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BE OPEN's Made In... India: Samskara exhibition will focus on the future of craft

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Dezeen Daily

BE OPEN Made In... India: Indian handicrafts and contemporary design will be displayed in a space built by local stonecutters (pictured) at an exhibition organised by creative think tank BE OPEN, which opens in New Delhi on 10 February.



BE OPEN's Made In... programme, a global search for handmade goods and ideas to ensure the survival of handicraft, is launching in India with the Samskara exhibition.



The exhibition will take place at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi, inside a bespoke space designed by architect Anupama Kundoo.



To create the installation, Kundoo worked with stonecutters at a granite quarry in Tamil Nadu who carve and finish each piece of stone by hand (pictured in these photos by Vimal Boraj).



Curated by BE OPEN and Sunil Sethi, the exhibition will include a range of furniture, products, textiles and lighting, handmade using traditional crafts and reinterpreted for the contemporary market by local designers.



It kicks off on 10 February with an invitation-only talks programme focussed on "The future of making in a globalised world".



Six guest speakers will present their ideas and case studies illustrating successful brand-building in the worlds of design and craftsmanship, followed by a discussion with journalists and commentators.



Students at Auroville's Mitra hostel, who helped design the exhibition

Samskara then opens to the public 11-28 February daily from 10:30am to 7:30pm and entrance is free. Dezeen will be filming a series of movies at the event, so keep an eye out for these on the site.

To find out more about the exhibition and the Made In... programme, visit the BE OPEN website.

Here's the information sent to us by the organisers:

Made in... India

BE OPEN's search for the future of creativity starts in India, with a focus on making

10 February official opening, by invitation only

BE OPEN, the global philanthropic foundation, announced its intention last month to launch a worldwide project that looks at the handmade and how to ensure its survival in the future.

Each year BE OPEN announces a theme that guides their research. 2012 focused on design and the senses, while the theme for the year ahead is North/South – East/West. Travelling to the four corners of the world, the foundation will involve a new generation of makers and designers, as well as students, academics and retail industry professionals, to develop the subject, exploring where and how our diverse cultures can meet and how to take traditional skills into the future, through innovation and technology.



Sidhartha Das notebooks to be displayed at Samskara

The journey of discovery begins in India, where, from the time of the Mughals through the Rajput, to the present day, Indian craftsmen have been commissioned to carve and inlay marble, wood and stone, to weave in silk and to mould in clay. Made in... India's exhibition will showcase furniture and tableware, textiles and jewels that reveal an imaginative reinterpretation of traditional craft skills by contemporary Indian designers.



SSDA bath set to be displayed at Samskara

A range of pieces by twenty-three designers will be installed in the Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi, in a bespoke space created by architect Anupama Kundoo. A dedicated graphic has been designed to create a unified way of presenting the conceptual Made in... India international brand, Samskara. Samskara refers to the idea of refining, which is what the project aims to do by re-positioning locally made, handcrafted goods to give them global appeal, rather than purely displaying the latest in contemporary Indian craft.



Atmosphere Potpourri box by Vibhor Sogani to be displayed at Samskara

Founder of BE OPEN, Yelena Baturina, says: "Business is in my DNA, so I can't help but bring a business focus to this project as well. We feel that the future of the handmade is about keeping it out of the moribund museum space and instead making it live and breathe by becoming part of the market economy. Working with local experts, BE OPEN has been looking at today's most promising Indian designers, encouraging them to think beyond their usual market and giving them the opportunity to present their work from a completely new perspective, so that it appeals to a much wider, international audience. Made in... is launching in India, not least because its culture reveals such a fascinating and stark dichotomy between tradition and modernity. This means that there is a tremendous legacy of skilled work and a willingness to take it forward into the future."



Homeware by Abraham & Thakore to be displayed at Samskara

BE OPEN is working with eminent design consultant, President of India's Fashion Design Council, Sunil Sethi for this project. Sethi has been a pioneer in terms of changing perceptions of India abroad, through events such as Bollywood at London's Selfridges (2002), and installations at Conran shops internationally (2007), amongst others. He says: "We have chosen designers to represent all of the craft skills for which India is best known, yet will be showing them in a light that will dramatically change the way that people might think about the tagline Made in India. For many, Indian goods are associated with poor quality and cheap labour. The BE OPEN project will prove that there is vast potential to reverse that perception."



Bowl Set by Vibhor Sogani to be displayed at Samskara

Voicing her support for the exhibition, Smt, Chandresh Kumari Katoch Honourable Union Minister of Culture, Government of India, says: "I am extremely happy to know that BE OPEN project is being launched in India, which is home to such a rich variety of handicrafts. The BE OPEN Foundation has adopted a novel and innovative approach of applying the business model as a way of working with the Indian crafts industry. It is a difficult task to keep the ancient traditions of handicraft alive in our country and the only way of doing it is by linking it to markets thereby making it self-sustaining. Therefore, I am delighted with this initiative of the BEOPEN Foundation and hope that it will mark the beginning of a new way to promote and preserve our cultural legacy for the future."

Pieces in the exhibition include: fashion by Aneeth Arora's Pero brand, Abraham and Thakore, Samant Chauhan, Ashish Soni, Gaurav Gupta, Rahul Mishra, Pankaj and Nidhi Ahuja; textiles by Gita Chopra's "Disha" brand, Ezma and Rasa; furniture by Bombay Atelier, Ayush Kasliwal, PortsideCafé and Sameer Wheaton; products by Sunil Sethi Design Alliance, Thukral and Tagra, Gunjan Gupta, Sahil & Sarthak and Siddhartha Das; lighting design by Klove and Vibhor Sogani; and metalware by Devi Design and Episode.



Peacock Mural by Klove to be displayed at Samskara

Nothing will be for sale, but the work will be presented as though part of a new brand, with logo, labels and tags, shopping bags and display all reflecting contemporary design: dynamic, beautifully crafted goods, grounded in tradition, yet reinterpreted for today. Items from the exhibition will be auctioned during BE OPEN's events at Milan World Expo 2015. The proceeds from the auction will be plowed back into the Young Talent Award fund, creating a virtuous circle of support for emerging designers.

In addition to the product installation, a discussion panel will see prominent international design and fashion professionals sharing experiences and discussing their approach to the future of making in a globalised world. Confirmed participants include: Amy Kazmin, Financial Times South Asia Correspondent (UK); publishers Angelika Taschen (Germany) and Yaffa Assouline (France); Armando Branchini, Vice Chairman of Fondazione Altagamma (Italy); Raymond Simpson, Executive Vice President of Dominion Diamond Corporation (USA); and architect and architectural educator Anupama Kundoo (India).



Portrait of Indian designer Aneeth Arora

BE OPEN's activity in India will be supported by two calls for ideas through a web and social media campaign. The first "Create the ultimate Indian object for our future", will invite Indian design students to submit concepts across five home and fashion categories, awarding 1500USD to each category winner. The second, "India Through My Eyes" is a global call for responses to the image we have of India today. Winners will be invited on an all expenses paid trip to the next international BE OPEN event.

Made in... India is not only about making a strong statement for Indian craft; it has global application. BE OPEN's mission for this project will be to encourage makers around the world to explore alternative ways of using traditional skills and keeping them alive.