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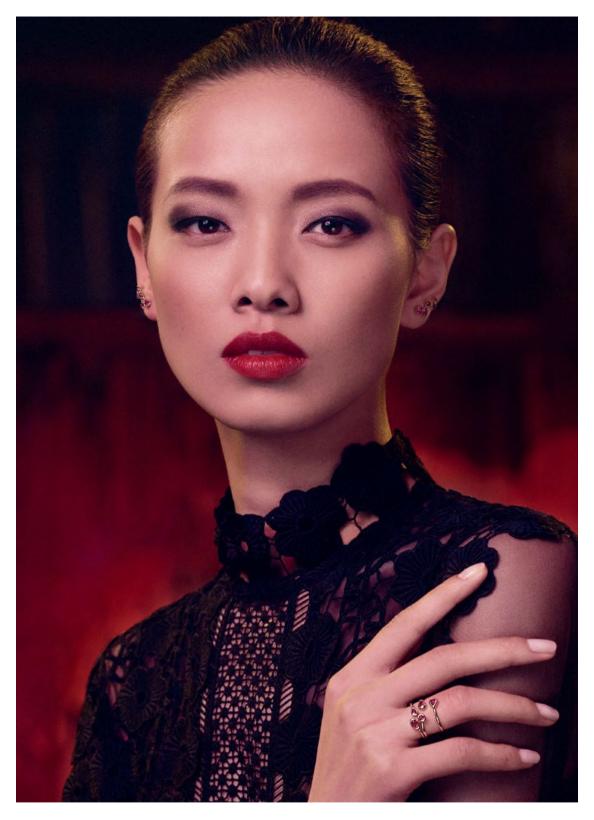


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LEVI.IN





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59 **ELLE SPECIAL** Amazon
India Fashion Week S/S 2017
was all about easy movement,
elegant day-dressing and
playing it cool. Surabhi
Chauhan reports from the frow





ON THE COVER:

Lace dress, silk jacket, metal and resin earrings; all **Chanel**

PHOTOGRAPH: PRASAD NAIK STYLING: MALINI BANERJI

ART DIRECTION: RESHMA RAJIWDEKAR HAIR AND MAKE-UP: DANIEL BAUER MODEL: KANGANA RANAUT



94 **MY DAD, THE FEMINIST** Feminism is simple to

Feminism is simple to understand when it takes the shape of your father (and the occasional tyre change), writes Rochelle Pinto

96 **DRESS CIRCLE** We found the hottest new designers to watch out for this year—meet the finalists of the ELLE Graduates

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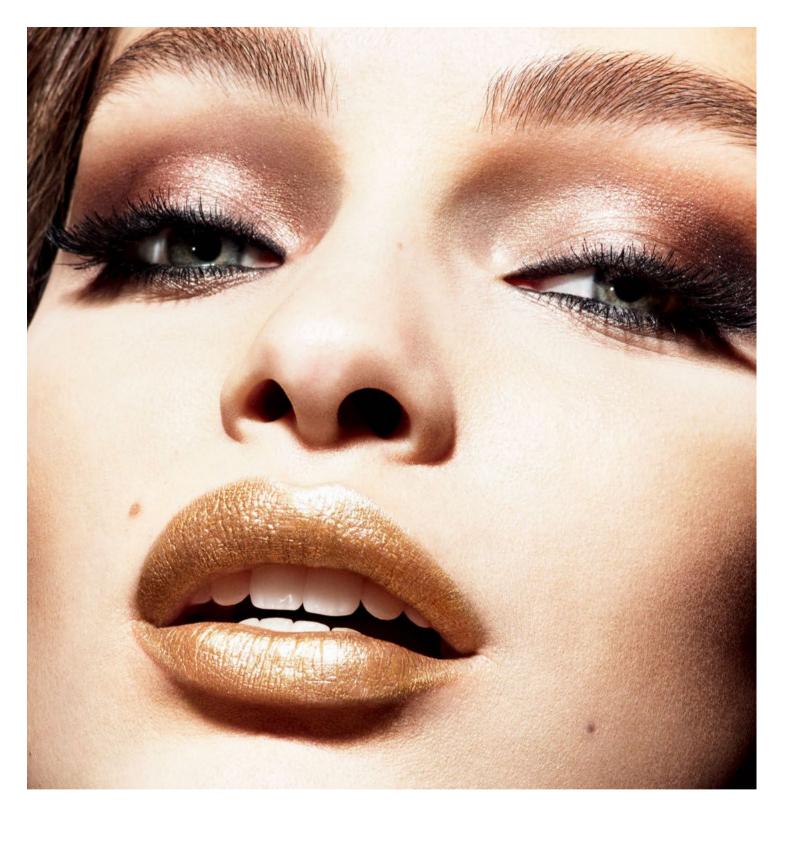
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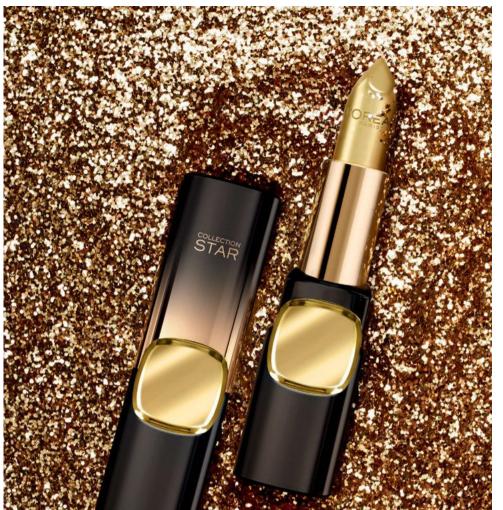


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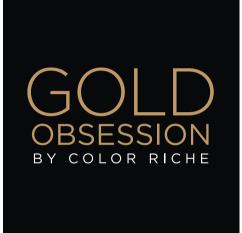


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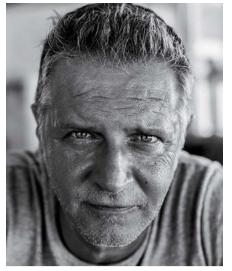
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Salvatore Ferragamo



ANDREA VARANI

The lensman captures new bohemian dressing in all its vivid glory in Wild Flower, page 112. His advice to new photographers:

"Never lose the enthusiasm you have today."

@ANDREAVARANIPHOTOGRAPHER

MARCH ELLE

POWERED BY

MAYANK SHEKHAR

The writer talks to Kangana Ranaut about her unique success story in Top Gun. page 106. The most memorable moment from their conversation:

"When she talked about how ambition is neverending and feeling satisfied is a myth. In her words: 'there's no such thing as enough love or money. Humans are an ungrateful species."

y@MAYANKW14



SURABHI CHAUHAN

The writer dissects the biggest trends from Amazon India Fashion Week S/S 2017 in the trend report, ELLE Special, page 59. A trend she thinks is here to stay:

"Easy footwear."

@@LOVESTRUCKCOWHQ



PRASAD NAIK

The photographer turns his lens on cover star Kangana Ranaut and catches her many moods in Top Gun, page 106. A photograph that inspires him:

> "Anything shot by Henri Cartier-Bresson."

@PRASADNAIKSTUDIO



AMRITA PAUL

The writer analyses India's approach to autism with Dr Archana Nayar, founder of the Autism Centre for Excellence in Take Courage, page 86. A cause she feels deeply about:

"Gender equality—a woman's safety, her bodily autonomy, her values and opinions. In the face of startling misogyny, words are slowly becoming vital ammunition to steer change."

@JUXTOPPOSE



SANDHYA SHEKAR

The make-up artist opts for a clean. classic old-school look with wine lips and structured hair in South Side, page 148. An item that's always in her bag:

"Beauty Bakerie's Lip & Cheek tint."

@SANDHYASHEKAR









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Rashmi Nayak (@rashnayak)

Why is this not applauded more! Stunning digital cover by @ELLEINDIA with the beautiful Anjali Lama wearing @gauriandnainika.

MissMalini (@MissMalini)

ELLE TWEETS

Want to have

a little chat

or show some love/loathing?

Tweet at us

@ELLEINDIA

The February issue of @ELLEINDIA is really, really special.

> Enrique Torre Molina (@eTorreMolina)

#Ungender. Join a global movement. Break free of the binary. Be who you want to be.





ELLE MAIL

Got something to say about the issue (or life in general)? Email us at ellemail@ ogaan.co.in



I have been reading ELLE for over a decade and I have observed that any big news about fashion is always broken by you, which is evident, once again, from the introduction of your cover girl Radhika Nair.

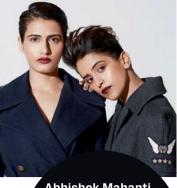
FRESH CATCH

ANJU KHETARPAL, GHAZIABAD

FIT BIT

I'm over 60 years old and the article titled Old School really inspired me. The way women are prioritising their bodies and health, by indulging in various fitness activities available in the world today, was an eye-opener.

NAFIS FATIMA. NEW DELHI



Abhishek Mahanti (@Arjs_Bits) @fattysanashaikh @sanyamalhotra07, it's always good to see you both. Thank you, @ELLEINDIA!

NEW AGE

The message hidden in the Blurred Lines shoot was beautiful. It's time to be more open and embrace diversity.

SABIA TRAMBOO, NEW DELHI

YOUNG AT HEART

Old School was a wonderful and heartwarming article about senior citizens who are also gymnasts. It goes to show that you really are only as old as you feel.

RAJESHWARI SINGH, NEW DELHI

GENDER FREE

I really liked ELLE's take on gender fluidity and your initiative to write about an otherwise taboo subject—one which evokes strong and, sometimes, vicious opinions.

REKHA WALI, NEW DELHI

FIVE LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE APRIL ISSUE WILL WIN A GIFT FROM LA ROCHE-POSAY.





Please include your address and telephone number. Incomplete letters will not be entertained.

Five letters published in this issue have won a gift from Cath Kidston.

@madenau

We Nepalis are so proud of you, ANJALI LAMA! You are a role model for Nepali LGBT youth around the world! DREAM, INSPIRE, ACHIEVE!





ELLE INSTA

Trying your filters on our issue? Don't forget to tag us @elleindiaofficial



@diversity_rules

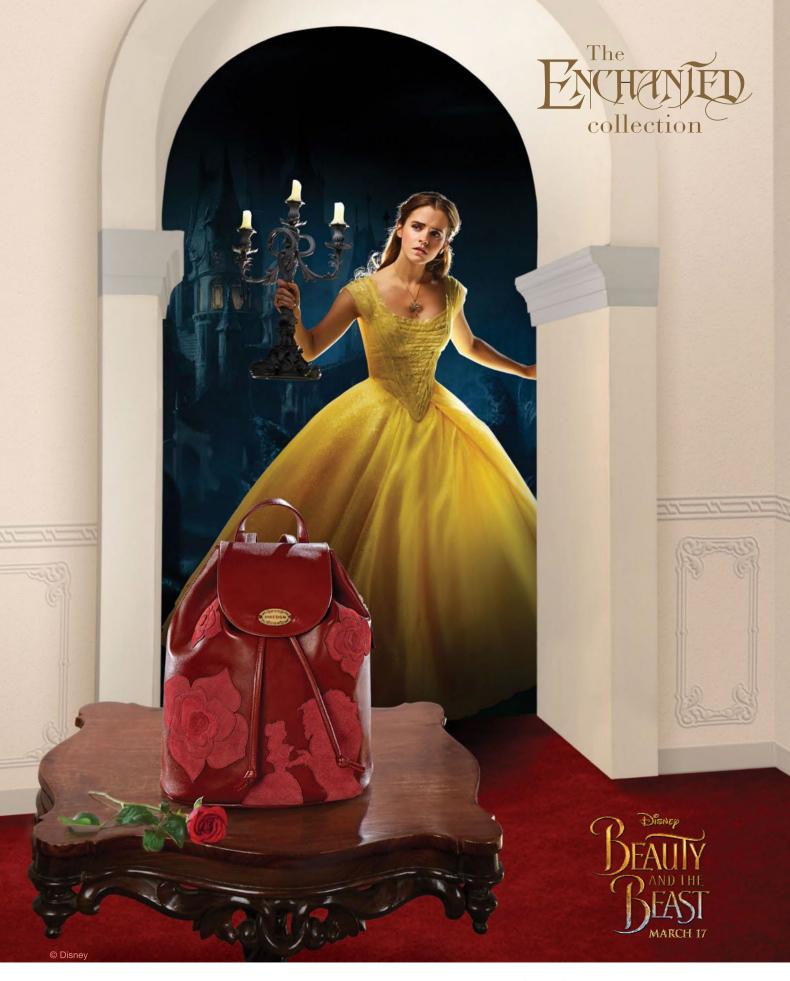
Love transmodel Anjali Lama by @o_k_whatever for ELLE India February 2017 (special digital cover). We need diversity in fashion and magazines! #Diversityrules #beautyisdiverse

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E L L E MARCH



t's not easy to like Kangana Ranaut. She's prickly, opinionated and ambitious, she betrays unflinching honesty, and she really seems to not care very much whether or not you like her. Is there anything more unlikeable in a woman than her not caring whether or not you like her? In a man, however... okay we won't get into that for reasons of preserving my sanity.

I've long stopped counting the number of times people (other women, mainly) have stressed upon me the importance of being likeable. (It's why Hillary lost, after all.) I've had female bosses tell me that I need to be friendly, warm, nurturing; and I've nodded at them with a deep sense of disappointment and betrayal. We expect better from other women, don't we? We hold them to a higher standard, ask more of them on every front. This may not be fair, but neither is life, and we wimmin gots to stick together.

This is my last issue of ELLE, and I've had just the most fun over the last four years with different bunches of women who have always stuck together. No matter how things fell, we always had each other's back. I've made friends for life here, and have had the distinct privilege of being blissfully unlikeable around so many exceptional, talented people who didn't care. I'd like to thank them all for being awesome.

I'm so glad, too, that my last issue has on its cover a strong, defiant woman who refuses to colour inside the lines. Watching Ranaut perform, speak and stand her ground is a pleasure and a joy, and her first ELLE cover could not have come at a better time. She makes me so hopeful.

That sums up how I feel right now, actually. I feel impossibly hopeful for the future of everything. For the future of magazines, journalism, fashion. For the immensely capable team I leave behind. I'm excited to see where ELLE will go next, how it will change and what it will become. I'm excited to see where I will go next, how I will change and who I will become.

More than anything, I am filled with hope for unlikeable women, so many of whom I see around me, kicking ass on a daily basis. I stand with you. May you never have to be friendly.

Thank you for reading. Goodbye.

AISHWARYA SUBRAMANYAM EDITOR

Email editor@ogaan.co.in Twitter @otherwarya Insta @otherwarya



Ranaut's airport looks are always on point. Even Alia Bhatt couldn't help but go on about them on Karan Johar's chat show.



When she's not busy shooting, Ranaut likes to escape to the cooler climes of Switzerland or Manali.



The beauty board was easy and fuss-free, with dewy skin, glossy lips, and natural kinks for the hair.



The Playlist: **The Chainsmokers:** 'Paris' **Maroon 5:** 'Sugar'



KANGANA RANAUT

The queen of Bollywood is the picture of grace on her first cover for ELLE



The fashion rack was lined with delicate pastels, including Chanel's delicious blush-pink ruched dress, which also made it to our cover.

Our National Award-winning cover star has collaborated with ace director Vishal Bhardwaj and Bollywood biggies Saif Ali Khan and Shahid Kapoor for the first time for her new film.



Three essentials that Ranaut never leaves home without: lip balm, perfume and credit cards.





The song 'Tippa' from Ranaut's new movie, Rangoon, tops her playlist currently.

TARUN TAHILIANI

ALL THAT WE WERE, AND MORE



WHAT'S NEW ON

News, trends, insider info—this is your daily dose of ELLE



COVER

QUEEN BEE

Seven times Kangana Ranaut proved that she was the coolest Bollywood celebrity around



facebook.com/elleindia











INSTA

ELLE LOVES

Keep up with the hottest trends in beauty, fashion and more



FASHION

STYLE QUICKIES

Layering rules to follow this season for a happier wardrobe





BLOG

MOVE ON

A handy guide to packing smart for any trip, ever



CULTURE

REEL STORIES

Read these books before they hit the screens in 2017





BEAUTY

BON VOYAGE

Five beauty holiday essentials that need to be in your kit at all times





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TIPPLE POINT

Fratelli Vineyards' Taste Of The World event was an evening of fine wine, delicious food and great company

Wine connoisseurs from across the globe descended on the Indian capital for Fratelli Vineyards' star-studded event, Taste Of The World, which was held recently at The Mansion at Hyatt Regency Delhi. The evening saw guests enjoy 29 old and new wines from Australia, France, Italy, Chile and America, as well as those from Fratelli Vineyards' expanded international wine portfolio and domestic range—SETTE, VITAE and MIS - Masters' Selection.

The new international labels included JCB—numbered wines created by Jean-Charles Boisset (fondly known as the James Bond of the wine world)—DeLoach (from the US) and Cecchi (from Italy), apart from Australia's boutique wines by Molly Cradle. Fratelli Vineyards also displayed at the gala its soon-to-be-launched SETTE Magnum bottle.

At the event, Boisset, proprietor, Boisset Collection, said, "I am absolutely thrilled to be associated with Fratelli Vineyards, and have JCB and DeLoach wines as part of this prestigious Taste Of The World event."

As the evening wore on, the hum of conversation and strains of live jazz served as the perfect backdrop to the tinkle of glasses and waves of laughter, while guests refilled their glasses and tucked into the gourmet spread curated by Hyatt Regency Delhi.

