



**TAHIR SULTAN'S  
JAIPUR-BASED  
CONCEPT STORE,  
MAKAAN, IS AS  
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OBJECTS INSIDE IT.**

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**T**ahir Sultan, the Jaipur-based designer, brought his concept store, Makaan, to life on the heels of Covid. “When I first came upon the space, it had seen better days. There was something about it that seemed improbable,” recalls the Kuwait-born entrepreneur, “but not so improbable that I couldn’t make it work.”

Makaan began as a novelty store, as a shopfront for fashion towels, shawls, and beautiful antiques. Then it metamorphosed into an interior concept store with rare curiosities such as tribal masks, Naga stools, and 200-year-old urns originally used on trade routes. Today, it assumes a third avatar, with a chapel room for carpets and an ikat room for cushions and lamps, amongst other

equally charming treasures. In addition to staying true to its predecessors, it also serves as an art gallery, a fashion boutique, and an antique house, and enjoys a clientele of discerning designers and architects around the world. Still, this may not be its last incarnation. “It’s always a work in progress,” shares Sultan, who also runs a small culinary empire. “I’m always after something new. But one thing is certain: I am selective about what I source and only buy things I might keep in my own home.”

The store is as whimsical as the objects that inhabit it. Old rusted sewage pipes—found and saved several years ago—masquerade as art installations beside artisanal clay pots of Sultan’s own design. Cardboard boxes and bamboo ladders



FACING PAGE: TAHIR SULTAN WITH A BLACK-METAL ELEPHANT. LEFT: ANTIQUE CANE CHAIRS AND METAL PANELS OF SULTAN'S OWN DESIGN FLANK A CHARACTERFUL DISPLAY OF TRADITIONAL INDONESIAN RICE POTS (FLOOR) AND ANTIQUE METAL COOLERS (TABLE). BELOW: THE CHAPEL ROOM, FORMERLY A BALCONY, HOUSES CARPETS FROM OBEETEE'S COLLABORATION WITH TISSAGE. THE CANDLESTANDS ARE FROM THE JAIPUR JUNGLE COLLECTION. THE CEILING LIGHT IS A CUSTOM DESIGN BY VYOM.



display artwork and vases. Old boxes of incense find new life as pedestals. “People come to Makaan for the experience,” reflects Sultan, who refreshed the aesthetic lexicon last year to reveal its most soigné identity yet: think triple-height ceilings, black stone bathrooms, and grey and white hand-trowelled walls.

Forty per cent of the pieces on display, including the life-size black metal elephant at the entrance—which he fell in love with and bought for good luck—aren’t for sale, although Sultan will have you pose with the mammoth and give you a Polaroid print as a parting gift. Also reserved for window shopping is an old post office desk that he painstakingly procured from a vintage dealer. “If I sell everything, people won’t get a real sense

of the sort of items I can procure for their homes or hotels,” he says. The merchandise is divided into sections for fashion, art, artisanal objects, lighting, and rugs. As he puts it, “It’s a quirky design hub for everything.”

For someone who enjoys taking the path less travelled, it comes as no surprise that Sultan has a homeware brand up his sleeve. Christened the Jaipur Jungle collection, the label will encompass made-to-order vases, lamps, lampshades, candle holders, bed linens, napkins, placements, and kaleidoscopic objects which, he hopes, “will plug gaps in people’s aesthetic vocabulary”. Other developments in the

offing include a cafe, which he plans to open in September on Makaan's open rooftop, and a website, slated to go live in July.

No two trips to Makaan, not least a month apart, are the same. For example, neither the children's metal beds from the 1920s—that now occupy the lower floor—were there a fortnight ago nor, for that matter, the peacock-shaped teapot or the beautiful white wooden lion. The brass baltis that Sultan has reimagined as ice buckets are also new arrivals. "I go back and forth between antiques and the crafts of today," he says of the idiosyncratic assortment, which includes ikat blinds, Chinese bowls, Naga tables, beaded art made from old Gujarati skirt borders, delicate evil eyes, lace bookmarks from Sri Lanka, and hand-woven pouches and wallets, among many other novelties.

