

B R I G H T Y O U N G T H I N G S

Combining style with substance and craftsmanship with commercial acumen, we present the emerging stars of Indian design. Here, they are projected cinematically on models wearing pieces designed by them.

*Photographs by
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*Text by
SUPRIYA DRAVID & BUTOOL JAMAL*

CHOLA, SOHAYA MISRA, 40

BAZAARLOVES: Chola's eye for Victorian-era details like pussy bow necklines, mutton chop sleeves, and ruffled collars, which she interprets skillfully. Think little girl on the prairie with a strong dollop of punk. Brace yourself for layered maxi dresses, asymmetric jumpsuits, and voluminous tailored trousers.

SPRING 2017: "This season, I've worked with prints for the first time. I was inspired by vintage tile patterns, and even though it was very difficult to do, we managed to print on a silk-satin weave called *gajji* silk, besides working on structured linen and organic cotton. So it was a challenge balancing out all three different materials."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "I started out as a stylist, although I studied psychology in college. The actor Manisha Koirala was a family friend and she encouraged me to do it. I worked on two films with her, *Mann* and *Champion*, and then

decided that Bollywood wasn't for me. So I moved on to *Chanel [V]*. At that time it was a great platform to express yourself."

INSPIRATIONS: "I am very inspired by Japanese designers like Yohji Yamamoto and Issey Miyake. I love how they convey a story through their clothes. Often you can't even tell what the garment is until you wear it, but at the same time the clothes won't engulf you."

BRAND PHILOSOPHY: "It's really important for me that my designs accommodate different body types. No one is too fat, too thin, or too feminine or womanly to wear my clothes. That's why most of what I make is free size. They can also be styled in multiple ways. There are buttons and ties, and everything can be layered or worn on its own."

Available at Atosa, Aza (Mumbai); Elabe (Hyderabad) ▶



All clothes, **Chola**.
Fashion editor: **Yukti Sodha**.



**JODI,
KARUNA LAUNGANI, 32
GAURI VERMA, 26**

BAZAAR LOVES: Nothing says Made in India quite like Jodi's vibrant designs. From graphic pineapples to abstract bougainvillea-inspired shapes, their prints appear on a range of cool, on-trend silhouettes, be it off-shoulder tops and dresses or practical kurtas and culottes.

BRAND PHILOSOPHY: "Jodi started out over a shared Pinterest board. It's about a movement and a lifestyle, not just clothes. We work mostly with hand-block printing. When I was at the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi, I got the chance to travel to a lot of villages and realised that most craftsmen were creating products for an audience abroad," says Verma. "We wanted to work with similar craft techniques, and make versatile, modern clothes that have a global appeal for a discerning Indian audience." Laungani adds, "We've just launched childrenswear, and are working on a collaboration with a brand called Ethnicity, founded by the Future Group. We have also just started exporting to a few stores in the Middle East."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "There's no clear division, but I studied graphic design and communication at NIFT, so I do more of the print development. Karuna is better with clothes. She studied fashion design at Sophia College, Mumbai, so she looks at the silhouettes. The two of us met while working at *Elle* India and started the label in 2014. We both have very different aesthetics but that just means we can provide for a broader audience base," says Verma.

LEARNING CURVE: "Working with craftsmen is tough. Often they're not educated or they don't know how a business works. And finding the right printer was a struggle. It's like trying to find a partner. When it works out, it's a relief," says Laungani.

Available at www.thejodilife.com ▶

All clothes, **Jodi**. Shoes (left), **Steve Madden**.
Shoes (right), **Dune**.

RARA AVIS,
SONAL VERMA, 32



BAZAAR LOVES: Having won the Most Innovative Designer award at NIFT in 2008, Verma designs for today's peripatetic cool kids. From her practical, slouchy parkas and paper-bag waisted skirts to the exquisitely handcrafted satchels that won't spill out during security checks, everything is thoughtfully designed and undeniably luxurious.

