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POPPRAPP

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Crafting her story
SADIE MONROE

SHE'S A
VANGUARD
Rani Rampal

'BEAUTY IS A FEELING'
Camilla Dian

THE SCRIPT SHIBBOLETH
Mihir Ahuja

Rushali Yadav
WALK THE
WALKER

UNAPOLOGETICALLY
IN FASHION
Rishab Nanda

To get weird with it!
MOSES KOUL

KARAN JOHAR & SANJAY NIGAM
DYAD IN VOGUE

POLAROID NINJA
Alina Gross

We aspire to bring a change in footwear, this isn’t just a change of choice, it is a change of perspective. We love diversity and that’s what we celebrate . Being the best version of yourself is what each footwear conveys, even if it means being crazy.

MANIA WALKER

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POPP DAPP

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It is not what we have, it's what we do continuously – better in every passing moment!

You know the thing about life, it is not a noun – it is a verb "living." It is not what we have, it's what we do continuously – better in every passing moment. The same is true with love; it's 'loving' – the process. We have lately trimmed down the capacity and comprehension of the term 'love'. Whereas, loving is a way of living.

Loving your chores, loving your work, loving people around you, just loving in general. Sounds like a weird concept – right? Well it is, and so is life – absolutely and beautifully weird. Things happen to us in a completely random and haphazard fashion. The trick is to not try to understand the patterns by acting intellectually; the trick is to try your best to live it by acting alive!

This issue is dedicated to the people who have been striving to their fullest to make the best of this one (unless you are a cat, lol!) life. Who could be a better ambassador for advocating a fuller life than Karan Johar himself? Our cover story celebrates the amalgamation of two powerful personalities from the domains of entertainment and fashion, respectively – Karan Johar & Sanjay Nigam. Sanjay Nigam is an entrepreneur dedicated to uplifting and uniting India's fashion industry.

It gives goosebumps to listen to the stories of women like Rani Rampal, a robust Indian hokey team player – where she talks about her struggles and triumphs. Not only her but there are artists like Moses Koul – who are redefining the definitions of experienced & seasoned actors, showcasing unbelievable acting skills.

This issue also captures the rawest essence of the freedom of existence. "They're Us" is a photograph series dedicated to capturing individuals from the LGBTQ+ community in their most unfiltered and genuine state. Women like Alina Gross, Sonam Nair, and Gina Badhen are breaking the molds created by decades of inheritance through their groundbreaking work in the fields of photography, direction, and makeup, respectively.

Through this issue, we have tried to bring to you the incredible exemplars of courage, perseverance, agility, determinant efforts, and timeless sagas of success!■

Anuja Mathur
Editor, POPP DAPP
www.poppdapp.com

CRAFTING HER STORY

Sadie Monroe

An American country pop singer born and raised in "The South" where she was a performer even as a kid! Performing for her stuffed animals in her room to an audience-filled club cheering for her – Sadie Monroe has emerged as a brilliant talent. Sadie Monroe's first love was singing, but she never thought she was good enough due to the lack of support from her father, who worked in the industry. The dream never left her alone, no matter how much she tried to distract herself with other shiny careers or traveling around the world. So, she just finally gave in to the calling in her heart.

"I did not begin taking it seriously until last summer when I released my debut single "Soulmate". I honestly had done it for 7-year-old me and was not expecting the response I got from people at all. It was like I was not taking it seriously as a career until I was performing my song live in Hollywood of all places not even 2 weeks after the song dropped. The lounge I performed at was on the roof of a hotel and as the audience faced me, I was facing the Hollywood sign just behind them. I was just so happy and nauseous while I knew there was something so much bigger that wanted to happen so I followed it. It was interesting because I had pursued acting for years and no doors ever opened from anything I did but I dropped this song mostly for fun and for the first time in my life it seemed like everyone I met wanted to help me with my music in some way," Sadie shares.

"I think for me, performing gives me such freedom to be shamelessly me," she says when we asked her about the thing that attracts her to performing. She further adds, "There's no need to hold back or contort myself to what is socially acceptable. Growing up when I would play various roles as characters in acting, I felt safe hiding behind whatever character I was playing. I would say "That wasn't me, I was just acting" and I think for a long time, I preferred that - hiding. Performing a song that I wrote about this longing for a person that may not even exist is so vulnerable and I do not think I could do it if I did not know who I am. I could not have done this even 5 years ago. I cared too much about what people thought before and now I do not."

There is indeed that one artist/ performer who marks a space in our hearts. "90s Pop and Country are my biggest inspirations in my music. Often, I feel like such a weirdo when I am riding with a friend in their car listening to their music. I love to discover new music but I rarely listen to what "everyone's listening to right now". I am the kind of person who shazams songs from television shows or at a cafe because they make me feel a certain type of way rather than because it is what is hot," Sadie says.

Artists are driven by an inner urge to create, which is usually fueled by external factors like experiences, traumas, triggers, etc. To this, Sadie says, "The first thing that comes to mind is the people who underestimate me. More than anything it is probably the happiness in my heart that I get when I am doing something I truly love and feel that I am here to do. It is such a pure and blissful feeling that drives me to work as hard as I do to make it happen again."

What a life is without a pinch of salt! Every journey has its ups and downs, failures and successes, happy and sad moments, and in the end – it all makes sense. "It is a mixed bag honestly. I would say before I really "came out" as an Artist, I often got in my way of allowing myself to dream as big as my heart wanted to. It took a lot for me to say to myself, "It's ok that you want that. It is ok to go for it and never look back". Now that I am going for it, there have been these waves of momentum I have experienced where things are happening and then out of nowhere, I am waiting on a producer to finish something or recording sessions get re-scheduled which affects the timeline of releasing something drastically. Things happen that are out of your control sometimes that can be frustrating in music just like anything else. I believe God's timing is a thing to be respected and at the same time, I have also learned the importance of keeping an urgency about your goals. No one will work as hard as you for your dream so you really must manage the things that you can and have patience for the rest," Sadie explains.

Who does not want to create a BTS, The Rolling Stones, Bon Jovi, a Queen, or an AC/DC – it is a dream for every singer. To this, Sadie says, "I am not sure if I will be the one to create my band. For now, I have just been working with various talented musicians in LA. I am also learning how to play the guitar so that I can at least contribute something musically to my performances in the case that a musician is not available. I think when I get to the point where I need a band for touring purposes or something, the right support to make that happen will come."

"I love horses and have been getting back into riding them or simply spending time with them." Sadie shares some of the things that excite her as a person. She further adds, "I have been getting back into dance which I had not done in years until last summer when I started performing so that has been surprising how much I missed it and so much fun incorporating it into some stuff I am working on right now. Waking up in LA every day is exciting for me too. You never know who you might cross paths with that can change the trajectory of your life forever and to me, that is epic. Aside from that, I have been blessed with a group of incredible friends who inspire me with all they are doing."

"To follow God first and stay focused on building a body of work that I'm psyched about," she rings down the curtain and says, "I've been working with a couple of producers here that seem to get me and I've got a lot of stuff on the books for 2024 that I hope people love." ■

"Beauty is a feeling"

CAMILLA DIAN

She knew there wasn't just one, but endless ways of living one's life. Camilla Dian, Italian actor & model talks to Popp Dapp about her journey that has led her to be open-minded, hungry, and curious about life. She says, "I grew up in Milan Italy, I have two other siblings, I'm definitely the middle child. Growing up I was exposed to different cultures, was privileged enough to travel, and always felt international. Surrounded by friends who had different backgrounds, my mom made sure to instill in us her American ways. With a father figure who was *Very* Italian."

"I always knew from a young age that I was an artistic human who loved to entertain others & myself," Camilla shares about her voyage & interest in the entertainment world. She adds, "As a kid, I was in all different types of extracurricular activities, that led me to quickly realize that physical movement and being able to express myself artistically in various forms is what brought me most joy. There was something inside of me that always knew I could make it happen. It was never a question of "if" but rather of when and how, then soon realized that those things seemingly fall into place when you know exactly what it is you are trying to achieve. I also knew that if I wanted it, then it was possible. I believe that having this mindset is crucial in achieving your goals and personal success."

From svelte to voluptuous, the standards of beauty are constantly changing. With evolving times, people in the entertainment world are realizing that "beauty standards" can be redefined. "That beauty is a feeling. People will always have their own opinions on what they consider to be beautiful or aesthetically pleasing to the eye. What *Is* constant, however, is that as individuals, we possess the power to feel beautiful regardless of external factors. Beauty is something that no one can take away from us, despite our age or how others perceive us. If you're taking care of yourself, are happy in your own physical and mental body, push yourself to become your highest self, it is inevitable to feel beautiful," Camilla explains.

"My family has always been extremely supportive when it came to me pursuing a career in the Arts. I think they knew how passionate I was, and still am about it. They also realized that there was a touch of natural inclination and talent that I was born with," she shares upon being asked about the family support received. Camilla adds, "Talent can only take you so far. It's a combination of hard work, dedication, and discipline that will take you where you want to go, but being realistic and knowing where your strengths lie is essential. Having a support system is a blessing. Whether that may be your immediate family or the family you choose, surround yourself with people who genuinely love you and only want to see you succeed.