Sultan isn't afraid to reinvent

the wheel or, in this case, the craft. He routinely works with NGOs and artisanal communities to create new products in new ways. One case in point is his recent pair of collaborations with Artisan:re, a farm-to-fabric women's collective, and Pure Hands by Ankuri, a Dehradun-based nonprofit that trains women in knitting, through which he was able to create a larger-than-life knitwear installation for his solo exhibition last year (the piece now hangs in the fashion room). He also engages with Gond artisans to create characterful dolls and decorative ceramic eggs.

As for what the future holds, Sultan doesn't quite know, and he prefers it that way. One thing on his wish list, however, is seeing glimmers of Makaan in other stores and cities in the way of pop-ups and booths. "There was a time when no one knew what a Naga grain table looked like. Now, they're everywhere, and an original is almost impossible to source. There's a palpable explosion of interest all over the world. I'd like to keep that going." ▲



ABOVE: THE IKAT ROOM FEATURES NOVELTIES FROM THE JAIPUR JUNGLE COLLECTION. ALSO SEEN ARE RUGS FROM OBEETEE AND MERMAID GLASSES DESIGNED IN HOUSE. RIGHT: EMBROIDERED JACKETS, NAGA MILK POTS, AND IKAT LAMPS ANIMATE THE FASHION ROOM.





← **LEYRE LÓPEZ DE LA PAZ**

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Based in Ibiza, Spain, López de la Paz believes creativity is essential to human consciousness. In this issue, she photographs master weaver Shamji Vankar Vishram Valji at the Xtant festival in Mallorca (pg 19). "I loved every moment with Shamji bhai. We shared each other's life stories, and at one point, we even sang a song from my travels to India together."



→ **RAGHAV GOSWAMY**

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Based in Mumbai, Goswamy works across publications, advertising and fine art, primarily exploring themes of nostalgia, space, memory and reflection. For this issue, he photographs the studios of textile designer Hema Shroff Patel (pg 32) and artist Shakuntala Kulkarni (pg 44) in Mumbai. "Crafts serve as a reflection of India's rich heritage and both Hema and Shakuntala are doing a wonderful service by preserving and promoting them through their practices."



↑ **SURYAN AND DANG**

**PHOTOGRAPHERS** For this issue, Saurabh Suryan and Lokesh Dang photograph Anupam Poddar and Eshaan Kashyap's home in New Delhi (pg 90). "It was a delightful experience capturing the various hues and textures of the mud plaster walls, the many textiles, ceramics, art objects and other pieces."



→ **DIVYA MISHRA**

**WRITER** The former deputy editor of AD, Mishra writes about architect and designer John Pawson's latest line of furniture with Danish flooring company Dinesen (pg 22). "I find John Pawson's handling of wood almost poetic in how it transforms absence to presence. This collaboration has created furniture that seems to embody its own essence, and in doing so, evokes a sense of stillness and calm."



↑ **AVESH GAUR**

**PHOTOGRAPHER** A Delhi-based photographer and filmmaker, Gaur is known for his abstract style where he amalgamates art and architecture through his visuals. For this issue, he photographs Tahir Sultan's store Makaan in Jaipur (pg 36). "Shooting with Tahir and his antique products brought out a sudden nostalgic feeling and it felt like taking a walk down the memory lanes of culture and history."



← **VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR**

**WRITER** Talawadekar writes about Makaan, Tahir Sultan's Jaipur-based concept store (pg 36), and Bindoo, a new series of mirrors by Bengaluru-based Kumar La Noce for Altreforme (pg 14). "Writing for this issue was a treat. Covering both these stories was like venturing deep inside Aladdin's cave of undiscovered treasures."