SPRING 2017: "Travelling broadens my horizon. My Spring 2017 collection was inspired by a trip to Morocco I made last year, and a visit to Yves Saint Laurent's gardens, the Jardin Majorelle. Cactus, flowers, and the evil eye have been used as motifs, which have been translated as embroidery, cutwork, and even on the accessories. I've also used a range of techniques. There's chifley cutwork, embroidery, and tassels along with velvet and leather. It's all very textured."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "Leather is my real passion. I love everything about it: The smell, and what it is capable of doing. I studied leather design at NIFT, Delhi. Soon after graduation, I worked with Rohit Gandhi and Rahul Khanna and Ritu Kumar, in their leather goods divisions. I went on to complete my masters at the Istituto Europeo di Design, Madrid, where I gained an insight into the finer nuances of leather. After I returned, I worked at Poem bags and did some trend forecasting for the Cotton Council International and Asian Paints. In 2012, I finally launched my own label."

INSPIRATIONS: "Maison Martin Margiela is a big influence on my design aesthetic. Lanvin, Givenchy, and Loewe are some of the brands that I admire because I like how they do very clean, contemporary silhouettes but it's the little details that make them special. So, you'll see French designers using Indian embroideries so seamlessly that it won't occur to you that they have been done here. It's all very subtle."

Available at www.perniaspopupshop.com; Ogaan (Delhi); Aza (Mumbai); Ensemble (nationwide) >

“TRAVELLING BROADENS MY HORIZON. MY SPRING 2017 COLLECTION WAS INSPIRED BY A TRIP TO MOROCCO, AND A VISIT TO YVES SAINT LAURENT'S GARDENS. CACTUS, FLOWERS, AND THE EVIL EYE HAVE BEEN USED AS MOTIFS.”





RUNAWAY BICYCLE, PREETI VERMA, 34

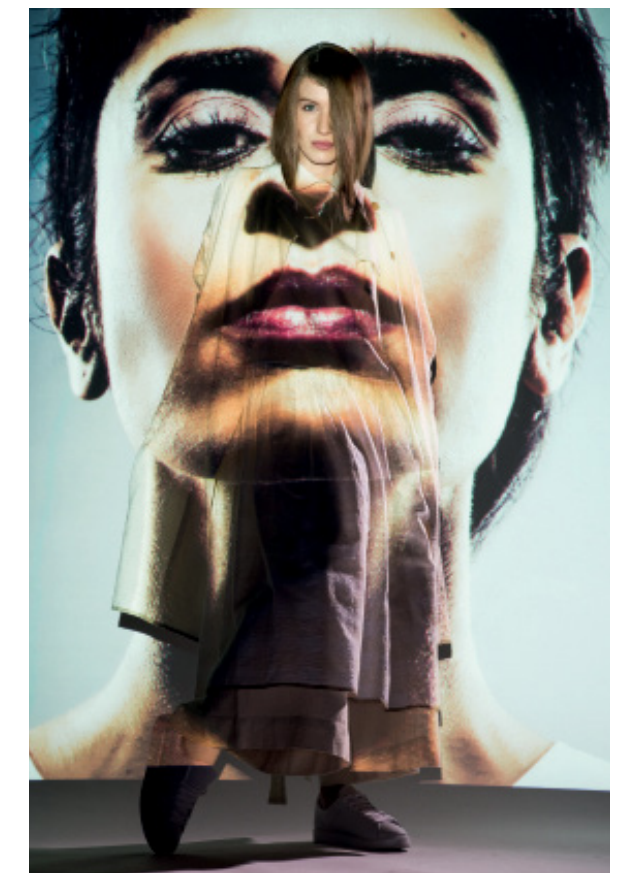
BAZAARLOVES: As a maximal minimalist, Verma's languid, breezy silhouettes in handloom cotton, mangalgiri, and handwoven khadi are soft on the skin and easy on the eye. Comfortable, clean, and chic, her pinafore dresses, box-fit tops, and pyjamas are perfect for Indian summers. A special nod to the quirky names she gives her garments—some of our favourites are 'Tuck A Jasmine in Your Hair', 'Cartwheel in Green', and 'Run to The Hills'.