POPP DAPP

In an industry like entertainment and fashion, where aesthetics is the frontier – mental and physical health harmony is a must, so what does Camilla's physical routine look like? “How much time do we have? In all seriousness, my workout routine is part of my lifestyle, always in constant motion. I try to move my body every single day, even if it's just getting a simple but crucial stretch in, to waken the body. I see my body as if it were a physical machine, and for it to function properly you need to upkeep it, give it the proper attention it requires. I incorporate a combination of high-intensity cardio (which is mostly running simply because I love it, it gives me mental clarity like nothing else. Although dancing is right up there, never a day without dancing, and people who *know* me, know;) I've recently started weight training and calisthenics, which have changed my body drastically. Feeling stronger, defined and shocked to see muscles I never knew I had! I practice stretching and yoga, I used to be a competitive gymnast and have always been extremely flexible. I know the importance of stretching your body, as you get older you will realize how crucial it is, so slowly push yourself daily into those stretches! Living in LA, I've become a HotYoga girlie. Yoga has been eye-opening, teaching me patience and how to be still. The power of knowing how to be physically and mentally present in the moment, finding comfort in the uncomfortable… trust me, if you sit in it long enough, you will find it. The most important thing out of all of this is to keep trying new things. Playing tennis on the weekends with friends, swimming in the ocean or box. Whatever you do, try to make it fun, and if you're moving your body, you are one step ahead,” Camilla shares.

When we asked Camilla about her routine, she answered, “I do have a morning and bedtime routine that I follow, the structure of my routine is solid. Life happens though, so at times, I adjust while still being true to my structure. First thing I acknowledge and be thankful that I am alive and well, my mind and body are working for me. Starting your day by feeling grateful for what you have sets a tone to your day, suddenly all those problems, negative thoughts that may have been running through our minds seem so small and insignificant, making it easier to tackle the day clear-minded. Hydrate my body from the night, splash cold water on my face and Ice roll it!! The morning joy of a cup of coffee or tea, followed by my workout. I have a cat, who is my precious baby and she is definitely part of my routine! To wind down I make sure my face is clean, I’ll read a book, journal or watch a movie, calling it a night. Oh! Before falling asleep I vocalize how grateful I am to have been able to have lived another day.” And she further adds about a go-to hack for having healthy and glowing skin, “To keep it short and simple. My two essential hacks are; what you put into your body, and Physical movement. What you eat and drink is always going to show on the outside, if you eat poorly then that's what's going to show. If you eat well, your skin will radiate just that. Physical movement, sweating, and putting your body through different temperatures have an incredible impact on your skin. If I implement these two things properly, 99% of the time my skin will naturally flow into being glowing and healthy.”

“No. I just don't view it as a "diet" or "cheat day", it’s a lifestyle that I have created for myself.” Camilla shares a very interesting lifestyle design with us, she says, “I am knowledgeable on nutrition and constantly curious to learn all there is to know about nutrients, the impact on the body, how to push longevity. Being Italian, food is part of my culture, it is sacred. Food is medicine to the body and being aware of what we give our bodies and when, is our duty. I view my body as a little experiment at times. Given the knowledge I acquire, I try to consume different things and see what feels good to my body. I keep what works and get rid of what does not work for me. Everyone is different so it is crucial to always keep in mind that just because it works for most people, it does not mean it works for you. Listening to your body and being in tune with it is a superpower, your body will always tell you what it needs. However, I try to be balanced and don’t restrict myself from what my body asks for. I love to try different cuisines and enjoy food with family and friends, the key is balance. Balance in everything you do, knowing your body inside and out.”

When we asked about the most important part of her personality that exceeds her in the industry as an actress and model, she shared, “Character is everything. Having strong ethical views, beliefs that align with your highest self and are true to yourself will always, and only work in your favor. In an industry where voices aren't heard enough at times, or get lost, there is power in knowing who you are and having the confidence to speak up. Not everyone is meant to like you, and you are definitely not here to please everyone. Staying true to yourself will radiate before you, and those who are capable and meant to see that, will.”

“I plan to keep working on myself and finding new ways of being of service to others as best as I can.” Camilla concludes with her plans, “I want to push myself to try new things. My passion lies in health and wellness. I would love to connect with people and help them become their best selves and go through this journey of life together. In addition, I will still be working towards my acting and modeling career… and someone tells me a new song is about to come out! So, keep an eye on that.” ■

WALK THE
WALKER
with Rushali Yadav

POPP DAPP: Walk us through your favorite fashion piece, made by an Indian designer that you've picked for POPP DAPP.
Rushali Yadav: I might sound a tad bit obsessed with myself, but hey, who wouldn't be when you've birthed a footwear brand that screams confidence and style? So if you may allow me, I‘ve picked my brand, my brainchild, Mania Walker, designed for fearless souls who, like me, revel in being a bit eccentric, unafraid to turn up the volume on life, effortlessly owning every look. Also, I’m pairing it up with this dress from Trove that compliments and rather highlights my boots in the frame. Trove’s euphoric prints and juicy bright colors bring in that perfect shoreline charm that I love!

PD: What makes it so special?
RY: The boots featured here are called Mr. Bumblebee! Cute, right? Why do I adore this piece? Well, apart from the fact that it's yellow (which happens to be my happy color), it embodies the essence of Mania Walker – a dash of madness, a splash of vibrancy, and a whole lot of style. And the dress, extreme comfort paired with stunning elements derived from the ocean, beach, and summer, just a look at it made me crave that vibrant vacation we’ve all been dreaming of! I observed that when it comes to women's boots in India, we have very few homegrown brands that put themselves out there. Think about it, if you want to go shopping for boots, the first few brands that you’ll think of are brands from the West. Mania Walker is here to fill that gap. Made in India, affordable, and dripping with style and comfort. I think people find it difficult to trust the brilliance of Indian craftsmanship at times. I want to work on changing that. This brand is more than a label; it's my baby – nurtured with love, perseverance, and a touch of my literal blood, sweat, and tears.

PD: **What sets Mania Walker apart?**
RY: It's the audacity to play with colors, embrace boldness, and sculpt unconventional silhouettes that make heads turn.

PD: How did you decide to pick it up?
When this opportunity from POPP DAPP came knocking, I didn't just open the door; I flung it wide open! Mania Walker needed a stage, a platform to showcase its vibrancy, talent, and uniqueness. And what better than the illustrious pages of POPP DAPP, pairing it up with this pleated midi dress in GEO WAVES PRINT makes a chic addition to my look.

PD: How do you like to style it, day as well as night?
RY: To style Mr. Bumblebee, daytime vibes would be a flirty summer dress just like this stunning midi printed dress I’m wearing or a sweet top paired with denim shorts and a jacket. Now, as the sun sets, picture a crisp white shirt dress, perhaps with a blazer for that extra edge, or a long, body-hugging blue dress that gracefully dances below the knees. Stunning? Absolutely.

PD: How has it been for you so far?
RY: I started as a medical student, but deep down, I always wanted to be a designer. Despite my family's background in government jobs, I took a chance on my passion for design. Modeling wasn't part of the plan, but a senior suggested it due to my height and face structure. Modeling became a stepping stone, but my true dream was always designing. Amidst the chaos, I pursued my passion, and now I'm both a designer and a model. Many people know me as a model, but I want to make it clear that I'm a designer first. I studied design, and modeling just happened along the way. Successfully achieving my ultimate goal, I established my brand. Through this platform, I aim to raise awareness about my journey – from medical school to becoming a designer and accidentally a model, all leading to the successful creation of my brand.

PD: What is the story behind the inception of ‘Mania Walker’?
RY: The creation of 'Mania Walker' was sparked by a lifelong passion for creativity and a distinct outlook on the world. From an early age, there was a keen sense of imagination and a desire to explore new avenues of expression. This innate creativity, coupled with a longing to forge one's path, led to the inception of 'Mania Walker.' It represents not only a personal endeavor but also a commitment to bringing forth something unique and impactful to the world. 'Mania Walker' is a testament to the power of creativity and the pursuit of one's dreams.

“It's the audacity to play with colors, embrace boldness, and sculpt unconventional silhouettes that make heads turn!

PD: What inspires you for your footwear collections?
RY: I believe that every design and every brand is the reflection of the designer. I find inspiration for my brand in my reflection. What I am and what I reflect shape my designs. Like every designer, I infuse my personality into my creations. I'm a vibrant, cheerful person, and I want my brand to mirror that. Happiness and color define my life, and I want my brand to radiate that same energy. I love exaggeration and boldness – that's the essence I aim to capture in my designs and brand.

PD: Was modeling the plan since the beginning, or did that happen over time?
RY: Modeling wasn't part of my plan; it just happened during college. Senior insisted I model for designs, boosting my confidence with my clean look and good face structure. I even tried pageantry, gaining valuable insights about myself. It made me realize what suits me and what I excel at. My advice to others is simple: do what makes you happy. I did, and I'm content and still loving it. I continue doing what brings me joy, and I'm genuinely happy with where I am in my journey. >>

POPP DAPP

<< PD: What is the main point of differentiation for 'Mania Walker' from other footwear brands available in the market?
RY: Mania stands out from other footwear brands in two distinctive ways. Firstly, our unique style of cowboy boots, a rarity in India, adds a touch of Western flair that you won't easily find elsewhere. Secondly, our vibrant and poppy color combinations are not only rare but create a unique blend, ensuring our footwear is one-of-a-kind and not easily replicated by any other brand. Our Shoes are like a bold fashion party for your feet. We don't just follow trends; we create them with comfy, eye-catching styles. It's not just shoes; it's a fun, sassy vibe that sets us apart from the usual shoe crowd.