MANDIRA LAMBA













FIRST LOOK







034 **EFirst Look**



BIG GESTURES

Wear a bit of drama on your sleeve this season, says Malini Banerji

Designers from Dries Van Noten to Dhruv Kapoor decided to let their sleeves do the talking this season. So out tumbled onto the runway everything from brassy bell sleeves to demure Victorian numbers. Anthony Vaccarello's debut show at YSL was all about the '80s and featured the season's standout silhouette: puffed shoulders with leg-of-mutton sleeves. Christopher Kane, J.W. Anderson and Simone Rocha, on the other hand, took a shine to bell-shaped, puff and gathered lace sleeves. Both Loewe and Valentino did some interpretation of the kimono-meets-trumpet style—one that curves outward from a narrow upper arm. Chloé, Burberry and Topshop Unique showcased the longer cuffed sleeve, which is soft, fluid and gathered. So quick, before sleeveless season is upon us again, cover up with flair to spare.







Photographs: /maxtree.com/Alessandro Lucioni

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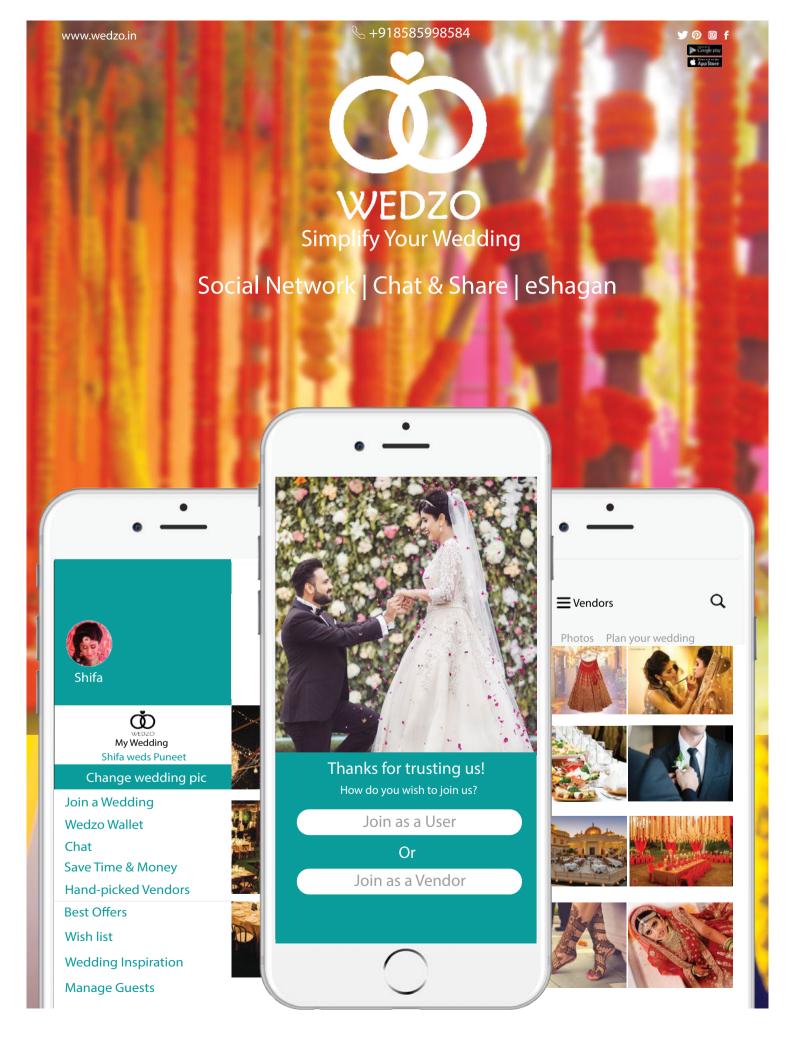
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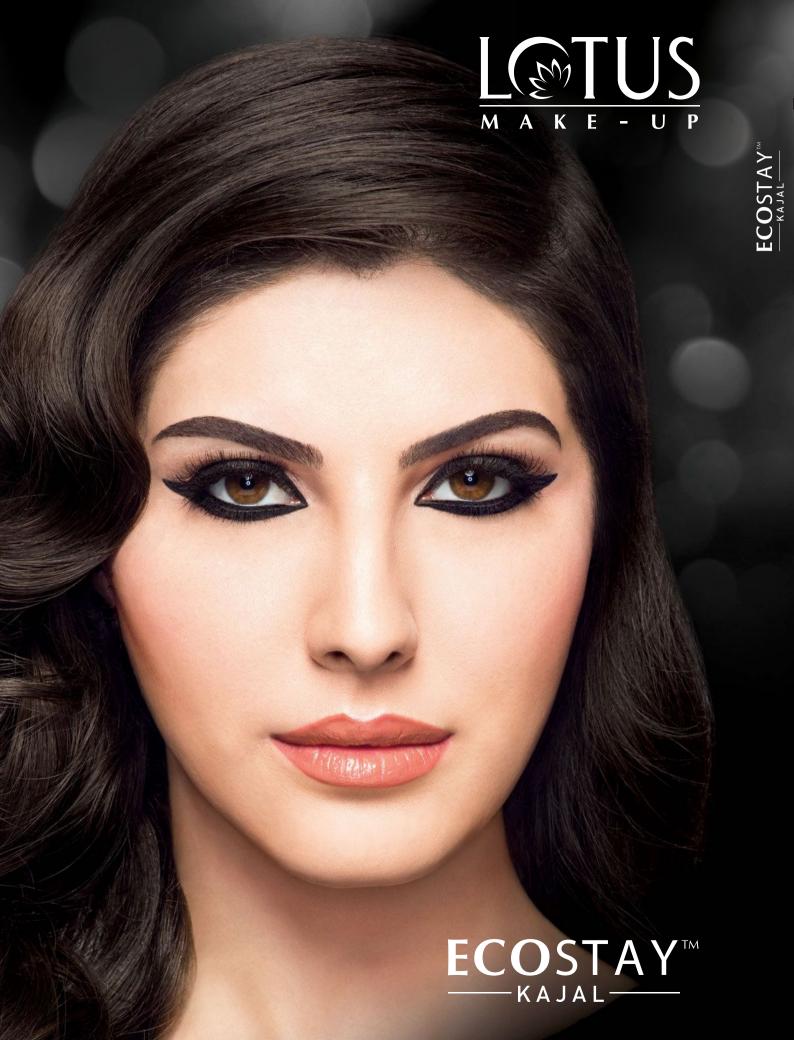
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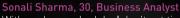


ONE MILLION EYES ARE DOING THE TALKING.



Divya Rastogi, 25, UI/UX Designer I love the dark kohl-lined look and my Lotus Ecostay Kajal gives me just that, in one smooth stroke. It gives my eyes the perfect black look and is definitely one of the best kajals I've used. I love it.





With my busy schedule, I don't get time for touch-ups and needed a kajal that doesn't smudge. I tried many that promised to be long-lasting and smudge-proof, but none of them matched Lotus Ecostay Kajal. It's super long-lasting and needs no touch-up.





Gauri Verma, 27, Fashion Blogger I have sensitive eyes and always wanted a kajal that's not harsh. Once I started using Lotus Ecostay Kajal, I never looked back. It's soft, safe, doesn't irritate my eyes and is tested by experts.

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WHAT'S ON YOUR LIPS THIS

SUMMER? Nykaa Paintstix will be the perfect companion to your summer style

The new season is here and it has brought along a fresh set of wardrobe updates. While it's easy to put together a summer outfit, raise your hand if you never know how to pair it with a lipstick. Well, the good news is that Nykaa has now launched a whole new range of lipsticks with a shade to match every style. The soft matte lipstick glides on easily and gives intense colour in a single swipe. Its long-lasting formula is infused with vitamin E to keep your lips hydrated and plump all day. Take your pick from 12 shades, ranging from cherry red to a barely-there nude. If you're having trouble picking the right shade, here's how you can match it with your personal style...



THE '90S KID =

GRUNGE BROWN

If you're obsessed with Rachel Green's style from *Friends* you'll surely need her signature brown lip colour to complete the look. You'll love Nykaa Paintstix in Grunge Brown—the inky shade adds just enough edge to your choker or retro sunglasses.



HEARTS N KISSES

Nykaa Paintstix in Hearts n Kisses is the perfect pick to tap into your girly side. Pair it with your dainty floral prints or candy bright accessories, and you will never go wrong. Just a suggestion, this shade makes a great nail colour too.





THE NORMCORE GANG =

NUDE SPICE

When your outfit is based on comfortable fabrics in neutral hues, you need a lip colour to match this code too. Look no further than Nykaa Paintstix in Nude Spice. It has just enough colour to accompany your basic outfit.

THE MINIMALIST =

NO CHILL ORANGE

Nothing beats graphic stripes and an all-white ensemble for the summer. Create an interesting contrast to your clean and simple style with Nykaa Paintstix in No Chill Orange. It may seem intimidating at first, but you won't believe how easy it is to wear this electric shade.



THE RAD '80S GIRL =

BOMBSHELL BERRY

Fashion was at its boldest during the '80s. And if your go-to outfit is all about neon prints, acid-wash jeans and classic Wayfarers, you'll love the dark hues of Nykaa Paintstix in Bombshell Berry. It's exactly what you need to take your outfit to the next level.





Tender Rose



Roll pink

Monster



Purple Bombshell Grunge Chick Brown Flick Pink Berry



Red



Spice

Nude



No Chill Orange

Peaches n Cream

STREET

A hint of pink will take you everywhere

Photographs **ROHAN HANDE**





SHRUTI VISWAN, 25

MODEL

Polyester sports bra, polyamide elastane tights, polyester bomber jacket; all **adidas**

@shrutiviswan

ROHINI NISHAR, 22 FASHION DESIGNER





Hair and make-up: Takshita Malhotra

052 **First Look**



RITIKA SETHI, 30 BANKER



VRINDA NARANG, 24 STYLIST/CONCEPTUAL ARTIST





PROMOTION



POWER UP

PUMA shows you how to fashionably flaunt your sporty self







Photographs: Rohan Hande, Hair and make-up: Takshira Malhotra

ALL PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE IN STORES AND AT PUMA.COM





SUNGLASSES & PRESCRIPTION FRAMES















tall glass of water in a single-breasted jacket and grey drainpipe trousers examines a freshly-painted wooden matryoshka doll shell. Beside him, a group of hipsters finger the delicate Orenburg lace decorating the czarina figurines on display. We're inside the neoclassical Central Manezh building in Moscow, right next to the Red Square. It's day two of the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week.

There's a heady dose of native inspiration everywhere. Even as they look to break into the Western market, the country's top designers are still channelling the dramatic opulence of Russian royalty for their client base of mink-loving oligarchs. Like, Alena Akhmadullina. The Moscow designer has dressed the likes of Naomi Campbell and Eva Green in her signature fur-embellished knits. And despite a foray into subdued wraps and shifts, her S/S 2017 collection returns to the territory of folklore and fairy tales. Her models wore comfortable silhouettes amped up with fur trims, complex jewel-like embroideries and trompe-l'œil effects.

For a more modern aesthetic with oomph-y Russian accents, there's Julia Nikolaeva. Her hugely popular eponymous label favours sleek silhouettes and sheer fabric with graphic tops and glossy jackets. Nikolaeva's 21st-century interpretation

MOSCOW UNDERGROUND

The global success of 31-year-old Gosha Rubchinskiyhis eponymous streetwear label stocks at 150 retail outlets worldwidehas opened the floodgates for Moscow's distinctive underground subcultures. Frontrunners in the genre include Sorry I'm Not, which produces limitededition capsule collections of provocative outfits, and designer Yriy Pitenin, whose label, Saint-Tokvo. is characterised by its aggressive sexuality and cheeky contradictions.

of Russian heritage is reminiscent of designer, blogger and all-season It Girl, Ulyana Sergeenko, whose couture collection marries two eras: Russia just before the fall of Communism and at the turn of the 20th century. Her mood board was partly Madonna and Boy George, and partly an ode to eccentric Russian nobility.

"We want our young designers to be inspired by traditional crafts and make them trendy on a global stage," says Alexander Schumsky, executive president of the Russian Fashion Council and president of the Fashion Week. Schumsky says that the Russian government is working on reducing export barriers and encouraging young talent to make their mark as global brands.

The soft-spoken Vera Kostyurina is part of this new fashion vanguard. She is the creator and patent-holder of quattro-sided clothing, a technique that allows outfits to be worn in four different ways.

The third designer on my radar is Lena Karnauhova. Her work is rich, with sensually flowing satiny dresses, and trenches and skirts with minimal tailoring that rely on mathematical precision in folding to achieve maximum fluidity. Her show-closing scarlet dress, shorn of any fur accents or embellishments, was a sensational statement on the Russian zeitgeist. ●









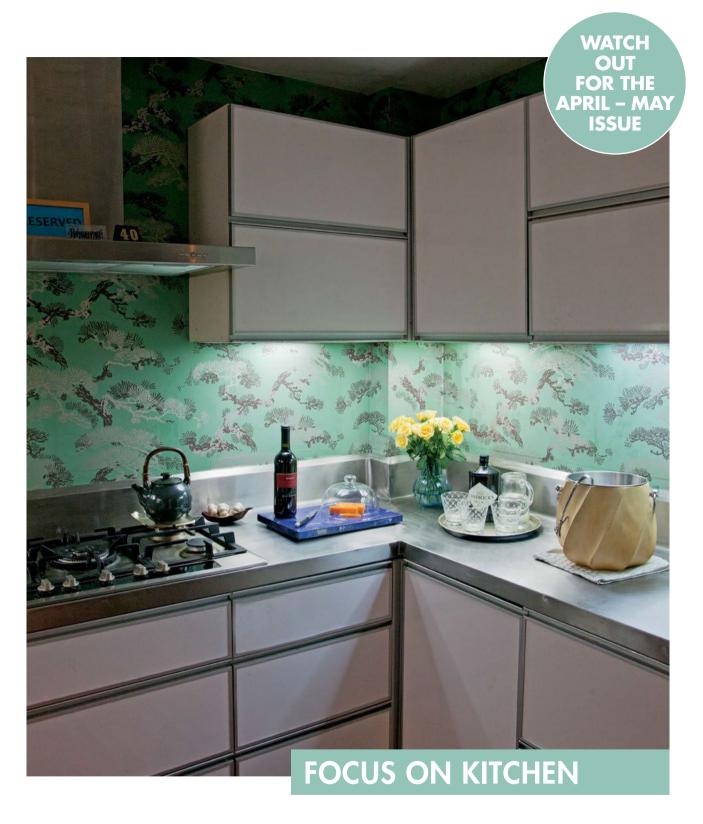
KAN I Mini bag in cream-coloured leather, ₹ 1,39,269

What makes an It Bag? Functionality or exclusivity—or is it both? With its new decorative range, KAN I, Fendi hopes to answer this controversial question, one pretty pastel shade at a time.

These square, compact candies first showed up in the brand's Resort collection as mini-bags (KAN I Small). And now, they're back (and bigger) to take over S/S 2017 with their structured exterior, scalloped edges, surface ornamentation—leather flowers, bows and studs included—as well as appliqué detailing. A quick shuffle of the shoulder strap will bring these multi-talented gems from the 'arm crook-hook' to the hands-free hold, for no extra stress.









IN OUR NEXT ISSUE STIR UP A STORM WITH OUR TOP PICKS OF COOKROOM APPLIANCES, SERVEWARE AND ACCESSORIES. PLUS, REPORTS FROM AMBIENTE, FRANKFURT AND MAISON & OBJET, PARIS. ALSO, CATCH UP ON WHAT YOU MISSED AT THE FIFTH EDITION OF INDIA DESIGN ID IN OUR COMPLIMENTARY HANDBOOK











Polka dots pop up every few seasons, but the trick lies in keeping that circle play fresh. Take a note from Mogachea's head-to-toe pattern on voluminous shapes. Want more quirk? Designer Abhi Singh looked at this trend under a magnifying glass where simple linen Separates were adorned with a single dot.













The versatility of the wrap silhouette is second to none. Whether you opt for graphic structured

wersions with the wrap silhouette is second.

Mehta or Versions Whether you opt for graphic structure.

Anomaly: sari like at Krishna Mehta or Anomaly's trenchcoat-style dress for an elegant evening affair, the result is always on-point.



GENDER NOT BIAS

Gender-bending has become a m_{otif} on the Indian runway and this season w_{as} no different. Men wore pretty scarves at Sanchita, HUEMN showcased slouchy layering styled the same on male and female models, and leading the pack, Akaaro had fashion student Malkeet make his ramp debut in his gender-neutral collection.

066 Trend Report

<u>fDCI</u>

amazon.in

INDIA FASHIOI

WEEK

















STALL
DESIGNERS AT
AIFW S/S 2017

5X BY AJIT KUMAR

The line invoked romanticism, with lightweight ombré-dyed fabrics and subtle floral embroideries. Wide-legged pants paired with boxy jackets were the stars.

ABHIJEET KHANNA

The label brought a playful, urbane offering in comfort fabrics like cotton silks. The line carried easy-to-wear silhouettes in bright colours with Indian hand-embroidery techniques and patchwork details.

ADITYA DUGAR

The collection consisted of colours ranging from sweet pastels to bold strokes on button-down kurtas, sheer cover-ups and salwar kameezes.

ANITA DONGRE

Dongre decided to go all out with handloom textiles, from chanderi skirts and jackets to versatile separates in a subtle-yet-stately palette of cream and gold.

ANTAR-AGNI BY UJJAWAL DUBEY

Dubey's collection incorporated nuanced detailing, smart cuts and raw fabrics in relaxed silhouettes, such as asymmetrical kurtas and draped dresses.

