

Fashion

Rahul Singh: For The Love Of Shibori



Rahul Singh, whose creations turned heads at Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI, is ardent about designing from the roots of Indian culture and crafts, choosing colours picked from nature.

By Nichola Marie



Your latest edit Modern Boheme was launched in November at Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI. It made waves with its unconventional and adventurous offerings. Tell us more about it.

Modern Boheme — as the name suggests — sparks a very chic, ahead of its time, bohemian aesthetic to men's wear. I would call its approach an avant-garde collection because of its bold strokes of Shibori tie and dye art, which is also my signature creation. The craft of Shibori has been modernised with trendy crisp cuts and patterns in shades of black, grey and white. It's an update to the men's wear wardrobe for an unconventional modern holiday look with a classic touch of bling highlights on summery linens and cotton linen blends.

You also design for women. How different is your approach when designing for both genders?

The base of the craft, art direction and the signature look, is the same - the difference is in the styling, the appropriate fabric and the aesthetics that appeal to the changing times of a modern man and woman.



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How did your interest in fashion spark? Who were some of your influences, then and now?

My interest in fashion developed over the years watching my mother and sisters dressing up, especially the Indian handicraft and Madhubani art-inspired ensembles like saris and fabrics that I explored as a child at home. It fascinated me how art lives not just as a print or impression or embroideries on fabrics, but also in the everyday lifestyle of how women dress up in each community. It is so diverse and unique!

An NIFT Delhi alumna, with post graduation in Fashion & Textiles, how did your training help in developing your craft?

NIFT gives you a base of versatility in your craft and exclusivity, but developing your choice of craft is definitely a process of self-exploration and experimenting with your sense of aesthetics practically in the craft one would want to pursue.

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Before your solo venture, you had the opportunity to work with industry pioneer Rohit Bal in Delhi and Bollywood favourite Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla in Mumbai. What valuable learning did you imbibe from these renowned names in fashion?

Just two phrases say it all - Discipline in their craft and their sense of exclusivity.

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What are some of the challenges you encountered in your journey so far and how do you face them?

I feel the only challenge every artist feels at the time of developing a collection is the market's demand meeting the product that one creates.

How would you describe your design philosophy? What does the label Rahul Singh inherently showcase?

Our design sensibility as a brand is to amalgamate traditional techniques of dyeing, embroideries and prints with global aesthetics of silhouettes and styling, keeping the look modern with changing times with a hint of traditional exclusivity. We showcase and create an extravagant celebratory look, whether festive or holiday, keeping the base traditionally and culturally rooted.

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You have also designed wardrobes for film personalities like Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Dimple Kapadia, as well as, styled for Manoj Bajpayee and Zayed Khan. Can you share some insights into their personal preferences and how you gave them a different edge through your designs?

Elegance was the common preference in their look and choice of wardrobe. The unique touch I would give to their look would be mostly adapting as per their character in their films and costumes appropriate for their look on screen.

What are some of the achievements you take pride in and what are your goals for the future?

I would say there is more to create, learn and explore in this world with every passing day for me.

Also, the most important part of my journey is the weavers and craftsmen that helped me create the base of my craft. I take pride primarily in uplifting the crafts by giving employment and recognition to my artisans.