PD: Were there any roadblocks that you faced in your entrepreneurial journey?
RY: Every journey has its bumps, and so did mine. I faced challenges, learned from them, and kept pushing forward. It's all part of the entrepreneurial adventure, right? Keeping up with the latest trends felt like chasing a speedy rabbit, and getting the right style for everyone was like trying to find the perfect puzzle piece. Dealing with people's opinions could sometimes be tough, feeling like a spotlight that's too bright. Then, the whole hunt for good vendors and manufacturers was like a tricky game of hide-and-seek in a constantly changing field. And online? It's a bit like navigating through a jungle, watching out for scams at every turn. But you know what? Facing these challenges is like winning a fashion marathon with a lot of flair!

PD: How supportive has your family been in your career choices?
RY: My family's been my rock in this business journey. They're not just proud; they're my biggest cheerleaders. From helping out with advice to being a constant source of encouragement, they're my backbone. Their support gives me confidence and the willpower to tackle anything that comes my way. My parents, especially, instilled in me the belief to stand up for myself and pursue my path. So, every step I take in my journey is not just mine, but a shared victory that makes us all proud.

PD: Fashion is such a competitive and ever-evolving industry. How do you maintain your physical & mental health in this constant hustle?
RY: Balancing both the runway and the business hustle is indeed a challenge, but self-care is my secret weapon. Physically, I prioritize regular workouts to keep that runway-ready energy going. I prioritize my mental health by finding solace in the organization – it's like therapy for me. When stress kicks in, I dive into organizing things to clear my mind. Additionally, spending quality time with friends and family becomes my escape, allowing me to focus on the positive aspects of life. Keeping busy with work also helps redirect my energy towards constructive and uplifting endeavors. It's about maintaining a balance that keeps me mentally strong and positive.

PD: Any advice you would want to give to the budding models and entrepreneurs?
RY: For aspiring models stepping onto the runway or entrepreneurs diving into their ventures, my advice is simple: Embrace the journey. It's like a stylish adventure filled with ups and downs. Stay true to yourself, be open to learning, and surround yourself with a supportive tribe. Don't shy away from challenges; they're your runway to growth. And most importantly, believe in your unique style – whether you're strutting on the catwalk or building your brand, authenticity is your superpower. So, step in with confidence, keep evolving, and enjoy the fashion-forward ride!

PD: What are your future plans?
RY: Our plans for the footwear brand are all about stepping into new horizons. We aim to expand our stylish footprint, reaching more fashion enthusiasts worldwide. Innovation is in our DNA, so we're all about crafting even more trend-setting designs that blend comfort and flair. My future vision for my footwear brand is to transform it into a unique, woman-centric label, proudly made in India. I aim to create distinctive designs that resonate with women, offering them footwear that not only reflects their style but also celebrates the essence of Indian craftsmanship. It's about making a mark in the industry by being one-of-a-kind and elevating the presence of Indian-made footwear for women.■

"To the fabulous readers of Popp Dapp, I want to extend a heartfelt message. Thank you for being part of our fashion journey! Your support means the world to us. Get ready to step into a world where style meets substance, and each pair of shoes tells a unique story.

Get ready to Walk the Talk & Walk with the Walker!

The last 12 months are an articulation, 2024 makeup trends are going to be ampler than ever. Shimmery, powdery textures are in, and you can say a part-time goodbye to creams and liquids. If there is a star product of 2024 Pallete - it's the highlighter!

THE URBAN WILD

THE URBAN WILD

PHOTOGRAPHER **PRIYANKK NANDWANA** | MUSE **NIVEA SYAL** | HAIR **DAKSH NIDHI** | MUA **GAYETRI CHAKRAVARTHY** | PRODUCTION **MAYRA FASHION STUDIO**

THE URBAN WILD

PHOTOGRAPHER **PRIYANKK NANDWANA** | MUSE **NIVEA SYAL** | HAIR **DAKSH NIDHI** | MUA **GAYETRI CHAKRAVARTHY** |
PRODUCTION **MAYRA FASHION STUDIO**

MUA GINA BADHEN | PHOTOGRAPHY OMER JANGUA | STYLIST PAOLO CASSEB | HAIR SAIRA RAHMAN | JWELLERY CARTIER, HERMES, MARC JACOBS, GIVENCHY, ELIZABETH TAYLOR VIA THE HIRST COLLECTION

MUA **GINA BADHEN** | PHOTOGRAPHY **OMER JANGUA** | STYLIST **PAOLO CASSEB** | HAIR **SAIRA RAHMAN** | SHIRT **VIVIENNE WESTWOOD**

POPP DAPP: Your transformation (before & after) videos are outstanding. What is the most heart-touching response you have received from your bride?
GINA BADHEN: The Huffington Post was one of the first publications to notice my before and after videos back in 2016, I remember waking up and my phone going crazy with notifications from their feature on me as they titled, "Gina Badhen is mesmerising Instagram with her before and after make-up tutorials". The best response I've had from a client is that they feel confident and beautiful on their most special day and that they enjoyed their experience with me as their artist. An artist's connection with their clients is very important as customer service and professionalism tie hand in hand with your brand's reputation.

PD: How did you feel when you won the 'International Beauty Expert & Educator' award?
GB: It was a heartfelt moment! I'm very grateful to be recognized for my craft as I've spent years working on it to improve, educate, and grow with. I love what I do, and I genuinely enjoy teaching all things beauty-related because not only is it an art, but it is also an ever-growing business that with the right guidance can turn your passion into a long-term profession!

PD: Talk about your journey.
GB: I have been in the beauty industry for over 12 years as a Skincare and Beauty Expert. I have a Make-up Academy that tours courses all over the world and I work with brands on product development and create production for marketing campaign launches and advertisements.

PD: Was making a career in the makeup industry always the plan, or did that happen over time? How did you come up with the idea of starting a makeup academy?
GB: I started my career in beauty as a writer, as it tied in with my bachelor's degree in English Literature, I worked early on with various magazines studying make-up products and learning the effects of different ingredients on alternative skin types and textures as research for my articles. I was fluent in product knowledge and the communication skills needed to become a successful make-up educator before I even knew it would blossom into fruition. I was editor-chief of Vanity Magazine, where I learned the business side of the beauty industry and the mechanics behind turning artistic visions into lucrative advertising campaigns. In my first year, I increased monthly sales by 50% and 50,000 readers in distribution across all major UK outlets. Established partnerships with key paid advertisers in fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and travel for print editions and events. By successfully implementing new digital strategies leading to an increase of 30% in online traffic and 25% in paid sponsors within 2 years. Then came the power of social media, where I began posting my authentic before and afters (at a time when editing apps were non-existent) and clients began approaching me for 1-2-1 make-up lessons and then the Academy solidified as a grand milestone in my career. I have trained over 2000 students worldwide with my Educational World Tours in London, Manchester, Birmingham Annually, Los Angeles, and Dubai.

PD: What is the story behind 'Wanderland Weddings'?
GB: Wanderland Weddings is a bespoke creative concierge agency that I created in 2015. The service specializes in pre-wedding multi-media visuals and commercial brand ads. A unique experience that bridges luxury travel with the adventures of artistic expression by capturing magical moments. Couples leading up to their wedding date book with us to showcase sensational photography and wanderlust videography to share with wedding guests in a grand expression of love and opulence. As they escape into the visual storytelling of Wanderland Weddings through the most picturesque hidden gems and locations across the globe.

PD: What are a few frequently asked questions of your course students?
GB: 'How do you create your flawless filter foundation / seamless skin in real life?' which is one of my favorite things to teach my students as I have ladies who are both brand new beginners and experienced intermediates who are always blown away when I share my inside tips and tricks on techniques and in-depth application theory. "How do I become a successful artist and have regular customers?" I dedicate a module of my courses to teach key advice on how to generate and approach clients, create pricing menus of your services, promotional strategies to gain long-term clients manage your invoicing, and safeguard your growing business. With social media business strategies, how to use your iPhone like a professional with the best lighting/framing and editing apps for both still images and video.

PD: What are your future plans?
GB: I have a world Make-up Academy Tour coming up this Spring 2024 – starting with the Middle East! Dubai – April 30th, 2024 in collaboration with Dubai Ladies Club @dubailadiesclub Bahrain – May 2024 in collaboration with Purple Patchouli Salon. We are a global artist community driven celebrating the mentoring of students to become successful business owners!■

"The thing with journeys is that every time you do something, it feels like you're starting from scratch"

- MOSES KOUL, Artist, Actor & Musician

POPP DAPP: Music demands the revelation of one's true soul, whereas acting is being able to transform oneself into a different character. As an artist, how do you manage to do these contradictory practices?

MOSES KOUL: I don't demarcate or compartmentalize what I do. Even when I make coffee, there is some element of it that seeps into what I do musically or with cinema. I am trying to live with what I do, rather than doing something for a living. It's the only way I can find conviction in doing it. If an idea - whatever it may be - feels amiss when I do my daily things and think about it, then I usually don't do it. However, I'm trying to learn how to be convinced about a lot more things than I earlier was. Acting and Music go hand in hand, and complimenting each other. They aren't contradictory for me, at least.

