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THE LEGACY & LUXURY

— ISSUE 2026 —

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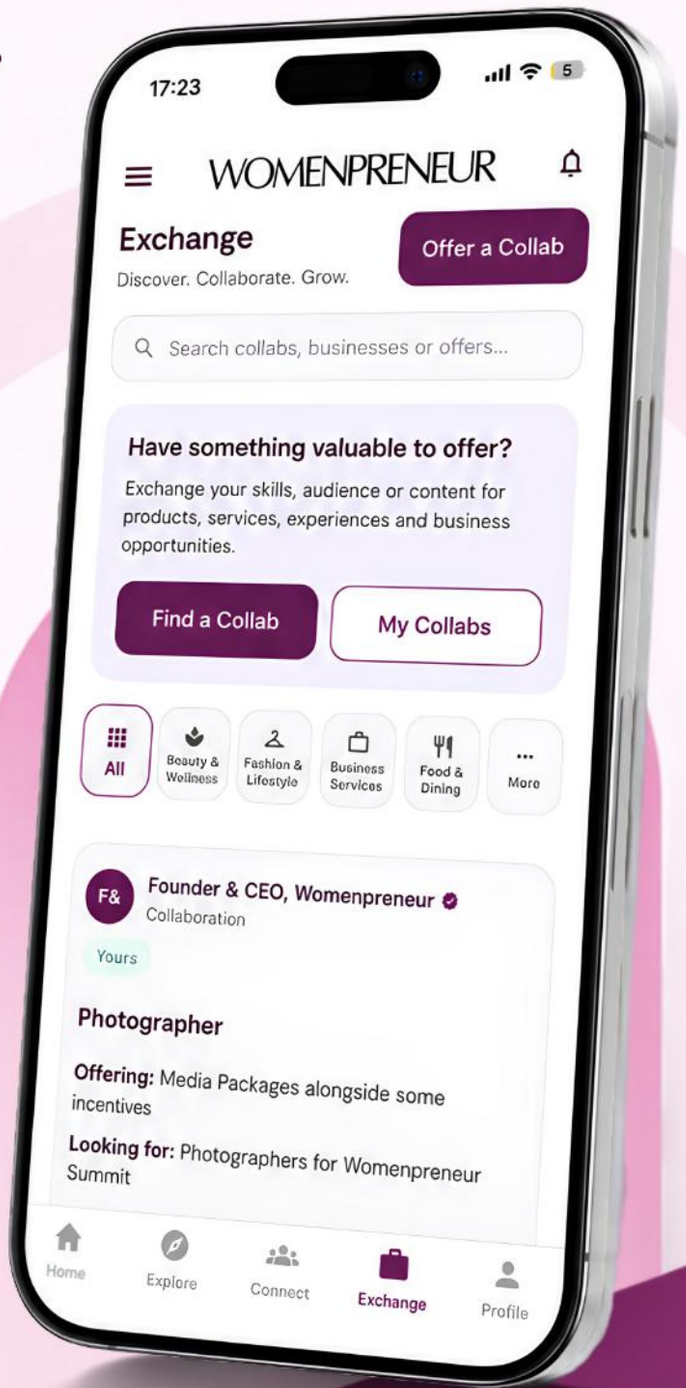
SHRUTI SODHI

ON CREATIVITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUILDING WITH PURPOSE

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Nisha Lamba
Editor-in-Chief
Womenpreneur India



The Meaning of What We Leave Behind

Luxury has always been associated with beauty, craftsmanship and distinction. But with time, its meaning evolves. It becomes less about what we possess and more about what we value, what we create and what we choose to leave behind.

The idea of **Luxury & Legacy** comes from this understanding. It is an exploration of women who are building businesses, preserving traditions, challenging conventions and creating something that extends beyond their individual achievements. Their stories remind us that true luxury is not merely an expression of success. It is the freedom to pursue a vision, the courage to make independent choices and the ability to create lasting value.

In these pages, we meet women who are redefining what it means to build a legacy. Some are carrying forward family traditions, giving inherited businesses a contemporary identity. Others are creating something entirely their own, transforming personal passions into enterprises and ideas into enduring brands. There are founders bringing Indian craftsmanship to global audiences, entrepreneurs reimagining luxury through thoughtful experiences, and leaders placing purpose, innovation and integrity at the centre of their work.

What connects their journeys is not a singular definition of success, but a shared understanding that meaningful work requires conviction. Building a business is rarely a straightforward journey. It involves uncertainty, difficult decisions, learning through experience and the willingness to evolve. Behind every remarkable brand is a story of persistence, often shaped by moments that remain unseen.

We also recognise that legacy is not limited to the businesses we build. It can be found in the traditions we preserve, the people we empower, the conversations we initiate and the lives we influence. It lives in the craftsmanship passed from one generation to another, in the knowledge shared, and in the choices that make it possible for others to follow a different path.

As the meaning of luxury continues to shift, we are seeing a greater appreciation for authenticity, individuality and thoughtful creation. Consumers are looking beyond appearances towards the story, skill and integrity behind what they choose. In the same way, leadership is increasingly measured not only by growth or recognition, but by the values that remain intact along the way.

Through this special edition, we celebrate women who understand that building something meaningful is as important as building something successful. Women who are willing to take risks, question established ideas and create their own definitions of achievement.

At **Womenpreneur India**, we believe every woman has a story worth telling, but some stories also have the power to shape what comes next.

May these pages inspire you to look beyond the immediate markers of success and consider the deeper value of what you are building.

Because luxury may be experienced in the present, but legacy is what gives it permanence.

Here's to the women who build with vision, lead with purpose and leave something worth carrying forward.

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SHRUTI SODHI

The Courage to Create a Legacy of Her Own

From modelling and marketing to building one of Delhi NCR's recognised interior design firms, Shruti Sodhi's journey has been shaped by independence, creative instinct and the determination to build something on her own terms. As Founder and Principal Designer of Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs, she reflects on the challenges that shaped her, the business of design, wealth creation and her philosophy of luxury.

You have moved through several professional worlds, from modelling and marketing to jewellery and, eventually, interior design. Looking back, what connects these different chapters of your journey?

I think the common thread has always been independence and creativity. My father instilled a very strong belief in me from an early age. He would often say, "Little is a life of a woman who takes money from her father, then husband and then son." Those words stayed with me. He lived comfortably, but he brought me up with the basics because he wanted me to create my own success rather than depend on what he had built.

I was always an all-rounder, both academically and in extracurricular activities. I enjoyed acting on stage, competing in poetry at the state level and playing basketball at the state level. I was competitive and loved exploring different things.

After graduation, I signed up with Elite Model Management, a franchise from Paris. Modelling gave me exposure, confidence and poise. It also opened doors to opportunities with established companies, where I worked as a brand ambassador and became involved in marketing. Those experiences helped me understand the business world and how brands communicate.

I also explored jewellery design, anchoring, voice-overs and marketing for different brands. But somewhere along the way, I realised that while I could work and create value for others, I wanted to build something of my own. Creativity had always been part of me, and eventually, it brought me to interior design.

> **"We work on one motto: 'Deliver as committed' and 'update real-time'."**

You began building your professional identity at a young age. What were those early years really like, particularly when you were trying to become financially independent?

They were extremely difficult. I moved out of my home at 21 with no money and very little direction. I had recently signed up as a model and was living in paying guest accommodations. I was struggling financially and emotionally, and my mental health was also affected by a difficult childhood.

I had spent years in boarding school and had not experienced much family life. I had no siblings, and I did not have the kind of immediate support system that many people turn to during difficult times. I was alone and broke, and those years tested me in ways that are difficult to explain.

I took up different opportunities wherever I could find them. Modelling was one part of my work, but I also pursued jewellery design, anchoring, voice-overs and marketing. I was constantly trying to find my footing and create financial stability.

I believe success requires a balance of luck and hard work. You cannot control every opportunity that comes your way, but you can keep trying, remain patient and make the most of the chances you receive. My journey was certainly not a straight line, but every experience taught me something.

Interior design entered your professional life when you were around 30. Was there a particular moment when you realised this was the direction you wanted to take?

The influence was probably closer to home than I initially realised. My father had designed our residence and our country home beautifully. He was a man focused on his career, but he also had an extraordinary creative sensibility. People would often talk about our home, and I grew up appreciating the thought and taste that went into creating those spaces.

Interestingly, I never consciously thought of becoming an interior designer while growing up. It was only when I turned 30 that I began to feel disconnected from the world of sales, marketing and glamour. I wanted to do something that felt more natural to me, something that allowed me to use my creative instincts.

Interior design seemed to bring together the influences I had grown up with and the creativity I had always possessed. I did not have formal qualifications in the field, but I believed in my ability to learn and deliver. I simply introduced myself to the world as a designer, and someone was willing to take a chance on me.

That first opportunity changed everything. I have always believed that opportunities will come, but what matters is what you make of them.

Today, Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs works across residential, hospitality and commercial projects. How has the firm evolved, and what is the philosophy that guides the way you work?

Our work has evolved across different kinds of spaces and projects, but the fundamental philosophy has remained consistent. We work with two clear principles: "Deliver as committed" and "update real-time".

In interior design, the creative concept is only one part of the process. The real challenge often begins with execution. Finances, timelines, coordination and delivery require as much attention as the design itself. A beautiful concept has to translate into a well-executed space, and that requires planning at every stage.

We believe in being transparent with clients and keeping them informed throughout the process. When expectations are clear and communication is consistent, many challenges can be addressed before they become larger problems.

Our work spans modern contemporary and classical luxury, as well as more traditional and understated aesthetics. I enjoy the fact that design does not have to follow one fixed language. Every project has its own requirements, and the challenge is to understand the client while bringing our own design sensibility to the space.

Interior design is as much a business as it is a creative pursuit. How do you balance the artistic vision with budgets, timelines, team management and profitability?

It is undoubtedly one of the most challenging aspects of running a design business. Creativity may be what attracts people to the profession, but sustaining an enterprise requires structure and discipline.

For me, planning is essential. We use CRM systems, establish clarity with clients on finances from the beginning and focus on the right delegation. When responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined, it becomes easier to manage projects and maintain quality.

I also believe that financial clarity should never be an afterthought. Clients need to understand the commercial aspects of a project from day one. Similarly, the team needs direction and a clear understanding of what is expected at every stage.

Design and execution cannot operate independently. They have to move together. A strong design is meaningful only when it can be delivered within the agreed parameters.

> **"Luxury according to me is based on three Es: experience, expensive and elusive."**

Your work has included projects associated with established names such as TDI Group, Reusette, Marriott, Headfield, Eldeco builders, the Bridgestreet and the Logix Group. What has helped you build lasting client relationships and earn the trust required for larger projects?

Interior design is largely a referral-driven business. You may begin with a relatively small project, but if you build trust and deliver as committed, that relationship can lead to much larger opportunities.

For me, the focus has never been limited to delivering a design. I want to build genuine associations with the people I work with. A client relationship should not end when a project is completed. It should develop into a relationship built on mutual respect and confidence.

Interestingly, some of my biggest clients have become my closest friends. My friends, on the other hand, were never my clients. I think that distinction says something about how I approach professional relationships.

Trust takes time to establish. It comes from consistency, communication and the ability to stand by your commitments. In a business where people are investing significantly in their homes, workplaces or hospitality spaces, that trust is invaluable.

You have also developed an interest in real estate and investments. When did you begin exploring opportunities beyond your core business, and what prompted you to diversify?

I have to admit that I have not always been particularly good at managing money. I am a huge spendthrift, and I realised quite early that having too much liquid money available to me often meant that it would get spent. I needed to become more intentional about managing my finances.

I saw someone close to me invest in international markets and generate good returns. That made me curious and encouraged me to start exploring real estate investments in both domestic and international markets. It also helped me channel my capital more productively instead of allowing it to disappear into trivial expenses and luxury spending.

There is a saying I often think about: if your income is ₹100 and your expenditure is ₹110, you are poor; but if your income is ₹20 and your expenditure is ₹10, you are rich. For me, wealth creation is as much about managing money as it is about earning it. Most of us know how to earn, but not everyone knows how to manage what they earn.

When evaluating international real estate opportunities, what factors influence your investment decisions?

International markets can be attractive when the potential return on investment makes sense. In my experience, real estate investments in India can involve substantial capital, while the rental returns may be relatively modest, depending on the location and property.

Some international markets offer opportunities to invest with comparatively smaller amounts and potentially achieve higher returns. But I don't believe in looking at returns in isolation.

Location and accessibility are important considerations, both within a country and in terms of connectivity between countries. I also look at the country's economic environment, how easy it is to purchase and eventually liquidate an investment, and whether the property is in a tourist destination where there may be opportunities for both short-term and long-term leasing.

Ultimately, I want an investment to make financial sense while offering a reasonable level of flexibility. It is important to understand not just how you enter an investment, but also how you can exit it.

How would you describe your overall investment philosophy? Do you see yourself exploring asset classes beyond real estate, and how do you balance personal wealth creation with reinvesting in your business?

My primary investments are in my own business, which is luxury interiors and furniture, and in real estate. I see real estate as a valuable way to build wealth because it has the potential to appreciate while also generating returns.

There are other areas that interest me, including aviation, stocks and shares. However, these are possibilities I may explore as part of my next five-year plan. I believe everything needs planning, and I would rather approach a new investment thoughtfully than rush into it.

My core business always comes first. I make sure that finances for the interior design business are set aside at least a year in advance. Once those requirements are taken care of, the surplus wealth can be invested towards long-term wealth creation.

For me, it is about finding the right balance between sustaining the business I have built and making financial decisions that secure the future.

You have been recognised with several industry honours, including the Top 25 Most Prominent Women Interior Designers of India recognition in 2022. What do such milestones mean to you?

Recognition is always encouraging, particularly when it comes from people within the industry. Being named among the Top 25 Most Prominent Women Interior Designers of India at the Architecture and Interior Design Excellence Awards 2022 was a meaningful milestone.

The firm also received the Leading Trendsetter Interior Design Firm of 2022 recognition across Premium Residential Projects, Hospitality Projects and Commercial Projects, along with the ELDROK Indian Architecture Award 2022 for Excellence in Delivering Luxury Hospitality Designs.

These acknowledgements are important because they recognise the work that goes into building a design practice. But awards are not the end goal. They are reminders that the work is being noticed and that the responsibility to keep delivering remains.

For me, the most meaningful measure is still the confidence clients place in us and the relationships we build through our work.

Luxury is a defining part of your design vocabulary. How do you interpret luxury today, and how do you see the Indian luxury interiors market changing?

Luxury today is not simply about selling an expensive product. I define it through what I call the three Es: experience, expensive and elusive.

When you understand the mindset of a client who has the means to access luxury, you realise that the purchase is rarely just about owning something. There is a desire





for an experience that feels special, something limited or difficult to access. Exclusivity is important because it creates a sense of individuality and privilege.

The Indian luxury market has evolved considerably, just as Indian clients have become more aware of international design and quality. Earlier, clients would often ask for Italian brands. Today, the Make in India movement and the emergence of Indian luxury brands have created a stronger domestic benchmark. We are seeing Indian brands develop products and designs that can stand alongside international offerings.

There is also an opportunity for Indian design and furniture brands to grow internationally. India already has a presence in global markets, but I believe there is considerable room to build brands that achieve the kind of international recognition that many global names enjoy in our own country. The next five years could be important in making that progress.

“It’s more about money management than money earning. We all know how to earn but most don’t know how to manage those earnings.”

As an entrepreneur, what keeps you grounded outside the demands of running a growing design firm?

I have always had interests beyond work. I am an avid reader, passionate about dancing and find a lot of serenity in spirituality. Poetry, painting, theatre and sports are also things I enjoy.

I think having different interests gives you a wider perspective. Creativity does not exist only within the workplace. It is influenced by what you read, observe, experience and engage with.

I also feel strongly about giving back. I support various charitable causes and remain committed to helping animals in distress. It is important to me that success should not make us disconnected from the world around us.

When you look back at the young woman who moved out at 21 with very little, what would you want her to know about the journey ahead?

I would tell her to keep going and to be patient with herself. There will be moments when you feel completely lost, when things do not work out and when you question whether you are moving in the right direction. But those moments do not necessarily mean you are failing. My journey involved several different careers before I found my way into interior design. Each one gave me exposure, skills and experiences that eventually became useful. I could not have planned the journey in advance, and perhaps that is the point.

I would also tell her not to wait until everything is perfect before taking a chance on herself. I did not have the formal qualifications to enter interior design, but I believed I could do the work, and someone gave me an opportunity. That one opportunity became the beginning of something much bigger.

I still believe in working hard, staying open to possibilities and making the most of every opportunity. Most importantly, I believe in building a life where your success belongs to you.









THE LUXURY







EDIT



SANYA V. JAIN

Where Creativity Meets the Business of Luxury

From fashion and premium spirits to art and cultural platforms, Sanya V. Jain is building a distinctive presence across India's luxury landscape. Through Smoke Lab and Smoke Lab Wear, she brings together design, entrepreneurship and cultural engagement to shape brands that extend beyond products into experiences.

For Sanya V. Jain, building a brand begins with understanding the world around it. Fashion, design, hospitality, art and culture are not separate interests in her work; they are connected ways of shaping how people experience a brand. As Co-Founder of Smoke Lab and Founder and Creative Director of Smoke Lab Wear, she has helped develop an entrepreneurial vision that reaches beyond a product, bringing together identity, design, community and cultural participation.