BODICE BY RUCHIKA SACHDEVA

Sticking to what she knows best, Sachdeva presented a line of transitional



amazon.in

wardrobe staples in her signature minimalist aesthetic, integrated with androgynous silhouettes—a mix of modern tailoring and skilful pattern making.

Ontrac par



CHARU PARASHAR

Inspired by her visit to Portugal, Parashar's ensembles, with their bold floral prints and fringed Experimenting with chanderi, Mehta played with pleats and layering on crisp handlooms in earthy tones.

DOLLY J

The designer brought in summer with vibrant hues, ruffled dresses and floor-grazing gowns.

EKA BY RINA SINGH

Singh remained faithful to handloom fabrics, such as tussar silk and patola weave, for her new collection of sustainable fashion, which featured an understated palette, unrestrictive forms and lots of texture.

EKRU BY EKTA JAIPURIA AND RUCHIRA KANDHARI

Ekru used neutral coloured handloom fabrics teamed with vivid hand-embroidered motifs.

GAURAV GUPTA

In an extravagant ready-to-wear line, Gupta presented sculpted pearl detailing and floral ruffles on pastel neoprene fabrics.

GEISHA DESIGNS BY PARAS & SHALINI

The designer duo showcased feminine silhouettes and vibrant vintage motifs with meticulous embroidery.

GENES - LECOANET HEMANT

The label presented a collection for the avid wanderer with natural fibres, abstract motifs, machine embroidery and laser cuts in a largely neutral palette with contrasting neon pops.

JOY MITRA

The designer took worked-on chanderi fabric and exhibited a traditional collection of chiffons and brocades in earthy shades.

KA-SHA

Ka-Sha put a spin on the season's widespread use of chanderi with a mod-boho collection that saw the subtle fabric in an assortment of colours.

KOMAL SOOD

Inspired by sensual indulgence, and enhanced by fine embroidery and gold-sequin embellishments, Sood's focus on comfort and movement took loungewear to the next level.

LOVEBIRDS

With multi-functional individual pieces, architectural construction, graphic colour-blocking and fluid structures, the collection achieved a balance between efficiency, precision and fun.

MANISH GUPTA

The designer created a timeless wardrobe of classic silhouettes—white shirts, tailored pants and denim jackets.

MYNAH DESIGNS BY REYNU TANDON

Tandon's new line, Coachella Part 2, catered to the liberated, bohemian woman, with tribal prints, kaftan-like silhouettes and bright embroidery.

NALANDDA BHANDARI

The collection's theme, Frills And A Girl, boasted ruffled dresses and sheer layers—perfect for day-dressing.

NAMRATA JOSHIPURA

Intricate surface embellishments and metallic fabrics teamed with sportswear comprised Joshipura's S/S 17 collection.

NIKASHA

Her quirky new line, Bul-Bul, used plush fabrics and traditional inspiration to bring a twist to the ordinary. Think exquisite embroidery and subtle embellishments on a pastel palette.

NIKI MAHAJAN

Mahajan's new line, The Magdalene Sisters, featured vintage French prints from the 16th century in handmade cotton and pastel hues.

NITIN BAL CHAUHAN

Known for his art-inspired pieces, Chauhan showcased a pastel line with a heavy, embroidered twist on Gothic artworks.

PALLAVI JAIPUR

Inspired by the Victorian markets of London, the collection oozed vintage charm. Lace dresses, floral prints and chiffon fabrics made up her new line.

PARESH LAMBA SIGNATURES

Sherwanis, jacket-kurta combinations and tailored shirts in a monochrome palette took centre stage in Lamba's collection.

PAROMITA BANERJEE

The designer experimented with textures on chanderi fabric. Dresses over pants, jackets, wide-legged pants and crop tops were the key silhouettes.

PAWAN SACHDEVA

Known for his tailored cuts and innovative use of fabrics, such as neoprene lined with linen and cotton, the collection featured everyday essentials ranging from bomber jackets to T-shirts.

PAYAL JAIN

The line saw comfortable summer silhouettes in easy, lightweight fabrics like cotton, muslin and chiffon. Details

like crochet layering, fringes and tassels gave the clothes a Coachella-like vibe.

PRIYAM NARAYAN

The life of Queen Elizabeth Bathory of Hungary was the inspiration behind Narayan's new collection—Victorian dresses, big sleeves and Gothic colours.

RAJDEEP RANAWAT

Inspired by the majestic palaces of India, Ranawat worked with hand-painted ensembles in reds and blacks, made contemporary with skirts and long kurtis.

RANNA GILL

The minimalistic, bohemian showcase embraced loose, asymmetrical silhouettes with summery floral prints.

RAVAGE BY RAJ SHROFF

Characterised by asymmetrical silhouettes in bright colours, Shroff's line was all sheer fabrics and ample layering.

RIDHI MEHRA

Mehra's collection featured crop-jackets and lehenga pairings, as well as suits in indigenous fabrics.

RIMZIM DADU

Experimenting with surface ornamentation, Dadu played with 3D embroideries, laser-cut techniques and traditional materials to create textures on A-line dresses and structured separates.

SAHIL ANEJA

Aneja's collection, Avant Mood, focused on bomber jackets, asymmetrical kurtas and pastel outerwear.

SAMANT CHAUHAN

Chauhan's collection was a blend of fluid bohemian pieces with understated luxury, characterised by the use of Bhagalpur tussar silk and zardozi handwork.

SWAPAN AND SEEMA

High on glamour and spark, this collection gave traditional silhouettes a fresh feel with floral bursts, rendering them highly versatile as occasion-wear.

SHYAM NARAYAN PRASAD

Bright, festive and uniquely traditional, Prasad's line of kurtas, lehengas and saris used techniques such as print-on gota and thread embroidery.

TANIEYA KHANUJA

A rich palette of reds, lavenders and flesh pinks drenched Khanuja's collection. Red carpet-worthy looks such as strapless dresses, column gowns and avant-garde tailoring grabbed eyeballs.

TANVI KEDIA

All-over prints, geometric patterns and beadwork rendered in raw silk and chiffon trumped all else.

TARUN TAHILIANI

The line was an amalgamation of Indian and Western wear, such as draped

saris, salwar kameez separates and evening dresses.

VAISHALIS

Her line encompassed contemporary and traditional silhouettes with clean lines and swivelling fabrics.

VARUN & NIDHIKA

The collection featured tonal embroideries mixed with intricate embellishments and subtle prints on traditional silhouettes such as lehengas and anarkalis—perfect wedding wear.

VEDANGI AGARWAL COUTURE

Drawing inspiration from the famous Wild Atlantic Way trail in Ireland, Agarwal's collection was all about easy-breezy silhouettes in fresh, floral hues.

VERB BY PALLAVI SINGHEE

The vintage bohemian collection, titled Dulce - The Era Of The Tribe, drew inspiration from heritage, with techniques such as kalamkari handknotted embroidery and tassel detailing.

VINEET BAHL PREMIERE

Bahl knows how to pull off minimalist glamour. He focused mainly on subtle pastels, thread work embroideries and traditional Indian silhouettes.

WENDELL RODRICKS

Drawing inspiration from ancient India, Rodricks' collection was all about simple cuts and light, fluid fabrics. Think sheer dresses, cold-shoulder tops and tunicpants combinations.

F7MΔ

The UK-based designer presented handcrafted cashmere scarves in a host of shades for a quick, comfy dose of luxury.

FELIX BENDISH

The collection consisted of neck-pieces, belts, bags and digitally printed scarves featuring hand-embroideries and handmade metal, all inspired by nature.

MALVIKA VASWANI

Inspired by Japanese carpentry and woodworking techniques, Vaswani took the idea of minimalism a step further by incorporating smaller forms and more delicate details.

MINE OF DESIGN BY AMBAR PARIDDI SAHAI

The high-concept designs were aimed at unleashing the power of the stones, and made for good statement pieces and conversation starters.

SWAROVSKI

Swarovski's new collaboration, Confluence, saw 11 Indian designers present avant-garde designs crafted with the finest Swarovski crystals.

WHATEVER BY ABHISHEK KANKARIA & SHRRUTI TAPURIA

The designers' new line featured jewellery with traditional Indian motifs and precious stones. Its USP: semi-precious haathphools with intricate jaaliwork. ●





ELLE: What were the highlights, according to you, at AIFW?

Sunil Sethi: Definitely Make In India—FDCI has been oiling the wheels of the programme by promoting Indian handlooms and textiles, giving them a place of pride in the FDCI repertoire and involving both young and established designers. It began with the Road To Chanderi show during the S/S 2017 edition—12 designers gave the magical chanderi weave an undeniable twist-followed by dedicating the first two days to woven wonders from all over the country.

ELLE: Tell us about your favourite shows at this edition.

SS: It is difficult to pick one show, but the grand finale was special. For us, real fashion is a heady amalgamation of modernity with traditional nuances, and that's why we pursued an ingenious theme for the show. Two diametrically

fDCl

and ideologically opposite designers, JJ Valaya and Alpana Neeraj, paid homage to crafts through the amazon.in exploration of embroideries and emblematic themes.

> ELLE: Fashion weeks have been around in India for almost 20 years now. How has the

way designers run their businesses changed?

country first at AIFW S/S 2017

SS: [It has changed in the way] the sector has evolved, by becoming much more organised and inclusive. Many are paving the way for designer prêt, a concept that revolutionises the apparel industry—one that was partial towards couture until now. This change will have a big impact on the market, making it more tactile and geared towards the future.

ELLE: Among the young designers who presented their work at AIFW, who are you most excited about?

SS: Our collaboration with ELLE has ensured that we offer the newest and most exciting talent, which we showcase through the First Cut show. It reflects the mood of young India, and is one of the most-watched and highly anticipated shows at AIFW.

ELLE: Are there any designers in particular who you are looking at bringing to AIFW in the future?

SS: We are attempting to make AIFW a wholesome event, which is why we included the menswear and accessory categories at A/W 2016. The process is ongoing and, frankly, endless, as our antennae are always catching fresh and reticent talent to bring to the forefront.

ABOUT THE FASHION DESIGN COUNCIL OF INDIA

Creating a kinetic space for path-breaking ideas, and offering limitless possibilities with an eye on the future, the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), a not-for-profit organisation, is the apex body of fashion design in the country. It represents over 400 members, and was created to promote and nurture the most incredible talent in India. Its prime objective is to propagate the business of fashion in India and alobally by adding interest and flair in the form of fashion weeks. As part of its initiatives, the FDCI's calendar of events includes the annual prêt week for women and menswear for Autumn/ Winter and Spring/Summer—the Amazon India Fashion Week and the luxurious yearly event, India Couture Week. Over the years, in a bid to help India across the shores, it has spearheaded exciting collaborations with different countries and their fashion bodies for an interchange of designers and models. The FDCI is always on the lookout for connoisseurs who appreciate the luxury of handcrafted fashion and its place in the world's fashion dictionary. It continues to foster designers, retailers, models, make-up artists, hairstylists, choreographers and manufacturers as it takes style beyond its perceived boundaries by improving business practices as it creates opportunities at home and abroad. The FDCI has brought together designers from various Indian states, cities and towns into one cohesive body, guiding them towards sustainable growth. Armed with an understanding of the complex crafts of the country, it works closely with textile designers to create a unique handprint. It sets superlative quality standards and has sparked a revolution for 'fashion with a soul' by tying up with various CSR initiatives. FDCI is the fulcrum for activities supported by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Textiles and the Guiarat State Khadi and Village Industries Board, who have actively facilitated trade at the fashion weeks. With each passing year, the FDCI builds on India's artisanal wealth and tackles the road ahead with a dynamic approach fired

by inspirational ideas.



074 Trend Report



CAMLA STORES : ELANTE MALL, **CHANDIGARH** / POOJA COMPLEX, **AMBALA** / GROUND FLOOR, V₃S MALL, **LAXMI NAGAR,** DELHI MODEL TOWN, **ROHTAK** / SEAWOOD, **MUMBAI**

Style Source PROMOTION











MISFIT PANDA

Dynamic mother-daughter duo Anuradha and Juveca Panda are the brains behind the distinctive footwear brand Misfit Panda, which brings together style and comfort. Inspired by their travels, the brand's designs are global, and borrow from the fashion capitals of the world. Its collection of oxfords, brogues and derby shoes combine classic styles that channel London, with delicate lace and floral prints that evoke Paris. Each print and material is handpicked by them, lending their products not only an air of exclusivity, but that added personal touch too.

















DALE+CO.

Dale + Co. began as an informal pastime. Its owner, AJ, would return from her travels bearing various *objets*, such as hand-painted ceramic bowls, African tribal masks and lacquered figurines. It wasn't long before she turned her interest into a business. Today, Dale + Co. curates a selection of global handicrafts with the aim of introducing quality, affordable international craftsmanship to India. Each year, it sources aesthetic and functional curios, and home accents from around the world and brings them back to the country. Its current collection comprises some very covetable Vietnamese lacquerware.



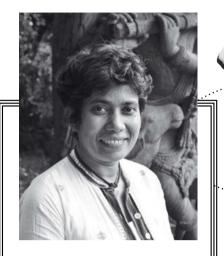












UPASANA

Auroville-based Upasana is where responsible design, a social business model and spirituality come together to address the issue of sustainability. The brand creates clothes that go beyond the boundaries of beauty and vanity—and relies on fashion to highlight its cause. Upasana uses indigenous cotton and natural dyes, maintains a zero-waste policy and practises upcycling. It also undertakes several social initiatives to better the lives of local communities.



Style Source PROMOTION













TIMELESS BANARAS

A Jaipur-based venture started by Shivangi Kasliwaal, Timeless Banaras works exclusively with highend, handwoven Banarasi textiles. Born and raised in Banaras, Kasliwaal has a deep connection to the city-and to her roots. Over the years, she has worked closely with Banaras' master weavers, often spending much of her time with them, collecting weaves and using their expertise to build collections. Her label's uniqueness lies in its quality and its mission to revive traditional handlooms and weaves. With gossamer jamdanis, rich brocades and elegant tanchois, her brand encapsulates the richness and diversity of the ancient city she calls home.



ERADAR



Owning it

Savi Sharma recounts her journey from self-publishing to the top of the bestseller list

Self-publishing can be a slippery slope, with books and authors routinely fading from public memory without any professional muscle to keep them afloat. Not so for Savi Sharma.

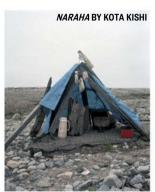
The 23-year-old managed to sell 5,000 copies of her self-published first novel, *Everyone Has A Story* (2015), on Amazon within a month. The enterprising Surat-based author did it all—the editing, printing, distributing and promoting. "It took a lot of work. You need to stay organised—it can be daunting," she says.

The novel brings together a café manager, a banker and an aspiring author, all of whom seek something beyond the staid sterility of normalcy—a premise that seemed to resonate with readers around the country. "My stories come from the people I meet and their lives," she says. Apart from her stories, Sharma herself is personable. "When I speak to my readers, they tell me that I don't have some author personality, that I sound just like them," she says.

Chetan Bhagat's work has been a strong influence for Sharma; her childhood desire to write crystallised when she binge-read 12 novels—several of them Bhagat's—as a stress-buster during her first-year college exams. She finished her novel during the course of her Bachelor's degree, while also juggling a course in chartered accountancy, a path she ultimately abandoned to dive into writing full-time.

Sharma has a vast base of loyal readers, but has simultaneously amassed a legion of critics and trolls online. With the success of her first book, it was only a matter of time before traditional publishing houses came calling. Sharma's second novel, *This Is Not Your Story* (Westland Books, February 2017) once again features three young people with baggage, attempting to cut their own path in the world.

— SATYAVRAT KK





PAST PRESENT





Is a photograph merely a snapshot of a moment in time, or can it be more? This is the fundamental question the third edition of the FOCUS Photography Festival hopes to answer with its theme, Memory. "Collective memory is being archived, shared and analysed like never before. We thought it would be fitting to invite the photography community to reflect on this time," says Matthieu Foss, the festival's co-founder and director.

Along with co-founders Nicola Antaki and Elise Foster Vander Elst, Foss intends to take the festival to more people than ever by making it free for all. "Along with exhibitions, there will be readings, portfolio reviews, walk-throughs, talks and workshops," says Foss. Then, there are also partner shows, exhibiting the works of Sooni Taraporevala (My Analogue World, Max Mueller Bhavan), Pablo Bartholomew (Some Portraits, Chemould Prescott Road), Anusha Yadav (The Photograph Is The Proof, Chemould Prescott Road), Chirodeep Chaudhari (In the City, A Library, Project 88) and Waswo X Waswo (Photowala, Tarq), among others.

Topping the list of key shows you have to see is *Autobiography* As *Memory*, at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Byculla. It's a showcase of the 20 winning submissions (from over 200 entries) that interpret the concept of the autobiography in conjunction with memory—keep an eye out for *Banality* by Abhishek Anupam and *Faded Memories* by Ashita Majumdar, the only two works by Indian artistes.

Next, head over to The Viewing Room in Colaba and take in *Intimation*, a collaboration—between photographers Bharat Sikka and Olivia Arthur—that delves into the notion of identity through the prism of sexuality, gender and fantasy.

Make Masterji by Maganbhai Patel aka 'Masterji' at Colaba's Akara Art Gallery the pit stop after. Patel left India to work at a factory in Coventry (UK) in 1951, and soon began feeling homesick. To reconnect with his roots, he began documenting the lives of the resident South-Asian community on his Kodak Brownie. The result was a colourful, quaint portrayal of immigrant life in the '50s and '60s. This is the first time Masterji is being exhibited in India.