PD: How has the journey been so far?
MK: The thing with journeys is that every time you do something, it feels like you're starting from scratch. Yet, when you look back at it when such questions are asked - you realize that whenever you actively move in any capacity, it adds up cumulatively. Looking ahead it feels like I've just positioned myself on the starting line, looking back, I see the years that went into getting here. Overnight success is a PR myth - and that helps me stay glued to the present and enjoy it.

PD: Was acting & music always the plan, or did these happen over time?
MK: Music has always been the plan, but because of the pandemic when all my plans for 2020 (Believe me, there were many and some fantastic once-in-a-lifetime sort of opportunities) came to a shattering halt. I was presented with the opportunity to audition for Class. With absolutely zero background or skill in acting or a desire to do so - I just took that leap of faith in myself and here we are. In hindsight, most of my greatest decisions have been unplanned and with a terrifying self-belief and assuredness in my ability to learn on the go.

PD: How did 'Class' happen to you? And how was the experience?
MK: Class was a life-changing accident during the COVID-19 pandemic. I had no background in theatre or acting, and Class was my first audition. Essentially, I got an audition from Ashim and Niharika directly - and I was extremely skeptical of even giving it any importance knowing that it wouldn't go anywhere - however I watch a lot of cinema, so I channeled whatever little I knew about acting into my auditions which I gave remotely online. But, once I started to get positive feedback on my portrayal of Sharan, I started to dive deeper into techniques and practices. One thing led to another and here we are. I'm quite certain the experience of your first web show, is an experience that can never be replicated again. And I'm very happy accepting that.

PD: How similar or different are Moses and Sharan Gujral?
MK: Sharan and I are poles apart. The world we belong to is completely different, and once you remove access, you're looking at a completely different set of power dynamics. That essentially is a crucial aspect of a person. I'm a convent school-educated Delhi boy with an Economics degree from St. Stephen's who has moved away from pursuing a conventional, yet stable career to a more unstable, high-intensity roller coaster of a career path, where I have no godfather, an industry that has a different set of expectations, trials and tribulations but no certainty to anything. Where 'No' is an answer more often than 'Yes', yet we still persevere. Sharan is an unloved, misunderstood teenager, who doesn't have anyone who truly has his back, but he has all the access to power, money, excesses, and indulgences. Yet not the freedom to truly understand or explore himself.

PD: Apart from guitar, you are trained in tabla as well. How much do you relate to Indian classical music and its nuances?
MK: I was 7 years old when I started learning the Tabla. My mother still reminisces about how I used to walk to my Tabla Class dressed in a crisp white Kurta (mandatory attire) with my notebook in hand, half asleep. I did it because my mother used to repeat the phrase "Winners never quit. And, quitters never win". As a 7-year-old, that gave me a certain stubbornness to not give up on learning anything even when things got tough, difficult, or just plain boring. Since then anything that I picked up, I would never let go of it, because the failure wasn't not being good at it, but it was quitting when I didn't get it. Pushing me into Indian Classical music first, was a decision I'm thankful to my mother for. Essentially not only is it extremely rigorous and vast, but a lot of music occurring around us naturally is influenced and informed by it. So it helped me build a one-to-one connection with what I heard around me and then express it.

PD: What are the sources of inspiration for your music?
MK: A beautiful drive. A good cup of coffee. Pleasant Weather. Comfortable Air Travel. Life and its idiosyncrasies. New Cuisines. Luxury Travel. Visuals and Aesthetics. Gardening. Solid conversations. Cinema and Performances. Fragrances and books. Anything around me that entices a response of any sort within me - influences me musically in some way. I write songs about experiences.■

"Hello, everybody. If you've made it this far, just know that your ability to sit through an individual rambling endlessly in a narcissistic manner is truly commendable. However, if there was anything here that was useful to you. You have Popp Dapp to thank for, and I hope you keep tuned into Popp Dapp for bringing in the culture to you. Hope you check out my work if you haven't, and join me on this journey.

THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER

"Remember, the world is your oyster, and with determination, resilience, and a global mindset, you can achieve anything you set your sights on. Dream big, explore boldly, and never underestimate the power of your potential to shape the future!"

- NIDHI NAGORI, Entrepreneur & Founder of Globalogy

POPP DAPP: Geopolitics is more unstable than ever before. What are the top 5 things that we need to keep in mind while choosing a country of interest?

NIDHI NAGORI: Well, it may differ for everyone what they are and depends on what perspective they hold onto it. But for me the things to keep in mind will be: Political Stability - Assess the political climate and stability of the country to ensure a conducive environment for personal and professional growth. Economic Opportunities - Evaluate the country's economic prospects and job market to ensure ample opportunities for career advancement. Cultural Fit - Consider the cultural differences and compatibility to ensure seamless integration into the local community. Quality of Life - Prioritize factors such as healthcare, education, safety, and overall quality of life for a fulfilling experience abroad. Future Prospects - Anticipate future trends and developments in the country to make informed decisions that align with long-term goals.

PD: Students who study abroad have a better chance of getting absorbed in foreign nations or international companies. Isn't it adding to the brain drain of our country?

NN: While studying abroad offers valuable experiences and opportunities for personal growth, it's essential to address concerns regarding brain drain. The world did not come with borders. We created them. And now we use that as a divisive force. Instead of viewing it solely as a loss for the home country, we should recognize the potential benefits of a globally educated workforce. Studying abroad equips individuals with valuable skills, perspectives, and networks that can contribute to the development of both their home country and the global community. If you look back at some of the top startups in India, their founders were either educated elsewhere or have worked in a different country. It's crucial to foster an environment that encourages knowledge exchange and collaboration on a global scale. >>

<< PD: Give us a glimpse of your story.
It's been an exhilarating ride so far, filled with challenges and success. As a CA, CPA, CISA, and content creator, I have had the privilege of connecting with many individuals and inspiring them to explore global careers. I grew up in a small town called Bauria, and for the longest time, my biggest dream was to work in the big city, which was Kolkata for us. I had never imagined coming so far, working in every possible country I could name as a child. I have witnessed firsthand the complexities of international labor markets and the aspirations of individuals yearning for global opportunities. This realization led to the inception of Globalogy, a platform dedicated to empowering individuals to pursue their dreams of relocating anywhere in the world.

PD: What is the story behind the inception of Globalogy?
NN: The inception of Globalogy was driven by a profound understanding of the gap in labor markets and the increasing demand for foreign talent in a globalized world. As an immigrant myself, I intimately understand the challenges newcomers face, from navigating complex migration rules to overcoming communication barriers. However, amidst these challenges, I recognized the untapped potential and the desire within my audience to explore opportunities beyond borders. Globalogy emerged as a solution to bridge this gap, offering guidance and support to those seeking to embark on their global journey.

PD: What was your first reaction to the news of Gobalogy making it to Times Square?
NN: The news of Globalogy making it to Times Square was a surreal moment, filled with a mix of excitement and gratitude. It was a testament to the impact we've had in empowering individuals to pursue their dreams of global careers. Seeing our platform showcased on such a global stage reaffirmed our mission and served as a reminder of the countless lives we have touched and inspired along the way.

PD: Which country has the safest environment and socio-economic structure for young talents?
NN: Identifying the safest environment and socio-economic structure for young talents depends on various factors, including personal preferences, career goals, and cultural considerations. However, countries known for their stable political climate, robust economy, strong social support systems, and opportunities for career advancement are often favored by young talents seeking a secure and thriving environment for their professional endeavors. Every country will not work for everyone, but some countries will work for every individual. One just has to find the right fit.

PD: What is the best career advice you would want to give to the young talents of India?
NN: To the young talents of India, I would impart the following career advice: Embrace Lifelong Learning, Learning Never Stops - Cultivate a growth mindset and continually seek opportunities to expand your knowledge and skill set. In today's rapidly evolving world, adaptability and continuous learning are essential for staying relevant and competitive. Think Globally, Extend Your Vision - Broaden your horizons and explore opportunities beyond borders. Embrace diversity, cultural exchange, and international collaboration to unlock new perspectives and opportunities for growth. Pursue Your Passion, Take that Courage - Follow your passions and pursue a career path that aligns with your interests, values, and strengths. Authenticity and passion are powerful drivers of success and fulfillment. Network Strategically, It's important whom you talk to - Build meaningful relationships and networks within your industry and beyond. Networking can open doors to new opportunities, mentorship, and invaluable insights that can propel your career forward. Embrace Failure, it's a day, not the whole life - Don't be afraid to take risks and embrace failure as a stepping stone to success. Learn from setbacks, adapt, and persevere in the pursuit of your goals.

PD: What are your future plans?
NN: As for our plans, Globalogy remains committed to expanding our reach and impact, empowering individuals worldwide to pursue their dreams of global mobility. We will continue to innovate, collaborate, and advocate for a more inclusive and interconnected world, where borders are no longer barriers but gateways to endless possibilities.■

RICHA SINGH

Celebrity Stylist & Wardrobe Consultant

POPP DAPP: How would you describe your approach to styling?
RICHA SINGH: I think styling is not only about fashion; it is more about knowing your personality and enhancing it through the choice of outfits we wear, and how we wear. It is about confidence and comfort. Trends come and go, style keeps on evolving, one thing common is how you portray a certain individual through his clothes. My job is to make the client look good in his comfort. Fashion is a trend and style is much more than that, it is an emotion and my job as a stylist is to bridge the gap between them. As rightly said by Alexander McQueen "I think there is beauty in everything, what normal people perceive as ugly, I can usually see something of beauty in it." Styling is something that expresses his personality through clothing. As a stylist, you must develop an eye for detail in fabrics, colours, silhouettes, and how to accessorize the outfit. To achieve the image you have in a vision, there should be a proper sync between hair/makeup/photographer/muse.