Her perspective has been shaped by an education across two influential centres of creative practice. A graduate of Parsons School of Design in New York and Central Saint Martins in London, Sanya developed an early grounding in fashion, design and visual storytelling. Exposure to international creative communities gave her an understanding of how brands establish relevance and aspiration, and how craftsmanship, culture and consumer behaviour influence the way people respond to what they see and experience. Those ideas continue to inform her approach to business.

Her entrepreneurial journey began in 2012 with SVJ, a bespoke handbag label. The experience offered an opportunity to explore the relationship between design and individual expression, while developing a point of view around products that are personal as well as considered. It also formed part of a wider creative journey that would later extend into fashion and lifestyle.

That journey took shape through Smoke Lab Wear, the fashion arm of the Smoke Lab ecosystem. Built around contemporary, gender-fluid design and responsible production, the label reflects Sanya's belief that fashion should be expressive without being constrained by conventional categories. Its approach brings together individuality, conscious luxury and a modern understanding of how people dress and live. The brand has collaborated with independent designers and creative voices, and its work has received recognition from Vogue's Forces of Fashion. Sanya's engagement with the fashion world also includes runway presentations, design showcases and conversations about the direction of Indian fashion.

In 2019, Sanya co-founded Smoke Lab with Varun Jain. The ambition was to build an Indian premium spirits brand with an identity that could travel beyond the domestic market. Since its launch, she has led the brand's creative vision, helping shape its identity, partnerships and consumer experience. Her work has been instrumental in developing Smoke Lab as a design-led lifestyle brand with a presence across conversations in fashion, hospitality and entertainment.

For Sanya, a brand cannot be defined only by what it sells. It must also consider the world it creates around its products and the ways in which people encounter it. This perspective has informed the evolution of Smoke Lab into a broader platform, with category extensions such as Smoke Lab Water, a premium canned Himalayan water brand. The extension reflects the company's design-led approach to modern consumption and hospitality, while illustrating an interest in taking a consistent brand sensibility into new categories.

The creative direction behind Smoke Lab and Smoke Lab Wear is rooted in the idea that contemporary luxury is increasingly shaped by experience, relevance and cultural connection. Consumers encounter brands through many different settings: what they wear, where they gather, the spaces they visit and the cultural conversations they follow. Sanya's work moves between these settings, bringing a design perspective to each. Rather than treating fashion, spirits and hospitality as unrelated sectors, she sees opportunities for them to contribute to a connected lifestyle proposition.

Her place within the luxury conversation extends beyond her own businesses. As a member of the Robb Report India RR Circle Board, Sanya is involved in discussions around luxury, entrepreneurship and culture in India. Her perspective has also appeared in publications including HELLO!, Esquire and Vogue, among other lifestyle and luxury titles. Recognition from Femina, which included her among its Fab 50, further reflects the attention her work has received across the fashion and entrepreneurial landscape.

International cultural engagement has become another dimension of Smoke Lab's brand-building journey. Sanya has cultivated relationships within creative communities and maintains an association with Serpentine in London. In 2026, Smoke Lab was announced as the Official Vodka Partner of the Serpentine Summer Party. The association placed the brand within an internationally recognised cultural event and marked a significant moment in its global visibility. For Sanya, such platforms create opportunities for Indian brands to participate in wider conversations around art, design and contemporary culture.

Her interest in the relationship between art and commerce is also reflected in her work with Mohulo. She helped conceptualise The Art of 12, an art-inspired initiative connected to the Baiga tribe, curated during India Art Fair 2026 and later presented through an intimate seated lunch at Le Cirque, The Leela Palace. The project brought together artistic expression, cultural reference and a considered hospitality setting. It reflects the breadth of Sanya's creative interests and her willingness to explore how ideas can take shape across different formats.

Another important initiative in her recent work is IIFA Connex, a platform designed to bring together leaders from entertainment, hospitality, entrepreneurship and the creative industries. Sanya played a key role in its launch, helping create a space for dialogue and collaboration across sectors. The initiative speaks to her wider interest in building connections between communities that may operate in different fields but share an investment in creativity, business and cultural influence.

Across these ventures, Sanya's approach is guided by a consistent interest in design, identity and the experience surrounding a brand. Her education in fashion and design continues to inform her decisions, but her work has expanded into a wider entrepreneurial practice. Whether shaping a fashion collection, developing a spirits brand, exploring a new product category or participating in a cultural platform, she brings an understanding of how creative choices contribute to a brand's place in the world.

Her vision for Indian luxury is confident and outward-looking. It recognises the value of global exposure while making space for Indian creativity, design and entrepreneurship to participate on an international stage. Through Smoke Lab, Smoke Lab Wear and her wider creative pursuits, Sanya is contributing to a generation of brands that seek relevance not only through what they offer, but through the experiences, collaborations and cultural conversations they help create.

SAAHIBHA GROVERR

Jewellery That Carries Stories Across Generations

For first-generation jewellery entrepreneur Saahibha Groverr, luxury is found in individuality, craftsmanship and emotional connection. From beginning her journey at 18 to creating contemporary interpretations of Indian heritage, she is building a jewellery house that celebrates personal style while giving treasured pieces a new life.

Saahibha Groverr's journey into jewellery began early, driven by a conviction that she was meant to create something of her own. A first-generation entrepreneur, she started her brand at just 18, balancing the demands of building a business with her education. What began with small, bespoke pieces for friends and family gradually developed into a distinctive jewellery label. Her ambition was never simply to enter an established industry; it was to find a space within it that reflected her own creative instincts.

Her formal education at the Indian Institute of Gems and Jewellery gave her a deeper understanding of the technical and design dimensions of the craft. After completing her studies, she returned to the institute as a Design Faculty member, teaching for around five years. The experience strengthened her knowledge while allowing her to explore the relationship between design, technique and individual expression. It also gave her an appreciation of the discipline behind creating jewellery that is beautiful, wearable and made to last.

The idea behind Saahibha Groverr emerged from a gap she saw in the market. Traditional Indian jewellery was often elaborate and reserved for weddings or major occasions, while minimal diamond pieces occupied a different space. She wanted to create a middle ground: jewellery that retained the richness and artistry of Indian heritage but felt contemporary, versatile and comfortable enough for everyday life. This thinking led to the Naksh Collection, bringing traditional craftsmanship into lighter, more wearable designs. As she explains, "At its heart, the brand was born from a simple thought, heritage jewellery should not just be preserved for special occasions; it should be lived in, celebrated and enjoyed every day."

That belief continues to shape the brand's design language. Saahibha enjoys experimenting with gemstones, colours and combinations, with a particular fascination for Polki jewellery. She is drawn to the possibilities within traditional forms, looking for ways to reinterpret them without losing their character. The result is a collection of designs that can move between occasions and styles, pairing as naturally with Indian ensembles as with contemporary Western clothing.

Versatility also means challenging conventional categories. The brand has explored unisex brooches, including designs that can be worn as brooches or attached to a hasli and styled as a necklace. For Saahibha, jewellery should encourage individuality rather than prescribe how it must be worn. She wants customers to invest in pieces that become part of their wardrobes, not objects that remain tucked away after a single occasion.

Her understanding of luxury is equally personal. "To me, luxury is deeply personal. It is the feeling of owning something that is truly your own, something distinctive, thoughtfully created and not replicated." This philosophy is expressed in the Luxe Legacy Collection, launched at the brand's flagship store in Dhan Mill. Its bespoke pieces are designed to be one of a kind, with a commitment that a design will never be repeated. The appeal lies not only in exclusivity, but in the sense of identity that comes from owning something created for one person alone.

Yet some of the most meaningful work at Saahibha Groverr looks backwards before it looks forward. Refurbishing heirloom jewellery has become one of Saahibha's specialities, shaped by her belief that jewellery holds memories and emotional histories. Rather than allowing an old piece to remain unworn, she sees an opportunity to preserve its sentimental value while giving it a form that feels relevant to the person wearing it today. Through The Refurb Soirée, clients can bring pre-loved jewellery to be reimagined into contemporary pieces. It is a thoughtful way of extending the life of an heirloom without erasing the story attached to it.

Her clients remain an important source of inspiration. Their trust, encouragement and personal stories have helped shape the brand, reminding her that jewellery is rarely just an accessory. It can mark a milestone, carry a family memory or become part of someone's identity. The relationships she has built with her clientele are therefore as meaningful to her as the designs themselves.

The opening of the first flagship store in Pitampura was an early defining moment, giving the brand a home in which to establish its identity. As customers began recognising her designs and approaching her to express their appreciation, Saahibha realised that people were connecting not only with the jewellery but with the thought behind it. The more recent launch of the Dhan Mill flagship store marked another milestone, reflecting the journey from a small beginning to a presence in one of Delhi's prominent luxury retail destinations.

As customer expectations evolve, Saahibha sees a growing preference for owning fewer, better pieces. "I feel the meaning of luxury is evolving from owning more to owning better." Customers are increasingly selective, seeking distinctive design, quality and versatility. For her, this makes the case for considered craftsmanship stronger than ever.

Maintaining that standard while growing the business is a responsibility she takes seriously. "For us, quality has been one promise we've made to ourselves from day one, and it is something we have never been willing to compromise on." Creativity and commercial growth must work alongside craftsmanship and design integrity, never at their expense.

> **"The meaning of luxury is evolving from owning more to owning better."**

Her ambition is to take Saahibha Groverr to an international platform, introducing its interpretation of Indian design and heritage to a wider audience. But expansion is only part of the vision. She wants the brand to be remembered for distinctive creations, trust and uncompromising quality. "More than just building a jewellery brand, I want to build a name that stands for individuality, trust, timeless design and quality, a legacy that continues across generations."

For Saahibha, that legacy is being shaped one piece at a time: jewellery that honours its origins, reflects the individuality of the wearer and gives meaningful stories a future.





DR GEETIKA

The Business of Beauty, Beyond the Surface

From a personal understanding of hormonal skin and hair concerns to building a growing aesthetic medicine enterprise, Dr Geetika is shaping ISAAC Luxe around a considered philosophy: clinical science, ethical practice and patient trust belong at the heart of luxury.

When Dr Geetika set out to build ISAAC Luxe, she saw a gap in India's aesthetic medicine market. The country had exceptional medical talent, she believed, but lacked spaces where clinical rigour could coexist with an unhurried luxury experience. Her ambition was to bring these elements together in a doctor-led brand grounded in medical evidence, individual needs and patient confidence.

There was a personal dimension to that ambition. Having experienced PCOS and hypothyroidism herself, Dr Geetika understood how hormonal skin and hair concerns could affect self-esteem. That experience informed her approach to aesthetic medicine, bringing personal empathy to a field often preoccupied with outward appearance.

> **"We want to be remembered for shifting the narrative from vanity to authentic client trust."**

With more than 12 years of clinical experience, board certification from the American Academy of Aesthetics and a Diploma in Practical Dermatology from Cardiff University, she has built ISAAC Luxe from a flagship clinic in Delhi into a growing national business. Yet one of the most consequential chapters in that journey began when the company came close to closing.

Three or four years into the business, Dr Geetika was a new mother navigating operational difficulties. The challenges had become so serious that shutting the business seemed a real possibility. Then her father gifted her Think and Grow Rich, prompting a shift in how she approached the company's future.

"We were ready to close the business," she recalls. The team was restructured, the brand re-anchored, an underperforming clinic closed and the business relocated to the heart of the town. It was a significant risk at a vulnerable point, but one she credits with unlocking the company's national trajectory.

> **"The real differentiation lies in a firm ethical stance: refusal to capitalize on patient insecurities."**

The episode reveals a less visible side of entrepreneurship: recognising when an existing model is not working and making difficult decisions before circumstances make them unavoidable. For Dr Geetika, it became a lesson in confronting challenges with commitment and strategy.

That resolve is reflected in the principles guiding ISAAC Luxe today. "For us, luxury is defined by unhurried craftsmanship, absolute transparency, and clinical efficacy," she says.

At ISAAC Luxe, this means thorough, confidential doctor consultations and treatments informed by medical evidence. The aim is not transformation for its own sake, but solutions that respect individual features and longer-term skin health. Luxury, in this interpretation, is less about opulence than the quality of guidance, the integrity of treatment and the confidence that comes from understanding one's choices.

Her approach also rests on a clear ethical position. "The real differentiation lies in a firm ethical stance: refusal to capitalize on patient insecurities," she explains. In an industry where personal concerns can become commercial opportunities, this principle shapes the brand's emphasis on enhancing natural features rather than altering them.

Its guiding philosophy is "doing better, not doing more". Doctor-led protocols and technology support treatment, maintenance and prevention, with the focus on what serves the client rather than what can be added to a treatment plan.

Dr Geetika believes expectations of luxury wellness are changing. Clients increasingly seek evidence-backed science, minimal downtime and subtle, healthy outcomes rather than conspicuous cosmetic interventions. She points to growing interest in prejuvenation and non-invasive approaches to maintaining skin structure, including technologies such as Ultherapy Prime and Emsculpt Neo.

For the business, meeting these expectations requires expansion without compromising standards. Dr Geetika says ISAAC Luxe has grown from one flagship clinic to 18 clinics and crossed ₹60 crore in revenue while remaining bootstrapped. She identifies operational protocols, continuous doctor training and consistent quality as essential to maintaining standards across locations. Decisions about technology and expansion, she says, are guided by scientific evidence, long-term results and patient safety.

Her work has also received recognition beyond the clinic. She has been featured in Forbes, Vogue, Grazia and Harper's Bazaar, and received honours including the Vogue Beauty Award, Times Business Award, Times 40 Under 40 Award and Nari Shakti Award.

Her ambitions extend beyond building a larger network. She wants ISAAC Luxe to help move India's aesthetic landscape towards preventive healthcare, regenerative therapies and skin longevity, supported by practitioner education, digital integration and internal growth.

> **"For us, luxury is defined by unhurried craftsmanship, absolute transparency, and clinical efficacy."**

"We want to be remembered for shifting the narrative from vanity to authentic client trust," she says.

For Dr Geetika, that is the legacy worth building: an aesthetic medicine business where clinical judgement and responsible innovation matter as much as appearance, and where trust remains central to the experience.

RAAYYAANA ARORA

A New Taste of Luxury, Rooted in Legacy

At 24, second-generation entrepreneur and Creative Director of La Tarté, Raayyaana Arora is bringing a global outlook to Delhi's evolving hospitality landscape. Building on her mother's 25-year culinary legacy, she is creating a distinctive world of wine, espresso and experiential dining, where thoughtful details and meaningful connections define the luxury experience.

For Raayyaana Arora, hospitality is not simply an industry she chose to enter; it is a world she has known since childhood. Growing up in a family rooted in food and hospitality, she witnessed the effort and consistency required to build a business that people return to. Her mother's 25-year culinary journey gave her an early understanding of reputation and the importance of creating something that stands the test of time. Today, as a second-generation entrepreneur, Raayyaana is carrying that foundation forward while finding her own expression of hospitality.

Her education at Temple University in Philadelphia and travels abroad brought a new dimension to that understanding. Some of her fondest college memories were made cooking with friends and experimenting with recipes. Travels through Italy deepened her appreciation for the culture surrounding food and wine. She was drawn to the way dining was woven into everyday life, turning a meal into an occasion to slow down, share stories and enjoy the company around you.

Returning to India, she began thinking about how to bring that spirit into Delhi's hospitality landscape. Rather than simply continue an established format, she saw an opportunity to reinterpret her family's culinary legacy for a generation looking for more than a conventional restaurant outing. This became the inspiration for reimagining La Tarté. "At the heart of La Tarté is a concept that brings together a wine and espresso bar with interactive, experiential dining," she explains.

At La Tarté, guests can roll fresh pasta, explore Italian cooking, take part in curated tastings and discover the stories behind what they are drinking. The intention is to make people participants in the experience rather than simply guests being served.

Her understanding of luxury is closely connected to this philosophy. "For me, luxury has never been defined solely by a price tag or extravagance. It's about how something makes you feel, the attention to detail, the thought behind an experience, and the memories you carry long after it's over." At La Tarté, this translates into a relaxed yet considered approach to hospitality. An intimate wine tasting or an afternoon spent making pasta can become memorable through the care that goes into each detail. For Raayyaana, modern luxury is increasingly about time, connection and discovery.

Wine, in particular, is an area she is keen to make more approachable. In Delhi, it can still carry an air of formality, leaving newcomers unsure of where to begin. She wants to make it conversational rather than intimidating, welcoming enthusiasts and first-time tasters alike. "I want to change the perception that wine is complicated or intimidating." Guests do not need to know the language of tasting to enjoy the occasion. Curiosity is enough.

One of the first moments that confirmed the idea was La Tarté's inaugural pasta-making and wine-tasting experience. Raayyaana had recently returned from the first harvest season at her family's winery, inspired by the process and eager to share her enthusiasm for wine informally. The gathering brought together people who arrived as strangers. By the end, they were making pasta, sharing wine, laughing and exchanging stories. It was the kind of evening she had hoped to create: one in which food became a reason for people to connect.

The experiences have continued to sell out, and even guests who do not drink alcohol have attended simply to be part of the activity and community. It was an important realisation for Raayyaana. "We weren't just hosting workshops or wine tastings; we were bringing strangers together and introducing a different way of socialising." That sense of belonging has become central to the brand's identity.

Building a business around experiences also requires balancing creativity with commercial discipline. Raayyaana is naturally drawn to new menus, unusual wine experiences and fresh ways of presenting the space. However, her family background has taught her that exciting ideas must work alongside consistency, quality and sound business decisions. At La Tarté, experimentation goes hand in hand with attention to ingredient sourcing, pricing, team training and the responsibility to deliver the experience promised to guests.

