

Vaishnavi Singh Dabi on Upcycling Saris and Making Indian Weaves Global

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For **Vaishnavi Singh Dabi**, heritage textiles aren't relics of the past—they're *living legacies* meant to be revived, respected, and reimagined for the woman of today and tomorrow. As the **co-founder and creative director of Knari Global—House of Brands (Sanskriti Silks)**, her collections are instantly recognizable to Chennaites, where she frequently exhibits at Collage. Each ensemble celebrates India's textile richness, merging craftsmanship with a distinctly contemporary flair.

Reimagining the Sari: When Kanjeevaram Becomes a Pant Suit

"I grew up surrounded by textiles—especially silks," Vaishnavi recalls. "Saris, with their complex motifs and vivid colours, aren't just fabrics; they're living pieces of art, history, and legacy."

Her passion deepened after she began collaborating directly with weavers. "Their humility and dedication made it clear that this is the world I want to devote myself to."

The turning point came when she **transformed a heritage Kanjeevaram sari**—from Knari's *Raja Ravi Varma-inspired* collection—into a striking three-piece pant suit. "Seeing that handwoven textile take on such a sharp, contemporary silhouette was spectacular. It proved that heritage weaves aren't merely traditional—they can evolve into timeless, modern heirlooms," she says.

The Challenge and Charm of Upcycling

Working with upcycled or vintage materials brings both joy and responsibility. "There are really just two main challenges," Vaishnavi explains. "First, creating **zero-waste patterns**, and second, ensuring the garment's lining and finish allow for longevity and care."

She believes the **fabric leads the design process**, dictating the silhouette and emotion of each piece. "The textile is always the hero. My role is to glorify its motifs, borders, and craftsmanship—never to overshadow them."

Tradition Meets Functionality

While motifs are sacred and remain untouched, Vaishnavi rethinks garment **structures** for the modern woman—functional yet deeply rooted in tradition. "Today's woman wants both—the grace of heritage and the ease of

movement,” she says.

Global Appeal of Indian Weaves

From **Kanjeevaram** to **Banarasi** and **Jamdani**, Indian weaves are enjoying their global moment. “Designers like Amit Aggarwal and many others are dressing international icons in sari-converted gowns,” she notes. “Each time these weaves appear on a global platform, they spotlight India’s extraordinary craftsmanship.”

Sustainability with Soul

Can upcycling and heritage revival coexist? “Absolutely,” says Vaishnavi. “Unless the sari is over a century old, when it becomes too delicate to wear. In such cases, I preserve them through art—framing them as textile legacies.”

For her, **transparency and education** are key. “Clients must understand what they’re investing in—the weave, the zari, the technique. That’s the real essence of conscious luxury.”

Through her thoughtful, soulful approach, **Vaishnavi Singh Dabi is ensuring that India’s textile heritage not only endures but evolves—gracefully, sustainably, and globally.**

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