

Bazaar HOT LIST



POP ART

Babneet Lakhesar's satirical paintings of Indian aunties has garnered her thousands of fans, including the likes of Mindy Kaling

ART

Like many Indian girls, Babneet Lakhesar grew up under the prying eyes of ubiquitous aunties—the distant relatives, friends of family, each with an unsolicited opinion on just about anything. That she moved to Toronto from Bhatinda at age six didn't change anything. Which is why last year, upon graduating from OCAD University, she created an alter ego: Babbu the Painter. Someone who uses her art to comment on ideas of feminism and identity. She paints the aunties—and occasional mustachioed uncles—in different avatars, as bikers in leather jackets, with *tikas* and tattoos, behind big round sunglasses. She also uses these characters on posters, pins and patches, bags, socks, and clothing. A favourite is the denim jacket with the word 'Bakwaas' painted on the back. Here, the 23-year-old, who counts Mindy Kaling among her 27,000 Instagram fans, talks to *Bazaar* about her work and inspiration.

On the infamous 'aunty': "She was always a prominent character in life, telling you what you could or couldn't do. My parents are progressive, but if you're Indian or South Asian, you always have people in your family judge what you do. It's not something you escape. Even now, I see many girls who don't drink or wear short blouses at some parties."

On the resonance of 'Bakwaas': "It's a word that my mom uses a lot, and it's catchy. I started to incorporate it into my work and it got a very sudden reaction. I made it because it was just something I wanted, but I realised other people did, too."

On Mindy Kaling: "She started following me on Instagram and would like or comment on photos. A few months ago, I received an email from her project manager, saying they wanted to use a painting for Season 5 of *The Mindy Project*. It's the one with three aunties wearing sunglasses, and I believe it's hanging in her [Mindy Lahiri's] bedroom. There's one from my friend Maria Qamar (@hatecopy), and one that we created together."

On new work: "Maria and I are working on a show called *Bakwaas*, which will have a lot to do with the idea of looking at something that makes you think of the word *bakwaas*, but is aesthetically pleasing. For instance, a jean jacket on which I'll paint Kurkure or Maggi packets—something that's '*bakwaas*', but something that you would wear. I'm very inspired by Jeremy Scott."



TARUN TAHILIANI ADDS A FIRST TO HIS VAST PORTFOLIO WITH A COLLABORATION with luxury brand Obeetee. Tahiliani has incorporated traditional techniques like chikankari and zari, and motifs like kairibootis, lotus, and rose into this limited-edition collection, comprising 18 designs. What makes it better? Each piece is made in a sustainable, environmentally-conscious way. Here, the designer talks to *Bazaar* about how India's traditions help fulfill his vision of creating unique masterpieces.

What was the inspiration behind this collection with Obeetee? India is one of the last preserves of the 'handmade'. This is reflected in our fashion, embroidery, jewellery, and our legacy of weaves and prints. The carpets are at once a nod to India's glorious heritage and to her vibrant present. The starting point on my moodboard—the colours and the techniques—are all quintessentially Indian. There is no other way to describe them.

DESIGN

MAGIC CARPET

Tarun Tahiliani brings his aesthetic to a new range of beautiful carpets