Her ambitions reach beyond the growth of one venue. She hopes to take La Tarté's approach to experiential dining to other parts of India, creating spaces that challenge the conventional idea of going out for a meal. Wine tourism is another aspiration close to her heart. Having experienced vineyard culture and harvest season, she sees potential in bringing Indian consumers closer to vineyards, the people who make the wine and the craftsmanship behind each bottle.

Her vision is not limited to opening more restaurants. "I don't just want to build more restaurants; I want to create a culture around how people dine, discover, and connect." Food will remain equally important. Raayyaana believes that while presentation may catch someone's eye, flavour, quality and consistency are what bring them back.

At 24, she is navigating the balance between inheriting a legacy and creating one of her own. Her mother's culinary journey has given her a foundation, but her global experiences and entrepreneurial outlook are shaping a new direction for La Tarté. She is not looking to replicate the past; she is building on it, bringing a younger perspective to a business rooted in years of experience.

For Raayyaana, the future of luxury hospitality lies in making people feel welcome, encouraging discovery and creating experiences worth returning to. If La Tarté is remembered for bringing people closer to food and wine, making wine culture more accessible and proving that sophistication can coexist with warmth and playfulness, it will be a fitting continuation of the legacy she has inherited.

"For me, luxury has never been defined solely by a price tag or extravagance. It's about how something makes you feel, the attention to detail, the thought behind an experience, and the memories you carry long after it's over."





SWETTA KATHURIA

Where Business Meets the Art of Living

An entrepreneur with roots in an established global footwear business and a creative platform of her own, Swetta Kathuria brings together commercial understanding and a considered eye for luxury. Through Tej International Ltd and Swetta24, she explores how heritage, craftsmanship and personal storytelling shape enduring experiences.

For Swetta Kathuria, luxury is not defined by display alone. It is found in the intention behind a design, the care invested in a service and the details that turn an ordinary encounter into a memorable experience. This understanding informs two distinct but connected dimensions of her professional life: her role as Export and Marketing Director of Tej International Ltd, an established global footwear business, and her work as the founder of Swetta24, a platform devoted to luxury lifestyle, fashion and curated experiences.

Originally from New Delhi and now based in Las Vegas, Swetta brings an Indian sensibility to an international outlook. Her journey has given her the opportunity to work across business and creative storytelling, allowing her to see how products, experiences and the stories surrounding them influence the way people connect with brands. She describes these worlds as complementary: one involves contributing to an established business legacy, while the other gives her space to develop a personal creative identity.

Her interest in presentation began with an appreciation for beautiful design and the ability of thoughtful details to create connection. Through Swetta24, that interest has developed into a distinctive approach to luxury lifestyle curation. Fashion, hospitality, fine dining, beauty, wellness and travel become subjects for visual storytelling, brought together through cinematic imagery and a measured sense of elegance. The intention is not simply to show a place or product, but to communicate the atmosphere and character that make it distinctive.

Swetta's signature style is shaped by the relationship between setting, styling, light and movement. An outfit is considered in relation to its surroundings; a hotel is experienced through its hospitality as much as its architecture; and a destination is brought to life through the details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Her Indian heritage and life in Las Vegas give this perspective a particular character, combining an appreciation for artistry and timeless elegance with exposure to a city known for its hospitality and experiences. She approaches curation as an act of selection: deciding what deserves attention and finding a way to make its appeal felt without overwhelming the experience itself.

That point of view also informs the way she approaches collaborations. She looks for a natural connection between a partner, her own interests and the expectations of her audience. The story must serve the brand's objectives without feeling out of place within her platform. Remaining closely involved in styling, visual direction and editing, she works with her creative team to maintain a consistent identity. For her, commercial success and creative integrity are not competing priorities; growth should strengthen execution, relationships and the quality of the work.

Her corporate role gives this creative practice a grounding in the realities of business. As Export and Marketing Director at Tej International Ltd, she contributes to carrying forward an established global footwear business. The experience brings an understanding of commercial purpose and the importance of a brand delivering consistently on its promise. It also informs her appreciation of the product itself: design, craftsmanship, comfort and lasting appeal matter as much as the way an item is presented.

A defining moment in bringing these two dimensions of her work into focus was a Forbes India partnered feature. It recognised her work as a luxury lifestyle creator and entrepreneur alongside her responsibilities at Tej International Ltd. For Swetta, the feature was meaningful because it reflected the full scope of her journey: contributing to a business legacy while building a distinct platform of her own. Luxury hospitality collaborations and attending Paris Fashion Week have further encouraged her to develop Swetta24, while strengthening the consistency of its visual identity.

Her understanding of luxury is rooted in substance rather than spectacle. She values heritage, craftsmanship, thoughtful design and personal service, as well as the consistency with which a brand fulfils its promise. A beautiful product or setting makes a stronger impression when the experience around it feels equally considered. In footwear and fashion, this means balancing design with comfort and enduring appeal. In hospitality, it means attentive service, individuality and the feeling of being understood.

She is also drawn to considered choices: pieces that can be enjoyed repeatedly and experiences that remain memorable long after they have ended. Technology may make discovery and access easier, but it cannot replace the trust built through quality, clear communication and human attention. This belief is particularly relevant in a crowded luxury landscape, where visibility is easy to pursue but credibility takes time to establish.

Swetta's ambition is to continue contributing to Tej International Ltd while growing Swetta24 into an internationally recognised luxury lifestyle platform. She sees both roles as exercises in building enduring brands through thoughtful marketing, strong relationships and a clear identity. For Swetta24, the next chapter includes deeper partnerships across fashion, luxury hospitality, travel, fine jewellery, beauty and fragrance. She also hopes to expand House of Swetta as a destination for curated discoveries, personal style and exceptional experiences.

The balance she seeks is deliberate. Each opportunity must support the wider direction of the business or platform, rather than simply add to its visibility. In this, her corporate experience and creative instincts meet: one asks whether an opportunity makes commercial sense, while the other considers whether it feels authentic and contributes something distinctive.

Ultimately, Swetta hopes to be remembered for bringing business understanding and creative expression together with elegance and integrity. Her Indian heritage and international outlook will remain central to the way she works, shaping both the brands she helps develop and the stories she chooses to tell. She also wants her journey to encourage women to honour their individuality, pursue their ambitions and build a legacy with confidence.

For Swetta, an enduring legacy is not created through a single milestone or a carefully curated image. It takes shape through consistency: in the quality of a product, the thought behind an experience, the relationships a business builds and the identity it protects as it grows. Whether contributing to a global footwear business or developing a luxury lifestyle platform, her focus remains on making those details add up to something lasting.

LISA RAY

Building a New Narrative for Women's Midlife

From entrepreneurship in wellness and conscious living to co-founding NuHer, a science-backed women's midlife clinic, Lisa Ray has consistently explored ways to turn personal convictions into meaningful ventures. Her latest chapter brings together lived experience, healthcare and a larger ambition: changing how women understand and navigate midlife.

Lisa Ray has never been particularly interested in being defined by a single identity. Known internationally as an actor and model, she has also explored entrepreneurship, writing, poetry and advocacy, allowing each pursuit to reflect a different aspect of her interests. Over time, however, a recurring thread has emerged: a desire to create something that has meaning beyond the immediate transaction, whether through wellness, conscious living or a more informed approach to women's health.

Her entrepreneurial journey began with ventures that reflected her personal interests. She started her own yoga studio and developed a line of ethical perfumes, bringing together her engagement with wellness, aesthetics and conscious choices. These were not simply extensions of her public profile. They represented an instinct to explore ideas independently and build businesses around subjects she believed deserved greater attention.

That instinct has found a particularly significant expression in NuHer, the science-backed women's midlife clinic she co-founded. The venture addresses a subject that remains underserved in mainstream healthcare conversations: the physical, emotional and psychological changes women experience during perimenopause and menopause.

The idea behind NuHer is both personal and purposeful. Lisa's own experience of health and hormonal change gave her an understanding of how disorienting this phase can be, particularly when women are not adequately informed about what is happening in their bodies. Diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a rare form of blood cancer, in 2009, she underwent chemotherapy-induced menopause at the age of 37. The experience brought her face to face with a transition that many women encounter much later, often without the language, guidance or support to navigate it confidently.

What makes NuHer's proposition relevant is its recognition that menopause cannot be reduced to a checklist of symptoms. It is a physiological, emotional and existential transition, and its impact varies from one woman to another. Low energy, vertigo, insomnia, dry skin, hair fall, brain fog and emotional distress can affect everyday life, yet these experiences are frequently dismissed, misunderstood or accepted as inevitable consequences of ageing.

Lisa's understanding of the problem also extends to the cultural attitudes surrounding it. Menopause sits at the intersection of three subjects society has often struggled to discuss openly: ageing, women's bodies and reproductive usefulness. The result is a silence that can leave women feeling isolated at precisely the time they need information and reassurance.

NuHer seeks to replace that uncertainty with knowledge and personalised care. Its approach brings together medical expertise and human understanding, recognising that there is no universal menopause experience. Each woman may have a different combination of symptoms, health considerations and personal circumstances. The clinic's experts help women understand the changes taking place in their bodies, decode available options and consider appropriate treatment pathways. These may include hormonal and non-hormonal approaches, medical interventions and lifestyle considerations.

The emphasis is on informed choice rather than a standardised solution. NuHer aims to give women the knowledge to participate actively in decisions about their health, while ensuring that the care they receive takes account of their individual needs. In doing so, it is addressing not only a healthcare requirement but also a larger gap in how women's midlife is understood and supported.

For Lisa, this venture is a natural extension of a journey that has repeatedly brought personal experience into public conversation. Following her cancer diagnosis, she began documenting her experiences in a blog titled The Yellow Diaries. The writing eventually led to her memoir, Close to the Bone, published in India in May 2019. The book received acclaim and was followed by a three-book publishing deal with HarperCollins India. Her decision to write openly about illness reflected a belief that sharing difficult experiences can help others feel less alone.

That openness has become an important part of her advocacy. A lifelong activist, Lisa has used public talks and writing to raise awareness around cancer and wellness. She has also spoken about embracing midlife, describing her current decade as one marked by greater clarity, self-acceptance and freedom from external validation. Her perspective challenges the tendency to view women's lives through the narrow lens of youth and reproductive age.

Her approach to motherhood has similarly reflected a willingness to broaden conversations around women's choices. Lisa announced the birth of her twin daughters through surrogacy, bringing visibility to fertility options and helping normalise different paths to parenthood. Across these experiences, her public engagement has consistently returned to the importance of choice, information and agency.

Creativity remains another defining part of her life. Her poetry draws on an identity shaped by different cultures, geographies and a nomadic experience, exploring what it means to belong without a fixed address. Her acting career has continued alongside these pursuits, with projects including the film 99 Songs, produced by A.R. Rahman, and the international series Four More Shots Please!.

Yet it is her entrepreneurial work that brings many of these interests into a tangible offering. The yoga studio and ethical perfume venture reflected her early engagement with wellness and conscious living; NuHer takes that interest into a more specialised and consequential space. It is a business built around a clearly identified need, informed by lived experience and designed to bring professional support to women navigating a major life transition.

The larger ambition is straightforward: no woman should have to go through perimenopause or menopause feeling confused, ashamed or alone. She should understand what is happening, know that she has options and be able to access care that recognises her as an individual.



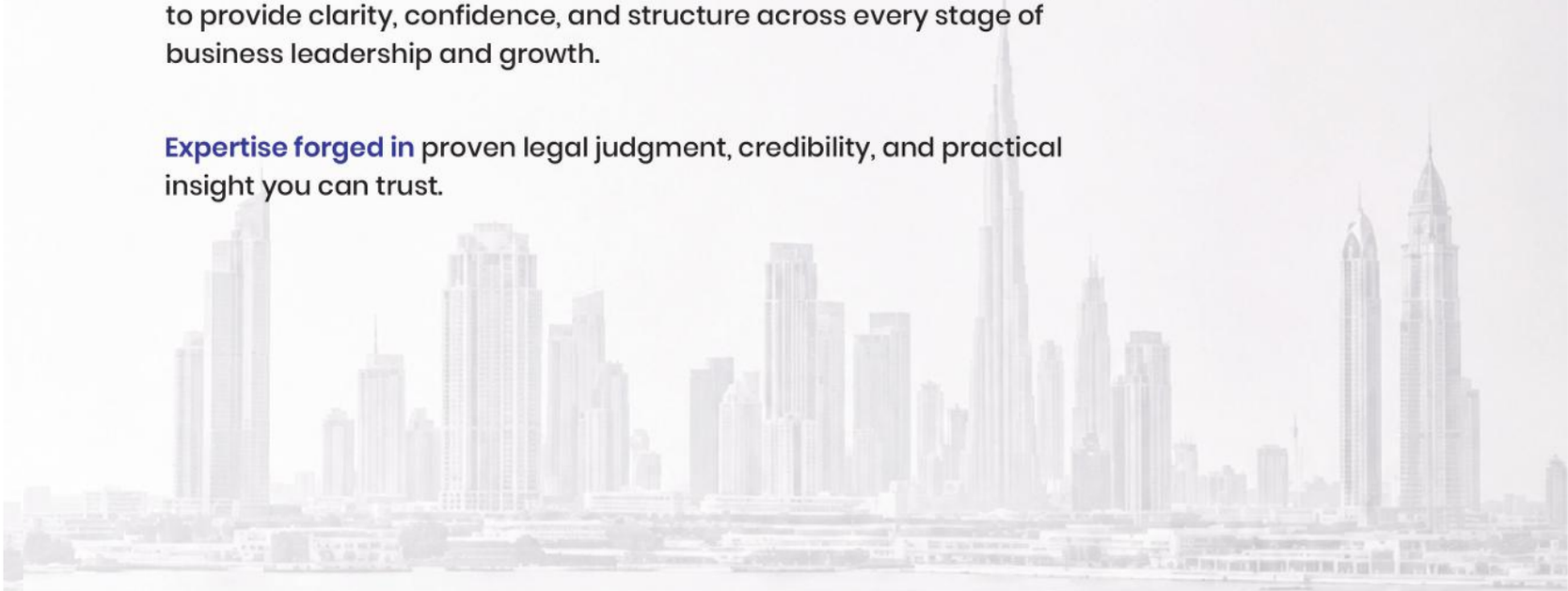
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THE LEGACY MAKERS



MICHELLE POONAWALLA

Creating Art That Moves Beyond the Canvas

An artist, business leader and philanthropist, Michelle Poonawalla works across creative practice and social responsibility. Through immersive artworks, environmental advocacy and the Poonawalla Group's philanthropic initiatives, she brings together imagination, enterprise and a belief in art's ability to create meaningful change.

Michelle Poonawalla's life moves between the creative possibilities of art and the responsibilities of business and philanthropy. An artist who lives and works between London and Pune, she has developed a practice that brings traditional mediums into conversation with technology. As Managing Director of the Poonawalla Group, she is also involved in the family's business interests and its wider vision for growth.

Art was an important part of Michelle's early life. A graduate of American College, London, she began exhibiting her work in 2016, including an exhibition at Gateway School, Mumbai, for which she worked closely with children with special needs.

Her practice combines painting with digital technology, sound, video mapping, projection and motion sensors. These elements invite audiences to participate and consider subjects often experienced at a distance. Recurring themes include memory, transformation, the natural world, displacement and the relationship between people and their environment.

Michelle does not see her creative, business and philanthropic pursuits as separate roles. "For me, that intersection is where the most interesting work happens," she says. Business gives her the opportunity to build and think strategically; art offers the freedom to explore and question; philanthropy allows that work to extend beyond the individual.

One of her significant works, Introspection (2018), emerged from unease about the way images of violence and displacement are consumed through continuous news coverage. Bringing together newsreel audio, ambient sound, motion sensors and digitally mapped visuals, the interactive installation creates an immersive environment. It was presented as a collateral project at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2018, at Alserkal Avenue during Dubai Art Week in 2019, and at London's Saatchi Gallery as part of START in September 2019.

The butterfly has also become a recurring motif in Michelle's work, representing transformation, freedom and the fragile nature of life. In the What If You Fly series, shown at Vis-à-vis Gallery in New Delhi in 2018, it became a way to explore beauty, imagination and possibility. Her solo exhibition Born Free at Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai that year paid tribute to her late grandfather Jehangir Vazifdar. Featuring animal portraits and culminating in a butterfly installation, the exhibition connected her artistic language with his belief in the freedom of creative expression.

Her engagement with social causes has often taken shape through collaborative art projects. In 2017, she participated in Khushii - India on Canvas, an initiative by the Delhi-based NGO. Working with its chairperson, former cricketer Kapil Dev, she created a work from her butterfly series for an auction supporting the organisation.

The natural world remains an important subject. For Elephant Parade India in 2017, Michelle created Monsoon Magic, a life-sized elephant sculpture inspired by the Indian monsoon and its significance to farmers. The public exhibition aimed to raise awareness and funds for safe corridors for the endangered Asian elephant. In 2022, her Striped Tiger sculpture featured in WWF-Singapore's AR-mazing Tiger Trail at Gardens by the Bay. Inspired by the markings of the Indian common butterfly, it imagined a meeting of butterfly and tiger forms. The work was later auctioned through Sotheby's Hong Kong, with proceeds supporting tiger conservation.

