

Jaipur Rugs' collaboration with Matteo Cibic goes to Milan

APRIL 12, 2019 16:51 IST



With rugs featuring moustachioed men and sundials, Italian designer Matteo Cibic takes local traditions for an international spin

Matteo Cibic is extremely busy at the ongoing Salone del Mobile in Milan, moving between 12 exhibitions featuring over 75 products designed by him. From furniture "made from 100% garbage", to his most recent collab with Jaipur Rugs, the designer has his hands full. But this is just the sort of environment the "hyperactive" Italian revels in. "This year, I've got more than 500 invitations to openings and exhibitions in town," he says over a morning call, the sounds of breakfast often obscuring his accented voice. "I'm looking forward to shows at the city centre, where the galleries, young designers and research-based exhibits are."

But for the moment, he is concentrating on Jaipur Wunderkammer, an installation, much like a cabinet of curiosities, that has been put together at Palazzo Litta to showcase his line with Jaipur Rugs. "I met [director] Yogesh Chaudhary in Milan last year and he invited me to visit. I discovered a city that is fabulous," he says, recalling how Jaipur's "Rubenistic plan, where even the smallest venue is well equated, with tiny arches", impressed him. What developed was a collection of 24 handmade rugs, inspired by the Pink City's architecture, moustachioed men, animals and colours.



Stories on carpets

This is not Matteo's first time working with rugs. Among others, he has designed collections for Kolkata-based luxury interiors brand Scarlet Splendour (playing with mindrops and the textures of Carrara marble), and more recently, a collection for Italian brand Moret, where he used geometric patterns and metal insets to re-create the way he remembers light bouncing off Venice's canals on to the ceilings of its many palaces. However, with

Jaipur Wunderkammer, he says, the inspirations are more tangible. "The idea is to show the world how India is a cool place to be. Today, wherever you go, you will find the same stores, the same products. But here you can discover strong cultures and traditions that aren't diluted by globalisation."

The rugs, in a range of pinks, magentas and peaches, are a mix of classic (reminiscent of 17th century miniature paintings) and organic forms. While architecture and monuments, especially the sundials at Jantar Mantar, inspired him – "I've never seen their like, they became a graphic element in the carpets" – he was also fascinated by the animals he saw everywhere, from the black pigs and monkeys that came down from the hills, to peacocks in flight. "I worked with a local painter, and it was a kind of game between us, to design this view of contemporary India but also reflecting its strong heritage."

Beastly tales

- Matteo's newest collection with Scarlet Splendour, Animalia, has also debuted at the 58th edition of the Milan Design Fair. An extension of his Paradiso Dream series, it features eight-foot wood and brass cabinets featuring "animals that live in my imagination". In direct contrast to the Nordic minimalism that has taken over the world in the last few years, the opulent designs of this line, which merges eastern and western influences, promise to bring a sense of wonder.

Fun and function

At 35, Matteo has come a long way from his teenage years, when he was obsessed with becoming the pope. A summer internship with his uncle Aldo Cibic, co-founder of the Memphis design movement, led him to study design. Today, his philosophy, driven by playful zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms – think cabinets with bunny ears and vessels with noses – is to bring emotion back into interiors. "The average lifespan of a toy in the West is 11 hours, of a garment, 3.5 hours," says the trans-media designer, who visits museums and industry trade shows to find new materials and production technologies. "We live in an instant world, where we don't make emotional connections. I want to create objects that you can connect with."

Salone del Mobile ends tomorrow. Priced from ₹25,200 to ₹1,57,500, pre-book the Jaipur Wunderkammer rugs on jaipurrugs.com.