanding more of it, giving briefs (viral trends), laying the blame on the artist for not doing enough or following said briefs to reach major mass audiences (likes and follows) erodes the very fibre of what the artist set out to do with their work in the first place.”

Sharma, on the other hand, believes that Reels are the new form of entertainment. Much like Explore, most of what you see is from accounts you don't follow. “So, we go through a very similar process where we first source Reels we think you might like and then order them based on how interesting we believe they are to you.”

The most important signals, roughly in order of importance, according to Sharma, are your activity, your history of interacting with the person you posted, and information about the Reel and the person who posted.

CULTURE WAVE

Music is a creative tool that enables expression. It's the currency used to propel trends and those that do well have a high number of plays and Reels created with it. In the last year, for instance, the top songs used in reels in India were *Raataan Lambiyan* (from the movie *Shershaah*) by Tanishk Bagchi, *love nwantiti* (feat. Dj Yo! & AX'EL) [Remix], by CKay and *Tu Milta Hai Mujhe*, by Raj Barman.

In a bid to give Reels a fillip, Instagram launched #1MinMusic – a new music property that comprises a set of music tracks and videos



It's all about creating a viral moment on Reels, with existing music forming the background score to various challenges

exclusively available on its platform for use on Reels and Stories, including music from 200 artists across the country, like Dhvani Bhanushali, Neeti Mohan, Shaan, Himanshi Khurana, Anirudh, and GV Prakash Kumar. “It will make your Instagram content more entertaining and inspire other artists to release their one-minute music on the platform as well,” says Sharma.

However, from a music label's perspective, launching a song to the audience is still a 360 effort, especially in a vast and diverse country like India. “It is essential to get the story of the artist and the song out there to the core fans and ensure maximum sampling. Different audience sets are glued to other mediums and react accordingly. Traditional mediums like radio, TV, print, OOH etc., will continue to play a role in sampling. In the last few pandemic years, we have seen newer audiences and platforms create a footprint in the digital universe. So, we take a holistic approach with an objective of far and wide sampling and do not overtly concentrate on creating a trend,” says Gangane. ■

Corded bracelet.
Outhouse.
₹ 6,500



Drop earrings.
Azga.
₹ 6,500



6 CELESTIAL BODIES

It's time to add a cosmic twist to your jewellery rotation

For S/S 2022, designers are looking up (quite literally) for jewellery inspo as crescent moons, shooting stars, and constellation-inspired designs made their way onto the runways and the high street alike. Often, these motifs are associated with luck, love, and protection so what better justification for buying new baubles with guiding or uplifting forces? Whether you glean deep and insightful meanings from celestial jewellery or enjoy the playfulness of a star, moon, or galaxy-inspired piece, these talismanic pieces are a reminder always to look up and ahead. **11**



SCHIAPARELLI



Metal earrings.
Radhika Agrawal.
₹ 3,500



Lapiz ring.
Isharya.
₹ 3,990



Opal and 18k gold
charm.
Harwell Godfrey.
price on request



Rose gold pendant.
Swarovski.
₹ 8,950



Mirror detailed
earrings.
Ritika Sachdeva
₹ 4,900



Hoop earrings.
Shop Lune.
₹ 4,950



Diamond and 18k rose
gold ring.
Rosa de la Cruz,
price on request

LANVIN



Label ALERT

7



Bring in the monsoon with celestial jewels and bright co-ord sets



IF YOU LOVE: A mix of vintage and modern India.
THEN YOU WILL LOVE: Khajoor Studio.
WHO: After receiving a bachelor's degree from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Jaipur-born designer Muskan Soni worked closely with different crafts clusters and design houses before starting Khajoor Studio in 2021. Soni's love for people, places and art has translated to artistic and artisanal semi-formal wear for the modern woman. The label aims to

connect India's rooted crafts with edgy modernity, anchored by art and emotion.

WHY: A juxtaposition of contemporary folklore expressed through textile craftsmanship with minimal yet striking pieces, focusing on hand knits and prints. The label works with artisanal crafts of India, using ethically sourced raw materials and employing eco-friendly techniques.

WHERE: @khajoor.studio on Instagram.

PRICE RANGE: ₹ 3,500-12,000

WEAR: Easy-going and trans-seasonal styles in hand-drawn prints with resort shirts, relaxed trousers, monochrome printed co-ord sets, and bucket hats adorned with delicate hand details. The vintage botanical prints are hand-block printed by the skilled artisans of Bagru, Rajasthan, with eco-friendly and azo-free dyes on cruelty-free, vegan silk fabric.



Compiled by PASHAM ALWANI



IF YOU LOVE: Reinvented classics.

THEN YOU WILL LOVE: The Loom Art.

WHO: Pearl Academy alumni Aarushi Kilawat, who also holds a specialisation in print textiles and fashion styling from Nottingham Trent University, believes that machine-made clothing can never replace the love and hardwork that is reflected in a handmade piece. This idea serves as the driving force for her label. Born from her love of handloom and her admiration for art, The Loom Art focuses on reviving old authentic craft techniques and generating a platform of employment for locals while bringing handloom back in style.

WHY: The label works on reviving ancient hand embroideries like *kantha*, *phulkari*, *sujni*, and cross-stitch, giving them new life via modern silhouettes. Also recently launched, TLA Jewels is an extension of the beliefs and ideologies of The Loom Art. Each piece of jewellery is carefully created with traditional handcraft techniques. To keep the essence of the brand and promote sustainability and longevity of every piece, they even offer to re-plate the jewellery so that you can treasure the pieces forever.

WHERE: www.theloomart.com, Aza, Ogaan, Tata Cliq Luxe.

PRICE RANGE: ₹ 2,000 - 25,000

WEAR: Shibori and block print boxy yet comfortable silhouettes with dainty jewellery inspired by celestial objects and everything in the sky. 🌌





Baljeet summited Mt. Annapurna I (8,091 metre) on April 28 and Mt. Kanchenjunga (8,586 metre) on May 12

8

IN THE HEIGHTS

Himachal's Baljeet Kaur became the first (and only) Indian to climb five 8,000-metre peaks in a single season in March 2021. She takes us behind the scenes of this incredible feat of human grit

Words **ANAND SINGH**



Baljeet Kaur

“**N**ever measure the height of a mountain until you reach the top” – this adage has rung true for Himachal Pradesh-born mountaineer Baljeet Kaur throughout her young but incredibly eventful mountaineering career. “They think Everest is the toughest to climb because it’s the tallest, but I don’t agree with that at all. No matter how small, it’s still a mountain you’re about to climb. All you need to do is put your head down, strap on, and enjoy your ascent,” says Kaur, recalling the beginning of her 8,000-metre journey back in 2016 – the mythical Everest.

To her and many young mountaineers who join the sport with stars in their eyes, scaling Everest is almost an initiation ritual. “It’s like you’re almost conditioned to it since you start dreaming about climbing mountains. To us

(the Indian Subcontinent), a person will never be a ‘real’ mountaineer unless they’ve climbed Everest. It’s funny but true – every young kid wants to start right in the belly of the beast.”

THE HIMALAYAN DREAM

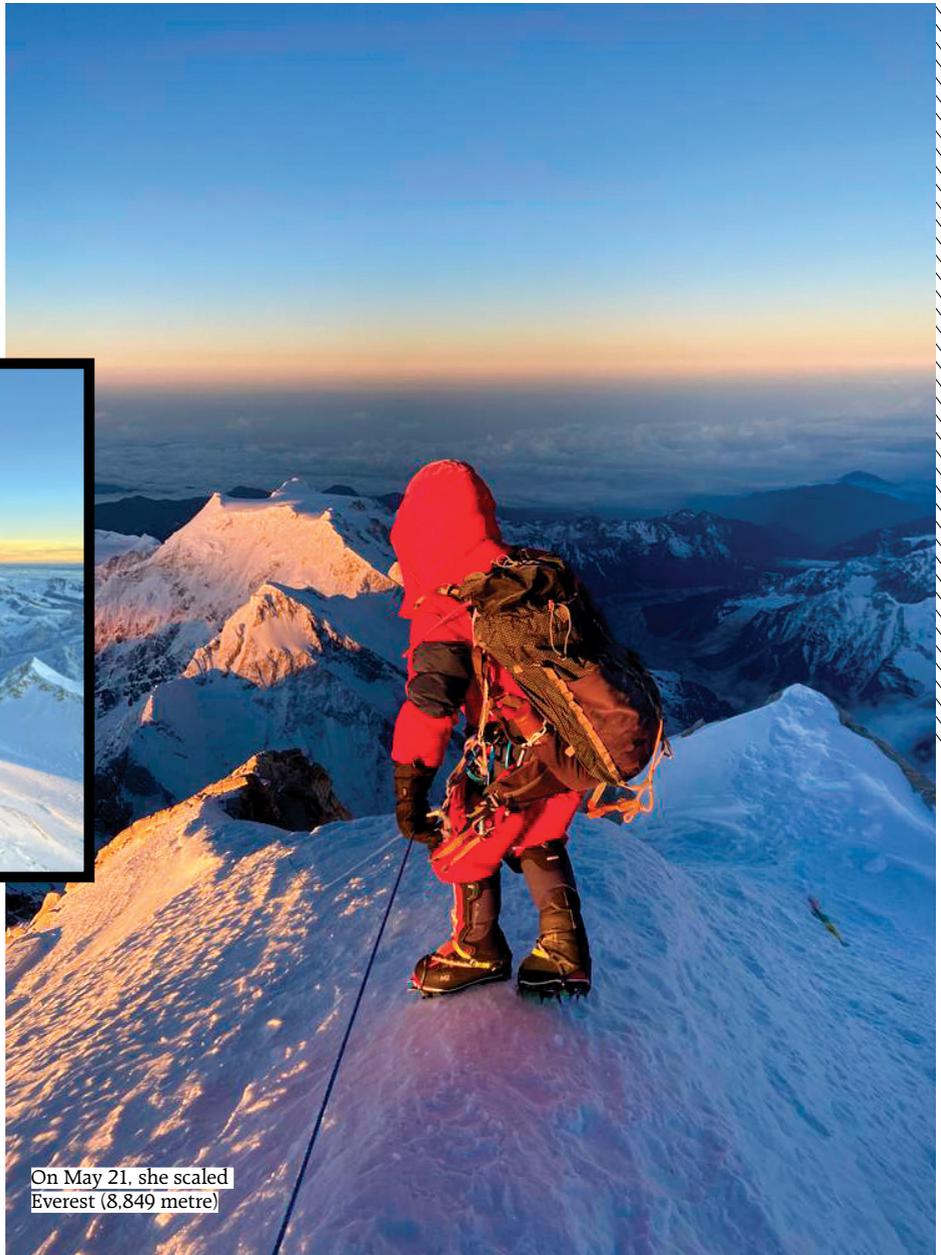
As a little girl, Kaur always wanted a unique present from her parents each vacation – to see snow. Her village Mamligh, near Himachal’s Solan, was once known for its tender winter snowfall, but climate change had been robbing the place of this beautiful experience for decades. Determined to fulfill her wish, Kaur’s parents drove her to Shimla each winter in search of snow. However, she wouldn’t encounter snow until much later in her life. “I remember waking up at 3.30 in the morning to catch the snow, but it didn’t snow anywhere. It was like I was doomed never to see it. It was much later that I realised why

this was happening.”

She finally saw snow over a decade later at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, which was everything she had hoped for. “It was just a basic training camp, but it was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. My childhood dream finally came true. That solidified my resolve in myself and my dreams of scaling the highest mountains in the world. The next stop then was Everest.”

THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED

Kaur spent the better part of 2020 and 2021 stuck in Delhi, the country’s coronavirus contagion epicentre. She recalls being trapped inside her house with zero to no supplies and a weakening resolve – an experience she



On May 21, she scaled Everest (8,849 metre)

“wouldn’t wish on anyone. I was questioning everything. It almost felt like I had chosen the wrong career and, by extension, the wrong life. I finally started coaching people and conducting online strength training sessions to make ends meet.” As fate would have it, helping people train with their bodies helped Kaur get in touch with her mind and re-evaluate. “The sessions saved me in more ways than one. I was able to support myself financially, and at the same time, I learnt the true importance of internal, self-sustaining motivation.”