Her environmental concerns also inform her moving-image work. Reflect (2020) considers climate change through the connections between urban development, rural livelihoods and environmental damage across South Asia. Reserve, another film addressing environmental awareness and individual responsibility, was presented at the House of Lords in London in 2022. During lockdown, she explored digital stop-motion through works including From Dust to Dust, which follows a rose disintegrating before its petals transform into butterflies, reflecting on nature's cycles of destruction and renewal. Her response to the pandemic also included 21 Migrants, an ink sketch created for Art for Concern, portraying the hardships faced by daily-wage workers forced to walk long distances to reach home.

For Michelle, art is more than an exercise in making something beautiful. "It is about creating something that makes people pause, feel, reflect and, hopefully, care enough to make a difference." This belief has shaped projects addressing wildlife conservation, climate change, displacement and human vulnerability.

Alongside her artistic practice, Michelle's role in the Poonawalla Group connects her work to a longer tradition of philanthropy. The family has supported initiatives across education, healthcare and public infrastructure. These include the development and maintenance of Gool Poonawalla Garden, Soli Poonawalla Road and Soli Poonawalla School, as well as support for Ruby Hall Clinic's Zavaray Poonawalla Cancer Building. Through the Yohan Poonawalla Foundation, contributions have also supported school facilities, sports grounds, transport and the restoration of public and heritage spaces in Pune. The group has additionally supported beneficiaries of the Poona District Leprosy Committee through manufacturing-related assistance.

Michelle's own philanthropic interests include the environment and social causes. She believes meaningful philanthropy must create opportunity and lasting change, not simply provide financial assistance. "For me, the greatest measure of philanthropy is not how much you give, but how meaningfully that contribution changes lives," she reflects.

Her contribution to art was recognised with the Shiromani Award at the NRI World Summit in the United Kingdom in 2022. She has also spoken at the House of Lords about art as a universal language and its potential to bring people together.

Across the studio, boardroom and charitable initiatives, Michelle's work reflects the belief that creativity can have a life beyond the object itself. Her art asks audiences to look more closely at the world, while her business and philanthropic roles connect enterprise with wider social responsibilities. Her legacy is taking shape through the conversations she opens, the causes she brings into focus and the possibilities she continues to explore.



SHIVIKA GOENKA

Building Businesses That Stand the Test of Time

From transforming premium gifting into a ₹100-crore-plus brand to shaping the future of education and championing Indian luxury, Shivika Goenka is building businesses around a simple conviction: lasting success begins with understanding people and creating something that genuinely matters.

For Shivika Goenka, entrepreneurship begins with recognising a need, understanding the people behind it and creating something that has a reason to exist. It is a philosophy shaped at Babson College, where she studied entrepreneurship, and one that continues to guide her work across luxury, gifting, retail and education.

As Director of Luxury and Education at the RPSG Group, Shivika works across businesses with very different audiences and ambitions. Yet, a common thread runs through them: the belief that a product or institution becomes meaningful when it creates an experience people value and trust. She is less interested in growth for its own sake than in building organisations that remain relevant and earn loyalty.

One of the clearest examples is The Gift Studio. Launched during the uncertainty of the pandemic, the business emerged from an understanding that gifting had taken on a different significance. With families unable to come together for birthdays, anniversaries and festivals, people were looking for ways to remain emotionally connected. A gift had become a way of expressing affection, gratitude and presence across physical distances.

"We saw that gifting had become more than a transaction. It has become a way for people to remain emotionally connected," she explains.

That insight shaped the business. By building an online experience around personalisation and the emotion behind each occasion, Shivika developed The Gift Studio into a brand that has grown beyond ₹100 crore. The journey reinforced a principle she continues to apply: understand what people are really seeking before deciding what to offer them.

Her approach to building institutions is equally evident in education. At RP Goenka International School (RPGIS), she set out to challenge conventional ideas of schooling by bringing together global pedagogy and Indian values. The school became East India's first International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme candidate school, with an emphasis on creativity, critical thinking and curiosity.

Building a school also taught her the importance of trust. Parents are entrusting an institution with something deeply significant: their children's development and future. Earning that confidence requires consistency, credibility and the right team.

"One of the biggest lessons I learnt while building a school was that institutions are ultimately only as strong as the people inside them," she says. Finding capable people, giving them clarity and ownership, and allowing them to grow into responsibility are principles she considers essential to building organisations that endure.

Her commitment to education extends beyond her own institution. She serves on the Board of Teach For India in the Kolkata region, contributing to efforts to address educational inequity. She also co-leads the Confederation of Indian Industry's Schools Forum.

In retail and luxury, her work has involved rethinking how people encounter brands. At Quest Mall, she has helped reposition the Kolkata destination as an exclusive luxury retail platform for Eastern India, bringing curated global showcases and local brand collaborations closer to its audience. The intention is to make retail a point of connection with design, culture and aspiration.

Her interest in the future of Indian luxury takes this thinking further. The partnership between RPSG and couture label Falguni Shane Peacock is particularly significant to her, not simply as an investment but as an opportunity to contribute to the growth of an Indian luxury house with an established creative identity. The group's investment marked its entry into luxury couture, while Shivika's focus has been on providing the long-term support required for the label to expand.

The opening of the brand's flagship store at Mumbai's Jio World Plaza marked an important step. For Shivika, the larger ambition is to help Indian luxury labels evolve into globally respected houses without losing the distinctive identity that makes them Indian.

"India should not only be seen as a consumer of global luxury. We have the craftsmanship, creativity, heritage and design language to build luxury houses of our own," she says.

Scaling a designer brand, in her view, should not mean diluting what made it distinctive. Capital and organisational strength should support the creative vision, not replace it. Building global relevance requires patience, a clear identity and the discipline to grow without compromising the brand's character.

That balance between ambition and restraint is central to her leadership philosophy. People come first, followed by attention to detail and patience. In luxury, excellence is found in how something is designed, finished, presented and delivered. Across sectors, she believes, people recognise when an experience has been thoughtfully created.

Her work has earned recognition across entrepreneurship, retail and education. She has been featured in Fortune India's 40 Under 40 and named among Fortune India's Most Powerful Women 2026. Her honours also include the Entrepreneur Today 40 Under 40 Award in E-commerce and Retail, the Devi Award by The Indian Express, FICCI's Power of She Young Achiever Award and Education Leader of the Year 2025–2026 by Education World.

For emerging entrepreneurs, her advice is to understand the purpose of a business before becoming preoccupied with its scale. Stay close to customers, remain curious and be willing to question assumptions. Their feedback, she believes, often reveals more than a market report. Above all, trust must be earned through consistent action.

When she speaks about legacy, Shivika returns to the idea of continuity. In luxury, it means helping Indian brands find their place in the global landscape. In education, it means preparing children to think independently and approach an unfamiliar future with confidence. Across her businesses, it means building teams and environments where people can grow, take ownership and create something meaningful themselves.

"Legacy, to me, is what continues to create value long after you have stepped away from it."

Whether through a school, a gifting brand, a retail destination or an Indian couture house, Shivika is interested in more than immediate success. She is focused on the foundations that allow an enterprise to grow, the people who give it purpose and the identity that makes it worth preserving. The ambition is not simply to build bigger businesses, but to build ones that continue to matter.



SHALINI PASSI

The Art of Creating an Enduring Legacy

An art collector, cultural patron, founder, philanthropist and author, Shalini Passi has built her work around creative expression and individual purpose. Through her platforms and philanthropic initiatives, she is creating opportunities for artists, encouraging cultural exchange and extending the meaning of influence beyond personal achievement.

Art, for Shalini Passi, has never been simply about collecting beautiful objects. It is a way of understanding the world, questioning ideas and discovering perspectives beyond the familiar. Over time, that relationship has grown into something larger: a commitment to supporting artists, encouraging creative exchange and making room for new voices. It is this belief that connects her work as an art collector, cultural patron, founder, philanthropist and author.

In 2018, Shalini founded MASH, a digital platform exploring the intersections of architecture, art, craft, design and fashion. It reflects her conviction that creativity should move beyond rigid categories, allowing architecture, fashion, craft and design to meet and influence one another.

"Being a founder was never about putting my name on an institution. The true value of collecting lies not only in what we preserve for ourselves, but in what we make possible for others."

For Passi, collecting carries a responsibility beyond personal appreciation: it can support the ecosystem that nurtures artists and contribute to the cultural imagination of future generations.

Building a creative platform requires vision, consistency, collaboration and a willingness to take risks. Relevance matters, she says, but not at the cost of artistic integrity. She wants to create opportunities for emerging voices and bring Indian creativity into wider international conversations. As she puts it, MASH should not simply reflect culture, but participate in shaping cultural conversations.

Her engagement with the art world extends beyond her own initiatives. She has served on the Khoj Studios Advisory Board since 2012 and remains a longstanding patron of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. Through initiatives such as the Young and Emerging Artists' Award, she has also sought to provide a platform for emerging talent and support the wider creative community. Her personal collection includes works by Indian artists Bharti Kher, Anita Dube and Sheba Chhachhi, alongside international artists Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst.

Her New Delhi residence, which houses an extensive art collection, has been featured in publications including Architectural Digest, Wallpaper and Larry's List. Yet, when Passi speaks about collecting, the emphasis is not on possession. It returns to the value of preserving, supporting and sharing creative work.

In recent years, her public identity has reached audiences well beyond the art world. Her appearance on Fabulous Lives vs. Bollywood Wives introduced her to people who may not previously have encountered her work as a collector and cultural patron. She sees this wider recognition as a change in audience rather than a change in identity.

"What has changed most is the scale of the audience, not the essence of who I am," she says.

Television also made her more aware of the responsibility that accompanies visibility. Influence can introduce someone to an artist or encourage a young woman to embrace her individuality. Recognition creates an opportunity to be heard; values give that visibility meaning.

This perspective also informs her debut book, The Art of Being Fabulous: 10 Rules for a Beautiful Life, published by Penguin Random House India. Launched at the Jaipur Literature Festival in January 2026, it blends memoir and philosophy, exploring self-definition, resilience and intentional living. Passi says it is less about glamour than the discipline, courage and self-awareness required to create a fulfilling life.

Her understanding of luxury follows a similar philosophy. She appreciates fashion, beautiful objects and craftsmanship, but does not believe price or brand names alone determine value. For her, luxury is fundamentally about freedom: the freedom to think independently, express oneself authentically and choose what genuinely enriches life.

"Something can be extraordinarily expensive and still lack soul, while something simple can possess immense beauty."

Over time, her idea of luxury has also come to include health, peace of mind, knowledge and meaningful relationships. It is a perspective that places discernment and personal meaning above possession.

Philanthropy gives another dimension to her belief in making possibilities accessible. In June 2023, Shalini began her association with UNICEF as a Champion for Children, advocating for the rights of children and young adults. Her commitment comes from the belief that every child deserves dignity, education, security and the freedom to dream, regardless of the circumstances into which they are born.

The MASH Ball, conceptualised as a charity initiative in support of UNICEF India, brings together art, community and social responsibility. Through it, Shalini seeks to harness collective influence and resources in support of programmes including art-based therapy and early childhood development. For her, creative gatherings can create awareness, encourage generosity and connect people with causes that deserve attention.

She believes lasting philanthropy requires consistency, collaboration and an understanding of the communities being supported. Its measure is not recognition, but the difference it makes to someone's life.

Her views on privilege and achievement are shaped by a similar sense of responsibility. Resources and networks can open doors, she believes, but what a person creates through those opportunities is their own responsibility. An independent identity comes from developing personal interests, convictions and skills, and having the courage to move beyond expectations. Women with access to resources and public platforms, she adds, have an opportunity to create pathways for others, turning individual privilege into collective progress.

When asked what she hopes her legacy will be, Passi does not focus on what she has owned or how widely she has been recognised. She speaks instead about contribution: nurturing an environment where creativity is valued, supporting artists and helping children imagine futures beyond their immediate circumstances. She also hopes women will see that it is never too late to discover a new dimension of themselves.

"We can be mothers, entrepreneurs, collectors, creators and thinkers, without allowing any single role to define our entire existence."

These identities are expressions of a life that continues to evolve. MASH, her philanthropy and her book each encourage expression, individuality and possibility.



RIDDHIMA KAPOOR SAHNI

Designing Stories That Last

Jewellery designer, entrepreneur and public personality Riddhima Kapoor Sahni has built a creative identity around personal expression, thoughtful craftsmanship and timeless design. Her journey reflects an instinct for turning meaningful moments into pieces that can be treasured across generations.

For Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, jewellery has always held a meaning beyond adornment. Growing up surrounded by creativity, art and craftsmanship, she was drawn to the way a single piece could carry a memory or tell a story. That early fascination became the starting point for a business built around personal design, thoughtful detailing and the emotional significance people attach to what they wear.

The daughter of actors Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor, and sister of actor Ranbir Kapoor, Riddhima grew up in a family familiar with public life. Yet her own professional interests initially took her in a different direction. Rather than entering films, she pursued fashion and jewellery design, developing an identity shaped by her creative interests and entrepreneurial ambition. Her work in fashion, including walking the ramp for designers, brought her into a world where style is both visual expression and an understanding of individuality.

In 2016, she founded Riddhima Kapoor Sahni Jewellery, setting out to create pieces that felt personal, timeless and meaningful. The decision followed the completion of her association with an established jewellery brand, where she had appeared alongside her mother. With her friend and business partner Anuj Kapoor of Punjab Jewellers, Mumbai, she began building a label of her own. The move marked a shift from representing a brand to taking responsibility for its design language, identity and relationship with customers.

Her approach is deliberately personal. She does not see design as a matter of following trends or producing pieces simply because they are fashionable. Instead, each creation begins with a story and the person for whom it is intended. Personalisation, fine detailing and timeless style are central to this philosophy. The aim is to make jewellery that feels connected to the wearer rather than dictated by a passing moment in fashion.

"What sets my brand apart is that every piece is created with a story in mind. I don't follow trends; I design for the person and the moment, with a strong focus on personalisation, fine detailing and timeless style," she says.

That emphasis on meaning shapes her understanding of luxury, too. For Riddhima, luxury is not determined by price. It lies in the craftsmanship, quality and feeling a piece offers when it is worn. Something truly luxurious is personal, made with care and intended to last beyond trends. This belief guides her choices in design and the attention she gives to the details that may not always be immediately visible but contribute to the character of a finished piece.

She is equally clear about the balance between creativity and commercial growth. The brand's values, she says, must guide every decision. Creativity matters, but never at the expense of quality. A design or partnership that does not meet the standards she has set is not worth pursuing, regardless of its potential profitability. Growth, in her view, should be thoughtful rather than rushed, supported by close involvement in design, the selection of artisans and materials, and a customer experience that remains personal.

This approach has become particularly meaningful as customers return to the brand for important occasions. A defining moment came when people began choosing its jewellery for weddings, anniversaries and gifts for loved ones. It was then that Riddhima recognised that the brand had become part of more than a purchase; it had found a place in people's personal stories.

"Every time someone tells me a piece has become their favourite or a family keepsake, it reminds me why I started and pushes me to keep raising the bar."

Such moments offer a different measure of progress from sales figures or visibility. They suggest that a piece has become associated with an experience, a relationship or a milestone. For a designer working in a category so closely tied to memory and celebration, that connection is central to the purpose of the business.

Her perspective on changing customer expectations reflects a similar shift towards considered choices. Today's customers, she believes, are more thoughtful about what they buy. They want fewer, better pieces that mean something, rather than purchases made simply for their own sake. Personalisation, quality and honest craftsmanship matter more than logos or labels. There is also greater interest in where a piece comes from, how it is made and whether it is designed to last.

Technology has made it easier to connect with customers and create custom designs, but Riddhima believes the human touch remains essential. The experience must feel personal, and trust must be built through the quality of the product and the care behind it. In an increasingly competitive market, these are the details that distinguish a brand and give customers a reason to return.

Beyond jewellery, Riddhima's public journey has continued to evolve. She has appeared in Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives and made her acting debut in 2026, adding new dimensions to a career that began in fashion and entrepreneurship. Her screen appearances bring another kind of visibility, but her jewellery business remains rooted in the creative philosophy that first inspired it: individuality, personal expression and the stories people choose to carry with them.

Looking ahead, she hopes to grow the brand into a name people trust for timeless, meaningful jewellery, while retaining the thoughtfulness that defines its work. She wants to explore new designs, collaborate with talented artisans and reach more people without losing the personal care at the heart of the experience. The ambition is to expand, but not at the cost of the qualities that made the brand meaningful in the first place.

She hopes the pieces will become heirlooms, remembered not only for their design but for the moments and relationships they represent. That aspiration gives her place in the Legacy Makers section a natural connection: legacy, in this context, is not simply about a name or an achievement, but about creating something that can be treasured and passed on. For Riddhima, the most enduring measure of her work may be the feeling a piece continues to hold long after the occasion for which it was chosen has passed.

In a world where trends move quickly, she is choosing to build around what lasts: personal meaning, considered craftsmanship and the quiet significance of a piece that becomes part of someone's story.



RANISAHEB SWATI SINH KATHIWADA

Preserving the Past, Building What Comes Next

Entrepreneur, creative director and philanthropist, Ranisaheb Swati Sinh Kathiwada brings together fashion, hospitality and enterprise with a deep commitment to rural development. Her work reflects a belief that heritage is not simply preserved; it must continue to create opportunity and remain relevant to the people it touches.

For Swati Sinh Kathiwada, legacy is not a story that belongs only to the past. It is a responsibility that comes with the opportunity to shape what happens next. As a member of the Kathiwada family, whose history spans nearly six centuries, she has come to understand heritage not merely as something to protect, but as something to keep alive through thoughtful work, functioning institutions and opportunities for future generations.

