

## ASHIESH SHAH'S LATEST COLLECTION DWAAR SITS AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE.

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TALAWADEKAR  
PHOTO: KASHYAP VYAS

In his 20-something years as a designer, Ashiesh Shah has time and again found inspiration in historic objects, but never enough to incorporate them fully into his designs. That is, until last year, when he decided to rewrite his own rulebook. His latest collection, Dwaar, unveiled at the 2024 India Art Fair, comprises 16 objects. Each, save for two, is tailored around one prized artefact, or ensemble of artefacts, mined from his own personal treasure trove.

Dwaar borrows its name from the Sanskrit word for door, and likewise its ethos from celestial doorways. The elevation of artefacts into objets d'art, in Shah's eyes, represents the passage between the mediaeval and modern, art and architecture, the familiar and unfamiliar. The artefacts in question, amassed by the designer on his travels over two decades, hold a mirror to the Indian hinterland. A shapeless monolith from Kerala, for example, finds new life as a base for the Mukut table, while a stone bust, also Kerala, takes pride of place in the Enlighten wall sconce.

Shah counts the Brahmand wall cabinet amongst his most significant designs. At first blush, the installation, defined by a column of mirror-image copper vessels, appears decorative at best. But venture closer and you'll spot, on each, a sliver of a door, behind which exists a marvellous hollow of storage. Equally special, the scarlet Manka Moli Panel—enlivened by wooden Channapatna beads,

mirrors, and cotton thread—reinterprets centuries-old artisanal wisdom in a contemporary grammar.

Bringing cherished artefacts into his oeuvre has marked a creative watershed for Shah. "The process demonstrates the timeless nature of design—a concept that resonates deeply with my artistic vision. It not only breathes new life into the object but also gives rise to a fresh voice and an evolved aesthetic," he says. ▲



THE MANKA MOLI PANEL HAS BEEN CRAFTED FROM WOODEN BEADS, MIRRORS, METAL FRAME AND COTTON THREAD.