After months of regular indoor training, she finally decided to give the fabled eight-thousander series a try. “I had a renewed love for the sport. That’s when I decided I wanted to do as many eight-thousanders as possible in the next season. The next step was to start high-intensity training to prep for it.” Another reason for Kaur’s much-awaited return to the mountains was how foreign and desolate her adopted metropolis had started to feel. “The only thing I knew for sure was that I belonged in the mountains. Delhi is a great city, and you’ll find everything here, but it just didn’t feel like home. I could spend a couple of months, maybe even a year, here, but it’s not where I belong. I can only live in the mountains.”

The reason for this, Kaur believes, is the city’s strikingly evident disconnect with nature and everything it entails. “Where I come from, everyone knows everyone. So we believe in being as close-knit as possible with each other and the mountains. It’s like we belong with them, and they belong with us, people who love and care for them like nobody else.”

RIGHT FOOD FORWARD

According to Kaur, this same disconnect and blatant disregard toward nature stop several mountaineers from advancing in their careers. “It’s like people bring this arrogance with them in their backpacks, the same arrogance that has taken cities so far away from nature. They treat it like a competition – who’ll fold first, them or the mountain? How can you ever win against a mountain? The only way to climb one is to respect and become one with it.”

Kaur’s journey across the Himalayas has been incredibly liberating yet alienating simultaneously. Doing the kind of expeditions she does, it’s hard to find a fellow woman climber. While this makes her conscious of her limitations, there’s nothing a fresh perspective can’t solve. “I look at it this way: I have to handle my periods and a thousand other things on these expeditions that the men don’t. Yet, we almost always climb at the same pace. It makes me feel like I can keep

up and even do better than them if I put my mind to it.”

Kaur’s advice to young climbers is succinct: Be aware. “You must be fully aware of your mind and body during a climb. Always look for oxygen because the first thing you lose when you lose oxygen is brain function. If you’re climbing up and struggling too much, pause, maybe even go down to regain some oxygen. If you’re coming down, push for a couple more kilometres and get to a place with more oxygen. Most of all, know when pushing your limits is brave and when it’s foolish.”

As for the media, Kaur believes that the attention that the sport gets needs to change drastically if we are to encourage young climbers to explore it. “We need to start reporting all achievements and not just Everest ascents. Secondly, we need to start reporting them the right way. Mountaineers have incredible stories to tell, amazing secrets of human grit and determination that they’re dying to share. Give them a chance.” **LI**



Sirisha Bandla

DEFYING GRAVITY

Andhra Pradesh-born aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla talks about the future of commercial space travel and her pioneering work in the field

We, as a species, decided half a century ago that the sky was no longer the limit by leaving footprints on the moon. Ever since, space research has seen ungodly advances and reached miraculous new heights, albeit under the reign of a handful of governing bodies. Commercial space travel aims to dilute some of this federal control and give the sector what it desperately needs today – social democracy.

FLIGHT OF FANCY

Andhra Pradesh-born aeronautical engineer and the third woman of Indian origin to travel to outer space, Sirisha Bandla, explains why it's the need of the hour. "It's all about gaining perspective. Travelling to space can help more people see for themselves and understand how fragile our planet really is and why we need to band together."

Bandla made news recently as the fourth

name on the short list of Indian women in space. She travelled with Virgin Galactic's Unity 22 – an orbital spaceflight where she conducted an experiment with The University of Florida. Bandla believes her journey from Guntur (her hometown in Andhra Pradesh) to Virgin Galactic (and ultimately to space) began when she was a young girl. "I remember researching the careers of all the Apollo astronauts and enrolling for flight training as soon as I found out that's what they did. I remember taking flight lessons before I could drive."

Apart from the usual suspects, what fuelled Bandla's passion for space travel were two sci-fi landmarks – *Dune* and *Star Trek*. "I loved both films because they're extremely cool, and the characters were so rich and diverse. I saw people, who look like me, solve problems in outer space while looking cool doing it; remember Michelle Nichols?"

For context, Nichols is a African-American actress who played the role of Uhura – a linguistics expert on one of the earliest iterations of *Star Trek*. "She even worked with NASA to recruit more people of colour after quitting the show. How cool is that?"

THE SISTERHOOD OF SPACE

Apart from her pioneering work in space policy with Virgin, Bandla also actively supports fellowships that offer young women a chance to work with some of the world's leading commercial space companies. "All these fellowships have a clear goal – selecting a group of 30 talented women from the same batch to come and work for the biggest companies. This way, all these girls have someone to rely on while navigating these boardrooms where they wouldn't otherwise find too many women."

Bandla believes commercial space travel has the potential to help boost these efforts and give women of colour and several other minorities a chance to explore a new frontier finally. "Commercialisation eliminates the tedious procedures you would need to go to space. That means we can send more flights, carrying more people to space. Politicians, artists, writers and musicians, each with a new perspective to bring back to their communities."

To her, the promise of commercial space travel goes well beyond what's currently receiving attention and towards a deeper, more humane cause that stands to change all our lives. "What fascinates me the most is being able to conduct regular experiments in space, with the best of the best observing them in real-time. Of course, simulating Zero-G helps, but it's just not the real deal. With actual space travel, the possibilities are endless." **FI**



Silk,
Dior, price on request



Abstract,
Fendi,
price on request



EMPORIO ARMANI

10 DOUBLE DUTY

Say hello to S/S 2022's hardest working accessory

For breezy beach outings and bad hair days alike – the printed scarf has been a perennial fashion girl favourite. As temperatures soar, designers have carefully worked on this simple square fabric and introduced several iterations, including 90s-style scarf tops (to be worn with OTM minis), chic granny-style head accessories, and neckties knotted for an easy everyday look. 📌



SALVATORE FERRAGAMO



PARIS STREET STYLE



PARIS STREET STYLE



Cotton blend,
Accessorize,
₹ 1,299

VERSACE



Silk,
Gucci,
₹ 15,401



Silk,
Gabriela Hearst,
₹ 30,802 approx



Linen,
Polo Ralph Lauren,
₹ 7,830



Dual print,
Zara,
₹ 990



COMING INTO her own

From dreaming about the kaleidoscopic world of films as a child to understanding how it's not always dreamy – Kiara Advani's Bollywood is many worlds into one

Photographs **TARAS TARAPORVALA**
Fashion Director **PASHAM ALWANI**
Words **ARMAN KHAN**

Knit maxi dress, **Massimo Dutti**, ₹ 6,490; crystal vest, **431-88**, price on request



“It's hypocritical to praise actors who otherwise play a grey shade and then criticise them when they play a grey shade of a regular character”

here are certain things Kiara Advani remembers: How she felt dancing to the hits of Madhuri Dixit, running around in the house with her mother's dupatta and being the heroine that she wanted, the endless learnings that came after *Kabir Singh* was received with polarised reactions, understanding the nuanced shades of love over the years, and knowing that she cannot possibly be a people-pleaser.

A Kiara Advani film has certain distinct markers, regardless of who makes or stars in them. For starters, they are unabashedly Bollywood. Beyond the song and dance routine, her films make the cash registers ring.

But what happens after the lights have gone down and the dreamy streets of Mumbai seem less than welcome?

“There are times when certain lows can get to you,” she says. “We're all human, after all. But the only way I know how to deal with these episodes is not to indulge them. When you're in the public eye, you have to not focus on the noise at all.”

Indeed, much can go wrong when an actor focuses on the noise, often without meaning. Since her debut in the 2014 film *Fugly*, Advani's fan clubs from Turkey to France are as mesmerised by her as she was by Madhuri Dixit's dance moves.

And then came *Kabir Singh* in 2019.

Things would never be the same, for better or worse.

SHADES OF A WOMAN

First came the op-eds. Then the awkward press conferences, followed by Advani getting mobbed wherever she went. Her fans couldn't believe what they saw on screen. And her critics pounced on her with the jaw strength of a mean alligator.

“Her character is more problematic than *Kabir Singh's*,” one editor wrote. “Does she have no agency at all? Why would she be this demure girl who lets the man run over her,” wrote another.

“As an actor, wouldn't you always want to be versatile? I don't think I can let my judgements come in the way of any character that is grey? If I play a murderer in my next movie, does that make me one? It's hypocritical to praise actors who otherwise play a grey shade and then criticise them when they play a grey shade of a regular character.”

Advani clarifies that she does not believe her character (Preeti Sikka) in *Kabir Singh* “tolerated” his toxic masculinity and other problematic traits that originated from it. But there is indeed a lesson or two that she learned about the legacy of Bollywood and its own toxic, one-dimensional relationship with the portrayal of love on screen.



Lace bra, **Hunkemöller**, ₹ 2,795; printed satin bandana tie up shirt, shorts, both **Kefi by Nida**, ₹ 4,500 and ₹ 2,500, respectively; chain link necklace, textured hexagonal bracelet, twisted enamel bangle bracelet, charm bracelet all **The Loom Art**, ₹ 1,400, ₹ 1,200, ₹ 3,200, ₹ 4,000 and ₹ 3,000 respectively; pendant necklace, **Tribe Amrapali**, ₹ 1,240; stackable rings (for a set of three), **Azga**, ₹ 2,350; strappy heels, **Jimmy Choo**, price on request



Printed jacquard bandeau, ruffled skirt, both **Shivan & Narresh**, price on request; textured hoop earrings, textured bangle, handcrafted bangle, all **Tribe Amrapali**; ₹ 3,610, ₹ 9,170, ₹ 1,545; chunky chain link bracelet, **Radhika Agrawal**, ₹ 3,000; coil ring, **Kichu**, ₹ 1,545



"Love has always been perfect and aspirational for Bollywood," she says. "In *Kabir Singh*, she left him after he raised his hands on her. And if she came back to him in the climax of the film, which was necessary, then that shows that love often supersedes everything else, and all relationships are complicated. The only thing that will lead you to forgiveness is love. So, in a nutshell that's *Kabir Singh* for those who resonated with the film and me."

Despite everything, Advani looks back on the experience as a time that permanently transformed her. She understood that there was only so much she could do as an actor. Her childhood trait of always wanting to ensure everyone around her was happy and comfortable received a major jolt, and she wasn't complaining.

"After *Kabir Singh*, I didn't know whether to focus on the love from audiences or this completely different reaction. So I immersed myself in work and moved on."

Her next project, which started production immediately after would be the polar opposite of Preeti Sikka. *Guilty*, produced by Karan Johar for Netflix, involved a boyfriend, too – accused in a #MeToo case. But Advani's character was oceans apart from Preeti. "I'd coloured my hair white," she recounts. "And I was in this grunge, chic look. I remember telling my director (Ruchi Narain) that no one will even recognise me anymore in public."

Between *Kabir Singh* and *Guilty*, Advani absorbed the many hues of Bollywood, how deeply overwhelming every film can potentially get, and the many ways things could go south. But, in her case, things didn't spiral. Instead, cinema would always nourish her. She only had to be careful.

NUANCES OF CINEMA

Relationships fail. And they fail disastrously. Advani says she's acutely aware of the same. Her recently released film, *Jugjugg Jeeyo*, shows us the range of the modern relationship – falling in love, getting married, and the inevitable divorce.

"If Bollywood shows us filmy romance, then even that filmy romance must have its fair share of complications," she says. "Our relationships are not perfect because we are not. Every

“After *Kabir Singh*, I didn't know whether to focus on the love from audiences or this completely different reaction. So I immersed myself in work and moved on”

“I also want to entertain the 80-year-old person as much as entertaining the 10-year-old child...so, why must all our films be so nuanced and niche?”

relationship takes effort – you have to work on it and nurture it.”

Advani takes a deep breath when she says it. I don't want to probe her about her relationship status or analyse who she was papped with and whether any of her films have been autobiographical in some ways. However, there is indeed some truth to what she has to say. The multilayered examination of sexual harassment and its murky intersection with love and infatuation, shown powerfully in *Guilty*, was never picked apart the way her orgasm sequence in *Lust Stories* or her demure looks in *Kabir Singh* was.

But as the French director François Truffaut, the great romantic, once wrote: "Today, I demand that a film express either the joy of making cinema or the agony of making cinema. I am not interested in anything in between; I am not interested in all those films that do not pulse."

Do Advani's films pulse?

The box office numbers certainly concur. But does she envision her film getting screened in the grim corners of a London subway? Or bootlegged by the shadows of the night in places where Bollywood is just another fancy synonym to hate? The gatekeepers of cinema have always come at her, diluting what Bollywood can do, squandering its potential to bring about meaningful change, and widespread opening dialogues on female agency, politics of the body, and life itself.

What is the burden of cinema, of Bollywood?