Her own journey began in a different world. After studying at United World College in Singapore, Swati pursued fashion technology at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, where she developed an interest in the mechanics behind design. Understanding how garments are constructed, how textiles behave and how global supply chains connect gave her a practical perspective on creativity. The business of making, she discovered, could be as fascinating as the finished product.

That grounding led to a seven-year career as a stylist and the launch of her eponymous fashion label, Swati, spanning contemporary menswear and womenswear. When she married Rana Digvijay Sinh Kathiwada in 2015, her professional journey took another turn. She entered a family with an established heritage, but was not expected to build a business of her own. She chose to do so regardless, launching a sustainable sportswear brand that she continued to run through the pandemic before selling it to focus on the foundation and the wider Kathiwada vision.

The experience shaped her understanding of entrepreneurship, particularly in a production-heavy industry where she often found herself navigating a traditionally male-dominated environment. The pandemic brought its own lessons in managing people and uncertainty. One principle stayed with her: the upside of a business can take care of itself; it is the downside that needs to be cushioned. Resilience, preparation and sound operations matter as much as ambition.

Her work today spans several ventures. Through Kathiwada Leisures, she is involved in the transformation of the ancestral Kathiwada Raaj Mahal into a boutique homestay, alongside the Kathiwada City House in Mumbai. Her portfolio also includes Sportsqvest, a specialised sportswear brand under Kathiwada Brands, and Kathiwada Agri Farms, which focuses on sustainable land management. Across these interests, her approach remains grounded in building systems and creating value that can endure.

Yet the most significant shift in her journey came when she took over the leadership of the Kathiwada Foundation from her husband, Digvijay. Working closely with rural communities challenged assumptions shaped by an urban upbringing. Rural India, she says, is a very different world. Talent is abundant, but opportunity often is not. The foundation works across 125 villages in western Madhya Pradesh, impacting or preparing to impact approximately 150,000 people. Its long-term ambition is a 15-year roadmap for socio-economic development in Kathiwada.

The work is particularly visible through Kamal Vidya Niketan, the foundation's English-medium school in Alirajpur district. With literacy rates in the district around 36 per cent, access to education is shaped by realities that cannot be addressed through lessons alone. Families often migrate seasonally in search of work, and children move with them. A school can only make a difference if a child is able to attend consistently.

That understanding has shaped the school's approach. Kamal Vidya Niketan provides transport, meals and uniforms alongside education, addressing practical barriers that might otherwise keep children away. For Swati, this was among the first lessons the community offered: get the basics right before talking about outcomes. The school is central to the foundation's commitment to making quality education possible in a challenging rural context.

She is particularly proud that the school is being developed through the methods and discipline of a well-run organisation, despite being entirely charitable. Her experience in business has informed its strategy and operations. For her, the principles of building a successful enterprise and running a foundation are not opposites. Both require clear values, capable people, consistent systems and accountability.

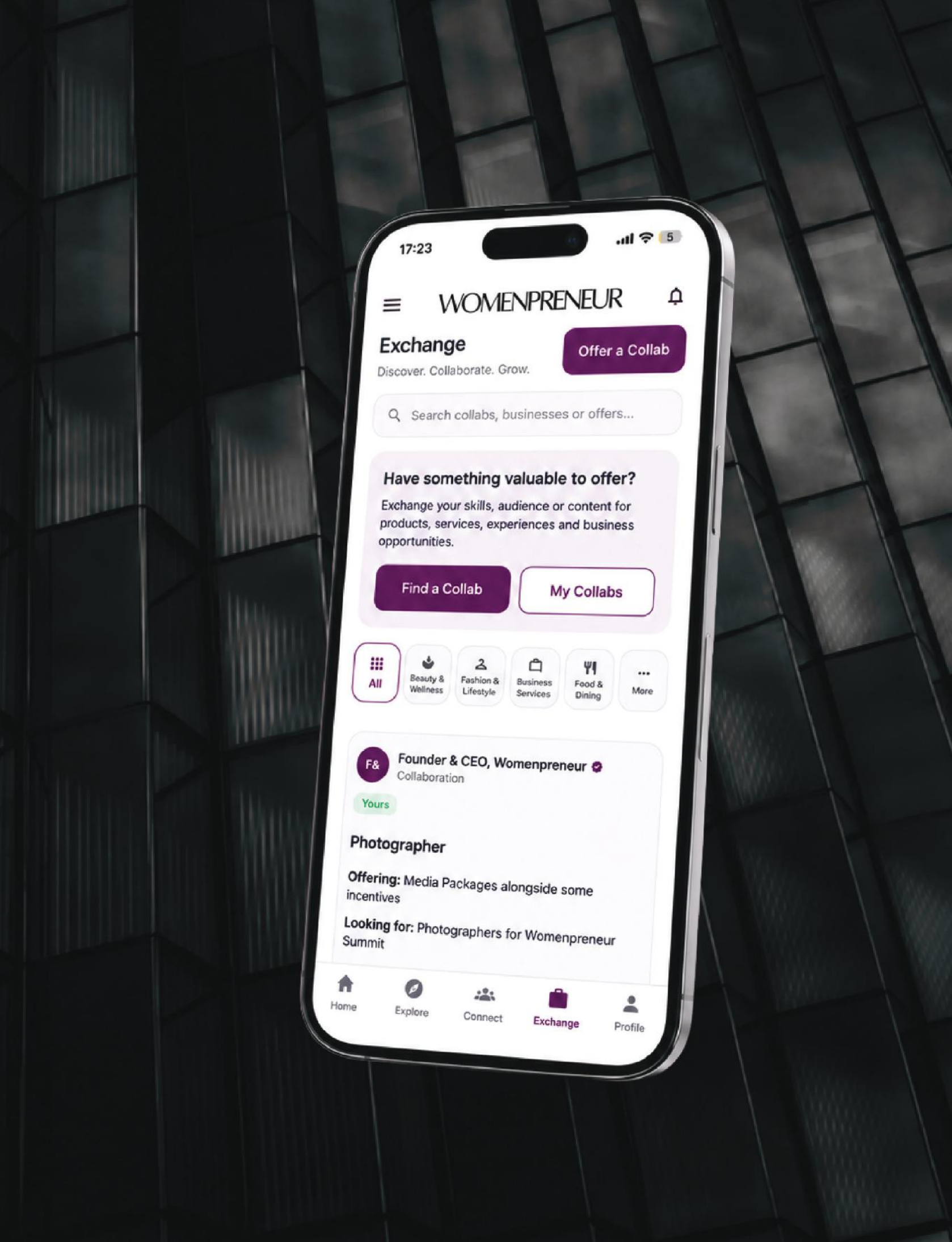
This practical understanding also informs how she thinks about family heritage. She describes herself not as someone born into Kathiwada, but as someone invited into its history through marriage. It took time to understand the scale of that responsibility. She learnt that legacy is not simply inherited; a person must earn their place as a custodian while also deciding what they will contribute.

"Heritage isn't only what you preserve. It's also what you keep functioning," she reflects.

That belief changes the way she measures achievement. A palace or a family name may carry history, but the more important question is what continues to work after the present generation has moved on. For her, legacy might mean a child completing school without having to migrate for work, a craftsperson finding a market for a skill, or a farmer producing organically with a reliable buy-back arrangement. The institutions being developed in Kathiwada, from education and healthcare to farmer training, sports and hospitality, are part of a wider effort to make the region a better place for people and the environment.

Her commitment to service predates her formal leadership at the foundation. She spent more than a decade volunteering with the Akanksha Foundation and S.P.J. Sadhana School, experiences that helped shape her understanding of responsibility. Today, she brings that commitment together with the operational perspective of an entrepreneur, recognising that meaningful community development requires patience and sustained engagement.


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THE LUXURY LIST

RITIKA JATIN AHUJA

Creating Her Own Lane

From luxury automobiles to building a community of women united by their passion for driving, Ritika Jatin Ahuja is creating spaces where confidence, connection and purpose come together. Her journey is about more than cars; it is about helping women discover the freedom to pursue what they love.



Some of Ritika Jatin Ahuja's earliest memories are connected to cars. As a child, she remembers her father's imported Toyota, which she affectionately called her "flying car". What began as a childhood fascination eventually became part of her professional life, taking her into an industry where women have not always been expected to occupy positions of authority.

Today, Ritika is the Chief Operating Officer of Big Boy Toyz and the founder of Queens Drive Club (QDC), an all-women supercar community. While one places her at the heart of the luxury automotive business, the other brings together women through a shared passion for driving. Across both ventures, her work extends beyond automobiles to building experiences, strengthening relationships and creating spaces where people feel confident pursuing what they love.

"Luxury to me is deeply personal. It is the freedom to choose what you love, appreciate quality and experience something that resonates with you."

For Ritika, a luxury car can represent a long-held dream or a significant personal milestone. The buying experience must therefore reflect the importance of that decision. Quality and performance matter, but so do transparency, personal attention and the confidence that comes from being treated well. Luxury, as she sees it, is not simply about what someone owns. It is about having the freedom to choose what holds value for them.

The idea for Queens Drive Club began with a simple observation. Ritika would see her husband, Jatin, and his friends heading out on drives and wondered why more women could not share the experience. Rather than wait for a space to emerge, she decided to create one herself.

What began as a shared interest in automobiles gradually became a community of women from different walks of life, connected by their love for driving and the experiences that come with it.

"The cars brought us together but the community gave the club a life of its own," she says.

Over time, friendships developed, members began supporting one another's businesses, and the club became a space for women to celebrate each other's achievements. The cars may have sparked the connection, but the relationships gave it staying power.

Ritika believes that what distinguishes a brand is not simply what it sells, but what it stands for. At Big Boy Toyz, that means building confidence throughout the customer journey. At QDC, it means creating an environment where women can explore their interests, form connections and feel comfortable taking up space in an industry often associated with men.

For Ritika, the club's potential also extends beyond driving. One meaningful initiative involved a collaboration with Shanti Sahyog to support professional driving training for underprivileged women and girls. The aim was to help create practical employment opportunities and encourage financial independence.

Driving had always represented freedom to Ritika. Through this initiative, she could explore how the same skill might open doors for other women. It was an opportunity to connect a shared passion with a purpose that reached beyond the club itself.

More recently, QDC's sixth edition in Mumbai was dedicated to cancer awareness, with banker, social activist and public figure Amruta Fadnavis joining the initiative. These experiences have reinforced Ritika's belief that an event's value lies not only in the experience it offers, but also in the relationships it builds and the causes it supports.

AASHICA KHANNA

Shaping the Future of Luxury Hospitality

As a fourth-generation hotelier and Executive Director of IHHR Hospitality Ananda, Aashica Khanna is bringing together a rich family heritage, contemporary leadership and a thoughtful understanding of luxury. Through her work with Ananda in the Himalayas, she is helping shape an approach to hospitality where personal care and well-being are central to the guest experience.



For Aashica Khanna, hospitality is more than an industry; it is a world she has grown up understanding. A fourth-generation hotelier, she comes from a family whose contribution to Indian hospitality spans generations. Her great-grandfather, Mohan Singh Oberoi, was a pioneer of the country's hotel industry, while her father, Ashok Khanna, established himself in luxury wellness travel. Reflecting on her upbringing, she says, "Having been brought up in a family of hoteliers, being a 4th generation hotelier in my family was a position of great privilege and learning for me."

Today, as Executive Director of IHHR Hospitality Ananda Pvt Ltd, Aashica is involved in the company's strategic growth and the continued development of Ananda in the Himalayas. Founded by her father in 2000, the award-winning retreat in the Himalayan foothills brings together traditional Ayurvedic and international wellness practices with luxury accommodation, fitness programmes and organic cuisine.

Carrying forward a family legacy also means finding her own voice as a leader. For Aashica, that begins with the culture an organisation creates. "Hospitality is a peoples business, and to create a great organization we must create a culture of care, trust, and shared purpose." Humility, sincerity and integrity are values she uses to guide decisions around recruitment, partnerships and business relationships.

Her understanding of luxury has evolved alongside the industry. She believes it is moving away from external validation towards more personal experiences. "Luxury has had a defining shift, from external validation to something more internal. People are now investing in luxury for more personal reasons like how it makes them feel and how it enriches their lives." Quality, craftsmanship, consciousness, time, health and peace are, in her view, increasingly shaping its meaning. Wellness fits naturally into this shift because, as she puts it, "it's an investment in yourself."

This philosophy informs the experience at Ananda. Aashica believes well-being cannot follow a standard formula, as every guest arrives with different physical, emotional and mental needs. "At Ananda we have always believed that wellness is deeply individual. No two people arrive with the same physical, emotional or mental needs, and therefore no two journeys would be identical." Personal assessment and guidance help guests understand their well-being and develop habits they can sustain beyond their stay. The objective is not simply indulgence, but a more balanced way of living.

As wellness becomes an increasingly prominent part of luxury travel, protecting the authenticity of a brand is equally important. While Aashica welcomes contemporary science, diagnostics and technology, she believes they must complement Ananda's traditional foundations. "We must protect the authenticity, integrity and depth of our offerings." For her, innovation should enhance the experience and effectiveness of its programmes without diluting their core philosophy.

Her journey as a woman in leadership has also involved learning to trust her judgement. She describes one of her most important shifts as "moving from seeking validation for my decisions to trusting my own judgement." Experience and difficult decisions helped build that confidence, while teaching her that confidence must be accompanied by clarity and decisiveness.

Looking ahead, Aashica hopes to bring India's wellness heritage to a wider global audience while preserving the knowledge and authenticity behind it. "There is a tremendous depth in our traditional knowledge systems and we have a responsibility to ensure that they are respected and carried forward in their truest essence."

For her, legacy is also personal. Working in wellness has reinforced her belief that a meaningful life is measured not only through professional achievements, but through relationships and inner balance. These are values she hopes to reflect in both her work and her life.

For Aashica, carrying forward a family legacy means more than sustaining a name. It means preserving the values that make hospitality meaningful while allowing the experience to evolve. Through Ananda, she is contributing to a vision of luxury that brings together exceptional hospitality, individual well-being and the enduring wisdom of Indian traditions.

BARKHA SINGH

Redefining the Luxury of Feeling Good

Actor, digital creator and Chief Creative Officer of Nuvah, Barkha Singh is bringing her understanding of fashion and personal style into entrepreneurship. With a focus on thoughtful design and comfort, she is challenging the idea that looking beautiful should come at a cost.



Barkha Singh's career has moved across screens, formats and creative roles. She made her film debut as young Tina Kapoor in Yash Raj Films' Mujhse Dosti Karoge! in 2002, beginning a journey through films, television and streaming platforms. Audiences have seen her in projects including Engineering Girls, Please Find Attached, Masaba Masaba, The Great Weddings of Munnes and Criminal Justice: A Family Matter. Alongside acting, she has built a digital presence around travel, fashion, beauty and lifestyle, collaborating with brands such as Cadbury, Coca-Cola, Amazon, Garnier, Clinique and Giva Jewellery.

In October 2026, Barkha stepped into a new chapter as Chief Creative Officer of Nuvah, an online-first women's footwear brand founded by Avni Jain. The role brings together her interests in fashion, design, communication and visual storytelling. It also gives her the opportunity to move beyond representing a product on screen and become part of the process of creating one.

The idea behind Nuvah is rooted in a familiar dilemma. Heels can transform an outfit, but discomfort often makes them difficult to wear for long. Barkha's own experiences with footwear made her question why women should have to compromise on comfort to enjoy beautiful design. "I've never subscribed to the idea that beauty must come with pain," she says.

That belief has become central to the brand's approach. Nuvah aims to create footwear that is visually appealing and considered around the realities of women's everyday lives. Its patented Steady-Form footbed is designed to distribute body weight more evenly, helping make heels more comfortable over longer hours. The brand also works with vegan materials and manufactures in India, with an emphasis on quality and finish.

For Barkha, this is a different way of thinking about luxury. Rather than treating it as something defined only by appearance or price, she sees it in the care behind a product and the experience it offers. "To me, true luxury is as much about how something makes you feel as it is about how it looks." Comfort is not an added benefit but part of the design itself. A beautiful pair of shoes should allow the wearer to move through her day with confidence.

Her partnership with Avni brings together complementary strengths. Barkha contributes a fashion-led perspective, creative direction and an understanding of brand communication, while Avni brings her focus on shoe construction, comfort and quality. The collaboration aims to keep the product and brand experience connected, from design decisions to the way customers discover and wear each pair.

That process also involves listening. Through Nuvah's Founder's Circle, customer feedback, surveys and product sampling, the team is building a clearer understanding of what women want from their footwear. Working with manufacturers helps translate those insights into practical design decisions. As Barkha puts it, "We're not simply designing heels; we're thinking about the lives of the women who wear them."

She believes women are not looking for style in isolation. They want products that fit into busy, varied lives and deliver what they promise. "Today's customer wants a product that not only looks exceptional but also delivers on its promise." For a footwear label, that means paying attention to the details that make the difference between a pair that looks good on a shelf and one that becomes part of someone's wardrobe.

For Barkha, the move into entrepreneurship is an extension of her creative journey. Acting has allowed her to inhabit different perspectives and tell stories; working with Nuvah gives her the chance to shape a product, its identity and the experience surrounding it. Her ambition is to help change the way women relate to heels, making comfort and confidence integral to the conversation.

The idea is simple: luxury should not ask women to choose between how they look and how they feel. Through Nuvah, Barkha is bringing that thought into a tangible form, one thoughtfully designed step at a time.