What's more, this year, even stores, cafés and roadside pop-ups will showcase some of the 1,500-plus works.

Don't miss *Bodyguard Lane* by BIND at Kala Ghoda. It takes a look at how a community of street dwellers preserve their family photographs, their 'memories' that are under constant threat from the weather and demolition crews.

With over 100 artists and 25 shows spread out across Colaba, Kala Ghoda, Lower Parel, Bandra and Khar, you'd be forgiven for hitting pause on the present for just a while.

FOCUS Photography Festival 2017 is on from March 9-23 in Mumbai.

Focusfestivalmumbai.com

— NEVILLE BHANDARA



TAKE COURAGE

How Dr Archana Nayar, founder of the Autism Centre for Excellence, turned her personal pain into power

When her 14-year-old son was diagnosed with autism a decade ago, Dr Archana Nayar's initial feeling of helplessness soon turned into a pivotal thought: what could she do to help herself and other parents in a similar situation?

An MBBS graduate with a Master's in public health and nutrition (and a nutritionist by profession). Navar start 1

An MBBS graduate with a Master's in public health and nutrition (and a nutritionist by profession), Nayar started to devote a substantial amount of her time to educating herself about the kinds of therapies and interventions that could work well for autistic kids. In 2014, she started the Autism Centre for Excellence (ACE) in Gurugram, a not-for-profit school that follows the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis to gauge the learning capacity of autistic children (from the age of two to 16) and uses that knowledge to teach them.

"At ACE, every teacher works with one student at a time, and tries to study the connection between the behaviour of the learner and the skills being imparted. It is an objective process with predefined goals, which are tabulated on a weekly basis to measure a child's development."

Autism, which affects roughly 10 million Indians, is

attributed to environmental and genetic factors, but the exact cause of it is still unknown. And a lack of general awareness about the condition means it is often misunderstood and the children always suffer for it. Navar feels that there is a lot of pressure on parents of autistic kids to send them to conventional schools and if they do end up sending them to special needs schools, they expect quick results. "It is difficult to accept that a lifelong disability has affected your child," she says. "But instead of dwelling on it or trying to make it go away, you have to be pragmatic and recognise that your child might be in need of your life-long support."

assures her that she is headed in the right direction. She says, "Our teachers are constantly hungry for knowledge. And they take ownership of the children very quickly. But the field needs to be professionalised and the teachers need to be empowered to be able to train others."

In the next few years, Nayar plans to expand the operation—from four to nine classrooms at ACE—and introduce ACE classrooms in regular schools, for autistic children who can be integrated into the mainstream. She also wants to start a vocational programme offering functional skills to young adults with autism.



Nayar admits that after the diagnosis she spent a lot of time overwhelmed and frustrated with worry for her son. But now, she is able to direct that energy into something more tangible and productive. The enthusiasm on the part of the teachers at ACE further

Reaching for change, she says, has empowered her like nothing else. "As parents of children with mental disabilities, we need to reassess our expectations. This might not be the road we wanted, but we can walk it as happily as is possible," she says.

— AMRITA PAUL

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There's a flurry of activity in Panaji. Art aficionados, cultural crusaders and those in the know are descending upon Dattaraj V Salgaocar and Dipti Salgaocar's Sunaparanta - Goa Centre For The Arts. Two of India's most respected art galleries, Kolkata's Galerie 88 and Mumbai's Project 88—helmed by Supriya Banerjee and Sree Banerjee Goswami, respectively—are showing a retrospective of their most celebrated pieces from the last 40 years, till April 30.

examining her mother's artists as well as her own. I discovered that while their programmes are almost incomparable, what makes their working style profound is how deeply invested they are in their artists' lives," says Shanghvi.

Each gallery occupied a very different space in India's art evolution: Galerie 88, which opened its doors in 1988, initially championed stalwarts such as MF Husain and SH Raza while also nurturing new talent. By the

"We set the works from both galleries to ricochet against each other," says Shanghvi. "We wanted to see how forms have evolved or become outdated, how some works have sustained over time—I believe these are works with keen emotional resonance—and we wanted to recognise how time had a central echo on the show. The opening work by Rags is precisely that: taking the words from Proust's In Search Of Lost Time, and illuminating them in different word sequences to mean different things. The title of the exhibition refers to our idea of how time rubs against culture and aesthetic, and the works emerge both influenced and defiant from the hours."

Shanghvi's association with Sunaparanta goes back a long way: the Salgaocars are family friends, and among Goa's most respected art patrons. "Siddharth has been actively associated with Sunaparanta for the past five years as honorary director," says Dattaraj V Salgaocar.

This is the first time that Galerie 88 and Project 88 have exhibited together in a curated show. "After 10 years, there is a need to join

SIDDHARTH DHANVANT SHANGHVI



UNTITLED (FLOWERS) BY FN SOUZA

the dots, to trace a lineage, to find the linkages between the past and the future. This intelligently curated show does that for me," says Goswami.

This "jugalbandi", as Shanghvi calls it in his curatorial note, is going to be one for the ages.

Deliberated Time is on till April 30 at Sunaparanta - Goa Centre For The Arts

— NEVILLE BHANDARA



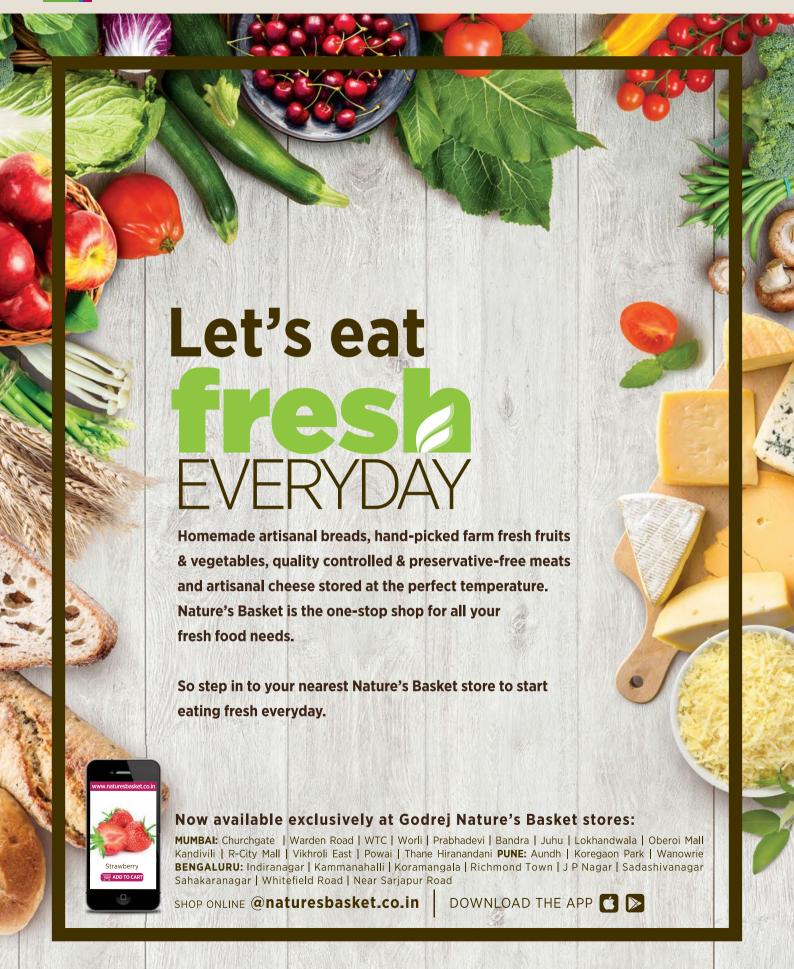
DATTARAJ V SALGAOCAR

Titled *Deliberated Time*, and curated by the centre's honorary director, author Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, the exhibition showcases works by established names such as FN Souza and Somnath Hore alongside rising stars like Neha Choksi and Andrew Ananda Voogel.

"The idea [for the exhibition] was suggested by Sree when I asked her to show in Goa: she wished to look at a body of work spanning 40 years, time Project 88 opened, 18 years later, much had changed in the art world. "When I started Project 88, there was a need to break away from the past—to establish the contemporary," says Goswami. Project 88 focused all its energy on the younger generation, exhibiting artists such as Raqs Media Collective and Rohini Devasher—both of whom also feature in this exhibition. Deliberated Time, then, is a visual timeline of India's art story.

TITLED AP BY SOMNATH HOR





EFEATURES





BALLERINA PIA SUTARIA
HAS FOUGHT INJURY
AND APATHY FOR THE
ART SHE LOVES MOST.
NOW, SHE'S ON A
MISSION TO MAKE INDIA
LOVE IT TOO

remember walking out of the movie theatre with my mother, at age five, dumbstruck after watching *Billy Elliot* (2000). It was my introduction to ballet and made me believe you could dare to dream outside the box. Or better yet, that there was no box. Unlike Billy, who had nothing but his own sheer will, my twin sister, Tara, and I had incredibly supportive parents who believed strongly in the power of the arts. We grew up in an atmosphere of song and dance, and regularly accompanied them to concerts and choir rehearsals from a young age. Classical ballet was the first dance form I was exposed to—I felt transported to a realm where the unreal seemed possible.

There is nothing natural or intuitive about ballet. Your body is expected to go against its very nature. The first thing you learn to do is turn your hips and feet outward to create a more pleasing alignment. Then you learn to defy gravity by leaping through the air and pirouetting. Most people, when they learn you do ballet, will say, "Ooh,

stand on your toes!" But going 'en pointe'—balancing the weight of your body on your toes—takes years of training, lots of blisters and perpetually bleeding feet. I understood very early on that choosing this life would also mean choosing to live with constant aches and pains.

I started learning ballet at five, at Tushna Dallas' The School of Classical Ballet & Western Dance in Mumbai. Mrs Dallas, now 75, is a renowned ballet teacher and the woman who single-handedly shaped my future in dance. With her I studied ballet, modern dance and ballroom. I became convinced that classical ballet would be my future and gave all my Royal Academy of Dance (London) exams through her school. At 16, I was ready to start training professionally. I had no idea what was coming.

Because I grew up in an arts-loving environment, I had never realised how little support there is for them in this country. We do not have a Bachelors' degree in performing arts because we simply don't have enough people who are qualified to teach and educate at that level. This is because there is virtually no funding from the government for people who want to pursue western dance in India. As a result, we can't keep the few who do make it through these odds: talented dancers aim to go abroad because they crave to be pushed further to compete with dancers in their league. Other than teaching, there is no opportunity for Indian ballet dancers to perform in a large-scale production here.

When I approached prospective sponsors for scholarships to study, all I faced was rejection. I was hurt and humiliated, for I had mistakenly assumed that we would be appreciated and acknowledged—but ballet is still seen as an elitist indulgence, not to be taken so seriously and definitely not as a career.

But I didn't want to give up, so I joined Danceworx Performing Arts Academy in Mumbai. By 17, I was teaching jazz full-time, but I missed ballet. So in 2014, I joined Navdhara India Dance Theatre,

the first Indian contemporary dance repertory to tour nationally and internationally. Training days always began with ballet [because it enhances technique and realigns the body] and we had the incredible Israeli ballet master Yehuda Maor teach us. We would keep 14-hour days on an average, sometimes rehearsing past midnight only to return to practise by 7am the next day. Life on tour is exhilarating but also exhausting. We've been on tours doing two, sometimes even three performances in a day, for 12 days straight. It was my first real taste of what a professional dancer's life is like.

But life has a way of crashing down on you just as you start to get comfortable. The true test of my grit came just a few weeks before our first international tour to America. I was stretching in class when my shoulder popped out of its socket. I didn't know what was happening—I just remember screaming in pain as I stared at my shoulder, which was three inches below where it should've been. At the hospital, I found out I had hyperlaxity—hyper flexible joints, meaning it could happen anytime, anywhere.

I was terrified. I knew no dance company wanted the liability of an injured dancer, especially on tour. I was advised to take a long break and get surgery, but ballet is such that every day you don't dance, you go back three steps. I had worked so hard to get there and I was facing

the end of a career that hadn't even begun. I decided—quite foolishly—to get back to rehearsals and go on tour, once the swelling subsided.

My shoulder popped out thrice after, twice before a big performance and once during a show. But I kept going from rage and hate. Each time, I'd go back to the studio before I fully healed, only to get injured again and again. Eventually, the pain was so great that I found myself physically unable to go on. I had to stop, and finally agreed to get surgery last March. It took three months before I could hold my arm up without help, and I'm only just finishing 10 months of my stipulated recovery period. Sometimes I thought of letting go and moving on to something else. When you pursue something for so long, you tend to forget you have that option. I asked myself, "Is this what you really want to do with your life, or are you doing it because it's the only thing you've ever known?"

My answer came back loud and clear. I loved dance with all my heart. Nothing made me feel as alive. The music, the rigour, the feeling I get when I do my first plié every morning—nothing can replace it. I realised I'd have to change. I began to accept that I had an injury and my body was compromised. So I started to change the way I expressed to accommodate it. I came back with more ferocity. I moved like I had nothing to lose. I remembered

"I just remember

screaming in pain

as I stared at my

shoulder, which

was three inches

below where it

should have been"

what Mrs Dallas once told me when I was seven, "Every time you step into a studio, dance like it's your first and last chance."

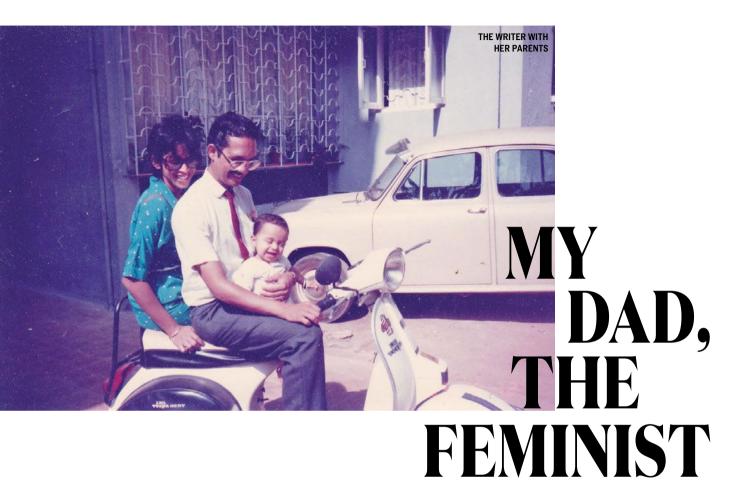
I've been teaching dance for the past five years and recently worked with two incredible young boys, Amiruddin Shah and Manish Chauhan, who came to train with Yehuda. They were an inspiration to us all with their immense commitment and refusal to be limited by their circumstances (they were both from low-income backgrounds) or gender (ballet tends to be perceived as a feminine dance form, especially in India. But the truth is, the world over, male footballers and body

builders take ballet lessons because it improves posture and strengthens the core). The two of them were awarded scholarships to the Oregon Ballet Theatre in America and are now pursuing professional careers.

They took me back to the story of Billy Elliot, to why I fell in love with ballet. I think we—Amir, Manish, myself—were the lucky ones, to have our skill recognised and to have the support system to help us flourish. But for most aspiring dancers, their passion will remain a pipe dream. In India, a good ballet education up to an intermediate level is now available, but it is very expensive. And courses abroad could set you back ₹ 70 to ₹ 90 lakh at a university like the Royal Academy of Dance.

I want to change this. I want there to be a future for ballet dancers in India because to this day when I tell people I'm a dancer, I still get, "Wonderful, but what do you actually do?" I want *The Nutcracker* to be performed at the NCPA by an Indian ballet company.

I am determined to keep pushing myself like Amir and Manish did. I've been training full-time in ballet, jazz and contemporary, with ballet as my focus. This year, I hope to further my training at the Royal Academy of Dance. I dream of becoming an integral part of a dance company and giving back to this art form everything it has given me. ●



Feminism is simple to understand when it takes the shape of your father (and the occasional tyre change), writes Rochelle Pinto

or the most part, my father was raised by a single mother. He was born in Goa while my doctor grandfather was away in Africa—a tumultuous relationship that lasted 15 years before the good doctor succumbed to cirrhosis of the liver, a family inheritance. Watching his mother—a polyglot who can still ace mental mathematics at the age of 86—struggle to bring up five children on her own heavily influenced my father's attitude towards women. It made him a lifelong feminist.

One of my favourite memories of spending quality time with my father was

learning how to change a car tyre. Every Sunday, our family ritual began with treating our ears to the melodic stylings of Bob Marley and our brains to Derek O'Brien's *Bournvita Quiz Contest*. Then we'd abandon all attempts at highbrow entertainment in favour of Stone Cold Steve Austin and the pyrotechnics of the WWF.

One Sunday, right after Stone Cold had administered his Stone Cold Stunner to another silly challenger, my father announced that I was going to learn how to change a tyre.

"You're a girl, but you should never need a man to get things done," he said. We gathered up the tools, put on our most dispensable 'home clothes' and went downstairs to his precious Maruti 800. Because my father is not one for half-measures, this lesson didn't involve me standing at a safe distance while he demonstrated the right technique. I must have spent an hour fixing the jack, removing the hubcap bolts,



dragging the stepney into position and then replacing the hubcap, with my father only stepping in occasionally to provide the extra muscle. When we returned home, tanned and greased like extras in a Charles Dickens play, my mother asked, "Did she manage?" "Manage? She did it by herself," he replied. "Next week I'm going to teach her how to change a tap."

In the school of Allan Pinto, feminism wasn't about one-upping the opposite sex or rejecting the genteel ways of the female. His thesis on feminism was hinged on one idea: self-reliance.

