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Shantnu & Nikhil's New Couture Store Is An Homage To Vintage India

One of the most notable duos in the Indian fashion industry, Shantanu & Nikhil, has been offering a new perspective on bridal couture and groom's wear over the past two decades. While they continue to challenge archaic notions of bridal wear, the pair looks forward to presenting a more contemporary and progressive approach with each new design that helps develop a narrative apropos of their latest store at Mumbai's historic Kala Ghoda area.

Following the launch of this new space, the designers opened up about the process of bringing the store together and their vision going forward.

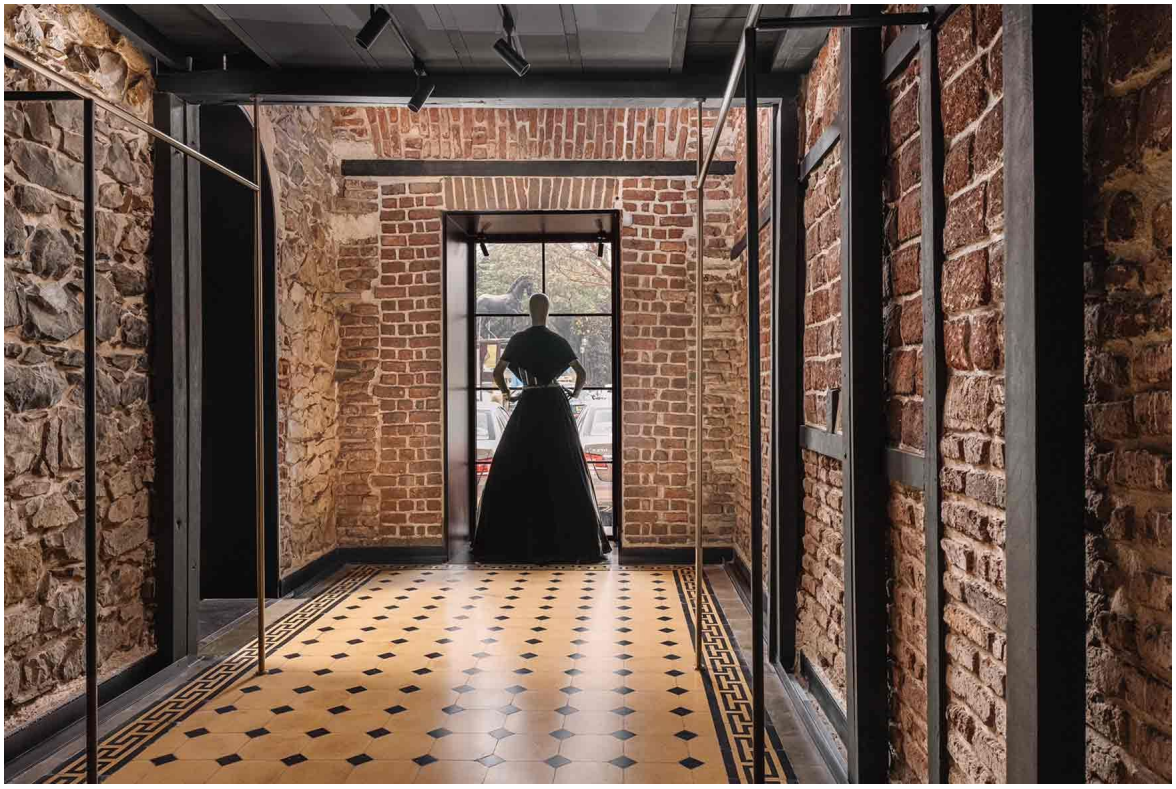
GRAZIA: After completing almost 22 years in the industry, how would you describe your journey so far?

SHANTNU & NIKHIL: Over the last few years, we have restlessly toiled around the idea of a new world, a more progressive and inclusive world without biases and boundaries. In this past decade on our journey, we have paved the way to reach a newer and bigger audience, making us more accessible and thereby fulfilling our dream to see our brand on every global Indian.

2020 was a year of ardent emotions for us: While the world recoiled to a new definition of normal, we celebrated 20 years of Maison Shantnu & Nikhil with a new chapter in our journey - S&N by Shantnu and Nikhil, a celebratory narrative where Indian heritage is enlivened by millennial spunk. The brand redefines Indian celebration wear with youthful sensibilities and a contemporary undercurrent.

G: How do you keep reinventing yourselves and your designs while keeping up with the times?

S&N: The deep-seated emotion of being ‘anti-trend’ within our brand gives us a sense of elasticity to reinvent continuously. Being trend-centric is market-driven, but being anti-trend is about driving the market & that’s our philosophy. We believe that disruption & innovation are the only two pillars that we as a brand stand on from creating an unconventional space for couture, revolutionizing the male ceremonial wardrobe and now carving out a new repertoire- S&N by Shantnu & Nikhil; we continue to put constant effort to stay relevant and showcase brand resiliency.



G: What are you looking forward to the most with the opening of your brand new store?

S&N: We are looking forward to our clients experiencing the regalia our store embodies, situated in such an iconic landmark. We made this store with so much thought, emotions and feelings of pride - we want our clients to experience that when they enter the store.

G: Could you shed some light on the store concept? What were you inspired by while bringing the space together, and what story are you hoping to tell?

S&N: The lanes, architecture, and historical stature in Kala Ghoda – all these elements tell a tale of Indian nostalgia. Shantnu & Nikhil, as a brand, has always had an India-proud sentiment in its ethos and design virtues. The quaint corners of Kala Ghoda narrate a story which we subconsciously have always been creating through our designs. We wanted the store to follow the exact concept. Once our clients enter the store, they'll feel the same energy one does whilst soaking in the glory of Kala Ghoda. Such locations are a homage to distinctiveness in design, encapsulating the splendour and decadence of vintage India and should be honoured in every way possible.

G: What, according to you, is the future of couture and bridal couture in India?

S&N: Ceremonial couture is and always will be a coveted space, especially in a country like India, where people love to celebrate. However, Ceremonial wear isn't just about sporting the newest trend. Consumers have become much more aware of what they want and how they want it. Comfort in couture had been a grey area for several years, especially in womenswear. However, now with the millennials, we've seen a shift. They prioritise their comfort without wanting to settle down on the design front. This is the reason we've seen a spike in demand for saree gowns, draped kurtas, pre-stitched sarees etc. These silhouettes give the wearer a sense of ease without them having to compromise on the aesthetic they like.