PD: Walk the talk with us
RS: I am Richa Singh, a freelance fashion stylist or you can say I am a dream catcher whose job is to understand one's dream and curate the look that turns the dream into reality. I have been working as a stylist for more than 3 years. I have a beautiful daughter who just turned 5 and is my pillar of strength and love spending time with her, looking after my plants, and travelling with my little one. I am very emotional, independent, and family-oriented and I know work-life balance and want to go slow in this fast-paced life. I had my highs and lows in the past 3 years and it is completely ok to have euphoric highs and crushing lows in any creative field. How you deal with this makes all the difference. I always felt that I was here to show my creative skill, and my talent as a fashion stylist and just be honest and dedicated to it. In the beginning, I had come few projects that did not pay me at all but still, I did as it was good work from my styling perspective and could build my portfolio. I would suggest to all that, can compromise with payment but not with the type of work you are doing in this creative world. We should keep doing good work and that will pay off one day. When I worked as an Intern, assistant stylist, and now as a head stylist, how much is the budget for me is the last question, even when I hire assistants, they do not even ask about the project, and their first response is Budget. Never stop learning here. I have got the inspiration for the colour board from places you would not even imagine. In a nutshell, I can say first few years focus on good work and build a portfolio, you will start earning money automatically out of it.

PD: What are your thoughts on current fashion trends
RS: Quiet Luxury is taking the lead, and is going to be liked over big logos for sure. Quality, fabric, neutral colors, and a subtle timeless look are in trend. Homegrown brands are doing excellent work. Gender Neutral outfits are in. The most important is that Fashion also has a responsibility toward the environment, organic and outfits made of recycled products. As a stylist, I would love your gone outfit and accessors made from recycled products. Monochrome/Athleisure continues to be in trend. As I said People prefer comfort over luxury.

PD: How do you deal with difficult clients?
RS: Having difficult clients has both advantages and disadvantages. Difficult clients can push you to the good edge. We Should not let our ego come in the way. They are clients and have certain expectations, it is give and take. When I look back, I think because of a few demanding clients, I have learned a lot. Maybe my 18 years of flying experience have made me hands-on to handle the situation well.

PD: What do you think of fashion industry standards and how relevant are they?
RS: Now we are setting up some realistic fashion standards where we have double XL. The fashion industry understands that all bodies are good body and beautiful. On the runway, with shoes, and influencers we see all kinds of physiques, ages, gender, share, and color. We still must go a long way to achieve sustainable fashion. Unsafe working conditions and meager wages of garment workers particularly in developing countries are going unnoticed behind the glamour of fashion.

PD: What is your opinion on the evolution of the fashion industry in the next few years?
RS: Fashion will be radically different in the future. There will be a new era completely after the integration of AI in the fashion industry. Fashion brands will use eco-friendly materials. Virtual ways to try on clothes, rentals, and sustainable fabric made of recycled raw materials will be in demand. The market of luxury fashion is the largest industry in the world and is expected to grow even more by 2030. You know fashion follows a cycle that repeats every 20 years.

PD: What are the most common misconceptions regarding fashion styling?
RS: Fashion stylists have always been mixed with fashion designing and these are different. Many think fashion stylists have costumes ready and expect us to get outfits in an hour. There is a system and procedure we must follow for sourcing.

PD: How do you think your work affects the way people see themselves?
RS: I can make my client look very comfortable and confident about their body type. Styling is not only about outfits. Rather if we shoot in adverse weather, I shall make sure to have a dryer so the client is comfortable. There were many times when you were styling for Reality shows of judges were not from acting backgrounds and we gave jazzy clothes to them where they were not comfortable and their confidence on screen drops so we should give them clothes as per their aesthetic.

"As a stylist, you must develop an eye for detail in fabrics, colours, silhouettes, and how to accessorize the outfit. To achieve the image you have in a vision, there should be a proper sync between hair/makeup/photographer/muse.

PD: What are some of the ways that you have pushed boundaries for styling?
RS: I have styled an actor for his photo shoot. He was the person who had worn white his entire life. His manager asked me to give Pop colors to him. That was challenging to make him wear and look confident and comfortable too. When we do commercial styling where you must style as per the character I think there we push actors and us too.

PD: What are your future plans?
RS: Want to keep doing good work, would prefer quality of work rather than doing anything. Here in the fashion industry, there is exploitation, interns do not get paid well. I want to make this industry more professional and motivate new stylists by paying them well and providing them with a good platform to learn and grow. I think it is lacking here; I would like to work for editorial more often, and that's the best platform for a stylist to show creativity. And would like to try corporate styling as still have not explored this side of styling.■

Popp Dapp is one of the few fashion magazines that is left with rich and sensible content. Keep doing the good work. You promoted all types of fashion styles and featured talents is very motivating. Fashion is a reflection of society and culture. Popp Dapp writes on culture, arts, and current events. Wish Popp Dapp all the best and keep engaging readers with meaningful fashion content.

SONAM NAIR

Writer-Director

"Stop seeking validation from the outside world, keep connecting with yourself, and stay true to yourself – which is very difficult in the present time. The only way you stand out as an artist is by sticking to your voice and instincts"

POPP DAPP: 'Masaba-Masaba' has been a refreshing treat to watch for Indian audiences. What was your inspiration and experience of this project?
SONAM NAIR: The inspiration was Masaba and Neena Ji. Usually, you need to write backstory and characteristics, but they were already fully formed characters. They came with cool and different characteristics and personalities, and I took a lot from who they were and put it into a fictional setting. Though we wrote all the scenes and arcs out, the characteristics were taken from their real life. That was a different way of approaching writing and direction, where they were playing a version of themselves. It was a weird, but fun mix.

PD: Let us get to know you!
SN: I am a writer and director. Grew up in Bengal. I studied film and writing in the US. I worked in New York for a year and then moved to Mumbai. Worked as an assistant director in Wakeup Sid and Saat Khoon Maaf. I then directed and wrote my firm film Gippi. Since then, I have been writing, directing, and working on films, web series, short films, & ads.

PD: Was writing and directing always the plan, or did these happen over time?
SN: Writing was always the plan as I was a big reader growing up – so wanted to write novels at first. But at the same time, I had a great love of films. Eventually, I decided to study films and write as well – so I went to Ithaca College, in New York. I studied writing stories, poetry, novels, and filmmaking. Writing is indeed my first love, as I prefer to be alone and quiet. But now and then it is also fun to go on set and work amongst the chaos also.

PD: Post-production of 'Masaba-Masaba' happened during lockdown. How tough was that for you? And did that take a toll on your creative freedom?
SN: Honestly, not a lot of the post-production happened during lockdown. Unfortunately, the final things I had to do over the computer. Usually, you go to the studio and see the color correction, sound mixing, and final touchups. But I had to do it all on my laptop, home speakers, and TV. Having it released during lockdown gave up a wider audience.

PD: As a writer, how do you strike a balance between relatability and aspiration value in a story? Because the audience needs both to love a story.
SN: I do not go for aspiration. There is relatability and there is a specific thing that you might not be able to relate to. Since everything cannot be relatable, but entire theme should be relevant. For eg. In Masaba-Masaba, Masaba's life is different from most people's lives in India. But the theme of the show is about a woman trying to find herself, and Neena Ji trying to figure out how she can stay relevant. A sweet mother-daughter relationship.

PD: 'Khujli' and 'Gippi' have received so much love and reverence from the audience. How was your feeling?
SN: Though 'Gippi' did not do so well at the box office, but it was expected. It was the story of a teenage girl who was overweight – it wasn't made for a giant box office success. It was at an early social media phase, so you could not figure out how many people have reached out to you. But over the years I have realized that so many people grew up watching it, it used to come on TV every weekend, and there was a generation that related to it. Now 10 years later, I realize that the film did well. 'Khujli' came at a time when I was very low in life, did not know what to do with my career, and was feeling lost. So, I decided to make a short film – it just went viral. People kept sharing it and sending me messages, and the second part of my career started with it. Because of that, I got other subsequent projects! I learned that one should not take anything for granted, if you want to make something – just make it, instead of waiting for some huge opportunity and stars to come along.

PD: Being on the cover of 'The Word Magazine,' how has that experience been?
SN: Nandini Bhalla, who is the founder and editor of The Word Magazine had met me at a photoshoot I did for Cosmopolitan a year back. That time she was working at Cosmopolitan and we got along well. When she was starting her magazine, she called a lot of creators and artists that she liked and wanted in her corner. We were excited to be a part of that family – support the magazine. It was such a glamorous and fun photoshoot – I am always ready for those.

PD: What drives you as an artist?
SN: Real life. The things that I and the people around me are going through. What their hopes, aspirations, and problems are. I am always looking at life from the point of view of searching for an interesting story. I am always studying life as to what can I take from it and put in my writing and directing. It also makes life more enjoyable as you are not too invested in it and take everything very lightly. Even if a horrible thing happens – I start to think that it might make a great scene or I can find humor in it.

