

Somaiya Kala Vidya Brings the Artisans of Kutch to the Lakm? Fashion Week x FDCI Runway

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Fashion weeks, with their back-to-back showcases and high-octane energy, often blur into a parade of trends and theatrics. Yet, every so often, a show cuts through the noise to offer something truly moving. On **Day Three of Lakm?**Fashion Week x FDCI in Mumbai, that moment arrived courtesy of Somaiya Kala Vidya (SKV) — a skilling institute from Kutch that empowers craftspeople to become independent designer-entrepreneurs.

What unfolded on the runway was not just fashion—it was a dialogue between heritage and innovation. **Ajrakh, Mashru, Bandhani, and Batik**, the four crafts that define Kutch's textile identity, took centre stage in a showcase that was equal parts poetry and performance.

? Crafts in Motion: Tradition Meets Transformation

The runway was divided into chapters, each celebrating a specific craft story. **Ajrakh**, with its laborious resist-dyeing and block-printing technique, appeared in vivid reds, indigos, and earthen tones—its geometry and botanical motifs narrating centuries of skill and patience. The show intertwined these visuals with **live folk music and spoken-word poetry**, transforming the runway into a living museum of Indian artistry.

While crafts in India are often framed through romanticised visuals of weavers at looms and embroiderers at work, this show shifted the lens—placing artisans not behind the scenes but in the spotlight, as designer-entrepreneurs.

? Five Artisans, Five Stories of Craft and Courage

Representing the new generation of craft-driven labels nurtured by **Somaiya Kala Vidya** and its social enterprise **Design Craft**, five artisan-designers presented deeply personal interpretations of traditional crafts:

• **Shakil Khatri**, a veteran from Mundra, showcased his label *Neel Batik*, blending layered dyeing and block motifs with Kutch's signature mirrorwork on saris, kaftans, and blouses.

- Mubbasirah Khatri, one of the few female Ajrakh artisans, presented Elysian—a painterly, almost abstract take
 on Ajrakh that challenged convention and technique alike.
- **Zaid Khatri**, with *Ajrakh Gharana*, explored co-ord sets and richly hued suits so textural they bordered on wearable art. His own Ajrakh suit worn during his finale bow became a viral highlight of the evening.
- Amruta Vankar, through her label Alaicha, celebrated Mashru—a silk-cotton weave historically rooted in Kutch—with gradient-striped saris that spoke of quiet luxury.
- **Muskan Khatri**, the creative force behind *Musk*, brought **Bandhani** into a new era with neon accents and astral motifs that connected heritage to a futuristic aesthetic.

? A Redefinition of the 'Artisan' Narrative

The showcase also questioned how craft is perceived and marketed today. In an era where "sustainability" and "artisanmade" have become industry buzzwords, **Somaiya Kala Vidya's presence served as a reminder** that empowerment begins not with branding but with recognition, education, and agency.

As the artisans took their final bow, they weren't just representing centuries-old crafts—they were embodying the evolution of Indian fashion itself: *from craft as heritage, to craft as contemporary design.*

? A Moment of Cultural Resonance

In a week dominated by couture, celebrity showstoppers, and digital buzz, **Somaiya Kala Vidya's show** stood out as a moment of stillness and strength. It reaffirmed that the true luxury of Indian fashion lies not in embellishment or excess, but in the *hands that make, the minds that create, and the stories that endure*.

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