



ARTIST'S GROOVE

A label which embodies 'glocal' fashion a hybrid expression, that justifies the designers imagination. Urvashi's canvas of style is nothing less than eclectic.

BY CHITMAN KANWAR AHUJA

An army brat with a definitively personal style, and a noteworthy eye for detail, designer Urvashi Kaur has become the talk of the town. Sporting an edgy, short bob with strands of blonde highlighting her salt and pepper hair, a stud in one ear and dangle in the other, with nails manicured to goth perfection, she exemplifies the idea of punk with panache. It's hard to pin down the aesthetic of her brand, and that's exactly how its founder-designer intends it to be.

An avid traveler, Urvashi is one of the few designers who effortlessly translates her personal style on the runway through her creations. Words like relatable, comfortable, and interesting sum up Urvashi's work. Here are some edited excerpts from the interview.

The journey of fashion designing is always a noteworthy one. How did it all begin for you?

I've always been interested in adornment

and identity. An army background meant that we were travelling throughout my childhood, which resulted in an interest and fascination for clothing. This translated into a decision to venture into theatre and costume design, which ultimately led to my entry into the world of fashion.

Simplicity dwells well in your designs.

What inspires your design process?

I'm inspired by a multitude of things. Travel, ethnicity, identity, and heritage are themes that run through all my collections.

You seem to use a lot of surface texturing. What kind of techniques and fabrics have you come to work

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with over the years?

More than surface texturing, it's the tactile nature of handloom that appeals to me. I've explored various textiles with weaves that are developed across the country. The human element in these comes across so beautifully, and is a constant in my work. I then further add hand dyeing techniques such as, *Shibori*, tie dye or hand block printing to further enhance my silhouettes. Hand work in the form of *kantha* stitch details are also seen in most of my pieces, thereby creating subtle texture and interest.

A minimalist approach is seen in your design creations, but do you think that a nation drenched in maximalist tradition is ready for such a change?

Minimalism actually resonates very well with our country. Over the years my buyers have gravitated towards an aesthetic that's clean and lets the wearer stand out, as opposed to an over the top offering where the individual is completely overshadowed.

How do you think your designs have helped in showing the world the rich



1. A sage summer — digital illustration of the label's signature sage tie and dye *chanderi* silk sari paired with a block printed hand pleated peplum blouse.
2. *Masira* — digital illustration
3. Designer Urvashi Kaur
4, 5 & 6. Models in *Masira* collection presented at Lakmé Fashion Week Winter Festive 2019

Indian aesthetics?

My aesthetic profiles feature the rich Indian textile heritage in a modern contemporary manner that people across the world can imbibe in, to varying degrees. It isn't about simply re-creating what Indians are known for, but reinterpreting our skills for a newer, more conscious audience.

The Indian drape has gone experimental by leaps and bounds. Is experimentation a required tool for being consistent in the fashion industry?

Reinvention and adaptation are important in any industry. In fashion there is quick fatigue regarding what brands are offering, so it's imperative to constantly innovate. Especially now that we are looking at ecological impact. My label is seeking to not just experiment with drapes or cuts, but look deeper at our contribution to the world as a whole, and what we leave behind for generations to come.

Your designs give a contemporary touch to traditional wear. Is

modernism the secret to your label's success?

A new take on modern Indian dressing has been our vision for the brand. It's been heartening to see the response of the market to this interpretation of blurring the lines between what is considered traditional versus prêt-à-porter.

The bridal season is round the corner. What are the trends you are betting big on this year?

I'm looking at brides that are breaking the mould and having fun with their wedding attire. It's great to see alternatives to the typical red and gold outfits. *Urvashi Kaur festive* consists of such options, with beautiful artisanal techniques and rich textiles that convey a subtle, yet self assured luxury.

How would you define a muse draped in an Urvashi Kaur ensemble? What does her spirit look like?

The Urvashi Kaur woman or man is confident, compassionate, free-spirited, forward thinking; and is a believer in

equality and diversity.

What does it take to stay relevant in fashion?

Adaptation, reinvention and an awareness of the world around us. Fashion, like art, is ultimately an expression of the times that we live in.

What is your take on social media? How do you think that its emergence has helped you in promoting your label?

Social media is a tool that can help harness an enormous visibility. It takes constant focus, and we're always looking at ways and means of engaging with our audience in newer and more exciting ways.

Can you give us a hint about your upcoming collections?

I'm so excited for my latest collection, *Masira*, which we showcased at Lakmé Fashion Week. It's going to be hitting stores soon, and it's the first time that I've played with a clash of patterns and colours; so that is something new to look forward to.