PD: Were there any roadblocks in your career so far?
SN: I was quite young and a 'woman' when I started directing, and I met a lot of people thinking I could not do it, or rooting for me to fail. And I enjoyed proving them wrong. Even now, there is a lot of stereotyping and blocks when it comes to a 'female director.' I am lucky that there are few creators and producers who have a vision of calling me for a project. I love doing things that people think I can not do. But it takes a lot of time waiting for the right time for a nice project to come along because other people do not have an idea of your capability.

PD: What are your future plans?
SN: To be able to tell stories that challenge and excite me. I never want to be bored or frustrated with the work I am doing. We choose this industry to be creative in our work and enjoy it. I hope that continues! ■

KARAN JOHAR, leading the initiative at the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund and supported by its board and founder Sanjay Nigam, Karan has launched the website for India's first venture studio dedicated to fashion startups. This pioneering effort reflects the board's collective vision to revolutionize the fashion industry by providing startups with investment, mentorship, and significant networking opportunities.

KARAN JOHAR & SANJAY NIGAM
DYAD IN VOGUE

"Young entrepreneurs in India's fashion and lifestyle realm are igniting a global movement, reshaping entire industries with their innovative ideas. With this venture studio Fashion Entrepreneur Fund, we're not just writing cheques, we're writing success stories. By providing both financial support and essential mentorship, we're empowering the next generation to confidently make their mark with authenticity. I am incredibly enthusiastic about being a part of this vision aimed at propelling the industry to unprecedented heights. To all the budding trailblazers stepping onto the Indian business stage: Embrace your unique vision, infuse it with authenticity, and fearlessly sculpt a radiant future ahead."

- KARAN JOHAR

POPP DAPP: Could you please walk us through the talk?
SANJAY NIGAM: Reflecting on my journey, it feels like a fairytale from my humble beginnings in Lucknow to my current endeavors in the fashion industry. Leaving my village as a pre-teen, I embarked on a diverse career path, until I found my calling. Inspired by my roots and fueled by a spiritual journey, I realized the importance of giving back to society. Creating Talent Factory with a broader vision, I aimed to support not only models but also new-age designers, backstage workers, and fashion design students, generating income and opportunities for them, and later founding the FEF India Fashion Awards (IFA), a global platform celebrating creativity in fashion. Recognizing the need for support beyond recognition, I launched the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund (FEF), a ₹200-crore property providing financial backing, mentorship, and resources to emerging fashion entrepreneurs & businesses. One of the highlights of my journey is the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund, where we plan to invest ₹20 crores in the first year to promising entrepreneurs. The team behind this venture, led by Mr. Vagish Pathak, Chairman of the FEF India Fashion Awards, is deeply committed to fostering a supportive ecosystem for the industry. Our promoters include Naveen Jindal, the esteemed Indian Industrialist and Philanthropist, who also serves as the Chairman of Jindal Steel & Power Limited, Robin Raina, Chairman of Ebix Cash and Founder of Robin Raina Foundation, Sandeep Jain, Director of Vega Industries Pvt. Ltd., Gaurav Dalmia, the distinguished Indian Industrialist and Chairman of Dalmia Group Holdings, and Vinod Dugar, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Malawi and Co-Promoter of RDB Group along with others, form the backbone of our board, each bringing unparalleled experience and expertise to our mission. Furthermore, Karan Johar, plays a pivotal role as one of the key members of our board, lending his invaluable insights and guidance to propel our vision forward. Beyond fashion, I've always been passionate about reading and learning, often spending hours in the video library absorbing knowledge from various books. In essence, my journey is a testament to my commitment to the industry and a desire to help others succeed, driven by a genuine love for fashion and continuous learning.

PD: Was entrepreneurship always at the top of your list?
SN: Becoming an entrepreneur wasn't something I planned from the start. I went through different jobs until one day I realized there was untapped talent in the fashion world. This led me to create Talent Factory and later, the FEF India Fashion Awards, as I felt a strong responsibility to help talented people. After three successful editions, the FEF India Fashion Awards is gearing up for its fourth edition, scheduled to take place in Mumbai on March 7 and 8, 2024. I saw that talent needed more than just recognition, so I started the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund (FEF). As an entrepreneur, I believed it was my duty to not only provide financial help but also mentorship. I brought influential people on board to not just invest in projects but to make dreams come true. Under FEF's leadership, we go beyond just giving money and providing support like mentorship and resources to help budding talents. My journey, going from someone with a dream to an entrepreneur giving back, is all about my commitment to supporting creativity and helping new entrepreneurs in the fashion world. It's not just about business; it's about feeling responsible to guide and offer a platform for the dreams of new entrepreneurs to grow. >>

<< PD: Starting at 14 and making a mark for yourself in the industry, you must have made you go through ups and downs in your path. What were the major roadblocks of your journey so far? And how did you overcome that?

SN: Starting at 14 was tough because I didn't have anyone to guide me or support me. I had to do everything on my own to get where I am today. The biggest challenge that I took upon myself was to channel my energy towards work and become somebody. The hardest part was not having someone to lean on or show me the way. I had to face my fears and believe in myself even when it was tough. I knew I had to, and I could fight through it. The key to overcoming these challenges was my determination. I had to keep telling myself that, even though I didn't have a mentor or a support system, my journey was unique, and success depended on my ability to face and overcome tough times. Yes, it was a hard journey, but in the end– I always conquered and felt stronger. My journey is a story of how we can overcome anything with passion and a strong desire to achieve something important. I was fearless and had nothing to lose. I enjoyed every phase of my journey. Having a hunger for learning, I always took an experience and learning back with me, and continue to do so.

PD: Karan Johar has been an eminent part of ideating and expediting FEF. How has the experience been working with such a renowned fashion and entertainment figure?

SN: Karan Johar and other esteemed board members at our alliance dinner, launched the FEF's website, marking a ground-breaking initiative that empowers emerging fashion and lifestyle entrepreneurs with essential resources, investment, education, mentorship, and networking. Karan Johar, renowned in both the entertainment and fashion spheres, brings a wealth of experience and insight to FEF. His esteemed position on the board has played a pivotal role in enhancing the strategic direction of our initiative, establishing FEF as a key player in shaping the future of the fashion and entrepreneurial landscape. Working alongside Karan Johar and our other esteemed board members has been invaluable in realizing our vision and achieving tangible milestones. As we celebrate our initial successes, we reflect on the collaborative efforts that have propelled us forward. Gratitude extends to all involved in this journey, recognizing that it is a collective endeavor. Special thanks are reserved for Karan Johar for his dedicated contribution as a board member. Together, we are charting a course toward a more dynamic and influential future for the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund.

PD: What is the story behind the inception of the India Fashion Awards?

SN: It all began with my deep love for the fashion world and the incredible people who make it what it is. I wanted to create a special platform, not just an event but a movement, that could showcase the amazing creativity and innovation of fashion heroes to the world. FEF India Fashion Awards is more than just recognizing big names; it's about celebrating everyone who plays a role in the fashion scene. From designers to models, photographers, artisans, light men, sound engineers, and every hardworking individual behind the stage, the FEF India Fashion Awards is here to honor their outstanding contributions that are taking Indian fashion to new heights. The idea behind the FEF India Fashion Awards came from my belief in the importance of giving credit where it's due and celebrating the diverse talents that make the Indian fashion industry so vibrant. It's not just about awards; it's a big, joyful party that highlights the passion, dedication, and creativity that make the fashion scene in India truly special. Why celebrate only the garments? We must also consider the rich Indian heritage reflected in the Indian craftsmanship. FEF India Fashion Awards is about togetherness under one roof– celebrating everyone from the fashion fraternity. We are the umbrella of the entire ecosystem, including funding, networking, nurturing, and overall growth and support. This year at the FEF India Fashion Awards, we are introducing the 'Fashion for Good' theme, which revolves around sustainability and its global impact.

PD: What do you think is the future of fashion?

SN: According to a report, the Indian fashion market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11-12% to reach $115-125 billion by 2025. Looking ahead, fashion's future seems thrilling. It's all about cool ideas, fairness, and being good to our planet. Everyone gets to join the fashion fun and express themselves in different styles. Taking care of the Earth is a must, using eco-friendly materials and smart production methods. Technology adds a touch of magic, making our fashion experiences better. Recycling becomes a hero, making sure our clothes last longer. People team up to create a fashion world that's not just stylish but also kind to everyone and the environment. It's an exciting adventure, weaving together creativity, sustainability, and inclusivity. The whole world is using Indian craftsmanship and textiles, India positions itself very high and will do so in the future with the fashion and textile industry.

PD: What is your take on sustainable fashion and the practicality of its application?