SPRING 2017: I've just done a collection inspired by school uniforms. It's called '1999'. There's a shirt with a print on it that looks like the stain you get from having a leaky pen in your pocket—it's called 'I'm Sorry Mamma'. Another dress has been marked down the back—I was thinking about how the naughty kids used to ruin each other's clothes. It's called 'I Hate That Boy'. We wanted to take a simple concept and update it for today's clients by expanding on it in multiple ways."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "After I completed my masters in advertising from Kurukshetra University, I worked in many agencies—JWT Singapore, Grey, Rediff, and most recently DDB Mudra for five years. I started Runaway Bicycle in 2013, but it was only last year that I finally quit advertising to focus on the label. I would still say that I'm more of an art director than a fashion designer. Growing up, I wanted to be an artist. I used to paint, but then I realised how challenging it is to enter the art circuit. To be honest, when I first started designing, fashion seemed like an easier choice."

BRAND PHILOSOPHY: "I think of Runaway Bicycle more as a project than a fashion label. Tomorrow, I might want to do furniture or art installations. Who knows? Our core strength remains textiles and with that we can do anything—curtains, furnishings—you name it. In the next couple of years, our brand will definitely expand and it won't just be about clothes."

Available at www.runawaybicycle.in



“ I THINK OF RUNAWAY BICYCLE MORE AS A PROJECT THAN A FASHION LABEL. OUR CORE STRENGTH REMAINS TEXTILES. IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS, OUR BRAND WILL DEFINITELY EXPAND AND IT WON'T JUST BE CLOTHES.”

All clothes, **Runaway Bicycle**.
Shoes (this page), **Tod's**. Shoes
(opposite page), **Zara**.



**URVASHI
JONEJA, 31**

BAZAAR LOVES: At NIFT, Delhi, Joneja was awarded Best Practical Graduate Collection in 2005. Her silhouettes—easy-patterned suits, crushed denim dresses, palazzos, and printed jackets—are imminently wearable. From psychedelic florals to stark all-white appliqué, Joneja doesn't limit her imagination—she has options for everyone who likes a little whim and wit in their wardrobe.

SPRING 2017: “I referenced the works of artist Tara Donovan. She makes life-sized installations using metal and plastic. There's a lot of repetition of the same shape in various ways. I've tried to do the same thing but by looking at the lines of the slinky. I wanted to explore this idea of elasticity and tenacity of things. I've translated it as prints, embroidery, and tone-on-tone texturing.”

DESIGN JOURNEY: “After NIFT, I worked with Rajesh Pratap Singh. He is such a perfectionist. Seeing his attention to detail and how involved he is in every aspect of the label, I learnt so much. I also worked with a textile designer called Amy Butler, and in the textile division of Ralph Lauren, in the US.”

BEST ADVICE: “Sabina Chopra, style maven and entrepreneur, suggested that I try experimenting with fabrics like Chanderi silk for retail instead of just georgette and crepe. Sabina respects the aesthetics of each designer, and she doesn't want to change anything. Instead, she pushes you to do the thing you already know but don't necessarily acknowledge because you are so caught up in your work.”

*Available at Fuel, Atosa (Mumbai); Aza, Ole Couture (Delhi); Anabita (Hyderabad);
www.perniaspopupshop.com*

All clothes, **Urvashi Joneja**.
Shoes, **Dune**.

All clothes, **Three**.



THREE, PALLAVI DHYANI, 26

BAZAAR LOVES: Having won the Best Practical Collection at Pearl Academy of Fashion, Jaipur, Dhyani's pared-down, one size fits all silhouettes (easy jumpsuits, fluid jackets, and boxy dresses in cotton) and soothing colour palette score high on comfort. Her keen eye for detail ensures that each of her pieces is perfectly finished.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: “My dad was in the army and so I've always wanted to do something that was inspired by the military. You can see my inspirations in the colour palette—there's olive, burnt orange, deep purple, and red—and very masculine, structured shapes. I enjoy all aspects of designing—pattern making, styling, and bringing it all together. Even if I'm making separates, I will always have a complete look in mind. There are usually at least three different layers to any look. That's how I dress as well—even on the hottest summer days, you'll always spot me in layers.”

DESIGN JOURNEY: “I studied science in school and didn't really plan on being a designer. But I applied to Pearl Academy, Jaipur, and once I got in things happened organically. After graduation, I worked with Aneeth Arora of péro for two years, and started my label in 2014. Working with Aneeth helped build my confidence as a designer. Even now, she's a big support.”

