

MEET THE MAKERS

Khanoom

THIS JAIPUR-BASED POTTERY STUDIO CREATES LUXURY TABLEWARE ROOTED IN STORYTELLING AND CELEBRATES INDIA'S RICH HERITAGE OF ARTISANAL LUXURY, WITH A CONTEMPORARY SPIN



A plate by Khanoom, inspired by the gardens of India.

WORDS VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY KHANOOM



Clockwise from top left: Each detail is hand-painted, using time-honoured artisanal techniques; A plate being brought to life at Khanoom's Jaipur workshop; The making of a plate by a master artisan

Priyamvada Golcha was raised with a deep respect for craftsmanship. After all, her family had been in the business of clay and particle technology for the better half of a century, and she had grown up around artisans and makers breathing life into the most beautiful ceramic objects. “And yet, it took the pandemic to prompt me to venture out on my own. Well, that and Simon,” she laughs. This would be British-born, Jaipur-based designer Simon Marks (who has dedicated the last two decades to working with artisans in India and Indonesia), whom Priyamvada met through a mutual friend.

The pair christened their little venture Khanoom, after the Egyptian deity Khnum, who was worshipped for his ability to create the bodies of human children, which he made at a potter’s wheel,

from clay, and placed in their mothers’ wombs. For their workshop, they revived the courtyard of a jilted glass factory and employed local potters and artisans. “Each item produced by the studio is handcrafted and hand-painted, making every piece unique. Khanoom employs Kaolin clay, sourced from Bikaner, and develops custom glazes,” explains Simon.

The studio’s collections are a charming time capsule of mythological motifs, whimsical illustrations and bright colours—a little hat-tip to the time-honoured treasures of India. Their latest tableware collection, custom-designed for an eco-sanctuary in Kanha, is inspired by the famous fables of the Panchatantra, more specifically the Kalila wa Dimna manuscript, noted for its seventy-eight paintings—each depicting a different story—of the jackals, Kalila and Dimna.

Playful animals and colourful fruits and vegetables are happily emblazoned across much of Khanoom’s pottery: mischievous lemurs hiding in mango trees, ripe custard apples hanging off branches, fat gourds that look like they could jump out and offer themselves for dinner. Ask them what plans they have up their sleeves and the two hardly skip a beat. “We’re dreaming up an astrological line, and expanding our offerings to include jugs and glasses, as well as an entire collection of kitchenware. With the festivities in full swing, it’s the ideal time to bring out the tableware,” they sign off. ♦

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