SN: I strongly advocate for the significance of sustainable fashion and its practical application in the industry. It's not merely a passing trend but a crucial and achievable pathway for the fashion sector. Many brands are now embracing eco-friendly materials and ethical labor practices, fostering positive outcomes for both the environment and society. The momentum towards sustainability is undeniable, with a 2020 Nielsen survey revealing that 85% of Indian consumers actively consider sustainability factors when making purchasing decisions. This shift is not ephemeral but rather a lasting transformation that is expected to gain further traction. According to a report by ResearchAndMarkets.com, the Indian sustainable fashion market is projected to experience a growth rate of 10.6% from 2021 to 2026. This expansion is propelled by increasing consumer awareness, government initiatives, and improved accessibility to sustainable materials. It signifies a promising transition towards a fashion industry that prioritizes not only style but also environmental and social responsibility. In line with this commitment to sustainability, we are thrilled to announce the upcoming 4th edition of the FEF India Fashion Awards, to be held in Mumbai. Themed 'Fashion for Good', the event revolves around sustainability, advocating for a mission aligned with promoting eco-conscious practices within the industry. Through initiatives like these, we aim to inspire and drive meaningful change towards a more sustainable future for fashion. >>

MR. VAGISH PATHAK & KARAN JOHAR

<< PD: What were the major highlights of 2023 fashion that were your personal favorites?
SN: In the dynamic world of 2023 fashion, my highlights included a comeback of certain pieces from the 90's and early 2000's. I enjoyed looking at people playing with colors, textures, and aesthetics. But at the same time, I don't follow trends, I make trends. I also noticed the influence of films bringing a whimsical vibe to the fashion scene, making it another standout favorite of the year for me.

PD: How much influence does international fashion have on Indian fashion markets and designers?
SN: International fashion has a big impact on Indian fashion, and I see it as a good thing. It brings in new ideas and styles, allowing Indian designers to mix traditional and modern looks. This influence helps Indian designers be more creative, trying out different things and expanding their choices. They can blend our cultural styles with global trends, making fashion more exciting for us. It's also common for Indian and international designers to work together, sharing ideas and cultures. This collaboration not only makes Indian fashion more known globally but also shows the world how rich and diverse our traditions are.
Thanks to social media, we can easily see and try out international trends. It's like a two-way street – international fashion inspires us, and Indian fashion contributes to the global fashion scene. In simple terms, the mix of international and Indian fashion is like a cool dance where each side brings out the best in the other. It lifts our fashion world, creating a global style that combines the best of both.

PD: A few discrete designers feel that there are unnecessary imprints of Western fashion on Indian designer's collections. What is your take on that?
SN: In the world of fashion, I firmly believe in the essence of craftsmanship, celebrating diversity, and infusing deeper meanings into a designer's work. When it comes to incorporating Western influences into Indian designer collections, I don't perceive these imprints as unnecessary. Instead, I see them as a creative exploration, provided there is a substantial and meaningful rationale behind the fusion

of Indo-Western elements. The key lies in purposeful blending, where each design choice carries significance, contributing to the richness and narrative of the fashion creation. It's about embracing the global while preserving the cultural roots, creating a unique tapestry of styles with purpose and intention.

PD: Whether it is La Finesse, India Lifestyle Week, or Indian Bridal Fashion Week, what is your process of understanding the needs of the fashion environment?
SN: As a business entrepreneur in the fashion industry involved with shows like La Finesse, India Lifestyle Week, and Indian Bridal Fashion Week, my way of understanding the fashion scene is straightforward.
First, I keep a close eye on global and local fashion trends. I make sure to attend international fashion weeks and stay updated on what's in style. Second, I believe in working together with the fashion community. Engaging with designers and trendsetters helps me understand what people like and what's new in the fashion world. Listening to feedback is crucial for me. I actively seek opinions from participants, attendees, and others to know what works well and what can be improved in our events. I also stay tech-savvy by embracing digital platforms and keeping up with social media trends. This ensures our fashion showcases not only look great but also connect with a tech-savvy audience. My involvement in different aspects of the fashion industry, from founding the FEF India Fashion Awards (IFA) to establishing the Fashion Entrepreneur Fund (FEF), gives me a complete picture of what the industry needs. Through FEF India Fashion Awards, we celebrate creativity, and with FEF, we support the practical side of mentorship and funding, contributing to the growth of the fashion world. We also hosted a 'Show Directors Night' in the past to honor the renowned show directors in the Indian fashion landscape.

PD: The Fashion Entrepreneurship Fund is an innovative idea for the Indian fashion industry. What inspired you?
SN: The Fashion Entrepreneur Fund (FEF) is born out of a passion for nurturing talent and fostering innovation in the Indian fashion industry. As the founder of Talent Factory and the FEF India Fashion Awards (IFA), I recognized the need to go beyond acknowledging talent and provide practical support. There are an endless number of freelancers in the Indian fashion industry, and they do not have economic support in the system. We want to bridge that economic gap and also provide mentoring, support, and nurturing the dreams of the young India in this space. FEF, a ₹200-crore property, aims to address the crucial aspects of mentorship and funding for budding fashion entrepreneurs. FEF goes beyond financial assistance, establishing a venture studio that offers investments, mentorship, networking opportunities, and essential resources. In its inaugural year, FEF plans to invest a substantial ₹20 crores in promising fashion entrepreneurs. FEF is not just a fund; it's a comprehensive initiative geared towards empowering emerging talents and entrepreneurs, ensuring they flourish in the dynamic fashion landscape. >>

BOARD MEMBERS

"Excited to connect with the lively readers of Popp Dapp! I want to share a message that matches the lively spirit of the fashion world. Our journey in fashion has been amazing. From a humble beginning to groundbreaking initiatives, Talent Factory and FEF India Fashion Awards, I've seen how fashion can transform. Now, with FEF, we're exploring new areas, helping new fashion entrepreneurs, and shaping the future of the industry. To all the dreamers and fans, let's celebrate our uniqueness because the fashion world is on the verge of something incredible. Come join me in this adventure of creativity, innovation, and shared success. The strands of passion and ambition create a story that goes beyond limits. Here's to a future where Indian fashion not only expands but also reaches new heights."

- SANJAY NIGAM, Founder of FEF India Fashion Awards & Fashion Entrepreneur Fund & Talent Factory

<< PD: The fashion industry is constantly changing & evolving. What is the best technique to stay relevant in the fashion business?
SN: In the fast-changing world of fashion, the best way to stay in the game is to simply be yourself. Your unique style is what makes you special, and it's something that will always be in fashion. Don't be afraid to show who you are through your designs. Never stop being creative. Your ideas are valuable, and the more you express yourself, the more likely you are to find success in the fashion world. Keep pushing yourself to come up with new and exciting things. Connect with others who love what you love. Build a network of friends and colleagues who share your passion for fashion. Working together and sharing experiences can bring fresh ideas and open up new opportunities. Most importantly, don't give up on your dreams. The road may be tough at times, but if you stay true to yourself and keep pursuing what you love, you'll find your way in the ever-changing world of fashion.

"Your creativity and ideas are valuable, so express yourself fearlessly through your designs. You are not going to become a designer after your degree, what you do post your degree is what will make you a good designer.

PD: How do you identify the spark in a candidate while screening for FEF (Fashion Entrepreneurship Fund)?
SN: In selecting candidates for the Fashion Entrepreneurship Fund (FEF), our screening process is designed to identify the spark of potential in aspiring entrepreneurs. We cast a wide net, tapping into a pool of 1.5 lakh applicants from across the country. Applicants are invited to fill out a form detailing their business plans. This form serves as the initial filter, allowing us to assess factors such as the uniqueness of their ideas, the presence of a minimum viable product (MVP), and strong projections indicative of their entrepreneurial acumen. From there, selected candidates advance to the next round, where a series of auditions take place. These auditions serve as a platform to evaluate various aspects of the candidates' capabilities, including their social media presence, marketing prowess, and ability to pitch compelling case scenarios. Through these rounds, we aim to unearth individuals with not only innovative ideas but also the skills and determination to bring them to fruition. Ultimately, the top 20 finalists emerge from this rigorous selection process. They can participate in the final round. Through this comprehensive screening process, we aim to uncover and support the brightest talents poised to make a significant impact in the fashion industry.

PD: How interested and accepting are the Indian investors of out-of-the-box ideas of the young fashion entrepreneurs?
SN: Indian investors are increasingly interested and open to out-of-the-box ideas from young fashion entrepreneurs. The changing dynamics of the fashion industry and a growing appreciation for creativity create a favorable environment for unique ventures. Investors recognize the potential for groundbreaking developments and understand that supporting unconventional ideas is an investment in the future of the fashion sector. This positive shift encourages young entrepreneurs to seek investment in their creative endeavors.

PD: What advice would you want to give to the budding fashion students?
SN: To budding fashion students, my advice is simple: embrace your uniqueness. In the dynamic world of fashion, staying true to your style is the key to standing out. Your creativity and ideas are valuable, so express yourself fearlessly through your designs. Keep pushing your creative boundaries. You are not going to become a designer after your degree, what you do post your degree is what will make you a good designer.

PD: Along with designing, newer fields are opening in the fashion domain - such as Fashion Communication, AI in fashion, etc. What is your take on that?
SN: The emergence of fields like Fashion Communication and the integration of AI in the fashion industry is incredibly exciting. Embracing these trends isn't just a necessity; it's a strategic move to stay relevant in the evolving landscape. Technology offers opportunities for innovation, personalization, and sustainability. The synergy between traditional design and cutting-edge technology is shaping a dynamic and forward-thinking industry. Embracing these newer fields is not just an option but a way to lead the fashion domain into an innovative and relevant future.