"In a country like India, how do you reach out to someone going to a PVR multiplex and an autorickshaw driver in Gaiety? I also want to entertain the 80-year-old person as much as entertaining the 10-year-old child," she says. "So, why must all our films be so nuanced and niche?" ■

Lace bra, **Hunkemöller**, ₹ 2,796; ruffled dress, corset belt, both **Gucci**, price on request; dangling enamel necklace, **The Loom Art**, ₹ 3,500

Assisted by (styling) **NISHTHA PARWANI, NAHID NAWAAZ**
 Make-up **LEKHA GUPTA/VINIYARD FILMS**
 Hair **GABRIEL GEORGIU/ANIMA CREATIVES**



Decor Courtesy **FREEDOM TREE DESIGN STUDIO, NICOBAR**. Carpet Courtesy **JAIPUR RUGS**

Life theⁱⁿ

ABSTRACT

A new generation of visual artists is changing the way we view art

Words **BARRY RODGERS**

We live in a time when personal happiness has become a non-negotiable priority; when envisioning and choosing the story we want to live takes precedence over constricted notions of obligation. Using symbolism to narrate their ideas, today's new crop of contemporary visual artists do not hold back in their ambitious experimentation and soaring creativity. Successfully building careers in the creative field is just one of the ways that the younger generation defies the odds – they are artistically expressing themselves in unimaginable ways, using social media to promote their talents to the world, and securing representation in the process. Spurred on by their personal experiences, including struggles with mental illness, childhood, and relationships, these artists use their work as a visual bridge to channel their emotions into pieces to be shared with an audience.

THE POWER OF IMAGERY

Hailing from Bhilai, Chhatisgarh, and residing in Bengaluru, visual artist, and content creator Gourab Pal uses perspective techniques to create a realistic impression of depth and present disorientating images. Although he trained to become an engineer, Pal wanted to break free. So, he started exploring the visual medium with photography. The creative work he delves into, where he gives new life to discarded images that expose his intimate thoughts, fears, and hopes, is inspired by artists like Ben Zank, Gelyo Concepcion, and Tom Williamson, among a host of others.

"I always believe in learning while creating. So, I started experimenting with my art in lockdown when one of my friends introduced me to processing codes and creative coding. It seemed quite interesting," he says. At the time, he was also introduced to artists working primarily on generative art, which draws inspiration from modern art, especially pop art that heavily uses orderly geometric patterns, like Tim Rodenbroker, Daniel Shiffman, and other coders.

With social media giving way to information overload, Pal believes that most people now decide what to read from the images they see. "It's the visuals that help viewers decide whether they want to read words. So the responsibility for image-makers to deliver is huge at the moment. I think our role is not just to reflect the time but also to have a stand," he says.



"It's the visuals that help viewers decide whether they want to read words. So the responsibility for image-makers to deliver is huge at the moment"



SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

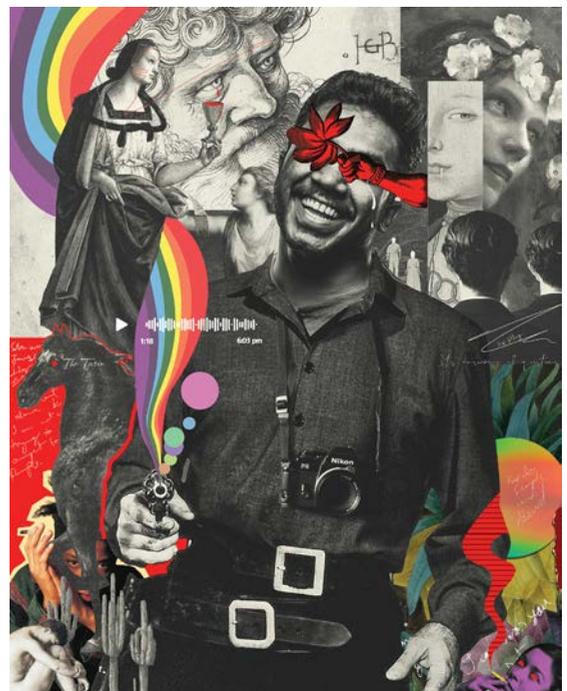
As a teen, Bengaluru native Prashanth C would spend hours creating fan-made poster designs for regional actors. Later, he found his niche in fashion retouching and started working on making it a full-time career, which he has pursued for seven years now.

But, the past two years have afforded the visual artist time to start working on his personal projects, shifting his interest to surrealism and collage art – in what he describes as an endless canvas where he has the freedom to play around with creativity. "I've been studying the history of the Dada movement (an art movement formed during the First World War in Zurich in negative reaction to the horrors and folly of the war) and Surrealist Manifestos. Neo-Expressionist artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, who changed the face of contemporary art, has been a huge inspiration."

Using surrealism as a tool has helped Prashanth ask a primordial question, "why not?". "Why shouldn't one object sit with another in a painting, or why shouldn't a pencil that I paint be larger than the child holding it? It helps me cope with and perceive the absurdity of life itself. This became an important medium of expression for me after losing my father and sister to Covid. There's no inherent logic to life or death; it's what one makes of it. So why must art alone inherently be sensible?" he says.

He concurs with Oscar Wilde when he says, "all art is quite useless," and perhaps "the only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely."

"There's no inherent logic to life or death; it's what one makes of it. So why must art alone inherently be sensible?"

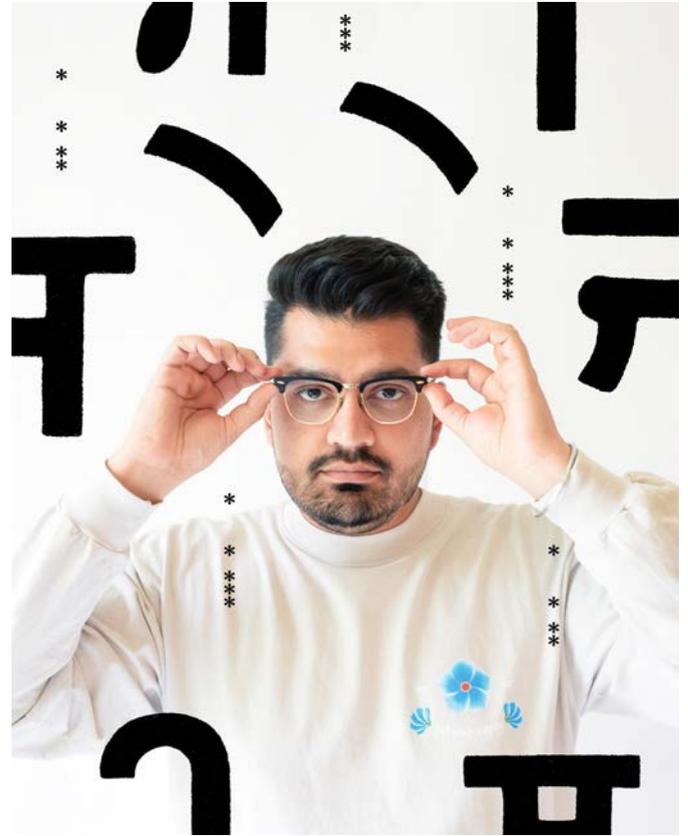


CREATING AN IDENTITY

Serendipity is important to Jessie Sohapul, whose work is heavily influenced by his experience as a first-generation born into a Punjabi immigrant family and raised in Canada. Meeting new people, walking into a new gallery, or simply coming across a new magazine at the bookstore can spark new ideas for him. “This became difficult during the pandemic, so I actively made sure to dig deeper into my book collection as well as into online digital archives for research and inspiration,” he says. Sohapul tends to use black and white as his colours of experimentation. His current chosen medium is markers and acrylic paint.

Sohapul actively documents the south Asian experience through audio-visual and typographical mediums and finds himself preoccupied with the idea of future nostalgia.

“I find my inspiration from graphic design, street art, streetwear, and of course, my roots. Street art has this rawness and boldness to it. And when mixed with a ‘do what you can with what you have’ attitude, you get interesting results. So I strive to incorporate this approach into my process. And I try to think of the context of where my work will live. What changes if it’s in a gallery, on a wall outside or a T-shirt, and how would the space impact the work?”



“What changes if it’s in a gallery, on a wall outside or a T-shirt, and how would the space impact the work?”

LIFE IN COLOUR

Mumbai-born graphic designer Anushka Tendolkar lives by the phrase “A jack of all trades is a master of none, but often better than a master of one” and has always made an effort never to get too comfortable with just one skill or medium. “I started my creative journey with the basic pencil and paper, which evolved to digital 2D illustrations that further evolved to dabbling with 3D illustrations as well,” she says.

Despite working with different styles, her biggest inspiration and a common link that binds the work she does in her day-to-day life experiences. Tendolkar’s work is packaged with a lot of colour and vibrancy. Interesting typographic work also forms the base of inspiration for form explorations. She says: “I’m a big fan of good typography that I can find even on a regular trip to the supermarket”.

Tendolkar admits that Instagram has played a pivotal role in her journey as a designer. “Over the past 7-8 years, I’ve made great progress with my work. I’ve collaborated with brands like Adobe, KFC, Kyoorius, made NFTs, had my collection of T-shirts designed in collaboration with a streetwear brand, exhibited at some known galleries for listed events, and worked with multiple start-ups. It’s been surreal,” she says.

“A jack of all trades is a master of none, but often better than a master of one”



TRUE STORY

Mumbai-based artist Anand Radhakrishnan always knew he wanted to tell stories. So it was only natural then that he decided to shift from science to art early in his career. Influenced by anime, heavy metal music, and comics, he decided to delve deep into the genre with a clear focus on French animation and comics and 60s American illustration.

Comics drew him in because of the economy of the medium, where his love for drawing and storytelling came together organically. "For the first few years of my career, the skill was more of a priority for me, and the work I was doing was more executional; that has been changing recently. As I complete more projects, I am starting to design my own and focus more on the authorship of ideas and stories. I am slowly pushing towards working on my projects full time," he says.

In 2021, Radhakrishnan became the first Indian to win a Will Eisner award, popularly touted as the Oscars of comic books. His award came in the Best Painter/Multimedia Artist (interior art) category for his drawings for Ram V's graphic novel *Blue in Green*, which deals with themes of ambition, the pursuit of genius, depression, and the loss of a loved one.

But he makes an interesting statement when asked where he finds inspiration for his craft: "I don't consciously look for inspiration anymore; these days, I try to focus on specifics. A particular way of handling the medium or an interesting way to treat a subject. I reference a lot for my work, and this has, with time, become an integral part of my image-making and storytelling process. This referencing could be anything from going out and taking pictures of a certain type of foliage that grows in an unchecked area during the monsoon season to someone sitting at the bus stop in an interesting pose. I also reference other creatives, films, and books while writing for a new project or drawing a new graphic novel, especially if I am stuck with a specific problem," he admits.



"I don't consciously look for inspiration anymore; these days, I try to focus on specifics"



"Trusting my unconscious mind and mistakes gives my work more direction and uniqueness"

NEW DIRECTION

Twenty-four-year-old NIFT graduate and new age textile artist, Akash Patwal has been engaged with pushing the boundaries of what can be considered a textile, as well as bridging the gap between textile medium and abstract art. "My mind likes to connect dots, and my eyes are good at noticing things that run parallel to my aesthetic," he says. Patwal's personal experiences and the experiences of people around him give direction to his work, while the visual sensation of the daily chaos that engulfs him adds texture to it. "Trusting my unconscious mind and mistakes gives my work more direction and uniqueness," he says.

Patwal believes in giving the usual a very unusual approach to creating newness to the vision of society. "The work I've created for *Grazia* revolves around creating a cultural cyborg, combining digital and handmade techniques; notice how the *zari* thread, which is traditionally used in fabrics like brocade and embroidery like *zardozi*, has been used to create a crochet mesh upper-body vest along with digital body modifications," he explains.

His Instagram account, Walking Vertical, contains a heady mix of abstract forms, shapes, intricate details, and colours, giving rise to vibrant abstract imagery. "I'm constantly looking to create and question. I believe that surrounding myself with creative minds has pushed me toward perpetual evolution," he says. ■

A new future

Where you get the most – and the most out of – colour this season. Four professionals in the natural dyeing industry tell us why democratised systems need to be the future

Words **RIYA JAIN**

The exuberance – the impact of colour, has always been reflected in Indian textiles. But, clearly, the greatest delight, brightly coloured and printed Indian-origin textiles, were exported in high quantities by the European East India companies pre-Industrial Revolution. And if we may take the liberty to say so, even added “fashion” to the wardrobe of the common European.