PAVITRA GANDHI

Redefining the Language of Modern Luxury

With Ekatra Jewels, entrepreneur Pavitra Gandhi is bringing a fresh perspective to fine jewellery. Combining design innovation, lab-grown diamonds and a women-first philosophy, she is creating a contemporary luxury brand that makes exceptional jewellery more personal, wearable and relevant to modern life.



For Pavitra Gandhi, luxury has always been about more than the price of an object. Years spent around the luxury industry through LLW and Magnanimous taught her that what makes people connect with a brand is the feeling it creates, the attention to detail and the story behind it. When she looked at the fine jewellery market, she felt there was room for a different conversation.

Traditionally, fine jewellery has been associated with milestones and special occasions, with beautiful pieces often kept away until the next celebration. Pavitra wanted to challenge that relationship. Her idea was simple: jewellery should be part of everyday life. She describes the philosophy as "drawer jewellery, not locker jewellery".

That thinking became the starting point for Ekatra Jewels, a brand built around the idea that women should feel equally comfortable buying diamonds for themselves as receiving them as gifts. As Pavitra says, "A woman shouldn't have to wait for somebody to gift her a diamond. She can buy her first solitaire for herself, because she wants to." A woman need not wait for an anniversary or somebody else's decision to own her first solitaire. She can choose one simply because she wants to celebrate herself.

Launched on Women's Day, Ekatra brings together a distinctly women-led vision. Pavitra works alongside women from different backgrounds and generations, including Ekta Kapoor, Sussanne Khan, Jennifer Winget, Pragya Kapoor, Apoorva Makhija and Vasuki Punj. Their varied experiences reflect the brand's intention to speak to different women, rather than define a single idea of its customer.

Pavitra describes Ekatra as a design, technology and content company. Design begins with a practical question: "Will a woman actually want to wear this?" A piece may be visually striking, but it must also feel comfortable, be well made and fit naturally into everyday life. For her, creativity and wearability are equally essential to good jewellery.

Technology is another important part of the brand's identity. Ekatra works with lab-grown diamonds through a reactor-to-ring approach, alongside its proprietary Featherlight Gold technology. Its Srishti Ratna collection features a 108-facet diamond cut, while the brand is developing distinctive cuts to bring a new design language to fine jewellery. The aim is to remain closely involved in the product, from materials and processes to the finished piece.

The Srishti Ratna story also reflects Pavitra's interest in what she calls spiritual luxury. For her, luxury can be found in taking time for oneself, understanding one's identity and feeling comfortable in one's own skin. The collection draws on three ideas: Aware, Align and Manifest. It presents jewellery as part of a woman's personal journey, rather than simply an accessory for an occasion. Through these ideas, the brand connects the experience of wearing jewellery with a deeper sense of self-awareness and personal fulfilment.

The content behind Ekatra connects its design philosophy with the lives and stories of real women. Pavitra believes the future of luxury will be shaped by more informed customers who want to understand what they are buying, how it was made and whether the design reflects their individuality. Quality and beauty remain important, but so do transparency and personal relevance. As she observes, "They also don't need permission to celebrate themselves."

This shift is also changing the meaning of gifting. Jewellery continues to hold emotional value when given by someone else, but self-purchase is becoming an equally meaningful expression. A promotion, a new chapter or simply the desire to mark a moment can be reason enough. Pavitra sees this as a more personal way for women to engage with fine jewellery.

As Ekatra grows, her ambition is to build an Indian brand with an international presence. She wants its design, technology and stories to connect with women beyond India while retaining the sensibility that shaped its beginnings.

For Pavitra, the idea at the heart of Ekatra remains uncomplicated: a diamond does not always have to be a gift from somebody else. Women can choose it for themselves, celebrate their milestones and wear it every day. In making that choice feel natural, Ekatra offers its own interpretation of modern luxury: one that is less about keeping something precious away and more about making it part of life.

MINI MATHUR

Making Midlife a Powerful New Beginning

After more than three decades in television, Mini Mathur is using the voice audiences have long trusted to change the conversation around women's health. Through Pauseitive, she is bringing science, lived experience and honest communication to a subject too often surrounded by silence.



For over three decades, Mini Mathur has connected with audiences through her intelligence, wit and effortless screen presence. Yet her most personal story began with a change she had never anticipated.

"I'd like to think of it less as a reinvention and more as an evolution," she says. "I just never imagined that one of the most important stories I would tell would begin with my own hormones!"

Perimenopause caught Mini off guard. Despite being fit, informed and attentive to her health, she began experiencing changes in her sleep, mood, energy, memory and body. What unsettled her most was the absence of clear answers. Even with access to leading doctors and resources, she felt dismissed and was offered only symptomatic relief.

She began wondering what millions of other Indian women were experiencing. The question became a turning point. Mini spent three years studying towards an international certification as a Women's Health Coach.

"That's how Pauseitive was born. Not as a business idea, but as a deeply personal response to a glaring gap in women's healthcare," she explains. "I didn't get certified to change careers. I got certified to change the conversation with verified knowledge and scientific facts."

Pauseitive brings together science, lived experience and accessible communication. Mini is clear that she is not a doctor; her role is to bridge medical expertise and women's everyday realities. The platform brings credible medical voices, HRT education and science-backed lifestyle guidance into the same conversation, taking a lifestyle-first approach to nutrition, movement, sleep, stress and emotional health rather than promoting quick fixes.

"I refuse to let menopause become another industry that makes women feel inadequate so it can sell them a solution," she says. "Women don't need more fear, shame or miracle cures. They need reliable information, compassionate healthcare, community and the confidence to make informed decisions."

Her work has also reshaped her understanding of luxury. Mini still appreciates fashion, art, beautiful things and a fabulous pair of shoes, but restorative sleep, strength, mental clarity, energy and ownership of her time have become equally precious. "To me, the ultimate luxury is agency - the freedom to make choices about your own body, finances, health and happiness."

Access to menopause-informed doctors and the experience of being heard, she believes, should not be privileges reserved for women who can afford specialist consultations or expensive wellness retreats.

Having spent much of her adult life in front of a camera, Mini understands the scrutiny women face as they grow older. But she has little interest in treating youth as the benchmark. "I don't want to be congratulated for looking younger than my age. I'd rather be admired for how fabulously I'm living it."

Ageing well, for her, is about vitality, curiosity, strength and joy: continuing to travel, dance, work, learn and surprise yourself. Putting yourself first, she believes, is an act of self-respect.

Mini sees a welcome shift among women in their forties and fifties. More are asking about hormones, strength training, sleep and preventive care, and challenging the dismissal of symptoms as stress or simply getting older. Self-care, she says, is the everyday work of protecting long-term health, seeking appropriate care and setting boundaries.

As Pauseitive grows, trust remains non-negotiable. Mini hopes to build a midlife wellness ecosystem of education, expert-led conversations, personalised coaching and community. She wants growth to follow impact, not compromise it, and would rather build a trusted community than an enormous audience.

Her ambition reaches beyond the platform. She imagines an India where women understand hormonal health before perimenopause, doctors are better equipped, workplaces recognise menopause as a health and wellbeing issue, and families respond with empathy rather than silence.

"Menopause is not the end of your story. It's simply the beginning of a chapter in which you finally get to be the main character," she says.

After a lifetime of telling stories, Mini is now helping women reclaim authorship of their own. It may prove to be her most meaningful role yet.

SONAL JINDAL

Building a Global Platform for Indian Fashion

As Founder and CEO of Medusa Group India, Sonal Jindal is connecting Indian fashion talent with wider markets. Through exhibitions, international showcases and an expanding business ecosystem, she is building a platform where creativity can become a sustainable enterprise.



For Sonal Jindal, fashion is more than changing silhouettes and seasonal trends. It is a meeting point of creativity, identity, craftsmanship and commerce. As Founder and CEO of Medusa Group India, she believes India has extraordinary creative talent, but designers and homegrown brands need the right platforms, visibility and market access to realise their potential.

What began as a vision to bring designers closer to consumers has evolved into an ecosystem spanning fashion, international trade, exhibitions and education. Through Medusa Fashion House, Sonal has worked with thousands of brands and women-led businesses, creating opportunities to showcase their work, connect with consumers and explore new markets. Her focus is on helping creative talent build sustainable businesses.

The idea grew from her conviction that fashion reflects identity, culture and craftsmanship. India has a rich textile and craft heritage, yet talent alone does not always translate into commercial opportunity or international recognition. Sonal founded Medusa Fashion House to bridge that gap, bringing established designers, emerging talent, independent labels and women-led businesses together.

"I realised that fashion is not just about clothing or trends; it is about identity, craftsmanship, culture and the power to create economic opportunities," she says.

Through curated exhibitions, fashion showcases and international platforms, Medusa creates experiences and connections. Each designer has a story, and Sonal sees the platform's role as helping that story reach the right audience. Her intention is to bring together the experience of luxury fashion and the entrepreneurial spirit of a business platform.

Her understanding of luxury is rooted in quality, craftsmanship, individuality and experience rather than price or prestigious labels. She values the thought behind a creation and the authenticity of its story. India's heritage of textiles, design and artisanal skill, she believes, can form the foundation of a distinctive contemporary luxury identity.

A defining moment came when Medusa Fashion House took its vision beyond India through participation in London Fashion Week. For Sonal, this was more than an international showcase. It demonstrated that Indian fashion businesses could build a global presence by nurturing talent and connecting creativity with new markets.

The experience reinforced her belief that designers need more than occasional visibility. They need an ecosystem that supports their entrepreneurial journey, from presenting a collection to reaching consumers and exploring commercial opportunities. This thinking informs Medusa's wider direction, which extends beyond exhibitions and fashion shows to international trade, digital commerce and fashion education.

Sonal recognises that luxury is changing. Consumers increasingly seek individuality, authenticity and personal experiences. They want to understand a product's story, appreciate its craftsmanship and feel connected to the brand. Technology can connect designers with consumers and open new markets, but she believes it must not displace the human relationships and creative judgement that give fashion its character.

For Indian fashion, this shift presents an opportunity. Heritage can be reinterpreted for contemporary consumers without losing the individuality of the designer or the integrity of the craft. Sonal wants Medusa to create platforms where traditional strengths meet new ideas, allowing homegrown labels to participate in a global conversation.

Balancing creativity with commercial growth requires clarity of purpose. Creativity gives a brand its identity, quality builds trust, and commercial sustainability enables growth. Sonal prioritises strong collaborations, high standards and decisions that support long-term development. Designers must retain the freedom to express their individuality, while the platform provides connections that can turn creative work into viable businesses.

MONICA SHAH

Where Indian Craft Finds Its Place in Contemporary Luxury

For Monica Shah, luxury is not defined by price or exclusivity alone. It is found in time, knowledge and the human skill behind an object. As co-founder and Artistic Director of JADE by Monica & Karishma, and founder of the Grassroot Artisans Project (GAP), she is building a contemporary design language rooted in India's craft heritage.



Monica's relationship with fashion began with a fascination for making. Trained as an interior designer, she was drawn to material, process and the human hand. Fashion offered a way to explore identity, culture and craft. "I don't think I entered fashion so much as I arrived at it through a fascination with making," she reflects.

Her understanding of craft was shaped by Chanakya International, the textile and embroidery house that has worked with luxury names including Fendi, Dior and Prada. Growing up around artisans and couture taught her to see craft as a living repository of knowledge and culture.

In 2008, Monica co-founded JADE by Monica & Karishma with a desire to create Indian luxury on its own terms. She wanted to turn attention towards the knowledge embedded in Indian textiles, crafts and communities. As Artistic Director, she has shaped its couture and ready-to-wear language around quiet luxury, textile innovation and traditional craft.

For Monica, the value of a handmade object lies as much in the knowledge behind it as in its appearance. "Luxury, to me, is depth. It is the luxury of time, of knowledge, of something being made slowly and thoughtfully rather than being produced simply because the market demands it." A hand-embroidered piece carries hours of work and generations of knowledge. She believes luxury will increasingly be defined by cultural meaning, integrity and longevity.

This belief led to the creation of the Grassroot Artisans Project. Through GAP, Monica took her engagement with craft beyond the atelier and into the communities where these traditions originate. Its guiding idea is to give back by going back to the roots: understanding artisans' techniques and histories, then bringing traditional knowledge into contemporary design.

The project works across craft regions including Bengal, Kutch, Bagru, Pochampally, Barmer and Banaras, engaging with traditions such as Batik, Bandhani, Ikat, block printing and Banarasi weaving. Rather than treating these techniques as embellishments, Monica sees them as sources of design intelligence. "We don't see craft as an embellishment applied to fashion; we see it as a knowledge system and as a source of design intelligence."

Her long-term, collaborative approach allows artisans to experiment and keep their skills relevant. She describes the process as "a kind of collision: heritage meeting contemporary design, without either having to surrender its identity." Consumers, she believes, are increasingly interested in provenance: who made an object, where its materials came from and what knowledge shaped it. "I think we are moving from a culture of ownership to a culture of meaning."

The House of JADE extends this philosophy beyond clothing, bringing together fashion, art, craft, books, food, interiors and objects. Its opening marks an important moment in the brand's evolution, creating a space where conversations around making and design can continue beyond the garment. For Monica, it feels "less like an expansion and more like a coming home to what JADE has always wanted to be."

Monica is clear about what the brand must protect: craft integrity, quality and its distinctive point of view. "I don't want JADE to simply become bigger. I want it to become deeper-more culturally relevant, more meaningful and more connected to the ecosystems of making that have shaped us." Growth, she believes, should strengthen the creative vision rather than dictate it.

Her work has received honours including Vogue India's Forces of Fashion (2023), Grazia India's Contemporary Craftsmanship Award (2022), Luxebook's 50 Most Influential Women in Luxury (2021), PETA India's Compassionate Designer Award and a 2024 Ministry of Textiles honour for GAP.

Monica hopes JADE will help India understand its craft and heritage anew: keeping traditions aspirational yet accessible, contemporary yet connected to their origins. "I would like JADE to be remembered as a house that contributed to the way India understood its own craft and heritage."

Through JADE and the Grassroot Artisans Project, Monica is making the case that Indian craftsmanship belongs not at the margins of luxury, but at its very centre.

BAHAAR DHAWAN ROHATGI

Where Art Meets the Unbounded

A self-taught artist whose journey began in law, Bahaar Dhawan Rohatgi brings together intellectual discipline and creative freedom. Through experimental materials, socially engaged narratives and immersive installations, she is expanding how art can be made and experienced.



For Bahaar, art has never been confined to the canvas. It is a way of observing the world, questioning assumptions and giving form to ideas that might otherwise remain unspoken. A self-taught artist based in New Delhi, she arrived at a full-time artistic practice by way of law. For five years, she worked with Amarchand Mangaldas as a Senior Associate, while continuing to paint and sell her work. In June 2015, she devoted herself to art.

The transition did not mean leaving one discipline behind. The precision developed through legal practice informs her work, while art gives her the freedom to move beyond fixed structures. The two worlds meet in an approach shaped by research, observation and storytelling. Her works often begin with dreams, travel, personal encounters and real-life cases, then develop through experimentation with form and material.

Bahaar's practice moves between figurative subjects and abstraction. Animals emerge in vivid, sometimes playful compositions; women appear in situations carrying messages; and textured abstracts invite meditative engagement. Rather than settle into a recognisable category, she follows each subject wherever it leads. The variety is held together by an interest in the human condition and the social realities shaping everyday life.

Her choice of materials is equally exploratory. She works with paper, rubber, resin, cement and sand, seeking surfaces and structures that extend each work's visual language. She has developed a technique combining burnt resin and reduced rubber to create a distinctive structural effect. Cosmic imagery, galaxies and landscapes recur in her practice, informed by a fascination with what may exist beyond immediate perception. Travel and conversations add further layers to this visual enquiry.

For Bahaar, art is also a means of engaging with issues that demand attention. Her work has addressed terrorism, women's rights and social concerns, including superstitions associated with owls in India. The intention is not simply to illustrate a subject, but to encourage viewers to look again, question inherited beliefs and consider perspectives beyond their own. Her practice reflects a belief that artistic expression can participate in public life.

Her ambition extends beyond the making and exhibiting of individual works. Bahaar wants to change how audiences encounter art, making it less intimidating and more accessible. In 2019, she collaborated with DLF on a large solo exhibition in a public space. She has also created immersive experiences combining virtual reality, sensory elements and kinetic sculpture, including an imagined journey into a future civilisation. Collaborations with brands across industries bring art into settings beyond conventional galleries.

Her work has reached audiences in the United States, Venice and Dubai, and entered collections including those of the Abu Dhabi royal family, DLF, Hindustan Times and leading law offices. In 2017, she received the SAARC Award for Best Emerging Artist, and in 2018 represented India at the Art Laguna Exhibition in Venice. Her solo exhibition was presented at the VIP Lounge of India Art Fair with sponsorship from Pernod Ricard.

Alongside her artistic career, Bahaar has maintained an interest in the legal and commercial frameworks surrounding art. Through an Art & Business programme organised by DAG Modern and the Young Women's Leadership Programme, she explored the art market as an asset class. Her engagement with Art & Law is driven by a desire for transparent dealings, stronger governance and greater confidence for artists. She has spoken on these issues in India and Japan, and raised concerns about the future of Art Law in India in a meeting with the Prime Minister.

This commitment to a stronger art ecosystem gives her journey a distinctive dimension. She is building an artistic language of her own while considering the conditions that allow artists to sustain their practices. For emerging creatives, a fairer and more transparent market can help make art a viable career rather than a distant aspiration.

