

Gauri Khan on mastering the art of interior design



With a clientele that includes but is not limited to the top celebrities from the film industry, ace interior designer Gauri Khan has carved a niche for herself in luxury interior designs sector. After making waves at the domestic market, the designer is busy expanding her customer base to the international market and has recently cracked a deal with the international label Ralph Lauren.

Her collection Tattvam, done in collaboration with Jaipur Rugs, is all about “women empowerment”, “creativity” and “colours”, as Gauri puts it during the launch.

She continued, “I was fascinated to note that these rugs were mostly created by women weavers. It is these women weavers who have managed to keep the tradition and this dying art still alive. To do a collection “made in India” which I have designed and which is woven by these women is a real honour for me... I would like to do more to bring traditional Indian crafts to the fore internationally.”

Unveiled at Maison&Objet, Paris, earlier this year, the collection was created to reflect the multitude of traditions, shapes, and colours found throughout rural India.

Guardian 20 recently caught up with Gauri to talk about her collection. “I launched Tattvam as a line of rugs that bridges the gap between rustic charm and urban luxury,” she said. “Jaipur Rugs has a lot of experience and is so established in rural areas across India, that it made perfect sense to come up with this line with them. Tattvam is my first rug line but it’s always something I’ve wanted to do because it really is such a large canvas to work on.”

When we quizzed her about the themes she has explored in this line, Gauri told us that the collection takes inspiration from all the “simple objects” found in villages—objects like “the intricate stone or metal design that can be seen on open-air windows or Jharlis to the precisely sculpted dung found on exterior walls in rural Gujarat”.

She added, “There is a variety of rugs that take a single object found in the villages and then portrays it through vibrant hues of wool and bamboo silk... The colours I chose are more modern, yet subtle enough to highlight the rural inspirations, rather than overpower them.”

How would she describe her designs in the collection?

She said, “The designs in this collection fuse contemporary trends found in modern rugs these days with the inspiration themes found in the villages. The designs are fairly abstract but once you learn about the inspirations, I believe the design truly

clear. The collection definitely blurs the barriers between urban luxury and the charming simplicity of village life.”

Gauri Khan Designs, her flagship store, opened in August in 2017. So what led her to take the plunge and make interior designing her profession? She answered, “After I redesigned Mannat, Sussanne [Khan] visited and loved it. She had just begun her own design work and invited me to collaborate with her on some projects. I enjoyed doing that, and from there began my formal journey as a designer.”

Lighting is the common theme in all of Gauri’s projects. While the interior designer is quite flexible with designs and her topmost priority being her clients’ vision, she admitted that she loves to “play around with lighting”. She went on, “I wouldn’t say my style has a distinct flavour in terms of design language, colours, or materials. My aesthetic is flexible because, at the end of the day, I am brought on by clients to bring their visions to reality... I find it [lighting] key in creating ambience, which is the main goal of any interior designer.”

What about the trends that have currently taken over the interior design industry?

She informed us, “The trends that currently dominate the interior design industry, mostly have to do with the subtle details and pushing the envelope of those subtleties. Muted tones with pops of colours, natural materials and central pieces that pull the theme of the interiors together are all the rage these days.”

Gauri also reflected on the mixture of cultural design motifs that have picked up globally and India’s contribution to the trend. She said, “With the amount of distinct styles and crafts found throughout India, it’s not uncommon to see them play an integral part in Western design themes.”

About the factors she considers before taking up any assignment, Gauri told us, “Clients bring me on because I try to bring a unique aesthetic that merges genres and isn’t too defined. These people have a certain vision and it’s my job to bring it to reality through

She added, “A lot of the design process is done through meeting with the client multiple times and ensuring that there’s lots of inspiration around for ideation. I try to bring several different styles of what I’ve done in the past as well as pieces I think they might enjoy, and we go from there. Trendy is subjective, I think if a client finds his or her space to be amazing, then it’s on trend for them, and that’s what’s most important. However, the people I often work with are up to date with what’s going on in the design world.”