Colour turns the mood of summer, moves clothes right into the city night or a working day, and into another season. Fashion’s strongest stimulus for consumers is that it strikes you before fabric, fit, and feel. However, neon-bright chemical-laden concoctions discarded into rivers, ever-deteriorating work conditions and, more often than not, poverty line wages are the true cost of the season’s brights in fashion’s synthetic dyeing systems.

Frequently suggested as an alternative, natural dyes on an industrial level introduce their own set of pollution problems. Mostly green-washed

for the buyer, natural dyes in untraceable supply chains are often fixed with chemical mordants. Counterintuitive mass production systems need to be democratised for real impact. So, how can smaller localised setups go about democratising fashion’s dyeing systems?

REWIND

From hair to fabric, dyeing in India has a plant-based history. Sisters Juhi and Janhavi Vyas of the label Akané combine amorphous shapes and sophisticated colours in hand-dyed floral prints through eco-dyeing forged leaves, bundle dyeing flowers and tie-dye techniques like *shibori* with plant-based pigments. The brand takes its sustainability badge seriously through naturally dyed slow fashion.

Tesu: Flame of the forest flowers, lac, *catechu*, *madder* root and *sappan* wood may sound unrelated to fashion, but they’re now as familiar to the sisters as thread and needle. “Earlier, *tesu* flowers were used to make pigments for holi, and



Madder root is one of Akané's favourite dyes to work with

madder root was found in Ayurvedic medicine. Lac is a resin widely used for bangles," Janhavi explains. "It's about going back in time and evolving the use of plants,"

Based in Mumbai, Akané is challenging both the notion that lasting dye jobs must be from synthetic industrial systems and that natural dyeing systems must exist only rurally.

REFLECT

"Who made my clothes?" – this is a question we all need to be asking brands and ourselves. Most 'sustainable' tags are industrial surface-level-good-behaviour on untracked skill outsourcing. However, from raw material manufacturers and skilled labour employers down to brands, transparency at every step seems more attainable in smaller setups.

"Where is everything coming from? There's attention to detail in localised setups," Juhi explains. "Where are the fabrics coming from, the dyes and the flowers? Are people happy making these products?"

RE-ENGINEER

Artisans and garment workers in India and across the globe saw drastic pay reductions or job losses as fashion brands cancelled large orders since the pandemic hit. As a result, millions living on poverty wages were left in desperate situations – unable to pay for basic needs such as food, water, and shelter while stranded in cities with no means of transportation.

With the pandemic highlighting the extreme difficulties faced by this group, it is essential to re-engineer systems. "Bengaluru is now a corporate city where ecosystems of craft people can very easily dissipate," says Padmini Govind of Tharangini – Bengaluru's oldest block-printing studio.

The way to prevent this collapse? "Pay the artisans well, give them private medical insurance, paid leaves, everything they get at a corporate sector otherwise, they would not be able to afford to be a full-time artisan in a city like Bengaluru. It's an expensive city."

RECOGNISE

Technically a democratised system is all about finding an ethical balance. However, fundamentally it's about recognising the unrecognised and celebrating their contribution.

Tharangini Studio creates printed textiles with pure, natural plant-based dyes and discharge printing using natural plant resins. "We've been keeping the same metric of using natural dyes before it was a hashtag on Instagram," Govind explains, before comparing with a smile: "And now there is a value and validation attached to this, which we're happy about."

Finding her greatest ally in digitisation, she also points out how traceable production chains connect the artisan to the consumer. "Visually, they see who's wearing their work, so it is an exciting moment; they get a rush out of it," she adds. It is a story of who they are and the story of the work they do, just like tangible monetary corporate profits.

RE-EVALUATE

As a wearer, an array of emotions wrap a garment with a readable backstory, like the comforting blanket of sea breeze in the summer of love. The "provenance of things" holds great value in Govind's opinion. "It's nice to showcase



Nila House in Jaipur embodies artisans in its business model

“In village-owned producer and community groups, skill and technique can be retained because the ownership remains”



Soft silks, tender textures and soothing colours at Studio Medium

the provenance of who we are by connecting to our local craft ecosystem of Bengaluru,” she adds.

“At the end of the day, all human hands are making your product. There is no intervention from automation or a machine,” underscores Govind. Localised setups allow discussions on the feasibility of the design, so you don’t go too far into the process and realise the design doesn’t work. Beyond the economic savings, it’s about the respect rendered to the skill.

An advocate of “no hierarchy” setups, she believes viewing herself as “only a facilitator” in the business, her job to mesh the ideas of designers and brands with those of the artisans at her studio is better executed.

Riddhi Jain Satija of Delhi-based label Studio Medium also points out how “an international acceptance and demand arises out of a regard for the process (natural dyeing), the materials, the aesthetic, and because it’s sustainable.”

RECONSIDER

American poet Ezra Pound rightly said: “Technique is the test of sincerity, if a thing isn’t worth getting the technique to say, it is of inferior value.” The scale of localised setups permits close connectivity for skill transfer without compromise.

“The dyeing technique is the inspiration,” says Anuradha Singh, the head of Jaipur-based Nila House, working extensively with indigo. “What needs to be done with that technique is help put it in context with what today’s consumers want.”

“In village-owned producer and community groups, skill and technique can be retained because the ownership remains.” She points out that when the ownership remains, artisans see the value of the skill they hold both – nationally and internationally.

RESCALE

“You can’t industrialise natural dye. It’s a very slow, patient, beautiful process that

takes time. So you can’t just do it in large quantities, which makes it sustainable,” explains Singh. And in economic terms? If you hyper localise, you create small community-driven industry systems that self-sustaining within each other.”

Apart from metric value, the ‘reach’ of skill can be rescaled too. A few days back, the picturesque Nila House space played host to a group of Ladakhi women creating beautiful weaves with yak wool that loses its original texture in contact with synthetic dyes. Referencing their seven-day natural dyeing workshop, Singh says: “The industry needs work on knowledge exchange and training among communities.”

RETAIN

It is only human to measure profitability in ‘stable financial income channels’ and ‘well-being through growth.’ If one sees another fail, cognitive frameworks are alarmed by the risks. Younger generations in artisan families

Tharangini Studio believes in people and planet-first fashion



A dyeing job in progress

“You can’t industrialise natural dye. It’s a very slow, patient, beautiful process that takes time. So you can’t just do it in large quantities, which makes it sustainable”

methods to transfer colour, in other cases, they stick to the use of alum, myrobalan seeds and iron to keep the water completely toxin-free.

“It’s something as simple as soap,” reveals Singh of Nila House. “Traditionally, systems like ours use *aritha* (soap berries) in our washing process.” From the pre-processing of fabric to post-processing, everything need to be “all natural so the water can go right back into the ground.”

Chemical mordants are the most divisive material in natural dyeing. If fixed with chemical mordants, natural dyes do not fare much better on the controversy scale. “Avoiding chemical mordants allows us to recycle all our water in-house,” points out Govind of Tharangini.

The slowdown philosophy is essentially at the heart of sustainable production: Focusing on artisanal skill, collaborative and traceable local supply chains, fair wages and aware sourcing of raw materials. Along with reducing water consumption and eliminating chemical use, a democratised system can marry earth-friendly to fashion-forward. **ff**

have witnessed business models dwindle on a lack of market demand.

The cost of design education in India is also an often neglected but crucial barrier. “Kids from artisan families usually end up in BA and BCom courses due to the fee structure of design institutes,” she points out. A more accessible and inclusive model of design education can create a space for the younger generation of artisans to hone market adaptability to their generational skills. Nila House has instituted a scholarship for artisan kids willing to pursue design careers.

REGENERATE

We’ve all considered the carbon footprint of our clothes, but what is the water footprint? Coined by Arjen Y. Hoekstra, in simple words, the water footprint is the quantitative utilisation of fresh water in the production or



Khadi cotton gender neutral shirts plant dyed at Akané

supply of goods and services by a particular person or group.

“Synthetic dyeing systems result in effluents reaching water bodies that animals often drink. It’s also very toxic for people working with them closely over prolonged periods,” explains Juhi Vyas of Akané. “With natural dyes, you have a chance to be responsible for how the water will end up.”

While most of their processes use steaming

NEW ENERGY

Studded suits, fringe dresses and playful extras are everything you need to outshine your wardrobe this season

PHOTOGRAPHS **KAREL LOSENICKY**
STYLING **ANNA SGURA**





Corset dress, silk skirt,
sunglasses, all Gucci



Printed ruffle silk dress, embellished earrings, both **Giambattista Valli**; thong sandals, **Aquazurra**



Fringe mini dress, Kaos Jeans



Feather mini dress, Carlo Pignatelli; belt, Benedetta Bruzziches; sandals, René Caovilla



Georgette wide shoulder dress, **Pinko**; velvet headband, **Beatriz**

Printed swimsuit, Yamamay; blazer, Genny; acetate sunglasses, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello; hair pin, Sodini
The beauty idea: For the body, Réponse Soleil Sun Protection Milk Spf 30 includes a special filter that protects cellular DNA from free radicals and Photo Aging (Matis, In Institute).





Metallic bikini, Oserée;
embroidered cape,
Luisa Spagnoli; round sunglasses,
Chloé; charm necklaces, Dodo



Lace dress, Atelier
Emé; leather
flip flops, René
Caovilla



Embellished bikini, **Calzedonia**; silk shirt, **Intimissimi**; glasses, **Swarovski Eyewear**; crystal necklace, **Swarovski**
The Beauty Idea: Also used as a sunscreen, Multi-Action Anti Aging Body Cream combines super softening rosehip oil with slimming and draining actives, **Élève**

Sequin feather
dress, Naracamicie

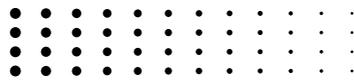




Sequin dress, Nicole Milano; silver necklace, Giovanni Raspini

Make-up: RACHID at PRODUCTION LINK AGENCY using Armani Beauty Lip Power
Hair: MIMMO DI MAGGIO at PRODUCTION LINK AGENCY using milkshake

Casting: SIMONE BART ROCCHIETTI at SIMO BART CASTING
Model: RINA GLADKOVA at MONSTER MANAGEMENT



Fringe knit blouse, Zara.
₹ 3,990



Zip up bag,
Forest of Chintz.
₹ 15,000

Fringed dress,
Bottega Veneta.
₹ 1,29,08,695
approx



DRIES VAN NOTEN

A BOHEMIAN DREAM

A permanent mainstay on the runway, fashion's favourite aesthetic – boho – is back. The vibrant style has now gone beyond its carefree and hippie status to a more focused version of all things escapist

Junior Fashion Stylist **NISHTHA PARWANI**



Fringe trousers,
Lisa Vong Tang at
www.farfetch.com.
₹ 26,049 approx



Checked
fringe skirt,
Mango.
₹ 5,990



FENDI

FRINGE BENEFITS

Going beyond a simple frayed edge, the return of the retro fringe is not for the faint of heart. From floor-length maximal dresses with car-wash-inspired fringe or finer 40s Gatsby-styled dresses, the consensus is common: The more exaggerated the fringe, the better.



N°21



PACO RABANNE



Crinkled weave. H&M.
₹ 2,999



Printed. Forever New,
₹ 5,200



CHLOÉ



Knitted.
Self Portrait,
₹ 39,151 approx



ETRO

MAXIMISE ME

While our barely-there minis have served us well, it's time to embrace the maxi skirt, which can be worn with just about anything. From solid shades in sleek styles at Altuzarra to abstract printed, flowy styles at Chanel, the runways had one clear message: Maxis will be the hardest-working piece you own. Pro tip? Opt for a printed ankle-skimming skirt paired with a print clash blouse, plus your fave hoops and strappy heels, and you're good to go.



