

What It Means to Wear a Story: Ashdeen Lilaowala

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In a world where fashion often rushes towards the latest trends, Ashdeen Lilaowala's work stands as a testament to the enduring power of tradition. His creations are not mere garments but narratives woven with history, culture, and personal memory. Through his label, Ashdeen, he reimagines the ancient Parsi Gara embroidery, transforming it into contemporary pieces that resonate with both heritage and modernity.

Reviving a Legacy: The Parsi Gara Embroidery

At the heart of Lilaowala's designs lies the Parsi Gara, a centuries-old embroidery technique that intertwines Persian, Chinese, and Indian influences. This intricate art form was traditionally passed down through generations, often serving as a symbol of status. However, as time progressed, the art form faced the threat of fading into obscurity.

Recognizing the importance of preserving this heritage, Lilaowala embarked on a journey to revive and modernize the Parsi Gara. His approach is rooted in deep respect for tradition, yet he is unafraid to innovate. Therefore philosophy guides his work, ensuring that each piece honors its origins while embracing contemporary sensibilities.

'Inheritance': A Collection of Stories

Lilaowala's latest collection, 'Inheritance,' exemplifies his commitment to blending tradition with modernity. The collection features a rich palette of gemstone-inspired colors—tourmaline, rose quartz, ruby, garnet, amethyst, onyx, and pearls—each chosen for their symbolic significance within the Parsi community. These colors are not merely aesthetic choices but carry deep cultural meanings, reflecting the reverence for intergenerational heirlooms.

The designs in 'Inheritance' are diverse, ranging from show-stopping sarees and lehengas to versatile separates like skirts, kurta sets, waistcoats, and pussy-bow blouses. This versatility allows the wearer to incorporate elements of tradition into everyday life, making heritage accessible and relevant in contemporary settings. As Lilaowala explains, "It's about making these traditions wearable."

The Craftsmanship Behind the Collection

Creating 'Inheritance' was a meticulous process that spanned several months. From concept to final stitch, the collection took about four to five months to develop. Thus the embroidery itself, a labor-intensive process, can take six to eight weeks for a single saree. Overall the piece is crafted with precision and care, reflecting Lilaowala's dedication to quality

and authenticity.

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