

Raw Mango's "Once Upon a River" Weaves a Tale of Unions, Ornamentation, and Modern Craft

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Arriving just in time for the festive season, **Raw Mango's latest collection**, *Once Upon a River*, is a lyrical meditation on **unions—of craft, emotion, and celebration**. Designer **Sanjay Garg** once again showcases his mastery of textile storytelling, creating garments that feel both rooted in tradition and alive with contemporary imagination.

The Art of Layered Ornamentation

At the heart of *Once Upon a River* lies a technical and aesthetic innovation — the seamless integration of **weaving** (bunai) and hand embroidery (kadhai), two crafts that have historically existed independently. "*This season, we wanted the weave itself to become part of the ornamentation,*" says Garg. "*The challenge was ensuring the brocade could support embroidery and vice versa* — *creating textiles that are richly detailed yet incredibly light.*"

Threads of real zari ripple across the surface of silk and brocade, evoking reflections of water and the fluidity of memory. Each piece, Garg explains, is "an invitation for brides, grooms, and their families to express themselves in their own unique form."

Symbolism and Innovation

Much like its title, Once Upon a River flows through layers of symbolism. "Every Raw Mango collection begins with an exploration of technique," says Garg. "For craft to thrive, it must evolve — design intervention must come from within the craft itself."

In this collection, ornamentation takes on a more tactile and narrative role. The garments balance the **weightlessness of brocade** with the **dimension of embroidery**, creating pieces that shimmer with understated grandeur. The results are textiles that feel timeless yet forward-looking — a continuation of Garg's belief that Raw Mango is not about reviving old crafts, but about **imagining the future of textile design**.

A Broader Conversation on Luxury

When asked about how the concept of "luxury" has evolved, Garg's perspective is refreshingly introspective. "Luxury today lies in experience and individuality. It's not about material or price — it's about meaning. A simple dress made of paper, worn once, can be more luxurious than the heaviest embroidery if it connects to who you are."

This belief resonates through *Once Upon a River* — where every motif, every shimmer, feels intentional. It's luxury defined by emotion, context, and craftsmanship, rather than excess.

Beyond the Loom: The Spirit of Raw Mango

Over the years, Sanjay Garg has continued to push the boundaries of traditional Indian textiles through experimentation. From Laheriya's layered turbans to Ikat Mashru outerwear and even Varanasi brocade woven with lycra, each Raw Mango collection redefines what handloom can be.

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