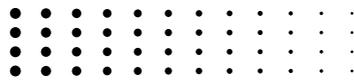
CHANEL



ALTUZARRA

A-line.
Marks & Spencer,
₹ 3,499

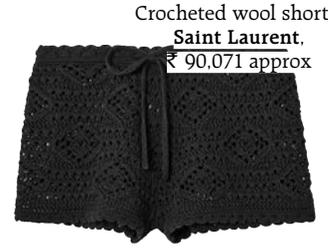




ALBERTA FERRETTI



Crochet blouse, Preach Crochet, ₹ 1,850



Crocheted wool shorts, Saint Laurent, ₹ 90,071 approx



Crochet dress, Arket, ₹ 10,181 approx



Crochet trousers, Calle Del Mar, ₹ 77,901 approx



GABRIELA HEARST



Multicoloured vest, Artsy, ₹ 1,850 approx



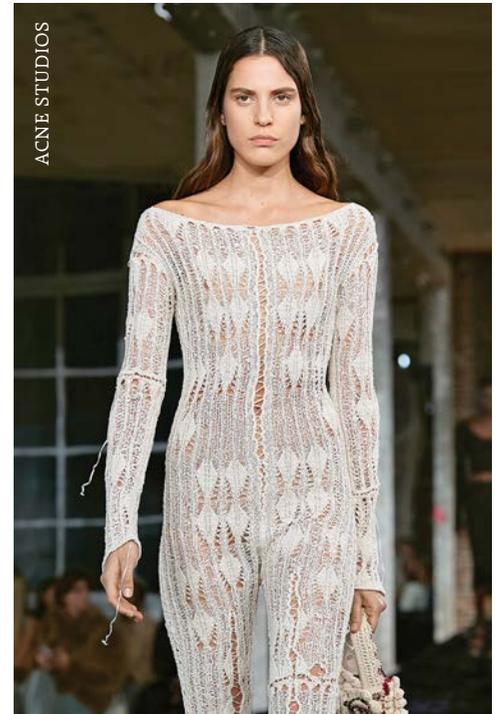
ANNA SUI

CLOSE KNIT

We're partial to anything hand-knitted, and the rediscovered colourful style of the 70s has our vote. Equal parts chic and eccentric, crochet is a fail-safe staple for your vacation repertoire. Think bold patterns, intricate designs and everything whimsical that can easily double up as an after-beach option over your bikinis.



Crochet bag, Bottom Drawer Crochet, price on request



ACNE STUDIOS



Tie-dye blouse, **Essgee.**
₹ 4,250



Tie-dye trousers, **Essgee.**
₹ 4,950



Mesh cardigan, **H&M.**
₹ 1,299



ALL THAT SHE LOVES

COLOUR ME HAPPY

With the fun-loving swirl of colours gaining momentum yet again, it's time to skip the solids and snap up that surfer girl vibe, no matter where you are. Straddling the line between neon and sorbet hues, we're obsessing over tie-dye everything this season. Take your cues from Jason Wu's uber-luxe co-ord that works double duty, or go the psychedelic grunge route with a shirt dress as seen at Marques Almeida.



Tie & dye cover-up, **Cult Gaia.**
₹ 49,018 approx



MARTIN CROSS



MARQUES ALMEIDA



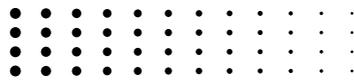
Tie-dye shorts, **Alemais.**
₹ 36,470 approx



JASON WU



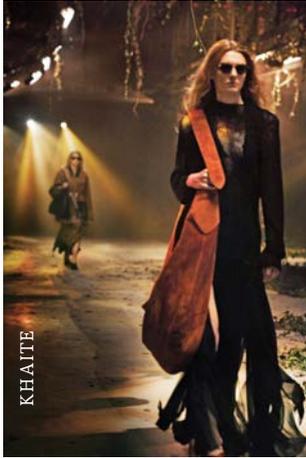
Tie-dye crossbody bag, **Stella McCartney.**
₹ 1,36,084 approx



Top handle, Marni.
₹ 2,15,423 approx



BALMAIN



KHAITE



ISABEL MARANT

Leather, Steve Madden,
₹ 7,499



Crossbody, Baggit,
₹ 2,290



Handcrafted, Jaypore,
₹ 6,995



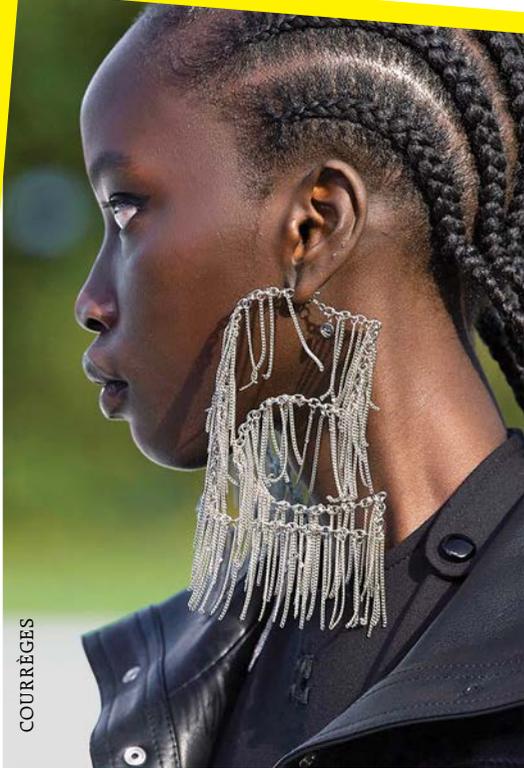
ARM CANDY 2.0

With just the right amount of slouch, the humble hobo bag is making a comeback on the S/S runways – and what's better than a bag that can *literally* do it all? Perfect for a nonchalant summer soirée with the girls or your daily errand runs, slouchy bags tick all the right boxes as the ultimate 'it' bag.



REJINA PYO

COURRÈGES



Crystal tassel bracelet.
Outhouse.
₹ 19,250



Tassel necklace.
Hrisha Jewels.
₹ 4,500



KNWLS

TASSEL TOWN

Like most of our 90s throwbacks, the charm of tassel and beaded jewellery conjures up memories of our carefree summer holidays. However, 2022 sees a new whimsical approach to tasselled jewellery. From Giorgio Armani's statement beaded necklace to Courrèges shoulder-grazing earrings, one thing's for sure – maximalist tassel jewellery is the only way forward this season.



Silk tassel earrings.
Valliyar.
₹ 5,500



Beaded tassel earrings.
Shrimps.
₹ 17,131 approx



KRONTHALER WESTWOOD



GIORGIO ARMANI



Fringe necklace.
Olivia Dar.
₹ 4,800

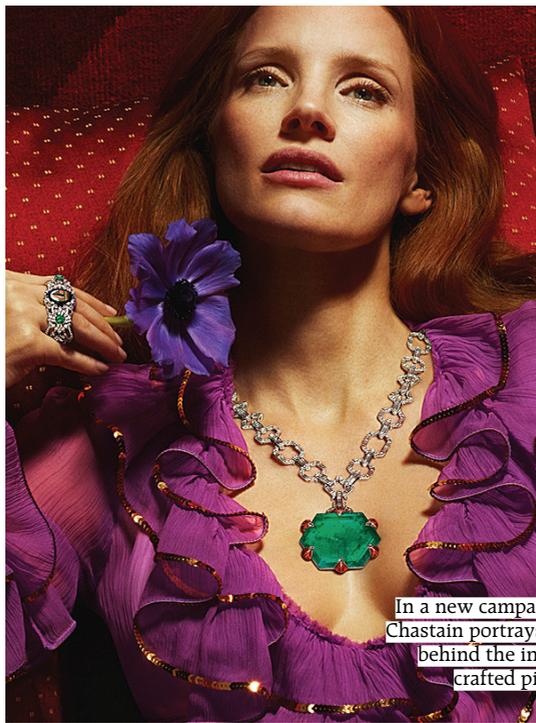
ON THE
STYLE
RADAR

The House of Gucci is back with its latest high jewellery collection. Launched for the first time in 2019, the third installment of the collection, 'Hortus Deliciarum', explores an "imaginary Grand Tour" through the medium of high jewellery. Designed by Gucci's Creative Director, Alessandro Michele, the collection is divided largely into five themes and consists of an array of necklaces, rings, and more. From designs influenced by the middle of the 19th century up to 1970, Gucci describes the collection as creating a "memory of memories."

In the 19th century, the Grand Tour served as a coming-of-age rite-of-passage for young men who toured all across Europe with a chaperone to mark them turning 21. Michele drew inspiration from this and used micro mosaics to pay an ode to that era. Since Rome used to be the ultimate destination of

GARDEN OF DELIGHT

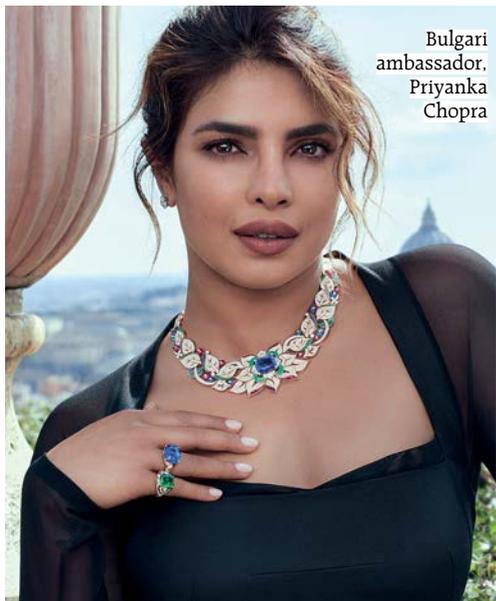
Gucci's latest high jewellery launch reimagines the Grand Tour



In a new campaign, Jessica Chastain portrays the stories behind the intricately crafted pieces

the Grand Tour, the jewellery pays homage to the same by depicting the Colosseum, Pantheon, and more. The collection features a glittering medley of stones like tourmaline, diamonds, peridot, opal, et al. Similarly, the second theme takes inspiration from the Maharajahs of India between the

magnificence of the eclectic architecture of the royal palaces and lush nature of the gardens. Michele's storytelling comes to life in this high jewellery collection. They have roped in Oscar-winning actress and long-time Gucci patron Jessica Chastain for the campaign.



Bulgari ambassador, Priyanka Chopra

WELCOME TO EDEN

Bulgari's high jewellery collection is the stuff of wonders

Bulgari's latest high jewellery collection is truly one for the books. While the Garden of Wonders remains the running theme this year, Bulgari unveiled the collection comprising 140 breathtaking pieces at a 2-day event in Paris. Even before the collection's launch, its campaign quickly became a fan-favourite on the internet as it starred Anne Hathaway and Zendaya featured.

The new collection is one-of-a-kind and

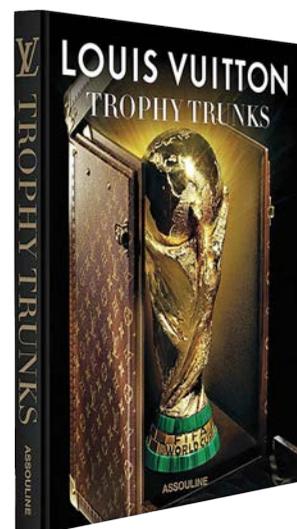
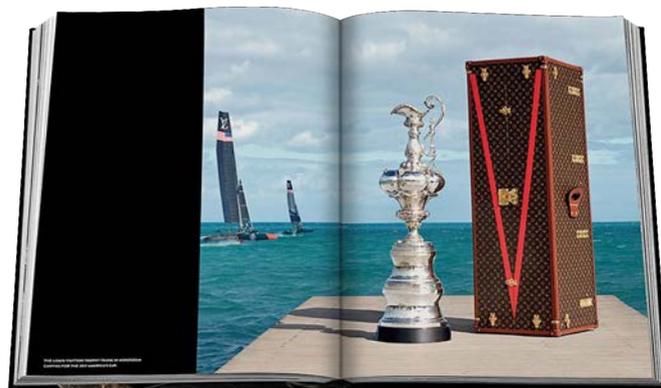
features at least 30 pieces that solely focus on emeralds which shows in the Flowers of Eden necklace comprising blossoms made of oval-shaped emeralds in mother-of-pearl inlay. However, the Mediterranean Reverie, which grabbed eyeballs at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival when Anne Hathaway wore it, is truly the pièce de résistance. The necklace is truly extraordinary, with a rare 107.15-carat cushion-cut Sri Lankan sapphire.

AMID THE CHAMPIONS

Assouline and Louis Vuitton come together to tell the story of sport and savoir faire

Synonymous with luxury, Louis Vuitton has set the standard for unparalleled craftsmanship for decades now, not just in the world of fashion but a whole lot more. For over three decades now, Louis Vuitton has been creating custom cases for trophies for some of the most iconic sporting events across the globe. From the clay courts of Roland Garros to the high-paced world of Formula One, Louis Vuitton has been known to create the most eye-catching cases for events.