It's the reason my childhood was bereft of pocket money. Instead, my father insisted I take up internships and part-time jobs. My first paid gig was at age 11 as a child RJ on All India Radio, where a half-hour segment earned me the princely sum of ₹ 150. This money was spirited away into a fixed deposit. When I graduated from college at 19, I paid for my first international vacation with the money I had made from summer jobs like that (and the birthday cash my parents had never let

My father's code of selfreliance is why my sister and I can ride his Enfield (she than better me) and drive

us spend).

both stick shift and automatic. Three female drivers in a family of four, all with the same teacher.

"MY FATHER'S CODE OF

AND I CAN RIDE HIS ENFIELD"

SELF-RELIANCE IS WHY MY SISTER

He encouraged us to stay out of trouble, but also to defend ourselves when trouble arrived uninvited. Like the time a middle-aged creep tried to grope me in the tidal pool of an amusement park. All I remember in the moments that ensued was a fury of kicking, biting, scratching and punching. As the lifeguards tried pulling the groper out of the pool—their confused rescue efforts foiled by my determination to draw blood-I could

hear my father shouting my name. Within seconds, he had arrived on the scene, calmly asking the guards and the cowering stalker why his daughter was foaming at the mouth. Nobody had a chance to respond. My father's followup question was delivered by force of a cupped palm to my attacker's left ear. The man saw stars.

Later, when tempers had been reigned in and an appropriate plan of action had been drawn up, my father turned to me and said, "Always remember, cup your hand like this and whack them on the ear as hard as you can. They won't be able to move after that."

Significantly, part of our feminist syllabus involved understanding that the women's rights movement was not about denigrating men. The whole campaign had acquired a bit of a bad rap along the way, especially in India, where incidents of women subverting laws intended to protect the oppressed had muddied the waters. He told me of how a family friend had become the target of a rape allegation—the result of a long-term relationship gone sour. The couple didn't get along any more and marriage was no longer an option. Except, the woman's family was now threatening to file a case of rape and fraud. "There are laws in this country that greatly empower women," he cautioned. "You should be careful not to abuse them." In my father's mind, it was not merely enough to hand us the tools of our empowerment—he also took responsibility for teaching us how to wield them.

For all the life lessons dished out over the dinner table and on long drives, the clearest indicator of my father's feminist leanings is in his relationship with my mother. She's always made more money than he has. A choir singer, baker, basketball champ and former crochet fiend, she's also arguably more talented than he is. But theirs is a relationship of equals. He solicits new investment ideas, she vets them for safety. He washes the dishes, she finds a way to fit multiple leftovers into an already overstuffed fridge (an ancient magic known only to mothers). He bought a karaoke machine to

encourage her to go solo, she

To be fair, my feminist ideas can't be blamed on one person alone. My maternal grandmother was the OG rebel, eloping from a landlord's family to marry a teacher with a strange accent and no money. My mother's father insisted that both

his daughters get jobs and be financially independent, having seen how poverty can be especially cruel to women. There were aunts who walked out on abusive husbands, classmates who defied conservative families to get themselves an education, colleagues who acted as mentors and close friends who were vocal in challenging societal restrictions. Even the curated books in my family's extensive home library were filled with female heroes, from Nancy Drew and Arundhati Roy to Indira Gandhi. And you know how dangerous it is to fill a young mind with such lofty ideas as equality and inclusiveness.

Today, when I call my father to tell him I assembled the new TV all by myself with nothing but the manual for help, he doesn't sound the least bit surprised. And there is no greater compliment than that.





















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EFASHON







"As an actor,
you are supposed
to promote a film
with conviction...
yet actors are
often seen to be
interfering in
the [film-making]
process"

Ithough Kamlesh, who had come down from Chicago to try her luck in Bollywood, was pretty much Kangana Ranaut's mother's age, they shared the Asha K Chandra's working girls' hostel in Juhu—a popular orientation school for beginners in Bollywood.

One evening in early 2005, Kamlesh and Ranaut stepped out to catch Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Black* at a neighbourhood theatre. As Ranaut recalls, "When I saw Rani Mukerji perform, I told Kamlesh aunty, 'I can do this.' She tried to calm me down, took me out for dinner to the JW Marriott hotel, and we talked at length about what I had said. Kamlesh aunty eventually laughed hysterically at the thought that I could actually act like Rani in *Black*."

"It was hurtful. But was she right? Was I being delusional? That night I came home, stood in front of the mirror, imagining it to be the camera, and repeated scenes from the film—trying to be blind, using sign language, making blank faces and sounds, choking myself in such a way that I wasn't actually choking myself... I knew I could do this."

Given that I'd planned to have a conversation with Ranaut, 29, that would cover various turning points in her life that have led her to where she is now—a bona fide Bollywood star—I asked if Kamlesh aunty's taunts that night didn't count as the trigger. She was 18 then, living on her own, working as a part-time model in Mumbai, auditioning for roles in films.

"That was one instance, yes," she says. Bhansali's *Black*, quite literally a dark film, which centred on the female character, gave Ranaut hope: "Around that time, the film industry was dominated by beauty queens, item numbers and female leads who hardly got three proper scenes."

But the dream had begun even before she moved to Mumbai, when she accidentally walked into director Arvind Gaur's theatre workshop in Delhi's India Habitat Centre. It had changed her life. Incidentally, it was Gaur, a veteran of Delhi's Hindi theatre scene, who pushed her to move to Bollywood. "There's no money in theatre," he'd told her; Gaur wasn't able to make enough to pay for his ailing mother's treatment at the time.

"So I had already learnt how to break down performances or study characters," Ranaut says. "When I came to Mumbai, I was essentially waiting for a break, desperate to work and make ends meet." It was shortly after that movie date-night with Kamlesh that everything happened "all at once," she remembers.

Ranaut landed a music video she'd auditioned for; got called to play the female lead opposite southern superstar Mahesh Babu in Puri Jagannadh's Telugu film *Pokiri* (2006)—later remade into *Wanted*, which turned around Salman Khan's career in 2009. And she was offered the part of a moll on the run, in Anurag Basu's *Gangster* (2006). She had to pick one.

She chose Basu's *Gangster*, which she'd been initially rejected from for being too young and skinny for the role. Actor Chitrangada Singh had first bagged that part, but was forbidden from acting by her new husband, golfer Jyoti Randhawa. Producers Mahesh and Mukesh Bhatt were in a fix at the last minute. Ranaut came on board, and finally made her Bollywood debut in 2006.

It does make sense to break down Ranaut's journey into plot points. Not just because her life itself reads like a film script—of which she is very much the hands-on director. But also since she's used to thinking in that way, being a legit screenwriter; she has written a full-length feature that she hopes to direct, among many others, soon.

A few years after *Gangster*, when the films that were being offered to her, or ones she was picking up—*Knockout* (2010), *Rascals* (2011), *Double Dhamaal* (2011), etc—didn't match her expectations, Ranaut took off to do a short-term course in film-making at the New York Film Academy.

"Direction was my Plan B," she says. "The idea was to gain complete creative control. As an actor, you are supposed to promote a film with conviction, yet one has to sometimes beg to even see the poster before it's out. Actors are often seen to be interfering in the [film-making] process."

By the time Ranaut was back from the US in 2013, having directed a short film, *Touch*, a pilot for the feature she has in mind, *Queen* had opened in theatres. It turned out to be the unexpected lever that catapulted her to unprecedented stardom: "It's ironic that just when I had decided to quit [acting], this happened."

I remember checking out pictures of Ranaut's birthday party after *Queen's* release. Few images denote this kind of arrival in Bollywood, with the who's who, Amitabh Bachchan onwards, lining up to wish her. I had attended her birthday a year or two earlier. It had been a quiet, sombre affair.

Queen had captured the zeitgeist, resonating in particular among young girls in cities and small towns. Ranaut is also co-credited for the film's dialogues. Her character, Rani, who travels solo >



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in Europe, hails from cosmopolitan Delhi, but shows the naiveté of her roots in Rajouri Garden, a middle-class neighbourhood. The story mirrors Ranaut's own life in many ways—of someone who cracks social codes of a world so distant from her own, and on her own terms.

She was raised in a village, off Mandi, in Himachal Pradesh: "The arc is huge. The places I go to seem like a culmination of five to six lifetimes. I'm the only rags-to-riches story. No one's come from the grassroots [in Bollywood]."

This is true. The top female actors currently dotting the landscape in mainstream Hindi cinema are often kids from film families—Sonam (Anil Kapoor), Sonakshi (Shatrughan Sinha), Shraddha (Shakti Kapoor)... One didn't witness this phenomenon up until the mid 2000s, when film families were wary of sending their daughters to work in Bollywood. The outsiders as well—Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone, Anushka Sharma—come from relatively affluent homes, even if from small towns, in some cases.

Ranaut was barred from watching movies or television while growing up. Her contact, if any at all with showbiz, was through the gossip pages of the newspaper *Punjab Kesari*, which she would occasionally gawk at. She says she found those heroines to be "utterly unreal".

Studying science in Chandigarh, rooming with fashionable girls from the North East, was her first window to this other world, to urbane chic: "Giving up a shirt and salwar kameez for a sleeveless top, or skinny jeans, was huge for me, but it's hardly high fashion in a showbiz sense."

She picked up most of the latter on the sets of Madhur Bhandarkar's Fashion (2008), engaging with the film's stylist Rita Dhody, carrying clothes from the set to try out at home. (Nowadays, it's no longer even novel to see her sitting front row at some international fashion shows; it's like she's been there all along.)

By then, of course, Ranaut had already been around in Hindi cinema for a couple of years. She was "expected to speak in English at press interviews and summits." She evidently struggled with the language. She hired an English tutor: "I would express my thoughts to her in Hindi. She would translate the sentence back in English. This is how I would pick up new words."

That her family back in the village had disowned her following her career choice is all too well known. "There were times," she recalls, "when I had no food to eat. And I was a minor. I've been through situations no sane person should." She tells me she's currently building a holiday home in Himachal, takes at least three to four vacations a year, loves to shop...

"But there's no such thing as enough love or money. Humans are an ungrateful species," she laughs.

Coming from a small town, or a remote village, as in Ranaut's case—and breaking into an alien social setting, would instil in some a natural insecurity. She, however, wears her humble origins as a badge of honour. "Chutzpah," a catchword from her current director Vishal Bhardwai's last film Haider (2014), comes to mind as you observe her swagger at public events, and candid interviews, where she takes on Bollywood biggies, like Hrithik Roshan (whether they were allegedly, or actually, dating). Ranaut calls herself "inherently opinionated, and a badass", yet her barbs aren't frivolous, anchored as they always are to some larger cause—perhaps freedom, or feminism. She inevitably sounds smart, or refreshing, at any rate.

Saccharine political correctness and mutual back-slapping has hollowed out public interest in leading stars' lives, as Karan Johar also observes in An Unsuitable Boy (Penguin Random House, 2017), his recently published memoir. Almost as a rejoinder, Johar gets a taste of Ranaut on his popular chat show, as she brazenly calls him out on nepotism, classism, obsession with stars and gossip, before a national TV audience. The host sits there looking slightly gobsmacked on his own show. While I write this, that episode of Koffee With Karan is going viral.

Given how far she's travelled, it seems as if Ranaut has much more to prove than to lose by stubbornly being herself.

Queen, an overnight sleeper hit, was a game changer of sorts, as much for her, as for the Hindi cinema heroine. The films she's picked thereafter have inevitably pivoted around the female lead, like Revolver Rani (2014), and doubly so with the Tanu Weds Manu sequel (2015), where she played two totally disparate characters for her second National Award-winning turn, after Queen.

Big on seizing the moment, Ranaut's also made much-justified noise since to ensure pay-parity, based on the length of her roles, rather than gender. Which means, in Bhardwaj's Rangoon, which released last month, her biggest budget movie yet, and where her character, a 1940s stunt star, is the protagonist, alongside Saif Ali Khan, a studio boss, and Shahid Kapoor, a soldier, her paycheque would at least match Bollywood's leading men's, if not top it.

Ranaut has come a long, long way. Having self-learnt her way to this point, along with a firm grip on the ground beneath her feet, I ask her if she feels like an outsider still. She pauses, then says, "I am showbiz now."

"There were times when I had no food to eat. And I was a minor. I've been through situations no sane person should"



























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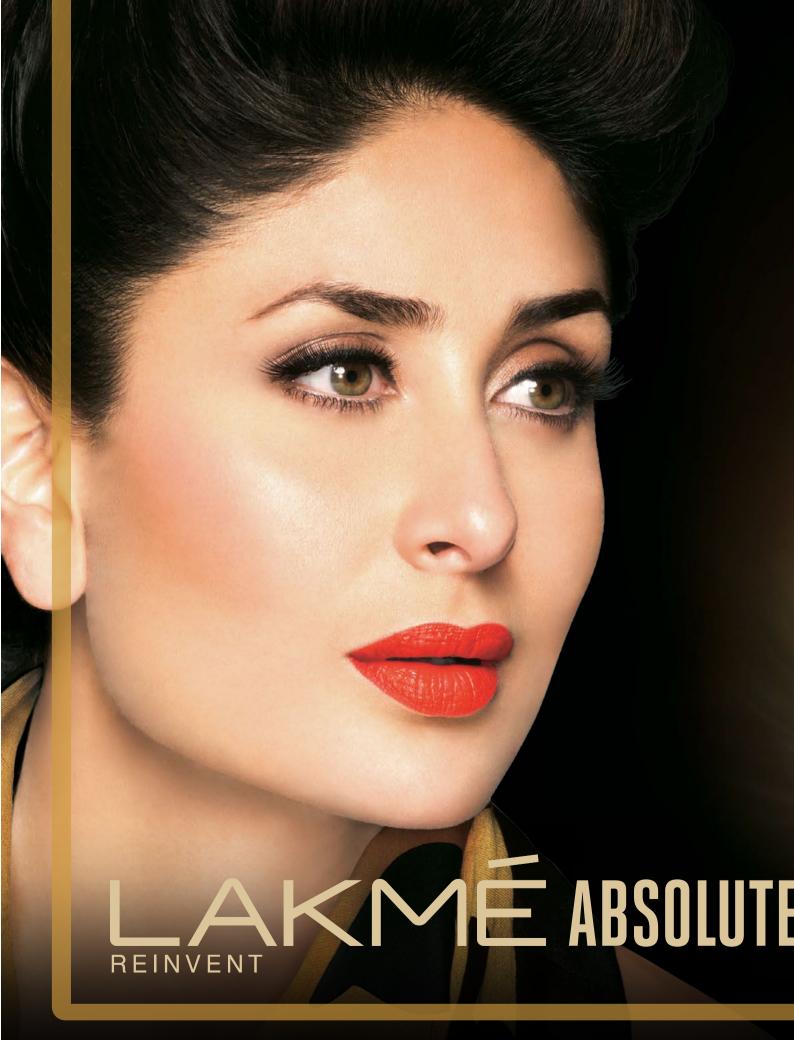
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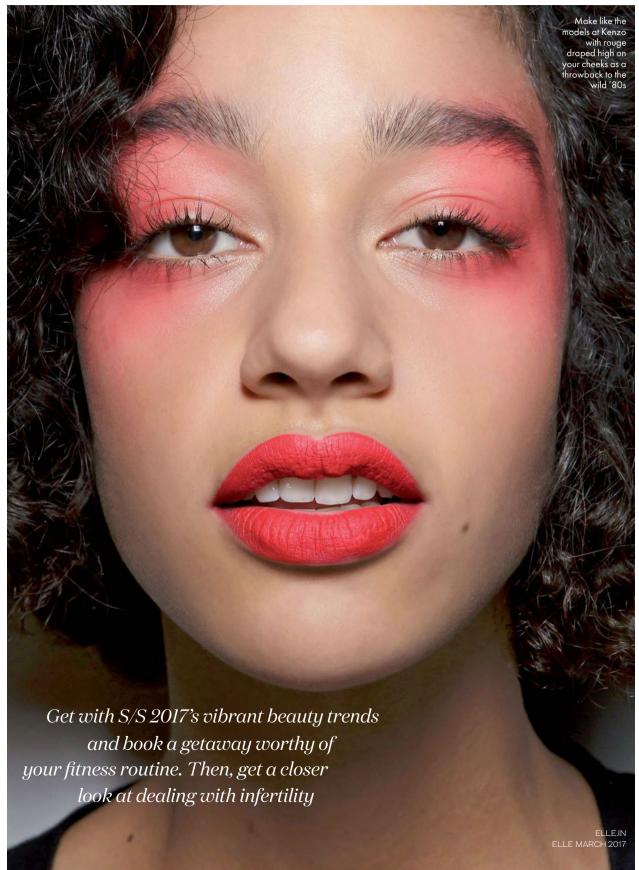
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GEOMETRIC LINES

It's not just about wearing simple flicked liner anymore. Make-up artists created blocky lines with negative spaces at Whatever by Abhishek Kankaria & Shrruti Tapuria, exaggerated wings at Masaba as well as Fendi, and dual-coloured lines at Gauri & Nainika. We suggest you arm yourself with Q-tips and micellar water before you draw the line.











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YOU

WHAT BOUNDARIES?

As make-up goes free-form, eyeshadow crept from the cheeks to the temples and lipstick crossed the lip line. We suggest you ditch those brushes for your fingers and crumbling powders for creamy long-stay formulas.





WET, WET, WET

Gleaming touches of gloss on the eyelids, cheekbones, lips (and even wet hair) have made the high-shine look part of 2017's beauty zeitgeist. Dip into bottles of hair gel, pop-coloured eye cream and dewy foundation for an other-worldly shine. We're taking cues from models at Balmain, HUEMN and Sanchita.







