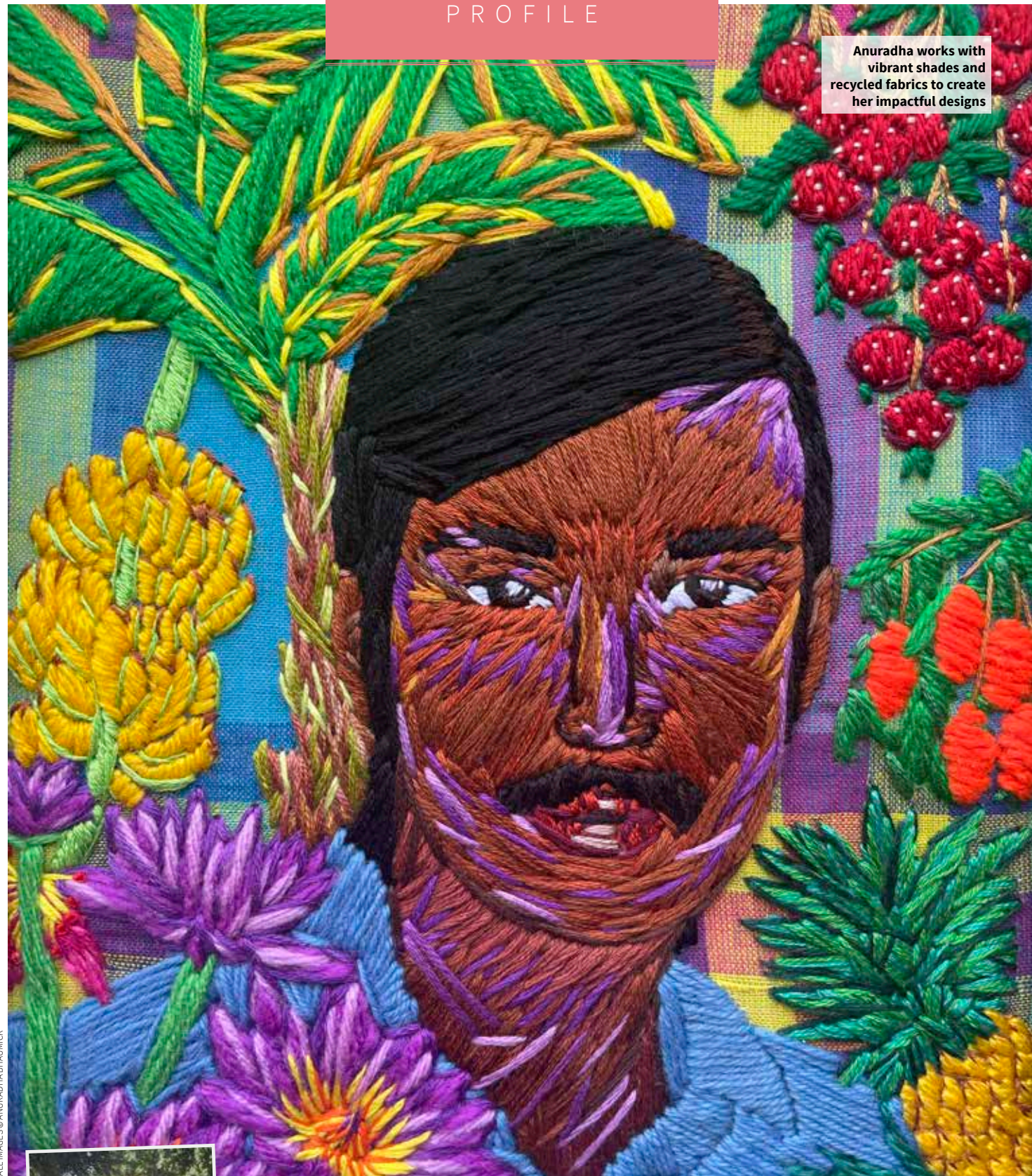


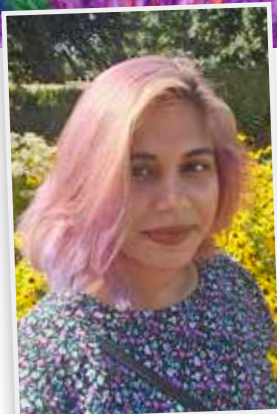
Anuradha works with vibrant shades and recycled fabrics to create her impactful designs



Anuradha Bhaumick

BASED IN BANGALORE, INDIA, TEXTILE ARTIST ANURADHA USES HER VIBRANTLY STITCHED DESIGNS TO CELEBRATE PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS – AND THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THEM

Words by Daisy Game



Fabric offcuts often feature in Anuradha's pieces, increasing the potential for sustainability and storytelling



“Growing up, my mom used to repurpose old sofa upholstery to make unique jackets for us... Cushion covers often became dresses for our dolls, too! In her world, everything was repairable and had an afterlife. This belief has been the crux of my work.”