Along with Assouline, they are narrating the story and the history behind these trophy cases in the new book, "Louis Vuitton Trophy Trunks". Each trophy case made at the maison of Louis Vuitton is unique. Created by skilled artisans at the atelier in Asnières, France over 400 hours, each case is a



testament to the art of creation and features unique touches inspired by the sport itself. A prime example of this is the trophy case created for Roland Garros, the French tennis open, which comes with a terracotta interior that symbolises the clay courts. And it's not just sports like tennis; Louis Vuitton

even creates them for video games such as League of Legends, which sees them combine their savoir-faire with technology to create a case like no other. Penned by Olivier Margot served as the editor-in-chief at L'Équipe and L'Équipe Magazine for 25 years, the book tells the story of history and true craftsmanship.

SNEAKER FEVER

This multi-brand sneaker retail store gears up for its biggest launch

There's no doubt that sneaker culture is growing by leaps and bounds in India, with more and more youngsters buying exclusive kicks and looking at sneakers as a form of investment. However, even with premium brands offering up drops frequently, the pieces are limited, and recognising this gap led to Superkicks's inception. A premium multi-brand retail store for sneakers and streetwear, it is all set to change sneaker culture as we view it in India. With a budding e-commerce platform and three stores to speak for, they have launched the biggest ever multi-brand sneaker store in Delhi.



Sangeet Paryani

Their most ambitious project so far, the new store, combines the old elements of Delhi with the new age phenomenon of sneaker culture. Sangeet Paryani, the brainchild behind Superkicks, spoke to us about the design elements of the new store. "Hinting back at the terracotta and Delhi fort ideas, we borrowed parts of our USP from those elements. For example, the staircase ultimately allowed us to close the loop and bring the concept full circle. One of the key elements is our sneaker wall, which you have to take a few steps to walk up to, which we've always paid attention to in all our stores. Additionally, we have digital integration on both floors through high-resolution screens and a unique tube system," said Paryani. The store is set to open in July and promises to be the premier sneaker mecca for enthusiasts. The store is set to open in July and promises to be the premier sneaker mecca for enthusiasts. **K**

LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE

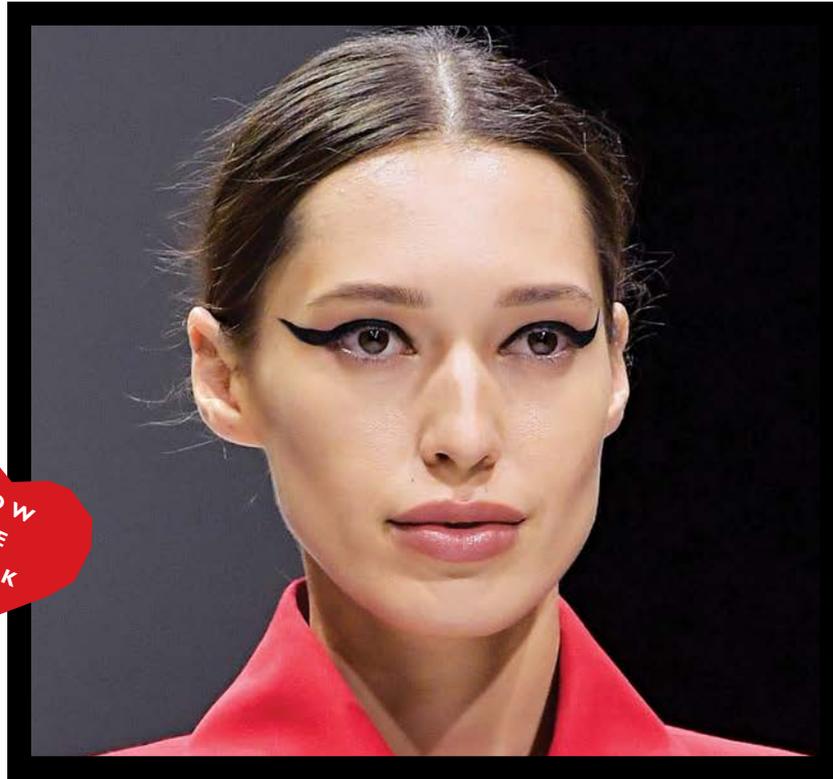
The iconic 'Tabby' gets a new update. With an accent logo and a pastel hue, you've got yourself a new fail-safe staple



'Pillow Tabby' shoulder bag, **Coach**, price on request

Photograph YUSUF LOKHANDWALA, Junior Fashion Stylist NISHITHA PARWANI, Fashion Assistant SANSKRITI GUPTA

BEAUTY



Photograph IMAXTREE.COM. Compiled by SANJANA SALUNKHE

HOW WE WORK IT

Where we spotted it
Lili Blanc's FW'22 showcase.

Why we love it

The winged eyeliner is probably the oldest make-up trick, but even today, it takes many forms. This feline flick is getting more individualistic and comes with a new variation each year – bright colours, graphic liners, or abstract shapes. For 2022, the exaggerated eyeliner has taken charge to show you how to make a powerful statement. The look is dramatic, bold, yet versatile and works for any occasion.

How to get it

1. Prep your skin with a primer. Follow with a hydrating foundation to set the base. Apply a colour corrector as per your undertone to cover the dark circles or any blemishes. Blend well. Follow with a buildable concealer for a lifted look. Blend well and set the base with a compact powder.
2. For the cheeks, skip the blush and use a bronzer on the hollows of your cheekbones to get a chiselled look. Now, take a high shine highlighter and apply it to the high points of your face to get a radiant complexion.
3. Line the eyelids with a black felt eyeliner and extend it to your brow bone. The idea is to extend the eyeliner to the hairline to get the exaggerated liner look. For the inner corners of the eye, use a shimmery gold eyeshadow stick for a bright-eyed effect. Follow it with a coat of mascara on the upper and lower lashes.
4. For the lips, use a nude lipstick and top it up with a lip gloss. Pair the look with groomed brows and a high ponytail.



1. Charlotte Tilbury Pillow Talk Multi-glow in 'Romance Light', ₹4,300
2. Bobbi Brown Long Wear Cream Shadow Stick in 'Golden Pink', ₹3,150
3. Clinique Even Better All-Over Concealer + Eraser, ₹2,500
4. Benefit Cosmetics Roller Liner Matte Liquid Eyeliner in 'Black', ₹2,190
5. The Body Shop Fresh Nude Foundation, ₹2,095
6. Maybelline New York Fit Me Matte+Poreless Primer, ₹499
7. e.l.f. Cosmetics Lip Lacquer in 'Bubbles', ₹320
8. Manish Malhotra Beauty by MyGlam Hi-Shine Lipstick in 'Barely Nude', ₹950
9. NYX Professional Makeup Conceal, Correct, Contour Palette, ₹1,325



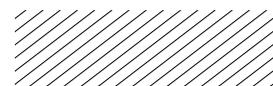
Photograph: ARSH SAYED

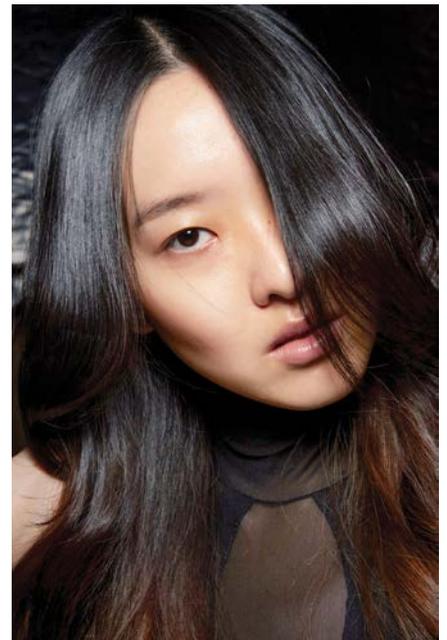
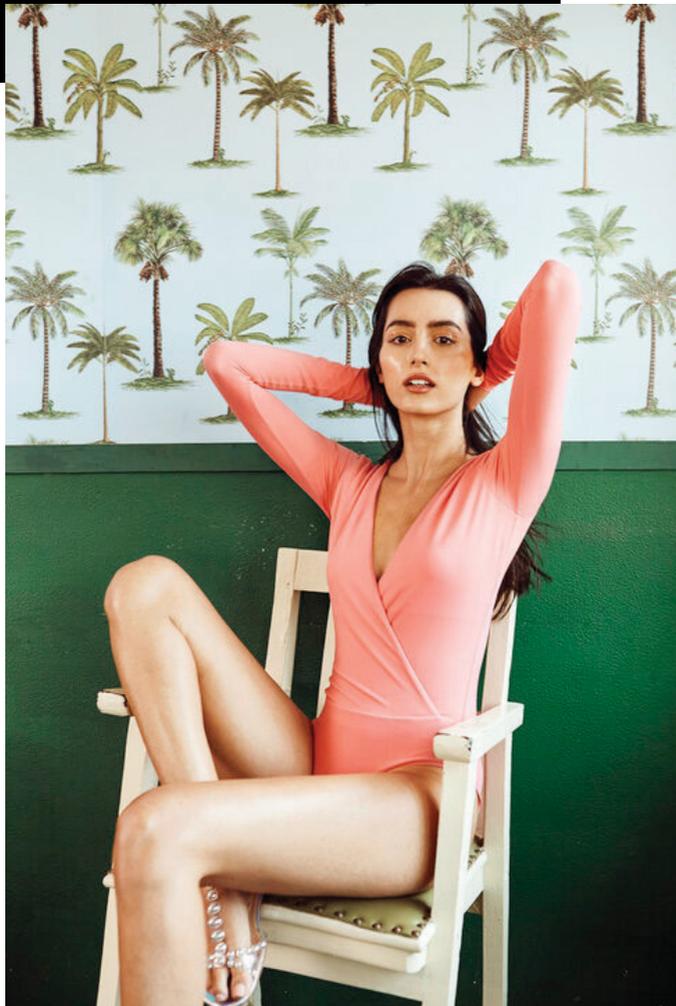
THE MANE FIX

Your hair will survive the rains just fine

Words **SANJANA SALUNKHE**

I've had a long, ongoing relationship with my hair, which has been a part of all my milestones in life. I have done everything from experimenting with dye jobs in my teens to cutting my bangs in the lockdown. There have also been times when my hair has faced the brunt of an ugly breakup with a dramatic transformation. But, if there is one thing that stayed constant throughout my hair journey, it was the feeling of being in control. I have always found my hair to be very empowering. Walking out of salons with a fresh cut or colour was always accompanied by a new sense of confidence. At the same time, I did take my hair for granted. I never went out of my way to look after it; my rituals were basic with a champi on a Sunday morning and a typical wash and condition routine – only to discover it didn't suffice. I started seeing the red flags after my postpartum hair fall phase, and for the first time ever, I reached out to a trichologist for help and was made aware of the things lacking in my routine. Safe to say: Embarking on a hair care journey is like skincare one that changes with seasons, moods, and your lifestyle.





5 tips for a happy hair day, every day

- Blow dry for volume.
- Get a haircut that highlights your best features.
- Work with – not against – your hair’s natural texture.
- Use the right comb/brush that helps with frizziness.
- Invest in a dry shampoo to absorb oil to make it feel fresher and cleaner.
- Make sure to use a leave-in serum that hydrates the hair and prevents thinning, split ends, and brittleness.

Photographs KEEGAN CRASTO AND IMAXTREE.COM

WRATH OF THE RAINS

The monsoon season is notorious for making your hair limp, dull, lifeless, and heavy. Reason being? The humidity. “Humid air causes excessive sweating, which increases the level of sebum on your scalp. Sweat and oil create an optimal environment for bacteria to thrive. So you end up with an itchy, greasy scalp that you try to wash away,” celebrity hairstylist Amit Thakur explains, which is also why your scalp feels itchy sooner, and you end up washing it more often. Thus, causing more harm than good. However, Dr Khushboo Garodia, trichologist, nutrition and stress management expert, believes that we are still at an advantage, thanks to our genes. “Indian hair is thicker, coarser, and denser – in terms of the number of hair per follicle. A study on the World’s Best Hair by the Textile Research Institute in Princeton, New Jersey, tested hair samples for four characteristics that determine healthy hair – thickness, tensile strength, shine, and smoothness. They analysed Caucasian, Asian, and Indian hair samples. They deduced that in terms of health, Indian hair is the best, topping other ethnic groups on all four counts,” she says as she reassures us that a few do’s and don’ts will help save our glorious mane.