Clarins UV Plus BB







Revion Photoready Skinlights, ₹ 855



Chanel Le

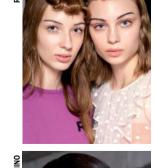
Rouge Crayon

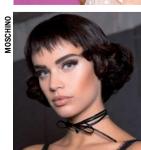
de Couleur in Tangerine, ₹ 2,900

It doesn't matter if your hair is long, short or just plain messy, you can adapt it to include bangs. Try a baby fringe, '40s rockabilly style (à la Rochas) or bangs that are long enough to be split down the middle. If you feel you are not ready for the plunge, experiment with clip-on versions like models at Anavila did.









'80S REDUX

Rekha (circa 1980) would co-sign on the crimped hair at AM.IT by Amit Aggarwal and Topshop Unique, but she would have truly endorsed the barrette adorned hair at Louis Vuitton and the Whitney Houston curls at Rohit Gandhi + Rahul Khanna. Own these badass hairstyles with lots of hairspray, disciplined curls, gravity-defying height and maybe a picture on Instagram.

132 Beauty



Kérastase

Discipline Curl Ideal

Creme, ₹ 2,400

KÉRASTASE



shows. For the taking this season, we have mannish side-parts (like Rajesh Pratap Singh), strands swept across the forehead (like Givenchy) or a casual, messy do (like Dries Van Noten).

L'Oréal Paris Le Vernis à l'Huille n Café de Nui ₹ 399 Dio **Dior** Nail Lacquer in Tra-la-la, ₹ 2,450 OPENING CEREMONY

Nykaa Matte Nail Lacquer in Lavender Gelato, ₹ 199

Lancôme Le Vernis in Rose





MUTED DIGITS

Take it easy with the art and give your nails a breather. Equate this summer's manicure trends with the no-make-up make-up look. Wear nude polish with a different pastel shade on every finger, enough negative space patterns or a hint of metallic gold.











LO-FI HAIR

You can't call natural hair a 'trend', but its resurgence on the runway—with stylists loving natural kinks and curls like never before—is very reassuring. Follow the models' leads and let your hair air-dry after a wash. Settle any frizz with serum, but stay away from the roots to ensure movement. About missing that blowout? No one's complaining.



MoroccanOil Hydrating Styling Cream, ₹3,000 approximately



TEN YEARS AGO, VASUDHA RAI FIRST STARTED TRYING TO GET PREGNANT. SHE REPORTS ON THE FRUSTRATIONS AND MIRACLES ON THIS BUMPY RIDE

didn't even want a baby, to begin with. I was 27 when I moved to Kuala Lumpur with my husband. We were travelling all around the world and life was good, until December 2006. I got my period and then it went on for a month. I was diagnosed with grade IV (the most severe type) of endometriosis, a painful condition of the uterus and the leading cause of infertility. So began the toughest phase of my life. Now, 10 years, two laparoscopic surgeries and five IVF treatments later, I still don't have a baby. But today I know what it feels like to desperately yearn for one.

Baby-making isn't a pleasurable business these days, even if it is a lucrative one. A study done by the International Institute of Population Sciences two years ago found that 15 to 20 million

Indian couples suffer from infertility. "There are two reasons for this rise," says Dr Firuza Parikh, director, Jaslok FertilTree International Fertility Centre, Mumbai, and visiting professor at University of California, Los Angeles, USA. "One is that people are now less hesitant to visit an infertility specialist, so it appears that more people are affected." But our chaotic lifestyles are not helping matters, either. "We're always in a hurry. We don't relax, are sleep deprived, have reduced sexual desire, eat too much fast food [particularly those with a high glycemic index] and are exposed to all sorts of pollution."

The increase in reported cases of male infertility (almost 50 per cent of all cases) is also one of the reasons for the spike in statistics,

according to Dr Deepika Krishna of Milann Fertility Centre, Bangalore, "The factors causing it are the same for women: stress, lifestyle habits, obesity, alcohol and smoking. There are studies that prove that mobiles and laptops have an effect on motility and reduce sperm count too."

Even as infertility is on the rise, science is hot on its heels and offers many choices for hopeful parents. When these new technologies are combined with age-old therapies, you're faced with a universe of possibilities. I would often call to mind Dr Parikh's words during my IVF treatments: the question isn't if you'll have a baby, it's when.

LET'S MAKE A BABY!

Fertility cannot be boosted with one miracle drug or supplement. It needs a more wholesome approach that can be achieved partly through a balanced diet. Pooja Makhija, Mumbai-based nutritionist and author of Eat. Delete. (Harper Collins, 2012) says, "When the body is deprived of nutrition from crash dieting or excessive exercising, its survival is called into question and it reacts accordingly." The reproductive system is the first to shut down DONE BY THE when our calorie intake goes in INTERNATIONAL the negative. Of course, being overweight also compromises your **INSTITUTE OF** fertility. Makhija recommends **POPULATION** that you eat every two hours, and find a balance between **SCIENCES TWO YEARS** protein, carbs and good fat. "In **AGO FOUND THAT 15** my experience, vegetarians who TO 20 MILLION INDIAN don't focus on the right kind of protein find it difficult to **COUPLES SUFFER** make babies because the quality FROM INFERTILITY of their eggs gets affected." Good sources of protein include pulses, sprouts, low-fat yogurt, quinoa and egg whites. She also warns against refined sugar and alcohol, both of which related to higher rates (polycystic ovarian syndrome), endometriosis and even PMS.

Dr Parikh suggests various micronutrients, a Mediterranean diet (primarily, plant-based foods with adequate protein), foods with a low glycemic index (i.e. ones that release sugar slowly into the blood-stream, like brown rice, wholegrain bread, natural muesli, sweet potato) and supplements like folic acid, vitamin D, B complex, zinc, selenium, CO-Q10 and omega 3 and 6. Personally, I felt that turning vegetarian helped me a lot during the infertility treatments because my food digested easily and I had minimal bloating. Lastly, get at least three litres of water in you everyday. The introduction of certain hormones into the system can lead to constipation, so drink up.

Dr Parikh also puts in a word of caution about a group of chemical compounds called endocrine disruptors that are often found in household

objects, cosmetics, pesticides, plasticware and fire retardants. In certain doses, they interfere with the functions of endocrine glands such as ovaries, testes and thyroid, and even the immune system. "Phthalates, bisphenol and organophosphate pesticides can accumulate in the body and cause early menopause, diminish the number of eggs in the ovaries, reduce sperm count, cause repeated miscarriages and even lead to cancer."

Age is another key factor that determines your chances at the baby lottery. Experts recommend the years between age 24 and 34 as the best time to have a baby-and it's ideal to have the first one before you hit 30. "The eggs start ageing by the time a woman becomes 35 and older women have a higher risk of miscarriage due to genetic issues with their eggs," says Dr Parikh. But that's not to say that women in their forties are not making babies—it just might take longer.

WHAT IS IT THAT'S STOPPING YOU?

STUDY

Regular visits to the gynaecologist are essential, whether they are to ease for diagnosis conditions like PCOS

overall health. There is a rise in the number of women with PCOS, a hormonal imbalance, and this is down to genetic and environmental factors. It can lead to acne, obesity, depression, irregular periods and trouble getting pregnant. "It can be resolved [or controlled] by being more active," says Dr Lalita Badhwar, senior consultant, laparoscopic surgeon, IP Apollo Hospital, New Delhi. "It's not about losing massive amounts of weight as it is about getting regular exercise." She explains that women suffering from PCOS are prescribed ovulation drugs to help conceive or oral contraceptive pills to prevent the ovarian bank from depleting. For cases of lean PCOS (where the woman is not overweight), Dr Krishna suggests a procedure called ovarian drilling. "It's a minor laparoscopic process where small punctures are made on the

Endometriosis, on the other hand, is far more complicated. While nobody knows the cause, we do know that this condition is almost incurable once it reaches an advanced stage. "On an >

ovaries so they ovulate on their own." she says.

your painful periods or to check up on your ovaries' capability to produce healthy egg cells. But since most women only see a doctor either when they get married orstartshowingseveresymptoms, like me, they rarely get a timely reproductive endometriosis. Left unchecked, these can wreak havoc on a woman's reproductive system and average, endometriosis is diagnosed seven to 10 years too late," says Dr Badhwar. However, early detection can control the situation through minor surgery and contraceptive pills. The funny part about endometriosis is that to cure it completely, you need to get pregnant, but to prevent it from spreading, you need birth control pills.

Then there's the sabotaging effects of that faithful companion of our modern lives: stress. Our body releases hormones like adrenaline, prolactin and cortisol when we're tense, and in large amounts, these chemicals can hamper the reproductive process. "Our team of psychiatrists and counsellors have carried out a study on one of the largest numbers of infertile couples and shown how stress can cause miscarriages and increase the chances of not conceiving," says Dr Parikh. Here's how it works: the hypothalamus is the brain's major nerve centre for fertility and conducts crucial functions like signalling the onset of ovulation. This same gland also helps our body regulate stress. It's a small, walnutsized portion of the brain we're talking about here and the balance it has to maintain is a very delicate one. Overwhelming it with one task makes it less available to handle the other. That's why, says Delhi-based psychologist Dr Divya Parashar, "Long-term stress affects the libido and decreases fertility"

Battling stress isn't exactly easy, especially when you're dealing with the anxiety of getting pregnant. Parashar explains, "Research has shown that psychological interventions such as cognitive behaviour therapy and mindfulness decrease stress and increase the chances of pregnancy." If your mind is in knots from the fear of failure, you might find fresh **SPECIALIST** hope in Joseph Murphy's The Power Of Your Subconscious Mind (Embassy Books, 2010). "I suggest this book to all my students who are trying to conceive," says yoga instructor Seema Sondhi. In the book, Murphy says that you must believe you've already achieved your goal, because miracles happen only once your subconscious believes they're possible. Dr Parashar also recommends getting a restful eight hours of sleep every night. "Most ovulation occurs between midnight and 8am. Getting too little sleep causes hormonal imbalances and can impact conception."

WHO CAN HELP?

So how do you decide if it's time to visit a fertility centre? Experts suggest that if you've been trying for a baby for more than a year and haven't conceived, it may be a good idea to consult a fertility specialist. "When a couple comes to us we look at multiple factors like age, egg quality, ovarian reserve, tubal potency, endometrium, sperm quality and its motility," says Dr Krishna. If everything is fine, you do not even require a major treatment like IVF. Perhaps you just get ovulation pills or some vitamin supplements to improve the health of their eggs, sperm and uterus.

If you are prescribed a treatment, the options are plenty and it's best to rely on your doctor to make that choice. There's the IUI (intrauterine insemination), where the sperm is injected into the uterus to facilitate pregnancy. However, the tubes must be naturally open so the sperm can pass through to fertilise the egg. Then there is IVF (in vitro fertilisation), where the egg is fertilised by the sperm in a laboratory and then implanted into the uterus. There's also ICSI (intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection) where the embryologist selects a single sperm to be injected directly into an egg, used in cases where the sperm count is low.

I chose my fertility clinic based on personal reviews, reputation and the compassion of the doctor. Pick a place that has a good reputation, not just good ads. Check their success rate by asking them how many babies were born from those pregnancies and what the live birth rate is. "It's prudent to ask the doctor to select the best treatment option to maximise your chances," says Dr Parikh. She suggests that prior to IVF, correcting hormonal imbalances, thyroid, blood sugar and blood pressure levels is helpful. Personally, I also did some research on fertility treatments at websites like Babymed.com and Fertilitycommunity.com. once the treatment starts, I think it's best to put all your

faith in the doctor and stop Googling symptoms that may just trigger negativity.

Dr Parikh also advises her patients to be very realistic about IVF and understand what it entails. There are several horror stories of daily injections and miscarriages, but while I was going through my cycles I felt that most of these accounts were blown out of proportion. For instance, it's a myth that you need complete bed rest during the treatment. "You can lead a normal life, but it's advisable to avoid intercourse and swimming," explains Dr Parikh. However, if the IVF does not work after about six attempts, it is time to change the strategy—and this may involve the use of donor eggs, donor sperm, donor embryos or surrogacy. The point is not whether you will have a child, but which route you will take to have one.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TRY?

Disciplines like yoga, Ayurveda, acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine all offer ways to improve the health of the uterus and ovaries, and increase the chances of conception. Personally, yoga has helped ease the pain caused by my endometriosis and that's a big plus in my book. Many doctors prescribe Ayurvedic supplements or acupuncture sessions to be followed alongside the medical treatments.

YOGA: Delhi-based Sondhi has been conducting classes for pregnant women for a decade now. She has helped many students prepare for IVF with yoga. "Infertility is a sign of imbalance within the body. Yogic practices help correct hormonal imbalances by working directly on the endocrine system," she says. In time, yogic breathing and asanas improve circulation to the reproductive organs, and help them rejuvenate and heal. "It creates a healthy environment in the mind and body—I have seen women conceive after three months of regular yoga." This can be a minimum of 20 minutes of yoga, thrice a week.

AYURVEDA: The panchkarma detox is the Ayurvedic therapy most commonly recommended to couples who want to prepare their bodies for conception. It involves five different types of cleanses that eliminate imbalanced doshas. This five-to-seven-day treatment is done at an Ayurvedic centre and is definitely not for the faint-hearted, as it involves stimulated vomiting, enemas and mildly unpleasant nasal cleansing. Every year, thousands flock to Kerala for the treatment, as it's known to eliminate environmental toxins and help cure everything from psoriasis to IBS to osteoporosis.

ACUPUNCTURE: "When the flow of our life force energy or 'chi' is disrupted, it can result in pain or disease. Acupuncture helps in maintaining that normal energy flow, thereby increasing a couple's chances of conceiving, says Dr Jasmine Modi, Mumbai-based PhD in Oriental medicine. She believes that acupuncture can specifically target hormones and ovulation, help increase blood flow to the uterus and thicken a too-thin uterine lining. It also helps, she says, with conditions such as PCOS and endometriosis. Modi suggests consulting a specialist and waiting it out for three to six months if you're only using acupuncture to prepare yourself for pregnancy. "It benefits men as well because the period of sperm maturation takes between 70 and 90 days," she says. If you're doing the procedure in conjunction with IVF, Modi encourages you to have a session close to the day of the IVF transfer and then, in case of a positive test, do it on a weekly schedule during the first trimester.

WHATIFNOTHINGWORKS?

I was haunted by this question through all my cycles. The yearning for a baby was so strong that I felt that there would be no meaning in my life without a child. Ten years later, I'm still heartbroken as I write this, but I have so many other things to be grateful for-my career is flourishing and I'm a certified yoga teacher. During the IVF years, I had just one friend and now I have a huge circle of friends and acquaintances who love and care for me. I think, as women, we have a natural instinct for motherhood, but I don't feel 'empty' in any way. If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't get obsessive about IVF. I would stop at three cycles and then explore surrogacy and adoption. And while I do think about having a baby, I also don't miss having one. Eventually, life is what you make of it. It has the potential to be ugly or beautiful, with or without a baby.

ACK-UP PLAN

Pregnancy is often offered as the solution to all gynaecological conditions in young women. But what do you do if you haven't met the person you want to make babies with? One possibility is cryopreservation or egg freezing at an IVF clinic. The process involves ovulation medication (to aid higher egg production) followed by the retrieval of eggs when they mature. These are subsequently frozen, coded and placed in a secure cryotank. "It is important to freeze the eggs around the late twenties to the early thirties. It is also important to freeze at least 15 to 20 eggs to increase the chances of pregnancy later," says Dr Parikh.

DISCLAIMER: THIS ARTICLE IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE, DIAGNOSIS OR TREATMENT. ELLE DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY OF THE THERAPIES FEATURED HERE AND RECOMMENDS YOU CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE STARTING ANY ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT.





