



#FASHION

Sabah Khan pays tribute to local artisans: The rising pillar in fashion

Sabah Khan, an iconic name in the fashion scenario of Bangladesh, reveals her journey as a fashion enthusiast. Starting off as a leisure pursuit that stemmed from admiring her mother's proclivity for dressmaking, she attributes her penchant for designing and aesthetics towards her mother.

In the pursuit to attain two masters' degrees followed by a full-time job in the development sector, Sabah never found sufficient time to study fashion designing. In hindsight, she is proud to proclaim that her gamut of knowledge regarding this industry and its intricacies is completely self-taught and garnered via extensive research.

Having been a rebel and risk-taker all her life, finally in 2017 she quit her job and worked relentlessly to establish her ethnic atelier, Sabah Khan. What started



off as experimentation to make dresses for her close-knit circle with only a couple of artisans working in her terrace, Sabah Khan accelerated her efforts and now works with over 45 such artisans.

Sabah Khan is contributing to revolutionise the fashion industry of our country in multifaceted ways, ranging from elevating the status of local artisans to changing the consumer mind-set and also advocating slow fashion.

"The local artisans of our country don't receive the level of respect or pay that they rightfully deserve and I am exerting all my energy to change that," said Sabah.

Her line of work is a testament to this

very statement as she has always been outspoken about giving artisans their due right and recognition, including the *karchupi* craftspeople who have been underrepresented in the industry for long. Furthermore, Sabah makes an effort to pay all her craftspeople more than the industry standard in return of their painstaking workmanship.

Even during the harsh times that the pandemic brought about, especially the debilitating consequences it left upon the luxury fashion sector where production was at standstill, Sabah continued to do her part for the artisans and encouraged others to accompany her in the journey as well through her campaign entitled "Save the Artisans, Ekshathe Bangladesh."

Through this campaign that was inaugurated on International Labour Day in May 01, 2020, Sabah exercised her best efforts to help the artisans sustain through whatever she could gather via donations and advance payments. The offshoot of the pandemic was the realisation and inclination of people towards wearing more local and taking pride in it as well.

Sabah envisions an inclusive society to

further the fashion industry of Bangladesh by developing the skills of artisans while uplifting their financial status and providing them with the scope to work with dignity. She hopes to highlight everyone involved in the backward linkage of this symbiotic process.

With this notion in mind, Sabah ensures to provide extensive training to all her artisans in order to enhance their skills and benefit the industry as a whole. Her work speaks volumes about the artisanal skills of the craftsmen of Bengal as each piece of clothing can safely be regarded as a piece of art.

The regal designs, floral motifs, striking colour palette, fine fabric and majestic handwork are enough to grab anyone's attention but the real sophistication lies in the baroque detailing evident in the work of Sabah Khan. There are several techniques and textures incorporated into a single piece of clothing, making each dress a masterpiece.

Furthermore, Sabah takes inspiration from culture, history, and art in order to formulate the extraordinary designs so that every piece of clothing narrates a unique

story. Some of her attires include hand-painted designs created by artists where the fabric is their canvas. The end result? Pure work of magic.

People ought to admire the elaborate and concerted effort that goes behind producing a single dress. The craftsmanship of the artisans, the delicacy of the tailor, the intertwining of threads so beautifully done by the embroider and the hours of labour invested should all be taken into consideration.

And Sabah Khan advocates to instil this sentiment within the minds of consumers. "People need to value the continuous process of human touch that is involved. A piece of fabric is much more than that, it is a patchwork that is derived from years of practice and cultural heritage. Upon realising this, consumers will start to make conscious purchase decisions," believes Sabah.

The fashion enthusiast also supports slow and sustainable fashion coupled with upcycling materials even within this materialistic culture. Thus, she is focused on creating timeless pieces that shall supposedly never lose their flair. More so, she deems discarding a dress after being worn only once or twice to be disrespectful to its creator.

The local artisans are in fact the mainstay of our booming fashion industry and it is of paramount importance that they are treated and paid accordingly in order to uphold this particular form of art. These artists do not deserve to silently work in the background, but rather should be empowered and placed in the limelight.

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Photo: Sabah Khan