THE NAMESAKE: “I originally wanted to name the label Mute but everyone told me that sounded too negative. Three is also generally considered an unlucky number, particularly if you're starting something new. But I'm not superstitious and I believe a lot in Shiva and the power of the third eye, so I stuck to the name.”

Available at Melange, Fantastique (Mumbai); Second Floor Studio, Ogaan (Delhi) ▶

CHIRAG NAINANI, 26



BAZAARLOVES: Nainani's designs offer a grown-up way of wearing print and pattern. In muted tones with abstract forms, his indigenously dyed textiles are fashioned into elegant maxi dresses, sleek, tailored trench coats, billowing capes, and peplum-waisted blazers.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "I specialise in printing and dyeing techniques. Compared to digital printing, dyeing is done by hand, which makes it more sustainable. My workshops are in Sanganer and Bagru near Jaipur, which are known for their indigo dyeing communities. By working with the craft and attempting to contemporise it, I'm also trying to build a sustainable business by creating employment at the grassroots level."

DESIGN INNOVATION: "I recently mastered a specialised technique of indigo-dyeing that works with traditional *dabu*, which is mud-resist printing. [This elaborate method uses wet mud that is sieved until it becomes a fine paste, and is later mixed with calcium hydroxide (*dhuna*), naturally pounded wheat chaff (*beedan*), and gum (*gound*) to make the mud resist]. I was able to do it in such a way that cotton then looks like denim from afar. This is easier to wear in our climate."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "I studied fashion design at Pearl Academy, Jaipur, and graduated in 2012. After that I worked with a designer called Harita Kapur in Ahmedabad, and briefly interned for Samant Chauhan, United Colors of Benetton, and the non-profit Shrujan. In 2015, I finally launched my own label and debuted as a Gen Next designer at Lakmé Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2016."

Available at Aza, Atosa, Creo (Mumbai); Ogaan (Delhi); Elan (Ahmedabad); Amethyst (Chennai); Dhona (Jaipur) ▶

“BY WORKING WITH THE CRAFT AND ATTEMPTING TO CONTEMPORISE IT, I AM ALSO TRYING TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS BY CREATING EMPLOYMENT AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL.”



All clothes, **Chirag Nainani**.
Shoes, **Dune**.

ANTAR-AGNI
UJJAWAL DUBEY, 29

BAZAAR LOVES: Dubey has been widely touted as the new face of menswear in India. His asymmetric kurtas, drop-crotch dhoti pants, and draped jackets in a neutral palette fuse fine tailoring with a grungy, street-style vibe. Featuring great finesse, Dubey's aesthetic is evolved yet retains an edge that keeps his designs current, functional, and fluid. You can't miss the clever hint of the offbeat either. It comes as no surprise then that he has been nominated to showcase his work at the regional round of the International Woolmark Prize this July.

SPRING 2017: "Each collection depends on my mood, and this time I was approaching everything in a more cheerful, less reserved way. I was a bit happier with myself. My Spring 2017 collection is called 'Free and Nothing'. I also played with light colours like sand and cream."

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "Antar-Agni is about a yogic way of life. It's about the search for individuality, and everything we create is supposed to enhance your personality. I design to bring meaning to life, and until I started my label in 2014 I never thought you could do that with clothes."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "I wanted to work in design but not necessarily in fashion. I thought it would be too glamorous. It was only later that I realised that there's just one percent of glamour and the rest is hard work. I studied textile design at NIFT, Kolkata, because I thought it would be more technical. After I graduated in 2010, I worked with Shantanu & Nikhil and even then I tried working in interiors, furniture, and product design. At Shantanu & Nikhil, I got to work on their debut menswear collection and had a lot of fun researching for it. At the same time I saw Aneeth Arora's clothes for péro and realised that I wanted to do something similar—make clothes that were subtle, sophisticated, and with minimal bling. Tom Ford studied architecture and then became a designer—that made me realise I could also make the switch."

Available at Aza, Atosa, Ensemble, Melange (Mumbai); Second Floor Studio, Ogaan (Delhi); and The Verandah (Bengaluru)

All clothes, **Antar-Agni**.
Shoes, stylist's own.