MYTHS VS FACTS

We have all been advised not to wash our hair after it gets drenched in the rain. Thakur disagrees. “If you enjoy a little rain dance and going out while it’s raining, ensure you wash your hair properly afterwards. The acid compounds in rainwater get trapped in your hair, causing a slight imbalance in the natural pH level of your scalp, resulting in excessive sebum secretion from the gland,” he says. Thakur also emphasises frequent oil massages that will hydrate your hair strands and increase blood circulation in your scalp, resulting in the healthy growth of new hair follicles. “Make it a habit to massage your hair with oil twice a week,” he confirms. Another widely prevalent myth says skip your hair masks, but Thakur instructs using deep conditioning masks during the season. A hair mask helps keep your hair nourished and moisturised. Choose one appropriate for your hair type to help strengthen and smoothen it.

MANE MATTERS

Hair becomes greasy and prone to breakage due to chemicals in products, humidity in the hair, and styling tools, so it's best to have a low-maintenance approach to styling and cuts. "Keeping your hair tied in diverse ways can help even if it's very humid, so different braids, ponytails, or knots can be super fun, can be worn for almost anything, and also protects your hair from external damage such as pollution, sun, and humidity. Hairstyles that do not require the use of any items are ideal," shares Thakur. For haircuts, opt for bobs, lobs, or shorter lengths, and if you still want to have fun with your hair, long layers are your best bet. "Connected layers is something you can bet on, and it's easy to maintain. Just make sure to keep the hair trimmed and in shape because disconnected haircuts grow out badly, leaving the ends looking very thin," he says. If your hair is prone to breakage, being dry and brittle, avoid colouring it during the monsoons. Colouring or highlighting your hair will make it even drier and lifeless. The colour treatment exposes your hair to a lot of heat and chemicals that can cause it to look dull if it gets wet in the rain. A leave-in serum or a conditioner is also essential, as rainwater is typically acidic and contaminated. If you're going out, apply a protective leave-in conditioner and let your hair dry naturally. "It will form a protective layer on your hair, shielding it from the damage caused by rainwater. As a bonus, it also acts as a deodoriser to keep your hair smelling fresh," says Thakur.

SUPERFOODS

We may remove harmful chemicals from our hair care products and get regular trims and oil regularly, yet we may be stuck feeling like our strands have just been unhappy. What gives? According to nutritionist Dr Archana Batra, our hair needs a diet rich in protein, fibre, and antioxidants for optimal hair growth. "Omega-3 fatty acids, fat-soluble vitamins, B-complex vitamins, iron, and lean proteins are among the greatest vitamins and nutrients for hair development. Salmon can help keep those strands strong because it is a high source of protein and Omega-3 fatty acids. Pulses are rich in plant-based protein and fibre, which can be a great alternative if you aren't into meats. Folic acid helps maintain healthy hair and regenerate cells essential for hair growth. Polyunsaturated fatty acids in flax seeds can nourish your scalp and ward off dryness," she says.

Nutritionist Nmami Agarwal, also insists on adding supplements to your morning routine. "Biotin, vitamin E, B complex, protein, and iron supplements are ideal for healthy hair. They assist in meeting your nutritional deficiencies while nourishing every strand of hair. But one must consult their doctor or nutritionist before taking on any," she says. Supplements are a must, especially from your late 40s, as the functioning of cells decreases with age, and so does the absorption of the vitamins. "The hair follicles produce less melanin and stop producing new hair strands. Even the ability of hormones to produce new hair decreases with age. Hence it is important to have a balanced diet and take care of your hair when you are young," explains Agarwal. **LI**



Make your own mix

Nmami Agarwal jots down a quick smoothie recipe for your hair

- Take a carrot, 4-5 leaves of spinach, avocado, ginger, and amla.
- Add all the ingredients to a blender and form a puree. The consistency should be smooth.
- Top it up with chia seeds and almonds.
- The ingredients are all good fats, fibre, and protein sources.
- This smoothie bowl can be consumed in the a.m. with your breakfast or is also a healthy alternative to your evening snack.



BEAUTY REPORTER

NEW CHAPTER

Diipa Büller-Khosla on Ayurvedistry, self-care, and launching, not just another influencer brand



“Self-love is standing tall in your skin, unfiltered. Of course, there will always be naysayers and noise along the way, but you must stay focused on the goal. Channel any energy you would have spent on them into building something amazing,” shares global influencer, activist, and beauty entrepreneur, Diipa Büller-Khosla as her beauty brand indē wild finally makes its way to India.

Growing up in Delhi, surrounded by ancient Ayurvedic treatments, thanks to her mother, an Ayurvedic doctor, Büller-Khosla knew her brand had to co-exist with self-care and tradition – just like it did when she was growing up. And like most Indians, Ayurveda has been integral to the influencer’s upbringing, heritage and culture. “I think the decision to launch a beauty brand was destiny. It’s almost like I was destined to create this brand. So many things came together – my childhood where I had my mother using these ancient Ayurvedic concoctions on my skin, the constant struggle with acne, and having no representation for brown skin, skin types, or concerns in the global beauty market led to the birth of indē wild. It made me realise that I could fill this hole in the market and give brown people a product that was truly theirs – as per their skin types and concerns. I truly want to globalise and make Ayurveda accessible for the rest of the world as well,” she says about the brand that reps brown people and uses Ayurvedic superfoods to build a conscious beauty ecosystem. For indē wild, Büller-Khosla taps into her roots and creates an entirely new category in the beauty and wellness sector called Ayurvedistry™, marrying the power of Ayurveda and the innovation of chemistry for the modern empowered Indian woman.

Her brand is all about women empowerment and is also led by a team of women experts who help address the needs of South Asian women and create solutions to combat the underrepresentation of this untapped demographic. “Being transparent and sustainable about not only the active ingredients but everything that goes into their products, including the packaging, is given attention to detail,” she says as she launches her two bestsellers: AM Sunrise Glow Serum packed with turmeric, ashwagandha, vitamin C and E, ferulic acid, niacinamide, and hyaluronic acid and PM Sunset Restore Serum that contains bakuchiol, squalene, amla, saffron, and rosehip seed oil.

ALL EYES ON THIS

Meet the newest standout brands
on Grazia's beauty desk

Brand: KATE HUDSON X
JUICE BEAUTY

Stand out star:

Revitalizing Acacia + Rose
Powder Mask

Why: Packs the dynamic duo of antioxidant-rich acacia plants with rose petal phyto-pigment powder, rich in vitamin C. Infused with aloe powder, grape skin powder, and hyaluronic acid, this age-defying and purifying formula uses organic ingredients on the inside and sustainable packaging on the outside. The vegan and cruelty-free mask makes skin appear plumper by locking in moisture and drawing out toxins.

More About Brand:

Juice Beauty is the original green brand leading the way in the clean beauty industry. "Our brand is radically transforming the chemistry of beauty through a proprietary organic botanical juice base and going beyond "clean" to exceed conventional chemical efficacy," says Karen Behnke, the founder and CEO. The company's philosophy revolves around strong commitments to veganism, cruelty-free products, sustainably certified organic ingredients, wellness, and their unique farm-to-beauty approach. "We have clinically validated formulas and authentically organic ingredients where every organic drop feeds your skin," she says.

Grazia Loves: The Revitalizing Acacia + Rose Powder Mask is packed with goodness. The mask is formulated with unique plant-based organic powder ingredients that help eliminate any dirt and impurities to give you an even-toned and glowing skin. A bonus is the cute yet sustainable packaging of recyclable glass and a wooden cap.



Brand: VILLAGE 11
FACTORY

Stand out star: The
Moisture Cream.

Why: This moisture cream with plant oils creates a moisture barrier and provides long-lasting hydration without any stickiness. It also contains eco ceramides to soften skin. The formulation with Devil's Claw, a rare plant used by native Africans to alleviate pain and heal wounds, melts into the skin with a little massage.

More About Brand: A

star in the beauty and skincare industry, Dr Geek initiated and developed Village 11 Factory, which is now available in India, thanks to Gwang BioCare. Village 11 Factory brings innovative ingredients like Devil's Claw, snail slime, collagen, etc., in the best possible formulations for healthy, nourished, moisturised, and rejuvenated skin. In addition, all the products are paraben-free, sulfate-free, phthalate-free, and cruelty-free. "The whole idea of Gwang BioCare is to bring to people in India the best the world offers for skincare and makeup. The business model is very simple.

Get the best and most niche products to discerning consumers. We have associated with the leading brands of Korea, which are known for their products worldwide and have some fabulous formations based on extensive research done in their respective fields," says Nishita Kalia, founder of Gwang BioCare.

Grazia Loves: The Village 11 Factory moisture cream embraces rare ingredients worldwide to provide an unmatched moisture barrier to the skin. A good idea to use the cream is by sandwiching it between your daily serum and SPF. **||**

LA ROCHE-POSAY 10% PURE VITAMIN C SERUM

"I am in love with this product as I have seen it work for me, and the results have been great. It is lightweight, so it ties in perfectly with my daily routine, and with consistent use, I have seen that my skin has become clearer, and my pigmentation has also reduced significantly."
Renu Tewary, Deputy Art Director



NEEMLI NATURALS HYALURONIC AND VITAMIN C SERUM

"I've been using this serum every morning for years now. The formula gives my skin a lovely, lit-from-within glow immediately upon application, and over time, my skin has become more healthy-looking (even when I'm not wearing it). Of course, I'm prone to the occasional breakout, but I have no lingering acne scars."
Barry Rodgers, Assistant Managing Editor

MINIMALIST VITAMIN C 10% FACE SERUM

"I was recently introduced to this serum and am glad I was. I love that, along with vitamin C, it also comes with PHA to tone down sun-damaged or dull skin along with fading dark spots and pigmentation. It is also fragrance-free and non-comedogenic, making it a safe pick for all skin types. My skin definitely feels healthier and firmer with each use."
Mehernaaz Dhondy, Editor



TEAM PICKS

Team Grazia shares their all-time favourite vitamin C-spiked serums

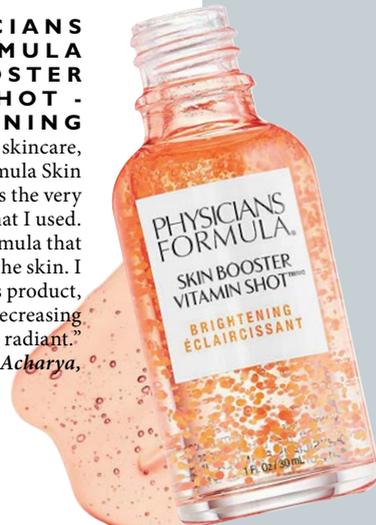
VC 15 VITAMIN C SERUM

"This potent serum is the only dermatologist-recommended vitamin C that has worked for me. It is lightweight and non-comedogenic so doesn't irritate the skin. It has been very effective and has helped me with my pigmentation concerns and overall skin health."
Pasham Alwani, Fashion Director



PHYSICIANS FORMULA SKIN BOOSTER VITAMIN SHOT - BRIGHTENING

"I love experimenting with skincare, and the Physicians Formula Skin Booster Vitamin Shot was the very first vitamin C serum that I used. It has a slightly oily formula that dissipates once applied to the skin. I saw instant results with this product, with my pigmentation decreasing and my skin getting radiant."
Pratiksha Acharya,



DEAR, KLAIRS FRESHLY JUICED VITAMIN DROP

"My skin loves a good dose of vitamin C in the morning, and this serum has been the one for me. It is lightweight and gets easily absorbed into the skin. The formula also uses pure vitamin C, which sometimes gives you a warm sensation after application. I find that comforting because I know the product is working and doing its job of fading any dark spots, pigmentation, or blemishes."
Sanjana Salunkhe, Beauty Editor



Compiled by SANJANA SALUNKHE

LOVE LOVE LOVE

Turn up the glow dial with this soothing blend of niacinamide, panthenol, and marine plankton extracts that clarify, balance, and support overall skin health

DR. BARBARA STURM
THE BETTER B NIACINAMIDE SERUM

Dr. Barbara Sturm The Better B Niacinamide Serum, ₹12,760

Deputy Art Director RENU SHARMA TEWARY, Words SANJANA SALUNKHE



BITE SIZED GOODNESS

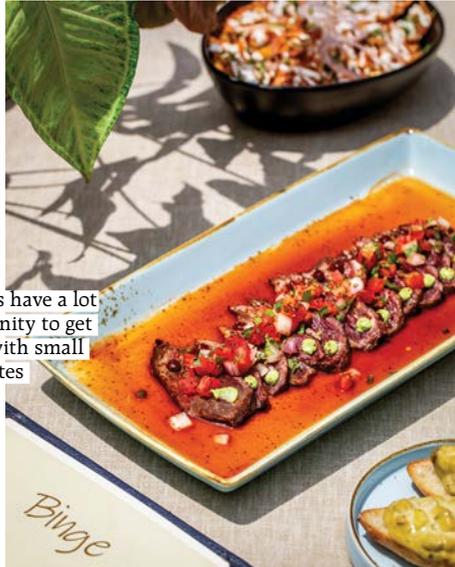
Why small plates are the next big thing

Words **PRATIKSHA ACHARYA**

If you were to deep dive into the history of *tapas* (Spanish for small plates of food), you would find yourself inundated with several explanations that trace the origin of the beloved bar snack. While some say that *tapas* came into existence when King Alfonso X of Spain made it mandatory for inns and taverns to serve wine alongside small snacks after he recovered from a long illness by indulging in the same to another story claim that *tapas* became the norm in Spain when King Alfonso XIII stopped at a tavern for a drink and was served some cured ham along with it. Whatever story you choose to believe, the fact remains that the humble pub grub has now become a global phenomenon and has translated itself into a variety of cuisines over time and given birth to a whole new dining culture in the form of small plates.