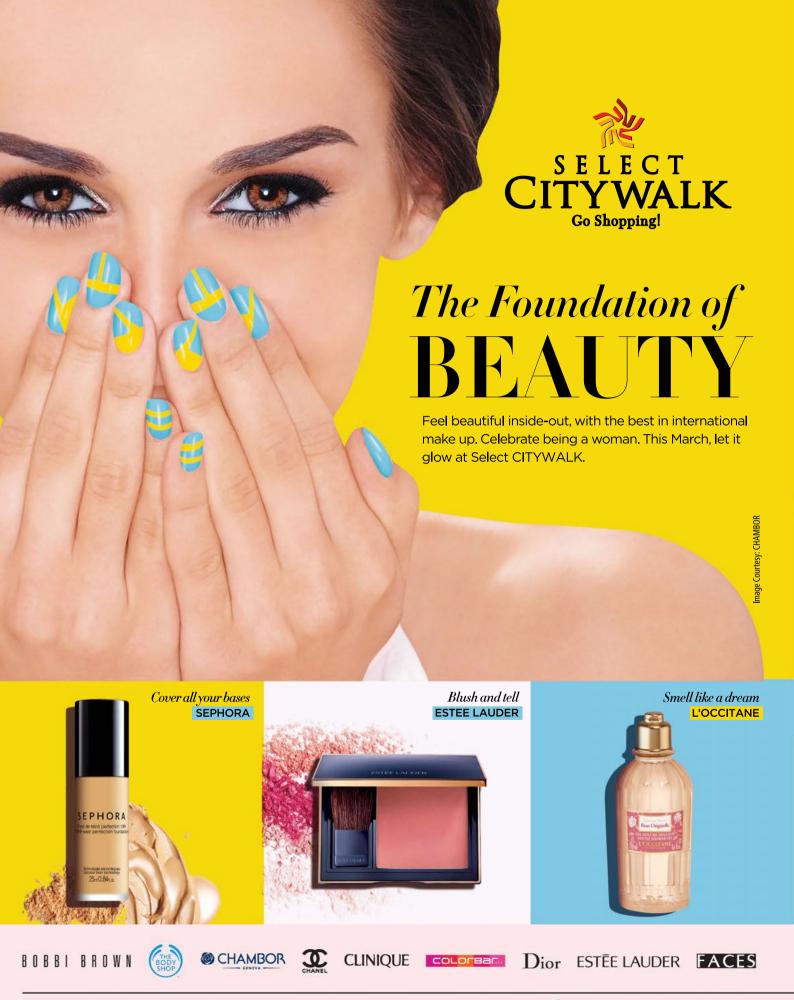
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GO

From diving camps
to relaxing yoga
retreats and scenic
cycling expeditions
that build character,
Kalyani Prasher
gives you eight good
reasons to stay
active on holiday

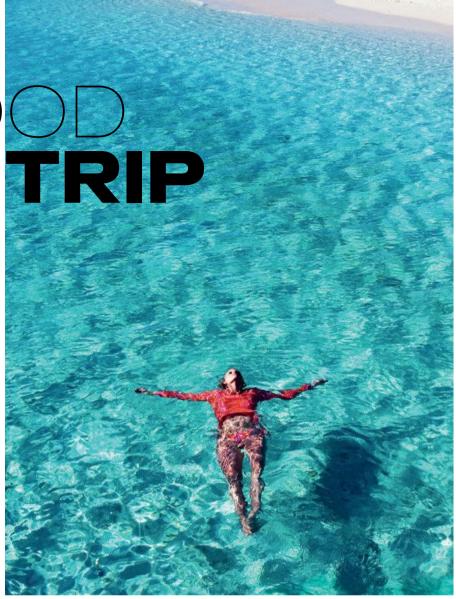
t's tough to tear yourself away from the beach lounger, but a holiday can be just the refresher you need to kick-start a new fitness regimen. You can kayak down a river in Bhutan, cycle through wildlife sanctuaries or even learn scuba diving in the Andamans, building strength, endurance and good gams while you take in the sights. Plus, all the sunlight will do you so much good. So, why not try...



FIT FOR: Exercise newbies. You can finish the four-hour round-trip with a few breaks—be sure to pack a power snack.

THE CIRCUIT: Ditch the crowded Mall Road for an adrenaline-boosting walk through the wooded areas around Shimla. Start the 10 km trek from Shoghi (most resorts are located in this suburb) and hike through the main road till it turns off on to the path towards Suro village. After just a minute's walk, all you'll hear is birdsong and all you'll see are towering pines. The path is ideal for beginners with a combination of uphill and downhill routes as well as long stretches of relatively straight walking. If you're prepared to take it up a notch, try a spot of valley crossing on a zipline or guided rappelling. (Park-woods.com)

WORK IT: The hilly, undulating terrain is perfect for a full-body cardio workout.



HORSE RIDING IN MARWAR,

RAJASTHAN

FIT FOR: Experienced riders who can endure four to seven hours on the saddle.

THE CIRCUIT: This safari is a fun way to explore south Rajasthan on glorious Marwari horses. Your adventure begins in Udaipur, moves through the Pali district and ends at the 300-year-old Chanoud Garh. You roam virgin tracts that pass through the 16th-century Bhadrajun Fort, sand dunes and vast salt lands, with lots of wildlife including the famous black buck. Nurse your sore muscles during leisurely meal times. (bhsafari@gmail.com)

WORK IT: Besides giving you thighs of steel, it also strengthens your arms, core and legs.

YOGA IN LADAKH

FIT FOR: Anyone who enjoys slow, meditative workouts.

THE CIRCUIT: Mumbai studio Yogacara's tightly edited getaway introduces you to a new way of life in a little over a week. Led by founder Radhika Vachani, the retreat includes working on your asanas, hiking, meditation and sessions on learning to fix unhealthy eating habits. Pro tip: you can ask for the occasional momo minus any judgment. Sign up for their upcoming July or September retreats now. (Yogacara.in)

WORK IT: You'll see big progress in your yoga and meditation sessions. And you will pick up more than just a few tips on living stress-free.







FALAJ WALKING IN JABAL AKHDAR,

OMAN

FIT FOR: Everyone who enjoys walking.

THE CIRCUIT: Score a major boost on your Fitbit along Oman's ancient water irrigation system, also known as falaj. The water channel, carved into the rocky mountains of Jabal Akhdar near Muscat, winds its way across the hills and centuries-old mountain villages. Many of these villages are now deserted and people have started using the falaj system for hikes. It seems easy, but the parapet is narrow and one misjudged stride could send you tumbling down the al-Hajar. Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort organises falaj walks and a host of other adventure activities like rock climbing, mountain biking, abseiling and via ferrata, which involves walking around a cliff's edge with a rope tied to you. (Jabal-akhdar.anantara.com)

WORK IT: The walk is best enjoyed at a relaxed pace, just enough to keep your metabolic rate up.



DEEP-SEA DIVING IN HAVELOCK,

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

FIT FOR: Water babies who can swim 200 metres reasonably well.

THE CIRCUIT: Sign up for a seven-day scuba camp on this pristine island. All the sightseeing here will take place underwater, as you swim alongside sharks, mantas, dolphins, corals and many small sea creatures. Work your way to an open water certification (PADI or SSI) over the week, after which you can go diving anywhere in the world. Spending every free moment in between lessons, lolling on the beach and watching surreal sunsets is a given. (Diveindia.com)

WORK IT: Diving and swimming are great cardiovascular and muscular exercises that don't put stress on your joints.

CYCLING TOUR IN THE NILGIRIS, KARNATAKA-KERALA-TAMIL NADU

FIT FOR: Everyone—provided you begin training now for this December's expedition. Exercise on a turbo-trainer, include short high-intensity sessions for endurance and practise cycling on all terrains.

THE CIRCUIT: If you've already ticked running a marathon off your bucket list, sign up for this seven-stage, 875 km mega-cycling group tour that will take you through the Nagarhole, Wayanad and Mudumalai wildlife sanctuaries. You'll clock over 100 km every day as you pass rivers, villages, mountains and rainforests. Multiple support centres and good medical aid will keep your strength—and morale—up on this once-in-a-lifetime trip. Registration begins in May; start training now.

WORK IT: Besides consistent fat-burning, pushing pedals will shape up your butt, thighs and calves. It's also great for building bone strength.





KAYAKING IN PUNAKHA,

BHUTAN

FIT FOR: Beginners as well as those who are experienced can find suitably challenging rapids in Punakha.

THE CIRCUIT: With its clear waters and scenic views, drifting down the rapids of the Po Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers is arguably the best way to see Punakha—you'll also catch a glimpse of Bhutan's most stunning fortress, Punakha Dzong, during your adventure. While there are simpler, hour-long routes, the 12 km Mo Chhu river route is more challenging with seven hours of active kayaking and scouting. Along the way you are likely to spot the whitebellied heron (one of the world's rarest birds), apart from some of the most gorgeous views of the Punakha valley. (Tourism.gov.bt)

WORK IT: Kayaking is great for building your core strength as well as your upper back, shoulder and chest muscles. It also compensates for your weekly aerobic class. ●



ROCK CLIMBING IN HATTIBAN, NEPAL

FIT FOR: Those with all levels of climbing experience, but serious enthusiasts will find more to love.

THE CIRCUIT: Nepal's natural rock faces make it a no-brainer for active holidays. While you can do learners' day climbs and pick tricks on using the equipment in Kathmandu, the real deal is at Hattiban, a village an hour outside the capital. There's nothing for beginners here—the four-day climb through forested terrain includes short climbs on sheer mountain faces of very tough 5.9 grade routes. Your reward: unbelievable 360-degree views of the Kathmandu Valley. (Hardcorenepal.com)

WORK IT: Climbing builds muscle, and boosts endurance as well as brain function.

SUPER MODEL

Switch your skin diet with The Body Shop's superfood-inspired masks

If you haven't gotten around to drinking those sumptuous green smoothies, you can at least apply their power-packed ingredients to your face. Loaded with goodies like acai, honey and charcoal, these face masks by The Body Shop infuse your skin with vitamins and antioxidants, without the nasty mineral oil. What's more? They're vegetarian. Try the British Rose mask for hydration, Himalayan Charcoal for a detox, Chinese Ginseng and Rice to zap dullness, Amazonian Acai to fight fatigue, and Ethiopian Honey to soothe irritated skin. Us? We'd pick them all to curate our very own multi-masking routine.





CUSTOM CODE

System Professional's latest tech will nurture your natural hair—and make every strand thrive

We get it. It's tough to find a salon ritual or product that targets all your hair needs—one might fix brittle tresses, another will treat that greasy scalp. Thankfully, System Professional's EnergyCode complex does it all and then some. The technology works at the core of each strand that is made up of lipids (fatty acids that make your hair flexible and strong). Since everyone's lipid levels are different, the complex is mixed with shampoos, conditioners and serums that target issues like repair, colour-protection, hydration and strength. This way, an expert can help you make your own combination of products that work best for your hair. Available at Jean-Claude Biguine and Affinity Salons





Beast mode

Fitness trainer Nam-Wook Kang means serious business when he asks his class to do a crocodile roll. Part of the latest no-equipment workout trend, Animal Flow is a sequence of movements, like crawling, squatting and stretching that mimic wild creatures. It looks simple, but the moves challenge your whole body, while building strength and boosting agility. For more information Facebook. com/tangerineartsstudio or Instagram.com/trainingwithnam

HOT ADDRESS

Celeb-favourite Italian stylist Rosanno Ferretti (responsible for Duchess Kate's shiny mane) has arrived in Delhi with a luxury hair spa. Sign up for an indulgent hair strengthening ritual along with a cut to get a taste of 'The Method'—Ferretti's unique technique for a bespoke chop. Rosanno Ferretti Hair Spa, Zehen at The Manor, New Delhi. Tel: 011 4323 5111



HAZELNUT OIL

Clarins Instant Light Lip Comfort Oil, ₹ 1,900 Besides the moisturising jojoba oil that everyone loves to love, the hazelnut extract in this lip oil delivers enough vitamin E to rescue you from chapped lips.

> **MANUKA HONE** Kiehl's Pure Vitality Skin

Renewing Cream, ₹ 4,700

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soothing and skin strengthening

properties of the New Zealand

honey ensures this

cream makes your

healthy glow.

Natural ingredients that power up your skincare regimen

reduces the appearance of large pores, slows ageing and leaves you feeling fresh—all without any of that dryness. .

OIL

Neal's Yard Remedies

Rejuvenating Frankincense

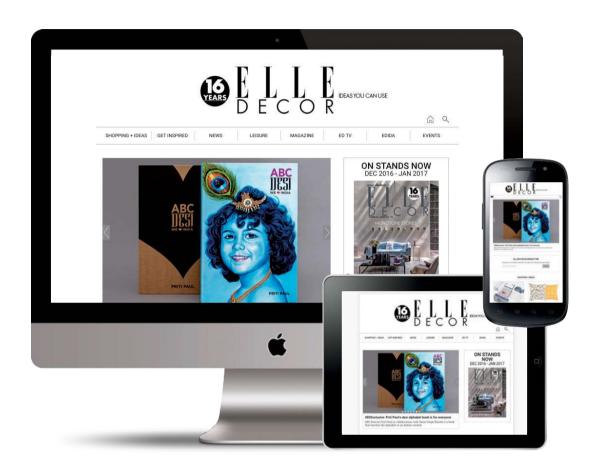
Facial Wash, ₹ 2,300



GOOD NATURE



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ELIFESTYLE

Catch the highlights of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale before it ends and find out why Bhutan should be on your bucket list







Andrea Vara





Andrea Varani



rom a bird's eye view, this is how the Kochi-Muziris Biennale would appear: at one corner, people are walking blindfolded, at another, musicians are playing to an enthralled audience and at yet another performance, artistes are rolling in the mud. Curated by Sudarshan Shetty. the theme of the third edition of the biennale, titled Forming In The Pupil Of An Eye, takes from a belief from the Rigveda, that when a meditating sage opens his eyes to the world, he assimilates its multiplicity with just one look. The result is a smorgasbord of 97 works produced exclusively for the 108-day event by artists from 31 countries. Here's what not to miss:

THE SEA OF PAIN

Wade through knee-deep water at the Chilean poet's installation dedicated to five-year-old Syrian refugee Galip Kurdi, whose body washed ashore after he drowned while fleeing Syria with his family in 2015. An accompanying poem reads: 'Don't you listen? Don't you look? Don't you hear me? Don't you see me? Don't you feel me?' "Can anyone not be concerned with the reality of refugees? Could an artist say, 'That is not my subject'? I do not think so," says Zurita.

12 STORIES BY PK SADANANDAN

The sheer scale of Kerala-based artist Sadanandan's 15-by-three metre mural, one of the largest in the country, is awe-inspiring. The message is heart-warming too; communal harmony, which Sadanandan discusses via 12 ancient stories from Kerala, painted in natural colours over the course of the biennale. "In the given political situation, I thought it was only appropriate to remind people that ancient India was a tolerant place and embraced all kinds of people," says Sadanandan.

THE PYRAMID OF EXILED POETS

BY ALEŠ ŠTEGFR

The Slovene poet's interactive work sees you struggle through the dark alleys of a pyramid made of cow dung, as a cacophony of voices read poems by exiled poets. Is this what it feels like to be wrenched from your motherland? To feel lost?

WHERE THE FLOWERS STILL GROW

BY BHARAT SIKKA

One of the most powerful images of Sikka's work is a damaged shikara lying in a glass showcase. The boat almost looks wounded—like Kashmir and its inhabitants. The moving photographs of the valley's destroyed homes and abandoned objects are evocative of the pain and loss faced by its people.

GOING PLAYCES BY ORIJIT SEN

Curious visitors attempt to complete a jigsaw puzzle of a Goan market place, the centrepiece of the detailed work. As you engage in the physical act of putting together a place, you have flashbacks: your first all-girl trip to Goa or a sea of mustard flowers seen from a train in Punjab. Sen points out that old areas of a city often function as archives of memory, stories and folklore.

CM 182 By endri dani

This series of photographs by the Albanian artist features Dani standing at the entrances to several buildings in his homeland that were constructed in the communist era, their height the same as his. The repetitive imagery symbolises the stifling standardisation of communism. "The attempt here is to explore my coexistence with my past—a way to completely submerge myself in the process of creating art and highlight the influence of one's motherland in one's work," he says.

WALKING OUT OF Bayan har by 11 bo'an

This one is at the Kottapuram Fort, at least an hour away from the main biennale—but it is worth the trek. The huge scroll (two-by-122 metres) by the late Chinese artist brings alive the ancient trade route between India and China, and the environment around the Yellow Sea. The plastic reproduction of an unfinished ink and wash figure painting scroll, made over 10 years, chronicles life in Bayan Har, a mountainous region in the south-central part of Qinghai province, where the Yellow Sea originates. The walk up and down to see the entire scroll makes you feel like a voyager seeking treasure.

ROOM OF LIES BY SUNIL PADWAL

Entering this room, packed with drawings and photographs from the floor to the ceiling, is like walking into Padwal's head. You understand how he processes things around him and creates art. It's like watching a soliloquy, one where the artist talks of several thousand images of birds, cars, people and under-construction buildings in south Mumbai.

BATHROOM SET BY DIA MEHTA BHUPAL

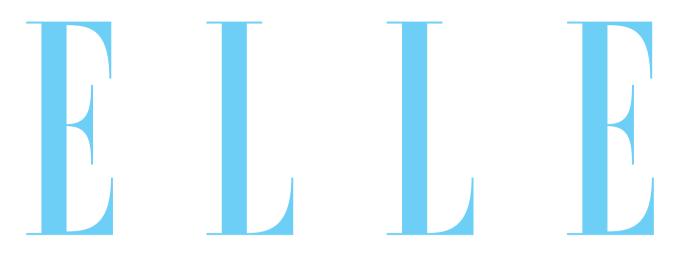
From a distance, it looks ordinary. Go closer and you'll see that this work is made entirely of newspapers and magazines that have been rolled and stuck together, creating layers of stories and giving a new perspective to the public toilet and the many stories it's been privy to.

DÉFILÉ By Aes+F

Bold, brash and shocking, the Russian collective AES+F, has dressed seven recently-deceased people in haute couture for a fashion shoot. The morbid display prompts thoughts of unchecked consumerism, forcing you to reflect upon the time and effort spent in pursuit of materialistic comfort. •

— RIDDHI DOSHI





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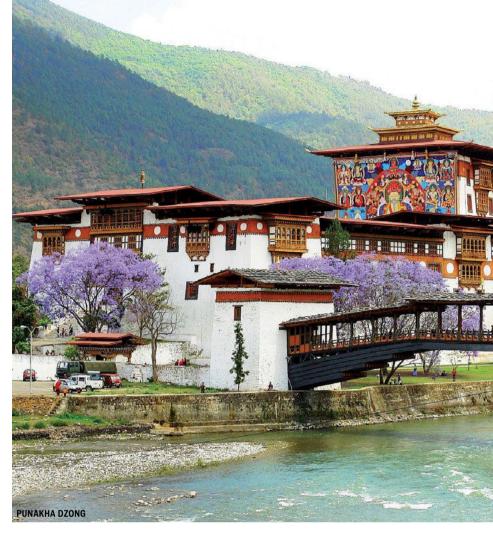


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BLISS POINT

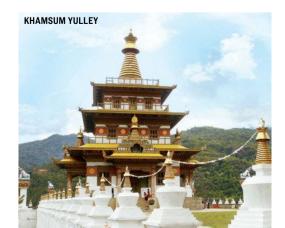
Eat your greens, work up a sweat and let your mind go blank. Good advice is so much easier to follow when you're in Bhutan, finds Deepa Menon





hutan markets itself as a nation that's concerned with its Gross Domestic Happiness, a sunny index that replaces the more prosaic GDP. But what is happiness? Is it scoring a seat on the left-hand side of your Druk Air flight from Delhi to Paro so you can try to capture the majesty of Mount Everest on your dinky phone camera? Is it the crunch of frost under your sneakers on a trek through a hushed rhododendron forest? Is it the novelty of being in a land where the INR is treated like it's the USD? Because Bhutan offers all those transcendent experiences, but it also makes you ask uncomfortable questions like, why do I need a job and a flat and a Form 16 (A) anyway?