All clothes, **Anomaly**.
Shoes, **Steve Madden**.

ANOMALY, MEDHA KHOSLA, 33

BAZAAR LOVES: Utilitarian and understated, Khosla's designs are examples of smart construction and great finishing. We love the little details—inverted pleats, on-seam pockets, delicate cuffs, and subtle contrast piping on the lapels. She sticks to a colour palette of white, indigo, and grey, although the occasional marsala makes an appearance. Anomaly's clothes mix masculine practicality (soft parkas, tailored vests, front-pleated trousers) with soft femininity (bow-tied blouses, slinky camisoles, notched lapel collar shirt dresses).

KEY PIECE: "I really like our silk shirts. They look simple but they are actually really functional, practical, and formal at the same time. And I don't think you can ever go wrong with one of our shirt dresses. Wear it as a dress or as a layer on top of something—it's up to you."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "In 2005 I graduated from Pratt Institute, New York, with a degree in fine art and fashion. Soon after, I worked at DKNY and most recently at a Canadian brand called Joe Fresh.

New York style is all about what's comfortable and practical. It's a very understated kind of sexy. At DKNY, it was the same—the designer would take one dress and drape it in a way that it served five different functions. I finally came to India and started Anomaly in 2015."

BRAND PHILOSOPHY: "Our clothes are specifically targeted towards working women in the corporate space. Women who are looking for a slightly higher quality product, who appreciate good design, but don't want any frills and fuss. There are lots of handloom weaves (cotton and linen) and silk. Our shapes are not distinctly trendy so you never have to feel conscious about what you're wearing to work. We believe in slow, organic growth. We have just introduced menswear this season as well as a range of scarves made in collaboration with Women Weave, the charitable trust spearheaded by Sally Holkar in Maheshwar. There is also a small line of home accessories and linens."

Available at Ogaan (Delhi); Amethyst (Chennai); www.shopanomaly.in

HOUSE OF KHANIJO,
GAURAV KHANIJO, 33

BAZAAR LOVES: Actors Hrithik Roshan and Shahid Kapoor are already fans of Khanijo's cool yet sharply-tailored aesthetic. His bandhgalas, biker jackets, shirts, and jumpsuits are made out of ultra-lightweight textiles. Khanijo's quirky hand-embroidered details and textured surfaces make his clothes undeniably unique. It doesn't stop there. His embroidered shoes will sweep you off your feet.

SPRING 2017: "It's a dramatic shift from last year. It's a lot more subdued. I've used pure 100 percent Irish linen and some Italian linen, and it's very utilitarian—there are jumpsuits, bomber jackets—but in a luxurious way."

DESIGN JOURNEY: "I did a short course at NIFT, Delhi, and then got into Pearl Academy of Fashion, Delhi, to study fashion design. I graduated in 2005 and won the Best Collection award. That gave me a lot of confidence and also helped convince my family that I was on the right path. After that, I interned with a Paris-based brand called Bless, and then came back to India to work at an export house called Meridian Apparels. I actually started out making womenswear in 2006. I had my own brand called Devi Brain, which focused on streetwear—jersey hoodies, sweatshirts, trench coats—but there were no buyers for that kind of aesthetic back then. Eventually, I tried my hand at creating menswear in 2010, mostly because I couldn't find clothes for myself, but also because I realised there was so much untapped potential."

INSPIRATIONS: "When I was in college, I loved the work of Rajesh Pratap Singh, Ravi Bajaj, and Narendra Kumar, under whom I interned for a bit. From amongst the younger designers, I enjoy the work of Ujjawal Dubey, Divyam Mehta, and Abhishek Patni."

Available at Khanijo (Delhi); Ensemble, Aza (Mumbai); www.carmaonlineshop.com ■

Models: Ciucă Simona Alina at Posh Talents, Anastasiia Namisniak at Idol Model Management, and Victor Stadnichenko at Serb Scouting and Management. Hair: Arman at Blliis by Ravissant, New Delhi, and Justine Rae Mellocrasto. Makeup: Chandni Gupta at Blliis by Ravissant, New Delhi, Iram Kazmi, and Team Inglot, Mumbai. Fashion stylists: Avneet Gill and Parvati Mangal.