

## How Contemporary Designers Are Gaining Global Ground

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India's fashion narrative is undergoing a compelling transformation as contemporary designers blend traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics to win global acclaim. At the forefront of this shift is **Kartik Research**, the menswear label founded in 2021 by Kartik Kumra. Drawing from centuries-old Indian handicraft traditions—like **kantha**, **bandhani**, and **chikankari**—Kumra reinterprets them into sleek, wearable, and globally relevant designs. Since its pandemic-era debut, Kartik has rapidly ascended, becoming the **first Indian label showcased at Paris Men's Fashion Week** in 2025, and now dresses celebrities like Kendrick Lamar and Stephen Curry. His brand is featured in over 70 international stores.

### Riding the Wave of Craft Revival

But Kumra isn't alone. He is part of a larger wave of Indian designers—**11.11 (Eleven Eleven)**, **Péro**, **Bodice**, and **Verandah**—who are revitalizing India's artisanal legacy. These brands are harnessing heritage techniques like hand-finishing and upcycling to align with growing global concerns around sustainability, while delivering fresh, contemporary looks.

### Sustainable Fashion with Artisanal Heart

The global fashion industry is craving sustainability. Indian designers are uniquely positioned to offer this through their artisanal methods, which prioritize slow, handcrafted processes—each garment tells the story of the craft. From revitalizing underappreciated craft clusters to integrating eco-conscious practices, these designers strike a balance between artistry and responsible production.

A robust internal market and growing diasporic pride are fueling these brands' global push. As Indians worldwide seek fashion that reflects cultural identity and craftsmanship, these designers are meeting the demand with pieces that feel both contemporary and rooted. Their designs resonate with global consumers increasingly drawn to authenticity and narrative-driven fashion.

### Navigating Hurdles: Logistics and Tariffs

Yet global expansion isn't without challenges. High tariffs, opaque distribution networks, and export logistics create substantial friction. Overcoming this requires strategic infrastructure and financial backing. Retail-centric business models and well-placed international partnerships, however, are helping Indian brands cross these thresholds.

### Setting Cultural Trends: A Broader Narrative

This movement signifies more than fashion—it reflects India's growing cultural influence on the global stage. Kartik Research and its peers are elevating Indian craftsmanship into modern wardrobes worldwide, creating a new "Made in

India” narrative that’s contemporary, conscious, and cosmopolitan.

### Spotlight: Kartik Rocking Pop Culture

In a striking show of crossover appeal, **BTS’ V (Kim Taehyung)** was seen wearing **Kartik Research**—a fusion of Indian heritage craft on the global pop culture radar. This moment not only underscores Indian fashion’s cultural relevance but also showcases its potential to resonate across genres and borders.

Trend	Insight
<b>Craft-Modern Fusion</b>	Brands like Kartik Research revive Indian techniques for modern global audiences.
<b>Sustainability Focus</b>	Handcrafting and upcycling meet global eco-conscious demand.
<b>Consumer Base Expansion</b>	Domestic and diaspora pride fuel international interest.
<b>Market Barriers</b>	Tariffs and logistics slow expansion; smart models are circumventing obstacles.
<b>Cultural Momentum</b>	Indian artistry as global narrative—not just aesthetics.
<b>Pop Influence</b>	BTS’ V wears Kartik—a cultural endorsement boosting visibility.

### A New Fashion Horizon

India’s design trajectory is reshaping global fashion—driven by creators who respect tradition but look forward. Brands rooted in heritage and resilient craftsmanship are stepping onto runways, red carpets, and boutique shelves globally. From Paris to K-pop fandoms, the message is clear: Indian fashion is no longer following; it’s leading.

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