It has to be said that the Bhutanese don't seem happier than any other people. Their youngsters are under the thrall of smartphones and Salman Khan, the good jobs are still largely in government service and travel outside the country is a luxury for most citizens. But an air of contentment lies thickly upon this land. Two details contribute to this perception. First, all the roadside dogs look well-fed and self-actualised. One of them has even written a book about his spiritual journey. Kunzang Choden's Dawa is the beloved story, now taught in schools, of a Thimphu dog who seeks a cure for his mange in a remote monastery and makes canny observations along the way about the pitfalls of ambition and the erosion of a simpler way of life. Somehow, it isn't much of a stretch to imagine one of the magnificently aloof mutts you meet on the Bhutanese countryside pontificating in this way. They all look like they have rich inner lives.







DOGS AT DOCHULA PASS

breathe, the organic food they eat, the cardiovascular workout they get just going from point A to point B (all roads are uphill here) and the parental level of control their government exercises in their lives. The sale of cigarettes and tobacco products is banned in Bhutan, the forest cover is maintained at a minimum of 60 per cent by law, and citizens enjoy universal health care. The average urban traffic jam is about three cars deep and no one honks. They have a sexy name for their country: Druk Yul or the land of the thunder dragon. And they actually seem to like their top management, the Wangchuck Dynasty that has ruled for over a century. Beleaguered Indians can't be blamed for seeing Bhutan as our Canada, the wise neighbour to the north we want to move in with. Due to disappearing habitats back home, our guide Karma tells us, Bengal tigers too are putting on their

To keep from being overrun by backpackers, but still maintain good neighbourly relations, Bhutan charges a daily fee of up to US\$250 to foreign visitors but citizens from certain Asian countries, including India, are exempt. So you'll hear enough Tamil, Marathi and Bengali to keep you from feeling too homesick, but there are no crowds anywhere, including popular destinations like Paro Taktsang or the Tiger's Nest Monastery. Guidebooks will tell you that the trek up to this ancient shrine takes about three hours to complete and that's because guidebooks are written by elite athletes with masochistic tendencies. For us fatties, the steep journey of 8km (both ways) takes a good five-to-six hours with many scenic stops along the way to pause and reflect on your mortality. >

monkey caps and migrating to Bhutan.

The other charm of this landscape is the sheer quantity of sprv senior citizens. We met one togged up like a triathlete and barrelling down the trail to the Tiger's Nest Monastery as we gasped our way up. He had barely broken a sweat. You will run into several elderly hustlers on the route to the Khamsum Yulley Namgyal temple; one bargained loud and long over a basketful of guavas, another blinded us with her toothless smile and tried to sell us overpriced religious objects. Thimphu's Memorial Chorten serves as a kind of nursery for seniors, who gather here every day in their usual spots, marked by folded gunny sacks placed between gigantic prayer wheels. Not for one grandmother this life of idle chatter—an apple-cheeked infant bobbed up and down in the saddle on her back as she counted her rosary and walked a dizzying number of circles around the temple.

All this vitality could be thanks to the clean air they







"HOUSES NEAR

DRUKPA KUNLEY'S

TEMPLE ARE

FESTOONED WITH

PHALLIC DRAWINGS.

THAN THE LAST"

It's a well-worn track to the top with a coffee and souvenir shop at the halfway mark, but there are so many opportunities on this path and at the monastery to just sit perspiring on a bench till you catch your breath. There are whole stretches of time when the only sound you hear is from magpies hassling each other in the pine trees, and there is no jostling anywhere.

Our guide, Karma, deputed by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (Tourism.gov.bt) to shepherd our

group of journalists, had cleverly warmed us up for this trek by taking us on smaller walks every day that led up to it. The most meditative of these was the one through the forest paths of Dochula Pass, between Thimphu **EACH MORE MAJESTIC** and Punakha. It was a downhill walk through a slippery, icy route punctuated with views

of the Himalayas and sounds of creatures that harrumphed invisibly, but comfortingly behind the cypresses. We visited Bhutan in December, but apparently these slopes are a carpet of flowers in spring (March to May).





Another pleasant way to limber up and improve lung capacity is to hike up to the Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Temple in Punakha. It's a pretty trail that weaves through paddy fields, past clear streams and over a panoramic view of the mountains and the river Mo Chhu where we would go rafting later. This river is named the feminine pronoun Mo for its placidity. While her male counterpart, Po Chhu, froths and tumbles, she calmly delivers you to your destination with only a few perfunctory soakings—but this is glacial water so the temperature is thrilling enough.

As you drift lazily on sweet old Mo, vou'll have time to stare up at one of the oldest shrines in Bhutan, the Punakha Dzong. A dzong is part monastery and temple and part administrative headquarters for the district, and so is usually built to an impressive scale. But the one in Punakha is so vast, squat and ancient that it radiates stillness. Punakha city is not exactly Las Vegas, but even the quotidian sounds of human life disappear inside this structure. It's like entering a bell jar.

Less solemn is the walk up to the shrine of the 'Divine Madman', Drukpa Kunley. Chimi Lhakhang, also in Punakha, pays ode to a 16th-century monk who subdued demons by (allegedly) hitting them over the head with his erect penis. Kunley rebelled against the straitlaced prescriptions of Buddhism, and brought a sense of humour and an appreciation of the absurd to spiritual teachings. In his honour, houses near his temple are festooned with phallic drawings, each more majestic than the



PHALLIC DRAWINGS IN HONOUR OF DRUKPA KUNLEY





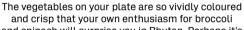
DrukAir operates flights to Paro from Delhi. Kolkata, Guwahati and Bagdogra. For more information, log on to Drukair.com.bt



last. Behold the hairy testicles, veiny shafts and spurting tips that proclaim the triumph of good over evil. Not surprisingly, Chimi Lhakhang is a fertility temple too and devotees show their respect by bringing bottles of liquor because of course they do.

While we listened to Karma tell the story of Drukpa Kunley, I was distracted by two kittens playing in front of the temple's altar, right inside the sanctum. This seemed to be their home and young monksin-training would come to play with them every now and then. At the entrance, we stepped over a dog snoozing in the sun. He was sprawled out like he knew he would never be shooed out of there.

I will leave you with one final story to prove how supremely chilled out this place is. There used to be a zoo in Thimphu, but all the animals were set free a few years ago for Buddhist reasons. However, one of them refused to leave and instead wandered into the city and held up traffic. The takin, which look like abbreviated moose, were then gently herded back into their large enclosures at the rechristened Motithang Takin Preserve, where they now live peacefully alongside other tame and goofy denizens of the goat and deer families. These fellows come right up to the bars and lick your hand for salt like they've never heard of the human-animal conflict. Then again, they're Bhutanese, so they probably haven't.



MO' THAN MOMOS

and crisp that your own enthusiasm for broccoli and spinach will surprise you in Bhutan. Perhaps it's the weather or the fact that the road to anywhere involves a wheezing trek, but every time you sit down to a meal here, you'll find you've worked up a nice appetite. The food is simple, largely organic and plentiful. Even a very basic restaurant will rustle up a plate of earthy red rice, fresh vegetables and some version of ema datshi, a cheesy gravy that folds in a lot of national pride. If you decide very sensibly to eat momos for every meal, make sure to order in advance, because they're made fresh. In accordance with Buddhist laws of non-violence. Bhutan prohibits slaughter on its land, so all the meat is imported. Sometimes, the beef can be stringy or dry, but you can't go far wrong with chicken or pork. The cuisine here also rates high on the Scoville scale. To deliver a kick to the sinuses, there are gigantic red chillies, green chillies with lots of lethal seeds and ezzay, a dry pickle. They're not big on desserts in this country, but they grow such sweet apples, oranges, peaches and guavas that you can forgive this oversight. Speaking of sweet things, make room in your

suitcase for as many litres of local liquor as you can legally carry back home. I can personally vouch for ara, the sharp, clear, potent rice wine, K5 whisky. which is both smooth and cheap (about ₹ 790 for 750ml) and Zumzin, a white wine that tastes

like a bowl of boozy peaches.







Trust the beauty of Alacati and the warmth of Incirliev to make your summer holiday unforgettable

Located in the picturesque Turkish village of Alacati, Incirliev is a gorgeous boutique hotel that's surrounded by fragrant gardens full of mulberry, mandarin and lemon trees. The property derives its name from the glorious incir (fig) tree located at its heart. Safe to say, this refurbished Greek house—owned by the Poshor family in Aegean Turkey's hottest up-and-coming holiday destination—is perfect for those keen on exploring untapped parts of the country.



SAFE HAVEN

Incirliev has eight spacious rooms—each adorned with local artwork and kitted out with all the modern amenities (yes, of course, there's free Wi-Fi). The Blue Room is ideal for those craving the cottage life. With its cosy fireplace and private patio, it offers the perfect setting to pop open that bottle of wine at sundown. If you fancy something a little more ethereal, opt for the White Room. Done up in shades of cream and ivory, with a bed fit for royalty, this room overlooks the hotel's famed fig tree—in the summer, you can actually reach out from the window and pluck the fruit right off the branches.





GOOD MORNING

Breakfast is undoubtedly the meal to look out for during your stay here. Expect homemade, sun-matured jams and marmalades made from the fruit of the resident mulberry, mandarin and lemon trees, all handpicked by the owner. Don't forget to load up on Turkish-style sesame bagels, fresh juice and pancakes with ricotta cheese and butter. There's more: the hotel also throws in a complimentary treat-afternoon tea, served with just-baked cakes and cookies.

Though Alacati has been a popular destination for windsurfers for years, it's only now beginning to flex serious muscle on the map of the discerning traveller. Turkish Airlines will fly you to the closest airport in Izmir, which is an hour away from Alacati by road. Spend your days kite-surfing and kayaking in the irresistibly blue Aegean Sea or stroll along the town's narrow, cobblestone streets that lead to its beautiful white-sand beaches. If you can't do without your spa treatments, make a trip to the Cesme Peninsula, which is known for its hot springs and healing mud baths. Those who don't want to get out of bed can rely on the hotel to organise a relaxing massage in their room. *Incirtliev.com*



— ANJAN SACHAR



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MAR 21 - APR 21

Of late, you have become quite complacent. Even though you have a reputation for being a fearless adventurer, one who is always looking for the next mountain to climb, you know the time to move on has arrived. But, you are not ready to budge just as yet—not for another few weeks at least.

TAURUS

APR 22 - MAY 22

You run into an old flame this month, and you are pleased to see each other. Two weeks later, you meet again, this time privately. Even though your date is probably part of a long goodbye than a new beginning, it proves that regardless of what you say, you are not over each other yet.

GEMINI

MAY 22 - JUN 21

Getting to the top isn't enough once you're there, you have to fight to stay put. You have bright ideas, but the weight of their responsibility could force you into playing safe, instead of taking risks. You may start looking for a way out sooner than expected.

CANCER

JUN 22 - JUL 22

You are the last person to seek popularity, but now that you have it, accept it gracefully—just don't let your ego outshine your abilities. Turn the situation to your advantage. It may open up new career paths. You may not take any of them, but it sure will feel good to have the options.

LEO

JUL 23 - AUG 23

You are usually too busy to let yourself daydream. But this month, you will get a chance to unwind for an entire week. Then, something urgent will come up and life will go back to the way it was. Don't lose sight of the ideas you come up with during those precious few days. They are the truest indication of where your heart lies.



ASTRO

BY **BERNARD FITZWALTER**

PISCES

FEB 19 - MAR 20

To be absolutely open about your feelings may sound like your worst nightmare, but it is also the only way you will get to live the life you want, instead of constantly having to pretend to be someone you are not. Shed all that heavy emotional baggage—it will feel exhilarating.

VIRGO

AUG 24 - SEP 22

You seem to have made up your mind about a key issue, without listening to what others have to say. Just remember that it is important to consider all sides of an argument. Don't interpret someone's reluctance to speak as a sign of agreement or disinterest. In reality, they care very deeply about it—and about you, too.

LIBRA

SEP 23 - OCT 23

If you're not sure of where you're going—or if you don't like where you are headed—the obvious thing to do is to stop and go back. But that's easier said than done, especially when there is a relationship involved. Yet, if you continue, every step will make the situation worse. Don't give up on your chosen destination—simply find a less disastrous route.

SCORPIO

OCT 24 - NOV 22

Are you going to act first and tell people what you've done later? Or will you talk about it beforehand to garner support? The latter is the way to go, if you are trying to boost your profile. But it is also the route that is most likely to fail. If this is something you really want, then do it, regardless of what anyone else thinks.

SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23 - DEC 23

We often say that if we could go back in time and do things differently, we would. You may now actually get your chance, in a way. But there is a possibility that you will end up doing exactly what you did before. Take your cue from the past if you like, but consciously try to do it differently this time around.

CAPRICORN

DEC 24 - JAN 20

Gaining permission to do something does not necessarily make it easy to do, nor does it guarantee success. The next few weeks are a battleground. Your gains will be small and hard-won. But each victory will take you a little bit further and force your opponents to retreat.

AQUARIUS

JAN 21 – FEB 18

A single word or action may be all that's needed to make you explode—it could start an argument and lead to irreconcilable differences, taking your life in a different direction. Like with an avalanche, it doesn't actually matter which stone starts it. It was going to happen anyway. Now, it seems, it has.

NUMEROLOGY

BY CHERYL LEE TERRY

MARCH IS FULL OF SURPRISES. You might find yourself an inseparable soul mate, friend or kitten. Positive energy surges will help you resolve all your work, family and financial disagreements. Keep your cool between the 9th and 13th to avoid serious arguments. After the 21st, speak up: coworkers will be receptive to your ideas. In the last week, don't be shy about sharing your feelings with those you love.

KEEP YOUR NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE

and ignore the insensitivity of jealous associates. Disruptive vibrations between the 9th and 14th will confuse you, but with patience and the right questions, you will find the answers you are looking for. After the 22nd, don't be surprised if someone steps forward to offer you his or her love. Vibrations around the 26th create moments for a quiet romantic evening with someone special.

YOU MAY FEEL that a loved one or friend has become too distant, and by the 9th, your patience will have run out—consider this a moment to revaluate your needs. Listen to others' problems and you will be able to fix the differences and restart this relationship. After the 20th, you will have the energy and charisma to take charge. Avoid taking any careless decisions.

DON'T ALLOW YOUR INSECURITY

to cloud your judgment. Till the 6th, put on a quiet show of strength—allow others to think that they are in charge. Explore ways to increase your income by working on a hobby that has business potential. At work, become more of a team player. Although emotions run high on the 23rd, the storm clouds will also show signs of clearing.

YOUR MIND TURNS TO long-term commitments, both personally and professionally. Stay cool between the 1st and 7th—this chaotic energy could make someone's intentions and your true feelings clear to you. After the 7th, you may realise that you and your beloved are on the same page. Singles may have an important romantic discussion about the future. Avoid engaging in heated debates around the 11th.

Numerology is a way to determine the cycles of your life by analysing the numbers in your birth date. To calculate your personal key number, use the following method: just add the day and month of your birth date. Here, November 28 is the sample date:

Day 28 Month 11

39

Add 3 and 9 and reduce the sum to a single digit: 3 + 9 = 12 and 12 (1 + 2) = 3. 3 is your key number, which you will keep for life.

THE MONTH BEGINS WITH a force that inspires you to spruce up your living space and fix the problems you're facing with your family and close friends. Tempers may flare between the 9th and 14th—make sure you fight over things that really matter. Stay mindful of your feelings and be wary of losing someone who is more than just a passing attraction.

MARCH'S POWERFUL numerological combinations will force you to face your fears. With determination, success will be yours. New insights between the 4th and 11th will help you clear all your financial doubts, but stay cautious about your investments. Singles may meet someone mysterious, but they must take their time before becoming too involved. A powerful energy surge around the 24th could spark a major disagreement.

YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT to feel hurt or angry because of the way you have been treated by someone. A series of disruptive power surges between the 1st and 12th will test your patience and loyalty. You are now in the final stages of laying the groundwork for changes that will, in time, lead to feelings of security and stability. After the 18th, lower your guard—an important relationship will become more intense and committed.

IT IS TIME TO CONSIDER a career switch. Else, change your attitude towards your work. On the weekend of the 10th, confusion reigns, so put taking any final decisions on hold. It's also time to revaluate a close relationship—you could get emotional and say too much. Hold off on expressing your frustrations, because by the 26th, you will forgive them all. In March, love will be complicated and interesting—live in the moment. ●

ELOVES

WHAT WE'RE OBSESSING ABOUT THIS MONTH



SHOULD YOU NEED PROOF

THAT SEX IS BACK IN FASHION,
LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THIS

STILETTO. IF YOU'RE NOT

FEELING HOT AT THE SIGHT
OF IT, TRY SLIPPING IT ON

Leather stilettos, ₹ 65,450, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello





DIOR