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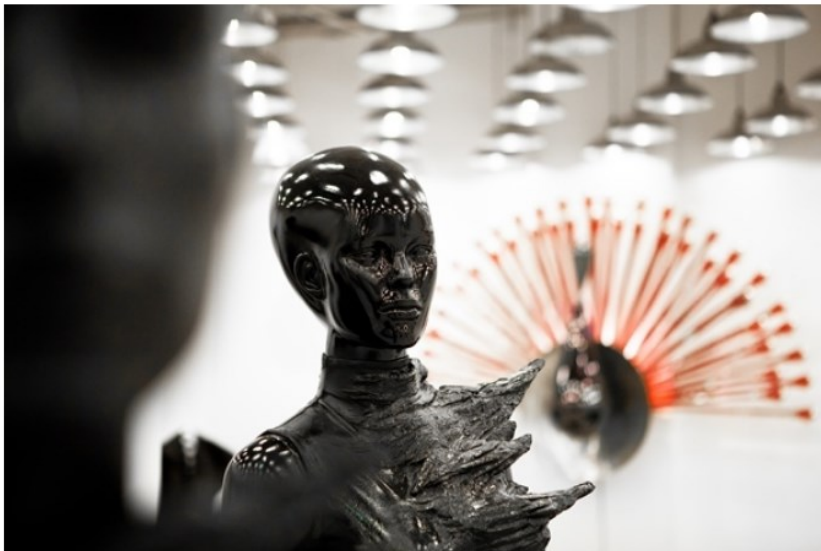
# From Samskara To Fame: Several Designers' Stories

10:18 PM RAWAT 0 Comments



Today, just a week away from India Design ID, the country's best luxury design week, we present to you 5 Indian designers and designing teams that we find worthy of close attention today.

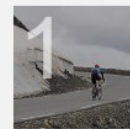
Apart from being prominent figures in contemporary Indian design industry, all five have another thing in common – in 2014, they all met and presented their collections at one and the same exhibition in New Delhi, organised by an international design-supporting foundation BE OPEN, set up and sponsored by Russia's richest woman, businessperson and philanthropist Elena Baturina.



That exhibition was part of the worldwide project 'Made in...' project developed by BE OPEN to encourage artisans around the world to explore alternative ways of using traditional skills and keeping them alive. The foundation involved 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.

'Made in India. Samskara' became the very first exhibition within the project, and it showcased furniture and tableware, textiles and jewels that revealed an imaginative reinterpretation of traditional craft skills by contemporary Indian designers. A range of pieces by twenty three designers were installed in the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi.

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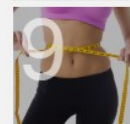
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#### Klove

Prateek Jain and Gautam Seth founded Klove Studio in 2005. Headquartered in the capital, this multiple award-winning firm was founded with the purpose to play with light and explore its form in different dimensions.

They are up to this day inspired by the skills they learnt from working with traditional Indian craftsmen, and work with them to break new ground with experimentation. As designers, they work on combining indigenous know-how with contemporary practices and embrace forward-thinking ideas, oscillating between past and future to express their present state of mind.

Today, Elle Décor features them as one of their 15 favourite lighting designers, the best of architects, interior firms, creative designers, thinkers and artists from across disciplines are drawn to the studio for its signature immersive experience: Klove designed the show window for the eminent British brand Paul Smith, an extraordinary distillery exclusively in glass for Hendricks, and many more.

#### Rahul Mishra

Rahul Mishra's approach to building his brand is rooted in his respect for the provenance of his materials, the sustainability of his production lines and the preservation of India's traditional craftsmanship and its craftsmen and women.

At the Samskara exhibition Mishra presented a collection of clothing with monochrome hand-crafted embroideries that have been his point of differentiation. Mishra is a strong believer in integrating the rich heritage of Indian craft with the constantly varying pulse of global fashion.

Over the years, Rahul has showcased his work at fashion weeks in London, Dubai and Australia, in addition to India Fashion Week. His work featured in London's Victoria & Albert Museum in 2015 to 2016 following his Woolmark Prize in 2014. In 2019, Rahul Mishra presented his collection on the official Paris Haute Couture schedule.

#### David Abraham and Rakesh Thakore

Their design is subtle, yet highly distinctive, with a strong respect for material, form and craft. A&T believes that real luxury lies in high quality, limited edition, handcrafted product. Drawing from the past while looking to future has been the brand's signature. Along with the technologically advanced fabric, the designers have also used ancient techniques of hand block printing, which is the oldest form of decorating textiles according to Abraham.



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Each season both the fashion and home textile collections by David Abraham and Rakesh Thakore are presented to international buyers in prestigious trade salons in Paris (Tranoi, Scenes d'Interieur, Maison & Objet) and in India (India Fashion Week). Their sophisticated hand woven fabrics for scarves, sarees and clothing, some of which have been included in major textile exhibitions in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris and the National Museum of Hokkaido.

### **Pankaj and Nidhi Ahuja**

Pankaj and Nidhi Ahuja are a husband and wife duo and have taken the fashion world by storm with their contemporary blend of Indian and Western aesthetics. Their label, PANKAJ & NIDHI, is influenced by both traditional craft techniques and futuristic garment technology, resulting in vibrant and exquisitely crafted collections.

In recent years, the duo has won both critical acclaim as well as commercial success, with innovative yet wearable clothes. Their designs are truly eclectic, with a generous use of colors, inspired by craftsmanship, symbolic and cultural objects from all over the world.

They now own flagship stores at Mumbai, New Delhi and Bangalore. Last season, the designers ventured into couture for the first time with their Mosaic collection on the India Couture Week runway.

### **Gaurav Gupta**

At Samskara, Gupta presented extravagant pitch-black sculptural pieces - experimental, out of the box and sophisticated at the same time. The designer is determined to push boundaries of what can be defined as Indian wear and Indo-western wear. In today's times, it is something unique, innovative, structural, abstract yet universally beautiful, he says. The indigenous techniques of futuristic boning, sculpting and motifs of Indian baroque come into play in that collection.

A year later, he participated in Lakmé Fashion Week Finale show in 2015 with the collection 'Sculpt'. In 2017, he joined forces with Klove Studios for a lighting collection, and launched his first limited-edition scent called 'Again', and collaborated with New York-based footwear designer.

With every passing collection, Gupta strengthened his position as a designer. His 3D embroideries, volume play, extempore draping and futuristic construction are now brand signatures. Besides the women's prêt-à-porter line, Gaurav Gupta has ventured into couture, menswear and children's wear. He has a flagship store in New Delhi and recently collaborated with Swarovski on a line of handcrafted jewelry pieces. Last year, the designer opened his first Kolkata and Hyderabad flagship stores, and held a number of pop-ups across India.

Editor's Note: Sadly, we have heard that Elena Baturina recently became a widow, and we hope people's appreciation for her work as a philanthropist will help her recover.

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