For embroidery designer Anuradha Bhamick, family has always been a major source of creative inspiration. It was Anuradha's mother who first taught her to stitch, in an effort to keep the then-five-year-old entertained during a nasty spell of the chicken pox. Little did she or her mother know, Anuradha's sick day pastime would kick off a love of textiles that would later prompt a grown-up Anu to pursue a career in the fashion industry. Until 2020, when Anu said goodbye to her denim designer day job to embark on a full-time career in embroidery. “Stitching helps me slow down – it's therapeutic in this way”, the creative says, explaining that embroidery has always enabled her to stay grounded: “When my hands are busy, my head is too. Creating art helps to divert my attention.”

Embroidery also gives Anuradha the chance to leave everyday worries far behind, escaping into a world of pure imagination. The collection of work closest to her heart, the designer reveals, is ‘The Time Traveller's Parents’, or ‘Monn'er Golpo’, and consists of stitched scenes depicting the designer's parents in their youth. Or, at least, depicting the pair as Anuradha imagines they may have been: “My mother only has five photographs of herself from before her marriage – one from an ID card, another from an interview application... But no photos of her infancy or teenage years.

Everything I know about her before she became a mother is through what she has told me herself. ‘Monn'er Golpo’ is my attempt to recreate photographs of my parents’ core memories, from adolescence to coming of age. I love travelling back in time through embroidery, to when my mom was just Nanda, and my dad was just Somnath – and they had full lives apart from each other.”

Her mother not only makes up the imaginative fabric of Anu's designs – she contributes real fabrics, too: Anuradha's ever-expanding textiles collection is largely made up of scraps from her mother's wardrobe: “My mom is 4'11”, and store-bought kurtas never fit her – the bottom hem always touches the floor!”, Anuradha says: “She's been getting them altered to her size since forever, and stores the leftover fabrics. When she noticed my love for all things textile and handmade, she started giving the offcuts to me. Since then, I have formed a treasure chest of these kurta fabrics. I call them ‘shona’, the Bengali word for ‘gold’ and I use them to collage my pieces. I have everything I need, from ikat, Ajrakh prints, true blue indigos to Thai silks. All because of my mother and her generosity...” →

“My themes will always be belonging, identity, compassion, and the freedom to be...”



When she's not busy taking a *Back to the Future*-style sojourn down memory lane, Anuradha turns to the people outside of her immediate circle for inspiration. The designer tells us that she has always been fascinated by the relationship individuals build with their surroundings, and with the precious belongings that fill them: "I like to imagine people being at peace when they are solitary – but not isolated – and surrounded by the objects that form their life's patina..." the artist ponders. "Things are not just things. They are living objects that give colour, both literally and metaphorically, to one's life. From the paint peeling on a bedroom wall, to tchotchkes collected from first dates and pictures of family and friends – I'm fascinated by everything that creates the mini-universe of a person... My themes will always be belonging, identity, compassion, and freedom to just be."

From a collection of scrap fabric with sentimental value, to the minutiae of her domestic life, Anuradha's sources of inspiration, it seems, are appropriately patchwork. This is reflected in the multimedia nature of the designs themselves,



which boast a beautifully textured, tactile quality. While her unusual use of long, Satin Stitch strokes lends an impressionist finish to her patterns. And, of course, colour plays a part too: "From the veins of a peony and the greying of my pug's chin, to Bangalore's unique orange sky, and the different hues seen in Biryani rice... these all their way into my pieces".

Keen to share her passion for embroidery with others, just as her mother did all those years ago, Anu set up her 'Stitch-Nic' workshops. For the last year, the artist has been inviting beginner and experienced stitchers alike to join these sessions and enjoy working on a set project, in the company of other crafters. All that attendees need to bring is a sense of enthusiasm, a love of learning – and a true appreciation of colour. And of course, Anuradha's use of vibrant skeins and leftover textiles is integral to her work. Since its first session in May 2023, Stitch-Nic has become an internationally successful endeavour, with Anuradha taking the class all the way from India to Primrose Hill, London. "I had no idea that I would end up not only sending my art across the world, but teaching my skills abroad too!" Anuradha says, before emphasising how thrilled she is about the development: "I am so grateful to be able to turn my passion into a lucrative career. It's been four years of this – hopefully it'll be a lifetime."

The artist is equally passionate about using her craft to do good for those outside of the stitching community. That's where the Sui Kapda Baagan collective comes in. Made up of clothiers, craftspeople and social impact partners, the brand sells vibrantly embroidered, one-of-a-kind items of clothing – and a portion of each sale goes toward the funding of an urgent social cause. The collective is currently supporting The Bahuarwa Foundation, founded by Priyadarshan Kumar, which is building The Savitribai Phule Memorial School in Darbangha. The school will provide education, meals and sanctuary to children from overlooked and marginalised communities. Now that's what we call stitching for change!

Visit Sui Kapda Baagan via Instagram, [@sui.kapda.baagan](#) and browse Anuradha's patterns at [@hooplback.girl](#)

