

Shradha Kochhar's *Imli Dana*: Textiles, Memory & Migration

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Shradha Kochhar, the co-founder of *Imli Dana*, is redefining the boundaries of fashion by fusing art, emotion, and activism. Her work transcends the commercial aspects of design, focusing instead on stories—those of labour, migration, and memory. Rooted in empathy and reflection, her label represents a quiet revolution in how we perceive craft and clothing.

Kochhar's perspective stems from her early experiences growing up among Delhi's mill workers. These formative years exposed her to the unseen hands that fuel India's textile industry, shaping her commitment to honouring their labour and lives through her art.

From Craft to Contemplation

Unlike designers who chase speed and scale, Kochhar embraces slowness. Her methods—crocheting, knitting, and weaving—are as much about mindfulness as they are about making. Each loop and stitch serves as a meditation, a way to connect with both material and memory.

She also describes her process as emotional and spiritual, transforming traditional handwork into a living dialogue between maker and cloth. In a world obsessed with fast fashion, Kochhar's deliberate pace feels radical—a statement that time, touch, and thoughtfulness still matter.

Craft as Contemporary and Political

Kochhar's philosophy directly challenges the notion that craft belongs to the past. "Craft in India is contemporary, political, and alive—not a relic," she asserts. Her work seeks to reframe how we value handmade processes—not as nostalgia, but as resistance against mass production and cultural erasure.

Through *Imli Dana*, she collaborates with artisans, empowering them as co-creators rather than anonymous labourers. Her pieces often carry traces of collaboration and conversation—subtle reminders of community, continuity, and care.

Overall traditional practices in a modern context, Kochhar elevates craft into an act of storytelling and social commentary. Each garment or textile becomes a vessel for lived experience, bearing the weight of history yet pulsing with contemporary relevance.

Connecting Local Roots to Global Conversations

Although her work resonates deeply with Indian craft traditions, Kochhar's collaborations extend far beyond borders. She has worked with global brands and designers who share her belief in sustainable, human-centred design. Yet, she remains clear about her priorities—impact over expansion, meaning over market share.

Her brand's global reach never overshadows its local grounding. The essence of *Imli Dana* lies in the intimacy of making and the authenticity of its message. By bridging India's artisanal heritage with global sustainability movements, Kochhar demonstrates that ethical fashion is not a niche—it's the future.

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