Call it an elevated version of *tapas* or simply its swanky new cousin, small plates have taken the restaurant industry by storm. For most families in India, dining out has always been a grand affair. Offering some respite from the wholesome yet mundane offerings at home, my earliest memories of eating out have always been that of a four-course meal replete with a soup (one by two, of course), starters, and then mains before scrimping on desserts later. The one thing that remained consistent throughout was the huge portion sizes, reinforcing the idea that bigger portions equal value for money.

“To share or not to share is completely up to you when it comes to small plates. While the menu stays limited, you have the freedom to try a little bit of everything if you are the experimental kind or go for that one thing on the menu that you know will hit the right spot”



Restaurants have a lot of opportunity to get creative with small plates

So, with the introduction of small plates, how does the restaurant industry aim to change the perspective of an average Indian on settling for small plates over an elaborate meal that, more often than not, promises quantity and the mental satisfaction of having something wholesome?

Not bite-sized and yet not a big plate, small plates can, at best, be described as a medium for experimenting with different cuisines while creating a community around food through sharing.

COME TOGETHER

A full 360 from what most restaurant menus offer, restaurateurs are now taking a gamble by opening up new spaces that rely on a menu that offers small plates and nothing more. Sensing the need for a good Mexican joint in the city, Chef Victor Manuel Murguía Mancilla of Sancho's fame set out to create a dining experience that focuses on the cuisine while operating out of a much smaller space than most restaurants. The result was Binge, Mumbai.

“The primary goal has been to introduce good food in small portions while changing the consumer’s perspective, who is used to ordering a bigger portion. To share or not to share is completely up to you when it comes to small plates. While the menu stays limited, you have the freedom to try a little bit of everything if you are the experimental kind or go for that one thing on the menu that you know will hit the right spot,” he says.

Although people have taken their time to warm up to eating smaller portions while still spending a good buck on it, the concept isn't lost on them. Small plates scale back on the portion sizes, but at the same time, the food quality remains top-notch due to the amount of care put into what is presented on the plate in front of you. High on visual appeal, the dishes at Binge are also extremely pleasurable on the palate, and Chef Victor's vision of using local produce reflects in them. A dish that stands out on the menu is the Pomfret Tiradito, which is his take on a traditional Peruvian dish that can be best described as

a carpaccio but using the local pomfret, which adds the ‘wow factor’.

Picking up on the same thread, Petisco in Goa is also championing the case of small plates. With dishes on the menu that would suit the tastes of a global traveller, Pranav Dhuri, its owner, started the restaurant assuming the same. A self-confessed foodie, he loved the idea of trying new dishes but was opposed to the wastage of food when ordered in large quantities. So, together with Chef Halton D'Souza, the duo produced a limited yet delectable menu that is perfect for people who want to experience a variety of small portions as opposed to a heavy meal with limitations. With a burgeoning food scene, Goa sees an influx of travellers who flock to sample a bit of everything because sometimes they just can't be bothered to sit down for a set-course meal. Moreover, studies show that the newer generations are more likely to experiment with global flavours; hence, a concept like this works very well for Petisco.

A NEW OUTLOOK

Small plates are *tapas* without borders, so it is not surprising that the rising tide of pan-Asian restaurants is doing away with their vast range of bigger portions in favour of appetisers, which they now refer to as “Asian *tapas*”. According to Mayouchi's Chef Sumit, at The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake, small plates and drinks are the perfect starter pack to create an informal environment around dining and make it a memorable social experience. From a range of sushi rolls to more serious Japanese dishes like *nigiri* and *sashimi*, the menu at Mayouchi aims to educate people about the concept of smaller portions while still doing so in a relaxed atmosphere where the drinks keep flowing.

And even though this might be the hottest new trend in the dining landscape, it still leaves us a bit befuddled. It's a daring new concept that simply can't replace our traditional dining experience. As Chef Halton strongly points out, “Sometimes, you just need to go all out on a *thali*,” he says. On the other hand, Chef Victor draws parallels to expand on how *thalis* technically operate on the same plane as small plates as you get to sample a huge variety all at once. The jury is still out on this one, but small plates might just be here to stay. **W**

➔ MONTH IN MONTH OUT

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



Masaba Gupta

ARRIVING IN STYLE

Masaba Gupta talks about fashion and the new season of her eponymous breakout show

The first season of Masaba Gupta's surprise Netflix hit *Masaba Masaba* shares a couple of key qualities with her homegrown fashion label (House of Masaba) – they're both fresh in their treatment and unwavering in their expression. At the centre of both lies a passionate and resilient dark horse who, above everything else, believes in strapping up and getting things done. "I've always reached out to people for the work I've wanted to do. I believe in taking the initiative because that's the only way I seem to get things done," says Gupta.

Within the first few minutes of talking to her, I was assured that this is a woman who is willing to give everything she does the fair thought (and sometimes



A still from *Masaba Masaba* season 2

much more) that it deserves. Her commitment to keeping the second season of her show as crisp and fresh as the first one might very well solidify her status as the jack of one trade (cinema) and the master of another (fashion).

GRAZIA: While the events of *Masaba Masaba* are completely fictional, you've gone on the record to state that they do almost always take some inspiration from your actual life. Was it difficult to keep the

second season grounded now that you have a hit season (and expectations) to follow?

MASABA GUPTA: Sure, there was a lot of nervousness around keeping up with season one's authenticity, but we knew we wanted to move the storytelling forward. This season is just as earnest and vulnerable in its approach but a lot braver, I'd say. It's larger in its production value but still genuine in terms of the characters. We chose to follow an organic growth trajectory, from the women (on the show) being hot messes in the first season to finally waking up to their reality and trying to take control in this one.

G: Following up on a season also means having hours of footage to critique yourself, which can get unnerving when you're playing yourself. How did you handle it?

MG: It was, as you said, quiet nerve-wracking. For the first two episodes, all I could think was, "Oh my god, it's like I've never done this before." Then, I remembered this simple scene that had absolutely no dialogue. I just had to pick up a bag and walk across the frame, and I couldn't do it. It took a while for muscle memory to kick in, but it was smooth sailing after that. I think it's just like any other activity; you need to loosen a few muscles to get in the groove.

G: Your label has had a major influence on the show and its treatment, but do you think the opposite has also come true since the first season came out? Has the show influenced the House of Masaba?

MG: I think the relationship

between the two is very symbiotic. The show gives me ideas about what kind of people I can work with, the celebrities I should get to endorse a certain line, or just the kind of women that would wear my clothes. But on the other hand, the brand and its identity heavily inspire the show and its overall aesthetic. There is no *Masaba Masaba* without The House of Masaba.

G: I found the inclusion of the fashion influencer plotline in the new season very interesting. Do you believe fashion influencers have come to occupy more substantial space in the landscape since the first season came out?

MG: Of course. You might not agree with their style of influence or content, but you can't ignore them. Influencers are more 'real' than the fashion icons of the past in that you can interact with them regularly and see them facing the everyday problems you face. Everything is virtual now, and these people regularly show up on our screens. It's impossible to escape their influence.

G: What's one thing that you would like the audience to take away from this new season?

MG: I would like the audience to get inspired and take charge of their lives somehow. The pandemic forced us to do that to an extent – looking after our friends, finances, and mental health more closely, but I think it should be a much more regular exercise. You can start anytime, whether you're 18 or 45. All you need to do is take a deep breath and take stock of your life.

Words ANAND SINGH

FINDING FREEDOM

This book outlines the struggles, achievements, and failures and the many reinventions of a shy and anxious girl

I don't often read memoirs or self-help books, but on the rare occasions I do, I end up disappointed. This voice in my head finds it strange that people pay to know about things that already lie in the corners of their minds. But when I received the advance copy of actor Kubbra Sait's candid debut, *Open Book: Not Quite a Memoir*, I was intrigued because I've been a fan of Sait's work over the years.

The book has her life on paper and intimate moments where she felt vulnerable. It's a reminder that not even successful people or celebrities have it all figured out or lead a fulfilled life. And her main source of abundance is practising meditation and gratitude. In a candid chat, Sait talks about the foundational beliefs she bases this book on.

GRAZIA: How did you go about writing a raw and accurate memoir filled with pertinent life lessons that don't feel contrived?

KUBBRA SAIT: I am honest, or at least I do my best, to be honest about the smallest elements of my



Kubbra Sait

life. I know my honesty sometimes can be too much to absorb even. My approval or disapproval can be instantly seen on my face for others and in my breath for myself. While writing *Open Book*, I felt relief. I was consciously holding back. It wasn't an effort to make me likable. It was a process of unlearning past patterns while witnessing my life in the present

tense. I felt free, fearless, and compassionate for the little adolescent and adult me.

G: Was writing truthfully about your father an act of resistance or love?

KS: It was realisation. From their perspective, we are all fed stories about people and situations in the third person. So it isn't about judging the man or the parent but about giving him the due of seeing him as an individual and accepting that he isn't right or wrong.

Forgiveness isn't something we do for others. In the truest sense, we do it for ourselves. I did it for me. I came from a place of expectations from my father, who he should've been. But, realising that he is who he was raised to be, made me accept who he is today. That is love for me.

G: An anonymous quote goes: 'What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life?' What do you expect from your memoir?

KS: I don't expect as much, although I am hopeful. I am hopeful that no one who reads the book will feel alone. We all experience life differently, yet elements of our lives are similar. I hope people who read the book believe my truth. We are all

coloured in our purview of the world, and we all react to people and situations differently. I dealt with my situation as best I could. The fact that today I am perceived as a happy, bubbly person, and I am successful at what I do makes me feel it could extend hope to those who are either survivors of a dysfunctional family or a career that takes too long to shape or abuse.

G: As a survivor of sexual abuse trauma, did you find new freedom through therapy and this book, in particular?

KS: I felt free. I felt like I was in my skin. I felt relief turning a new page, and no longer having to live in the past has been freeing. No one in the world can claim to know you and your story when you have nothing to hide.

G: Your book changes the way we perceive strength, did writing it make you more self-assured as an individual?

KS: If my journey or story gives you courage, my job as a writer is done. What you do with the journey is your responsibility. I feel lighter physically and in my soul because I no longer have dead or excess weight to carry. What happens in the future will be dealt with by a person willing to live and not to survive in a way that is living with self-assurance and acceptance. **||**

On the Bookshelf



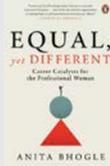
Ghost Lover,
Bloomsbury India,
Lisa Taddeo

In these nine riveting stories, Taddeo brings to life the fever of obsession, the blindness of love and the mania of grief. Featuring Taddeo's arresting prose that continues to thrill her legions of fans, *Ghost Lover* dares you to look away.



Unsung,
Penguin
Random House
India,
Arunoday Singh

Arunoday's poems explores themes of the self, breaking and healing, the search for divinity, and the light and darkness of the spirit.



**Equal, Yet Different:
Career Catalysts
for the Professional
Woman,**
Penguin Random House
India, Anita Bhogle

This book talks about the catalysts that are required for women to reach peak potential conditions, people, or even mindsets at home, at work, and in the ecosystem.



The Wait,
Penguin Random
House India,
Damodar Mauzo

Konkani writer Damodar Mauzo's sometimes bizarre, sometimes tender stories, set largely in Goa, create a world far removed from the sun and sand and the holiday resorts.

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