Bahaar's understanding of legacy is expressed through more than the works she creates. It lies in the conversations she initiates, the boundaries she challenges and the structures she hopes to strengthen. From the discipline of a law firm to the unpredictability of the studio, she has brought two very different worlds into dialogue. Her work continues to evolve across materials, subjects and formats, guided by the conviction that art belongs beyond prescribed spaces and established definitions.

RASHI KAPOOR

Indian Craftsmanship, Reimagined for the World

With a deep respect for Indian artistry and an eye for detail, designer Rashi Kapoor is building a luxury fashion label that brings heritage craftsmanship into conversation with contemporary style. From a modest Kolkata studio to a growing national presence, her journey is shaped by creative conviction and a belief in the enduring value of handmade fashion.



Rashi Kapoor's relationship with fashion began early, through an instinctive appreciation of colour, fabrics, textures and form. Raised in a humble environment, she developed a creative sensibility that gradually became a clear direction for her future. What began as a personal fascination grew into a determination to build a fashion identity of her own, one that celebrated Indian craftsmanship while speaking to the modern woman.

She pursued fashion formally at the London School of Fashion, where her creativity found technical grounding and a wider perspective. Yet, despite the international exposure, her connection with Kolkata remained central to her vision. Returning home, she brought together her contemporary training and the city's artistic heritage, launching her eponymous label from a modest 250-square-foot studio.

The early years were built on personal conviction. Rashi often wore her own creations to weddings, social gatherings and events, allowing the designs to find an audience organically. Friends, colleagues and members of Kolkata's social circles began approaching her for bespoke pieces, drawn to the hand embroidery, refined detailing and her understanding of how women wanted to dress. Gradually, individual commissions developed into a clientele built on trust and appreciation for craftsmanship.

That personal connection remains central to the brand. Rashi wanted to create more than beautiful clothing. "I wanted to build a luxury fashion house that tells a story through every creation, celebrates the extraordinary skills of Indian artisans, and empowers women to express their individuality with confidence and grace."

At the heart of her design philosophy is a meeting of Indian artisanal heritage and contemporary luxury. Intricate hand embroidery, innovative textures, refined silhouettes and careful finishing give the label its distinctive visual language. Rather than treating tradition as something to reproduce unchanged, Rashi approaches it as a living source of inspiration, reinterpreted through modern design.

Her definition of luxury reflects this balance. "To me, luxury is about timeless elegance, exceptional craftsmanship, and the beauty of thoughtful details," she says. For her, the value of a garment extends beyond exclusivity. It lies in the artistry invested in its making, the richness of its textures and the personal connection a woman forms with what she wears. "For me, luxury is not just about what you wear, but how it makes you feel."

As the label grew, Rashi began presenting her collections at exhibitions across India, extending its reach beyond Kolkata. Associations with PSL Group and AZA Fashions, alongside a strong high-net-worth clientele, have marked important steps in the brand's development. Seeing her creations reach women in different parts of the country has reinforced her belief in the global appeal of Indian craftsmanship.

She is equally attentive to changing expectations among luxury consumers. Today's customers increasingly value authenticity, personalisation, quality and meaningful experiences over fleeting trends. There is a growing appreciation for pieces that carry a story and remain relevant over time. This shift aligns with her commitment to creating garments that feel individual rather than dictated by seasonal fashion cycles.

Maintaining that identity while building a business requires deliberate choices. Rashi places importance on fine fabrics, handcrafted details and balancing artistic expression with wearability. "My philosophy is to grow with purpose, innovate with intention, and ensure that every creation continues to reflect the authenticity, sophistication, and luxury that define our brand," she explains.

Looking ahead, her ambition is to establish Rashi Kapoor as a globally recognised luxury fashion house, taking Indian craftsmanship to new audiences while remaining rooted in its heritage. She hopes to explore new creative horizons, expand internationally and create pieces that transcend generations. Equally important is supporting the artisans whose skills give each creation its character.

From a small Kolkata studio to a label building its presence across India, Rashi's journey has been guided by creative instinct and a belief in thoughtful making. Her ambition is not simply to dress women, but to create a lasting expression of Indian luxury, one in which heritage is honoured, individuality celebrated and craftsmanship remains at the centre.

DIVITA RAI

The Value of Taking the Slower Way

At 26, the co-founder of Duchess Kumari is building a luxury fashion label that brings Indian craftsmanship into contemporary wardrobes. Her approach to entrepreneurship is grounded in curiosity, respect for artisanship and a belief that some things are worth taking the time to get right.



At 26, Divita Rai is building Duchess Kumari around an ambitious idea: Indian heritage textiles and craftsmanship belong in the wardrobes of contemporary women across the world. The luxury Indo-Western occasion wear label brings traditional embroidery, handloom fabrics and artisanal techniques into silhouettes designed for how women dress today. In its first year, the business has developed a strong online presence, opened a retail store and reached customers in the Middle East, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Divita's route into fashion entrepreneurship began with a different discipline. A graduate of Sir J.J. College of Architecture, she brings an architectural sensibility to form, structure and design. Building a fashion business required a different set of skills. Without a business background, she approached the challenge with curiosity and a willingness to learn in real time. Her training continues to inform her creative direction, allowing her to approach clothing with an eye for proportion, construction and the relationship between form and function.

At Duchess Kumari, the classroom has been the business itself. Fabric vendors, logistics and operations partners, karigars and customers have all become part of her education. Working with artisans has deepened her understanding of the time and skill embedded in traditional techniques, while listening to customers has helped her understand what women want to wear and why. This ground-up approach has shaped the brand's identity.

One of the clearest expressions of that thinking is the label's commitment to handloom. Divita has described it as the operational bottleneck she is unwilling to remove. A Chanderi weave can take weeks to become fabric, long before cutting, stitching, quality checks and shipping begin. Early on, she considered faster vendors and mill-made alternatives, but each shortcut risked compromising the qualities that made the product distinctive.

She came to see that the time involved was part of the garment's value. The slight irregularities in a weave and the way zari catches light differently across a length of fabric are evidence of human hands at work. Rather than force the process to move at the pace of mass production, Duchess Kumari has built around the realities of craft, with production calendars that respect weaving time and pricing that recognises the work behind the textile. Craft can survive only when the people who sustain it are valued and paid for their skill.

This philosophy informs the way the brand approaches heritage. For Divita, preserving Indian craftsmanship does not mean keeping it unchanged or distant from everyday life. Each collection brings traditional textiles, embroideries and techniques into conversation with contemporary design. The label works with handloom, Kinkhab brocades, woven metallic textiles and hand-finished details, translating their richness into structured, wearable silhouettes.

Heritage dressing, in her view, should not be confined to festive occasions or reduced to nostalgia. It can be expressive and relevant to a woman whose life moves between different settings. The aim is to retain the soul of a textile while giving it a new voice: not museum-like or costume-like, but considered for the present.

Divita's approach also reflects a broader view of sustainability. Working with local artisans and valuing handloom influence how the business is planned and produced. In a market accustomed to speed and uniformity, she sees the distinctiveness of handmade textiles, their longevity and their potential to be treasured, repaired and passed on as part of their value. The challenge is to make that value visible to a new generation.

As a co-founder, Divita is involved in the practical demands of growth, from production sheets and vendor coordination to logistics and customer relationships. Though largely unseen in the finished garment, this work is central to building a dependable business. It has reinforced the importance of learning from every part of the value chain and treating contributors as partners in creation.

The next phase for Duchess Kumari is centred on thoughtful growth and a stronger global presence, without losing the principles on which it was founded. Divita wants to connect cultural authenticity with modern consumer needs, while continuing to champion artisanship and creative expression. Her ambition is to keep heritage in circulation: designed, worn, desired and economically sustained.



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BUILDING A BUSINESS THAT LASTS: FIVE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP, GROWTH AND CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Building a successful business requires more than a strong idea. It calls for a clear vision, commercial understanding, the ability to build effective teams and the discipline to grow without compromising the principles on which the business was founded. Drawing on the world of architecture and creative entrepreneurship, these five lessons offer a framework for women looking to build enterprises with lasting value.

A business may begin with an individual's talent, ambition or creative vision, but its long-term success depends on much more. It requires the ability to translate an idea into a sustainable model, earn the confidence of clients, build a capable team and adapt to changing expectations without losing its identity.

This is particularly relevant in creative industries such as architecture and design, where professional expertise must work alongside commercial discipline. A compelling design philosophy may establish a practice, but managing projects, finances, people and client relationships is what allows it to endure. The same principles apply across industries. Whether building a design studio, a consultancy or a consumer brand, entrepreneurs must learn to think beyond the product or service they initially set out to offer.

There are five important principles that can help women entrepreneurs build businesses that remain relevant and resilient over time.

1. ESTABLISH A DISTINCT POINT OF VIEW

Every enduring business needs a clear identity. It should be able to articulate what it stands for, what distinguishes its approach and the value it intends to create.

In creative businesses, this begins with developing an independent design philosophy. Without one, it is easy to become overly influenced by market trends, competitors or the expectations of individual clients. Responding to the market is important, but constantly changing direction to accommodate every external opinion can dilute a business's identity.

The same principle applies beyond design. Founders need to understand why their business exists and the problem it is uniquely positioned to address. This clarity becomes particularly valuable when making decisions about clients, partnerships, hiring and expansion.

A strong point of view does not mean resisting change. It means understanding which aspects of the business can evolve and which principles should remain consistent.

2. UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS BEYOND YOUR EXPERTISE

One of the most significant transitions for a specialist founder is moving from being proficient in a profession to becoming capable of leading an enterprise.

An architect may understand design and execution, just as a lawyer may understand legal strategy or a fashion designer may understand construction and aesthetics. However, running a business introduces another set of responsibilities. Financial planning, pricing, contracts, cash flow, negotiations, operations and team management become as important as professional expertise.

Founders cannot afford to remain disconnected from these aspects of the business. Understanding the numbers is essential to making informed decisions. Knowing the terms of a contract, recognising operational inefficiencies and preparing thoroughly for important meetings all contribute to credibility.

Not every founder needs to become an expert in every function. However, it is important to understand enough to ask the right questions, assess risks and recognise when specialist advice is necessary.

Commercial awareness is not separate from creative excellence. It is what allows creative excellence to become a sustainable business.

3. BUILD A TEAM THAT CAN CARRY THE VISION FORWARD

A business may begin with one person's ambition, but it cannot depend indefinitely on that individual for every decision. As an enterprise grows, the founder's role must evolve from managing every task to creating an environment in which others can perform effectively.

This requires more than hiring talented people. It involves defining responsibilities, establishing systems and ensuring that everyone understands the larger purpose of the organisation.

In multidisciplinary work, the best outcomes often emerge when different areas of expertise come together. Architects, designers, consultants, project managers and execution teams bring different perspectives to the same challenge. Their contributions need to be coordinated around a shared objective.

Delegation is therefore not simply the act of distributing tasks. It is the process of building trust and giving people the authority, information and resources to take ownership of their responsibilities.

Founders must also accept that others may approach a problem differently. The objective is not to reproduce the founder's individual working style across the organisation, but to maintain consistent standards while allowing people to contribute their own strengths.

4. BUILD CREDIBILITY THROUGH CONSISTENCY

For women entrepreneurs, establishing credibility can sometimes involve navigating assumptions about leadership, technical expertise and decision-making authority. Having a strong idea is one thing; earning the confidence of clients, collaborators and teams to execute it is another.

Credibility develops through preparation, professional knowledge, sound judgement and the ability to take responsibility for outcomes. Founders should know their work thoroughly, communicate expectations clearly and be willing to acknowledge what they do not know.

Seeking guidance, learning from experienced professionals and adapting when circumstances change are signs of responsible leadership, not weakness.

Relationships also play an important role. Mentors, industry peers, clients and professional partners can offer perspectives that may not be available within the immediate organisation. These relationships are built through mutual respect and consistency rather than approached only when a business needs something.

Over time, a reputation for reliability becomes one of an entrepreneur's most valuable assets.

5. GROW WITHOUT COMPROMISING WHAT MAKES THE BUSINESS VALUABLE

Growth is often measured through revenue, new clients, larger projects or geographical expansion. These are important indicators, but they do not necessarily reveal whether a business is becoming stronger.

The more meaningful question is whether the organisation can maintain its quality as its responsibilities increase.

In architecture, a successful project must respond to the people who will use the space. Understanding a client's lifestyle, requirements and long-term needs is as important as creating an impressive visual outcome. Design must serve people, not simply attract attention.

Businesses across sectors need the same discipline. They must remain connected to the people they serve, understand changing expectations and adapt their offerings without losing the values that distinguish them.

Expansion should be supported by the right systems, trained teams and realistic assessments of capacity. Sometimes, strengthening the existing business is more valuable than pursuing another opportunity immediately.

Long-term relevance comes from knowing when to innovate, when to consolidate and when to say no.

6. LEADERSHIP IS THE WORK OF BUILDING BEYOND YOURSELF

Perhaps the most important shift in entrepreneurship is recognising that a business must eventually become more than an extension of its founder.

The early years often require personal involvement in almost everything. But lasting enterprises are built when knowledge is shared, people are empowered and systems allow the organisation to function with consistency.

For women entrepreneurs, this also creates an opportunity to think about the professional environments they want to build. Mentorship, constructive feedback, access to responsibility and recognition of individual contributions can help more women develop confidence and leadership capabilities.

A business's influence is not measured only by its commercial achievements. It is also reflected in the people it develops, the standards it establishes and the opportunities it creates.

Building something that lasts is ultimately an exercise in balance: between vision and execution, creativity and commercial discipline, individual ambition and collective effort. Markets will change, teams will evolve and new challenges will emerge. The businesses that endure are those capable of responding to these changes without losing their sense of purpose.



Aparna Kaushik
Founder and Principal Architect, Aparna Kaushik Design Group LLP



BEYOND CREATIVITY: WHY BUILDING A BRAND REQUIRES MORE THAN BEING A GOOD DESIGNER

— BY MANISHA SONI

When people think about building a fashion brand, they often imagine beautiful collections, creative shoots, unique designs and the excitement of seeing their creations come to life. While these are certainly important, running a fashion business has taught me that creativity is only a small part of the bigger picture.

I often say that creativity contributes around 20% to building a fashion business. The remaining 80% comes from strategy, consistency, understanding your audience, marketing, communication and, most importantly, having the patience to build something meaningful.

As a fashion designer and entrepreneur, one thing I have always believed in is building a brand rather than simply chasing money. Revenue is essential for any business to survive, but a brand is what gives a business its identity, direction and long-term value.

1. KNOW YOUR NICHE AND HAVE THE COURAGE TO STAY THERE

One of the most important lessons I have learned is that you don't necessarily have to do everything to grow your business.

Especially in fashion, there is constant pressure to experiment, follow trends and introduce something new every time. While innovation is important, losing your core identity in the process can make it difficult for customers to understand what your brand represents.

I believe that sticking to your niche, understanding it deeply and continuously improving within it can take you much further than constantly trying to be everything for everyone.

A niche does not restrict your creativity. It gives your creativity a direction. When people begin associating your brand with a particular aesthetic, product or experience, you start building recognition. And recognition is one of the most valuable assets a brand can have.

2. BUILD A BRAND, NOT JUST A REVENUE MODEL

From the beginning of my entrepreneurial journey, my intention was to build a brand that people could recognise, remember and connect with.

There is a difference between making a sale and building a relationship with a customer. A sale may happen once, but a strong brand

gives customers a reason to return.
Building a brand requires thinking beyond immediate profits. It means investing in your identity, product quality, customer experience, communication and the overall perception people have of your business.

There will be moments when chasing quick revenue seems tempting, especially in a competitive market. But every decision should be evaluated against a bigger question: Is this helping me build the brand I want to be known for?
I believe long-term brand value is created through hundreds of consistent decisions, not one successful campaign or collection.

3. THE FOUNDER MUST BECOME THE FACE AND VOICE OF THE BRAND

One thing that has become increasingly important in today's business environment is the founder's presence.
People want to know who is behind a brand. They want to understand the thought process, the inspiration, the values and the personality that shape what they are buying.
You can create the most beautiful product, but if you cannot communicate its value, people may never understand what makes it special. Being the face of your brand does not necessarily mean being present everywhere or constantly talking about yourself. It means taking ownership of your brand's story.

Explain why you created something. Talk about the inspiration behind a collection. Share the decisions that go into developing a product. Let people see the person and the thought behind the business.
The way a founder presents and communicates a brand can make a significant difference to how people perceive it.

4. CREATIVITY NEEDS A STRONG BUSINESS STRATEGY

A fashion business involves much more than designing clothes. There is product development, sourcing, production planning, pricing, inventory management, quality control, marketing, sales and customer relationship management.
A designer may have an incredible creative vision, but without understanding costs, margins and customer behaviour, turning that vision into a sustainable business becomes difficult.
Creative entrepreneurs must learn to think commercially without compromising their creative identity.
Every product should have a purpose, every collection should have a direction, and every business decision should contribute towards the larger vision.
Creativity gives you the idea. Strategy helps you turn that idea into a business.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT JUST MARKETING; IT IS BRAND BUILDING

Today, social media is one of the most powerful tools available to entrepreneurs. But simply posting regularly or running advertisements is not enough.
Your digital presence should reflect the same identity that your products and business stand for.
Customers should be able to understand your brand through the way you communicate, the content you create, the stories you share and the experience you offer.
Social media should not only be used to announce new products or push sales. It should help people discover your brand, understand its value and develop a connection with it.
Especially for emerging businesses, the founder's voice can bring authenticity to this communication. People often connect with stories and perspectives more deeply than they connect with promotional messages.

6. CONSISTENCY AND PATIENCE ARE UNDERRATED BUSINESS SKILLS

Building a brand takes time. There is no guaranteed formula that promises overnight success.
There will be periods of growth, uncertainty, experimentation and learning. What matters is having enough clarity to stay committed to your vision while being flexible enough to evolve.
Consistency does not mean repeating the same things forever. It means staying true to your core identity while finding better ways to express it.
A business founder must be willing to learn beyond their original expertise. A designer must understand marketing. A creative entrepreneur must understand numbers. A founder must understand people.
The willingness to wear multiple hats is often what makes the difference between having a creative idea and building a functioning business around it.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

If there is one thing I would tell someone starting a business, it is this: Don't be in a hurry to become big. Focus on becoming recognisable, reliable and relevant.
Build something that has a clear identity. Understand your customer. Learn to communicate your value. Be involved in your brand's story and never underestimate the importance of consistency.

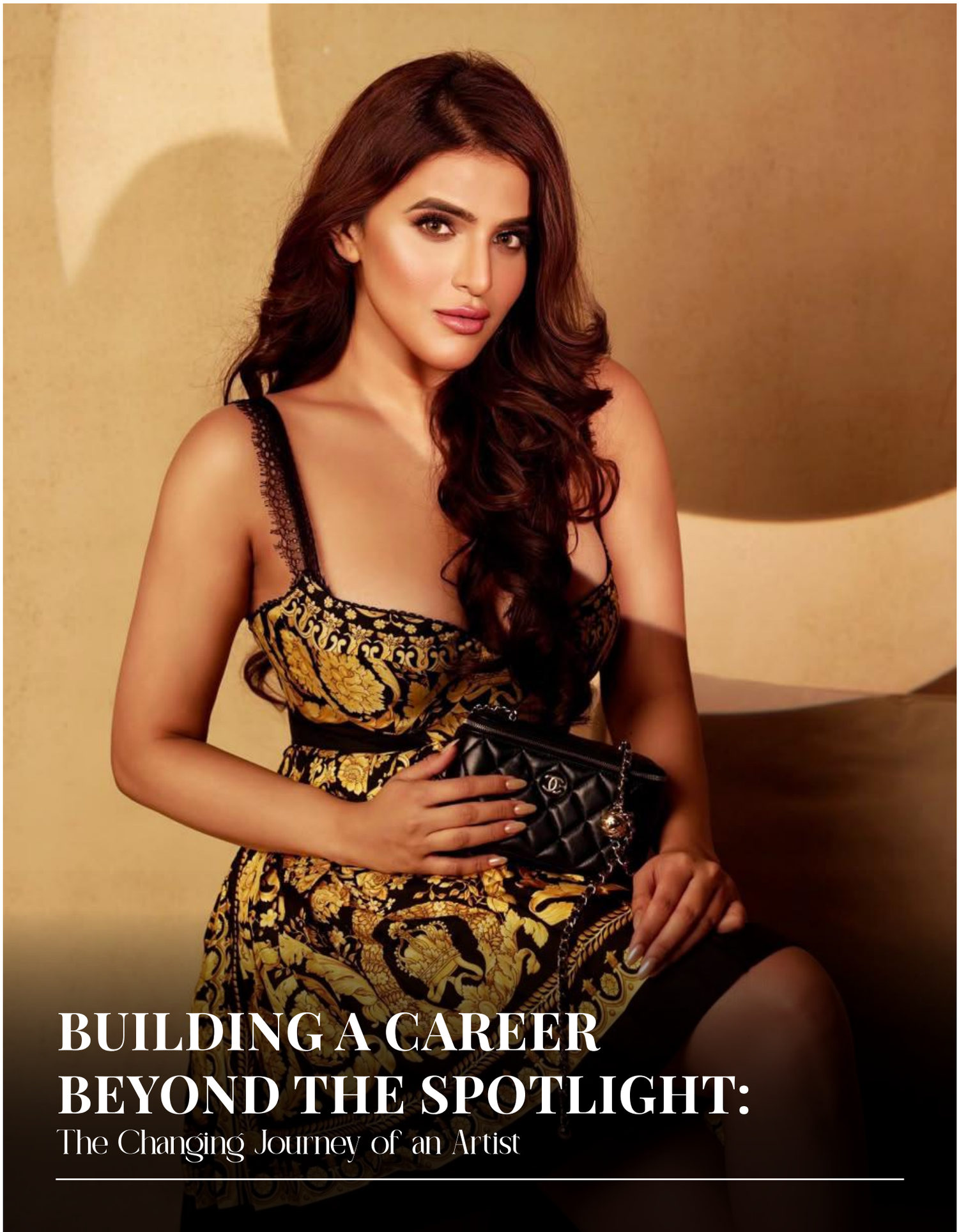
For me, entrepreneurship has never been just about creating products or making sales. It has been about creating an identity that people can recognise and a brand that can stand on its own.
Because ultimately, creativity may bring your business to life, but vision, strategy and consistency are what build its future.

DETAILS

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Company: Manisha Soni Couture



Author Bio:
Manisha Soni is a fashion designer and entrepreneur, and the founder of Manisha Soni Couture, a contemporary Indian couture label. She brings together traditional Indian craftsmanship and modern aesthetics to create distinctive fashion expressions. Her entrepreneurial journey reflects her passion for design, brand building and the evolving business of fashion. Through her work, she explores the relationship between creativity, culture, customer experience and business strategy, with a vision to build a distinctive and enduring fashion identity.
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BUILDING A CAREER BEYOND THE SPOTLIGHT:

The Changing Journey of an Artist

In an entertainment industry shaped by multiple platforms, changing audience expectations and global opportunities, building a lasting career requires more than visibility. It calls for versatility, preparation and the willingness to keep evolving. The journey of an emerging performer offers a glimpse into what it takes to navigate this changing landscape.

The entertainment industry has never offered just one route to success. Television, cinema, music videos, advertising and digital platforms each demand different forms of performance, and today's emerging artists increasingly find themselves moving between these spaces. While visibility can open doors, sustaining a career requires the ability to adapt, develop one's craft and approach every opportunity as a chance to learn.

For aspiring actors and models, this distinction is important. A strong screen presence may attract attention, but a professional career is built through consistency, discipline and an understanding of the different demands of the industry.

VERSATILITY IS A PROFESSIONAL ADVANTAGE

Working across formats can be an important part of an artist's development. A television commercial may require an immediate connection with the audience, while a music video often relies on expression, movement and the ability to communicate a story without extensive dialogue. Television serials, meanwhile, demand continuity and the capacity to sustain a character over time.

Each format develops a different aspect of performance. Exploring varied assignments can help emerging artists understand their strengths, identify areas for improvement and become more comfortable in front of the camera.

Manasi Pawar's career reflects this movement across formats. Her work has included television commercials, serials and music videos. One of her identifiable projects is the 2020 music video Na Tere Bin Aaye, directed by Hemantkumar Mahale and featuring the voices of Udit Narayan and Alka Yagnik. Her more recent project, Rose, represents another opportunity to explore a different screen identity.

The value of such experiences lies not simply in the number of projects undertaken, but in the range of skills they allow a performer to develop.

VISIBILITY SHOULD BE MATCHED BY CRAFT

Red-carpet appearances, media coverage and international exposure can introduce an artist to new audiences. They can also create opportunities to connect with industry professionals beyond familiar markets. However, visibility and professional growth are not interchangeable.

An international appearance may become an important milestone, but the work that follows determines how that attention translates into a career. The ability to select meaningful projects, prepare for roles and deliver performances that resonate with audiences remains central.

In 2026, Manasi made her red-carpet debut at the 79th Cannes Film Festival, followed by an appearance at the Venice Film Festival in September. These appearances brought her into the international spotlight and added a new dimension to her public profile.

For emerging performers, such milestones can be valuable when viewed as part of a larger professional journey. International exposure can expand networks and introduce new possibilities, but it is the quality and consistency of the work that gives an artist a lasting identity.

THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED THE RULES

The growth of digital entertainment has widened the opportunities available to performers. Artists are no longer dependent on a single medium or traditional route to reach audiences. Music videos, streaming projects, short-form content and digital productions have created additional spaces for storytelling and talent discovery.

This changing environment also brings new expectations. Performers must be comfortable adapting to different production styles, understanding audience preferences and maintaining a professional presence across platforms.

The challenge is to remain open to new formats without allowing the pursuit of visibility to become the primary objective. A digital project should offer an opportunity to explore a character, tell a compelling story or develop a new aspect of performance. The platform may change, but the importance of preparation and authenticity remains.

PERSONAL IDENTITY AND PROFESSIONAL IMAGE MUST WORK TOGETHER

For actors and models, public image is often closely connected to professional opportunity. Fashion choices, appearances and media interactions contribute to how an artist is perceived. Yet a lasting professional identity cannot depend entirely on appearance.

An artist's public image is strongest when it complements the work rather than overshadowing it. Developing an individual sense of style, communicating with confidence and maintaining consistency across professional engagements can help create recognition. At the same time, performers need the freedom to experiment and move beyond a single image.

The objective is not to become predictable, but to build an identity that audiences can recognise while continuing to discover something new in the work.

THE NEXT CHAPTER MATTERS MORE THAN THE LAST MILESTONE

An emerging career is best understood as a continuing process of development. Every project brings new collaborators, expectations and challenges. Some opportunities create immediate visibility; others contribute quietly to an artist's experience and professional understanding.

The more important questions are what each experience teaches, how it strengthens the craft and whether it opens the way to more considered choices.

For Manasi Pawar, the journey so far spans music videos, television assignments and appearances at two prominent international film festivals. As she explores opportunities across film and digital entertainment, the next phase will offer scope to deepen her range and establish a more distinctive body of screen work.

For anyone entering the entertainment industry, the broader lesson is clear: a career cannot be built on the spotlight alone. Visibility may create an introduction, but preparation, adaptability and meaningful work are what give that introduction the potential to become a lasting professional journey.

Manasi Pawar
Actress and Model


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ISHA JAJODIA:

Building a House Beyond Trends

With Roseroom by Isha Jajodia, designer and entrepreneur Isha Jajodia is shaping a contemporary expression of Indian luxury through romantic silhouettes, considered craftsmanship and a distinctive design identity. Her ambition is not simply to create beautiful clothing, but to build a fashion house with the substance to endure.

For Isha, Roseroom by Isha Jajodia began with a realisation: she did not have to wait for the fashion industry to define where she belonged. A graduate of NIFT Delhi, she developed a strong grounding in textiles, garment construction and couture techniques. She wanted to create clothing with emotional resonance, pieces that expressed identity and presence rather than followed seasonal trends.

Raised in a Punjabi family and later becoming part of a Marwari household, Isha grew up with an understanding of cultural depth, enterprise and tradition. These influences shaped her sense of responsibility and resilience, while her education instilled respect for process and material.

She saw a gap in contemporary Indian fashion for softer fabrics such as lace, nuanced tones and romantic silhouettes that retained the richness of Indian craftsmanship. Rather than wait for the market to offer what she envisioned, she decided to create it herself. "I wanted to create that world for myself," she says. What began as a passion project gradually developed into a business, shaped by the responses and experiences of women who connected with the label.

A defining milestone arrived in 2020 with the opening of Roseroom by Isha Jajodia's flagship atelier at Ambawatta One in New Delhi. It marked a renewed direction for the brand, allowing Isha to formalise the studio, establish systems and step fully into her role as a creative entrepreneur. In 2023, Roseroom by Isha Jajodia made its debut at FDCI India Couture Week, followed by presentations in 2024 and 2025.

For a young label without an established fashion lineage or extensive industry network, that first couture presentation was a considerable risk. Isha pursued it because she believed Roseroom by Isha Jajodia belonged on that platform. "I stopped waiting for permission to belong in the industry and started taking responsibility for building my own place in it," she reflects. The experience changed her understanding of her role as the brand's founder.

Roseroom by Isha Jajodia's design language is defined by restraint, craftsmanship and a distinctly feminine sensibility. Its refined silhouettes and intricate techniques have found an audience among clients and public personalities, including Kareena Kapoor

Khan, Kriti Sanon and Sara Ali Khan. The brand has received recognition from publications including Vogue India, Grazia India, Forbes India, Elle and HELLO!, and is available at select multi-designer retailers such as Ogaan and Ensemble.

Yet Isha measures progress by more than visibility. She places particular value on clients who return to Roseroom by Isha Jajodia, including those from international markets. Repeat relationships, she believes, reflect confidence in the product and the experience behind it. For a luxury label, that trust is as significant as public recognition.

Her understanding of luxury is distinct from the idea that it must be conspicuous or excessive. "I believe luxury is about having a strong point of view, investing in craftsmanship and having the discipline to stay true to it." This conviction informs decisions across the business. Much of her day, she says, is spent weighing choices around garments and campaigns against the needs of the brand, its customers and the business. Building a fashion house requires discipline and sound decision-making as much as creativity.

Over the next five years, she hopes to develop Roseroom by Isha Jajodia into a globally relevant Indian luxury house, expanding selectively across international markets while strengthening its couture, ready-to-wear and bridal businesses. She also wants to create a stronger ecosystem around the label, offering meaningful opportunities to skilled artisans, allowing traditional craftsmanship to evolve and bringing fashion into conversation with art, culture and design.



Isha's leadership is guided by intuition, spiritual grounding and a long-term view. Travel and cultural experiences inform her perspective, while stillness, meditation and faith help her maintain balance. She believes building something enduring demands patience, consistency and the confidence to know when to say no.

Her ambition is measured in years rather than seasons. She wants to build "a brand that a woman can discover today and still want to return to twenty years from now". For Isha Jajodia, legacy lies in creating a distinctive point of view, honouring the people and skills behind each creation, and giving Indian craftsmanship a contemporary voice that can travel across generations.





PRIYANKA THAKER:

Beyond the Boundaries of Practice

At the intersection of architecture, visual art and material exploration, Priyanka Thaker has built House of Berserk as a practice that resists easy definition. An Assistant Professor of Architecture and founder of the multidisciplinary art and design studio, she approaches creative work as an inquiry into space, identity and the human experience. The studio is an evolving way of thinking.

Trained as an architect, Priyanka developed a grounding in scale, proportion, space and the relationship between people and their built environments. Yet her curiosity extended beyond conventional architectural practice. She wanted to draw, build, paint, make objects, experiment with materials and tell stories through different forms. House of Berserk emerged as a parallel identity that gave these interests room to develop.

"There wasn't necessarily something missing from architecture; perhaps there was something in me that needed more room," she reflects. What began as an independent creative pursuit gradually evolved into a multidisciplinary studio. Today, House of Berserk works across large-scale murals, sculptures, installations, furniture, canvases and material explorations, from intimate objects to public interventions.

The studio's work is connected less by a particular medium than by an interest in narrative. People, memories, mythology, identity, culture and colour inform its approach to space and form. Priyanka describes House of Berserk as "a storyteller's Mecca", where the idea determines the medium rather than the medium limiting what an idea can become.

She has resisted defining herself or the studio through a single professional label, believing categories can restrict creative possibility. "The idea dictates the medium rather than the medium dictating the idea," she says. A story might find expression on a wall, as a sculpture, through furniture or as an installation.

That inquiry often starts with people. Priyanka and her team seek to understand the individuals behind a project: their histories, memories, cultural references and

aspirations. A client questionnaire moves the conversation beyond surface preferences such as colour or style. Research, drawing, references from history and mythology, and material experimentation then help build the narrative. She looks for an idea that brings a degree of uncertainty; if the outcome is entirely predictable, there is too little discovery in the process.

Her work as an academic and her role as a founder continually inform one another. Teaching keeps her questioning established assumptions, while students bring fresh perspectives to the built environment. Studio practice, in turn, brings the realities of clients, budgets, execution, craftspeople and improvisation into the classroom. "I don't see academia and HoB as competing careers anymore. One keeps the other intellectually restless."

Maintaining an independent creative practice extends well beyond the work itself. As the studio has grown, Priyanka has had to navigate teams, clients, sites, finances and deadlines while protecting the curiosity that gave rise to House of Berserk. She does not describe balance as something permanently achieved, but as a continuing negotiation between work, wellbeing and home. "I don't want success to come at the expense of having a life I actually want to live," she says.

For Priyanka, success has increasingly come to mean freedom: the freedom to choose projects, move between disciplines, work at different scales, collaborate with people who challenge the studio and decline work that does not align with its direction. Recognition and growth matter, but not if they make the practice predictable. "I want HoB to become larger without becoming safer," she says.





Looking ahead, she sees opportunities in public art, spatial installations, collectible design, furniture, objects, material research and collaborations with architects, craftspeople, brands and cultural institutions. She is particularly interested in work where art is integrated into architecture from the beginning, rather than added as decoration. India's crafts, mythology, material intelligence and visual languages offer an expansive source of ideas, which she hopes to reinterpret without reducing them to nostalgia.

Ultimately, Priyanka does not want House of Berserk to be recognised for one signature product or medium, but for a distinct way of thinking. Her aspiration is to keep making things she has not yet learnt how to make, experiment at unfamiliar scales and remain open to influences beyond her immediate disciplines. In a field where visibility can encourage repetition, she is determined to preserve the curiosity that made the studio possible.

Her story suggests that a lasting legacy need not be a fixed identity, but a practice with the freedom to evolve while remaining attentive to the people, places and ideas that give it meaning.

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