PD: Are there any future expansion plans for FEF?
SN: Looking ahead, FEF has ambitious plans for expansion, with a carefully outlined roadmap for the coming years. We have already started the pre-registrations for the first year where we will make a substantial investment of ₹20 crores. Building on this initial success, our trajectory includes doubling the investment to ₹40 crores in the subsequent year, 2024-25, as we strive for the prestigious status of a Unicorn in the entrepreneurial landscape. In our 3rd year, we plan to franchise it to the top fashion capitals of the world. This expansion plan not only signifies growth but also underscores our commitment to fostering innovation and empowering talents on a global scale. Over 5 years, our comprehensive strategy will see us invest more than ₹500 crores in nurturing budding fashion and lifestyle entrepreneurs, cementing our dedication to driving impactful change in the industry.■

POPP DAPP: At the age of 15, being the youngest player in the national team in the 2010 World Cup. How was the feeling?

RANI RAMPAL: 2010 has been a very special year for me as it was a big deal to play the World Cup for India at the age of 15. At that age, you do not know much to play in such a high-pressure tournament. But that World Cup for a turning point for my life and my career, where I got an opportunity and platform to perform at that age. I got a lot of motivation and confidence for not looking back. Describing that feeling in words is not possible. But yes, it was an honor for me to represent India – because very few people get that opportunity. I learnt one thing in life; do not take anything for granted – stay consistent in your hard work and your efforts for many years. Seeing international top-level players playing with dedication and consistency has inspired me a lot!

PD: How has your story started?

RR: I started playing jockey when I was 7 in Haryana's small district. A lot of girls played hockey in the school (Shri Gurunanak Pritam Senior Secondary School) I started playing it. Since those girls also played for India, so I thought I could also do something in life and I also wanted to play hockey for India. Being a girl child in Haryana was not an easy journey, as I had to convince my parents as well. They also had a lot of societal pressure and heard a lot from others about my decision. A lot of stigmas like 'how would a girl go out of the house and play hockey,' 'She would bring a bad name for the family,' etc. – my parent endured all that. My father did support me a lot to start my journey. I always wanted to do something that would open the way for all the girls. Though it has been a tough journey, I have learned to do hard work, have passion for the dream, fight with every situation, and never give up in life!

INDIAN HOCKEY TEAM PLAYER

SHE'S A VANGUARD

Rani Rampal

PD: As per you, what should be the top 3 qualities of an Indian women's hockey team captain?
RR: Firstly, it is always an honor and privilege for any player to represent India. I was privileged to get the honor of representing and then leading the team for India. Finishing fourth in the Olympics is like a dream come true. Three qualities of a captain should start with leading by example. Do it yourself first, and the team will follow. Secondly, a captain should know how to keep your team as a unit. So that performance as a team is consistent. Thirdly, make sure that each player is on the same page in the team. What is the vision & values of the team, should be clear to each member. And its captains should remind the team every day that the country comes first!

PD: Being awarded with Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna and Pandam Shri Award in 2020. What was your first reaction when you got the news?
RR: Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award is the highest supporting honor by the Government of India to any athlete, and so is the Padma Shri Award as a civilian honor. My years of hard work precede this honor for me. Both these awards have somewhere given recognition to the women's hockey team of India. Firstly, the feeling of getting these awards is unbelievable – it is like a dream. When Padma Shri was announced, I was in New Zealand and there was a difference in time zone. So, when it was announced I was sleeping at that time. When I got up and saw loads of calls and messages – my first reaction was of some misshaping at home. But when I got the news – it was a very emotional moment for me!

PD: Why did you choose hockey over other sports such as cricket, badminton, tennis, etc.?
RR: Hokey is our national game and usually, kids who play hokey have a very poor background, and so do I. Technically I did not have the option of playing games like cricket, badminton, and tennis. Though it was tough for Jockey as well, since I come from a city that has one of the best hockey academies in India – more than 70 girls have represented India from there. It inspires you to see those girls and makes you choose the same sport.

PD: Working as a coach with Sports Authority of India and training budding jockey players. How was your experience?
RR: Jockey has given me an identity in life. I had never thought that I would reach this point through jockey. Sharing my experiences, struggles, and techniques with students via coaching them to help them improve their game – gives a lot of satisfaction.

PD: As a sportsperson, there needs to be a perfect balance between physical fitness & mental health. How do you maintain both under extremely stressful situations?
RR: People expect a sportsperson to have top-level physical fitness. But along with physical fitness, mental health is equally important. Sports are very cruel; some days you win and some days you lose, and you also get a lot of injuries. Physical fitness can be achieved by training with people around you, but no one knows what is going on inside your brain – you alone need to deal with that. Though we have psychologists to help us with mental fitness, when you are in the game – it is all you. I believe in prayers, so do whatever you believe in – be it meditation, yoga, etc. Everyone has his/ her ways to calm their mind. But positive thinking is the key!

> ***"Work hard, have passion for the dream, fight with every situation, and never give up in life!***

PD: How supportive has your family been in your journey so far?
RR: My family has been hugely sporty in my journey. Whatever their capacity was, they did more than that. I was not a stubborn child. I understood the fact that the parents would do the best that they could, like providing me food, clothing, and shelter – the rest I would achieve with my hard work. My coaches and senior players have also helped me a lot. The biggest support of my family has been that they have allowed me to play hockey. Other than that, you need to fight your own battle.

PD: What advice would you want to give to budding female athletes coming from small towns in India?
RR: Capability is not a gender thing; it is all about your passion to achieve something. Keeping excuses on the side, are you willing to put in the hard work? Indeed, is a bit tougher for girls to walk that path of success, but since so many girls have proved themselves – so can we. Have your vision, believe in yourself, and think of setting an example for society.

PD: What major challenges did you face in your sporting career?
RR: The first challenge was the fact that I was a girl in a small town in India. Secondly, surviving and playing with the injuries – like 15 years of stubborn back pain. Facing a lot of failures, where you thought you could have won the meddle – but you did not. Not winning the World Cup and then re-starting the 4 years of cycle, and putting your mind, body, and soul in the field. Challenges always make you strong; accept the challenge, work on it, and take it positively! ■

THE SCRIPT SHIBBOLETH

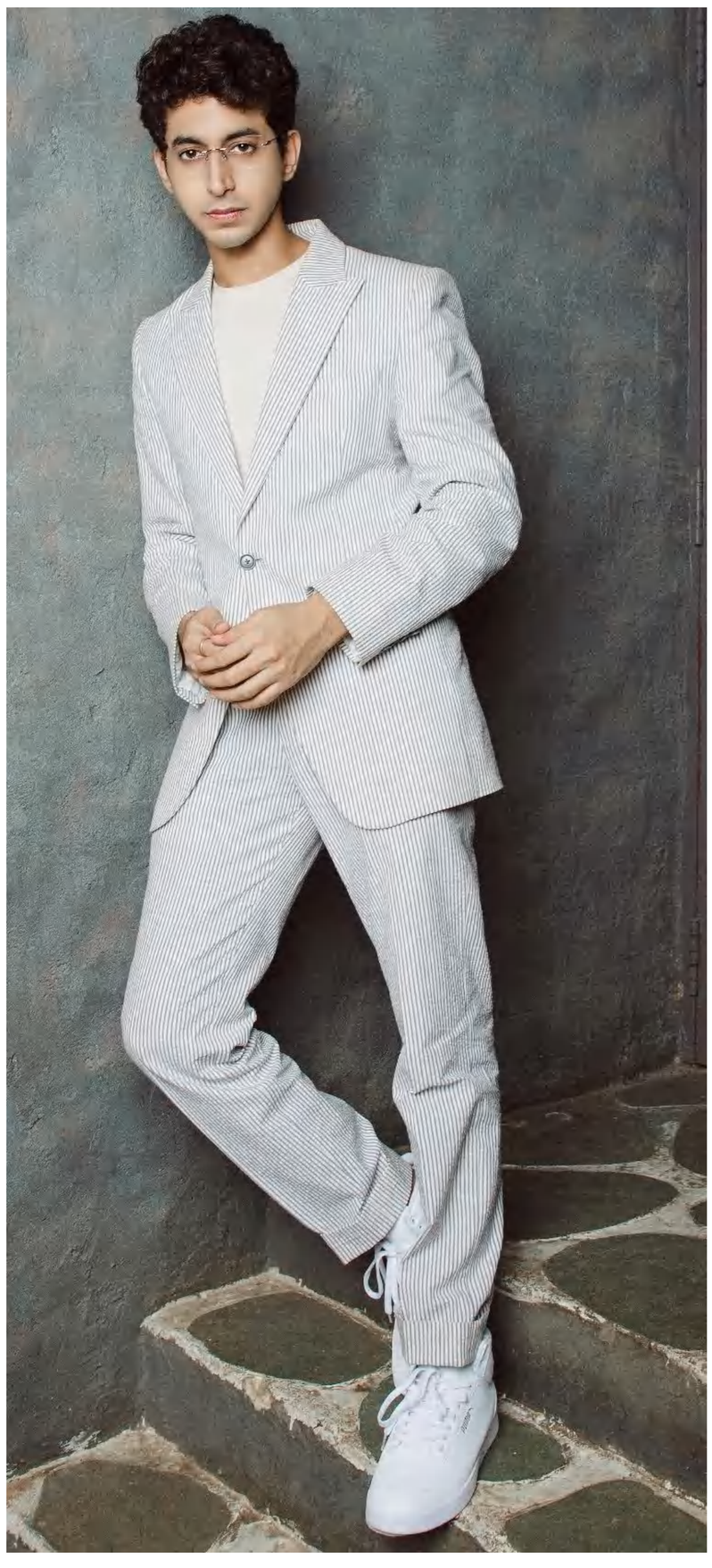
MIHIR AHUJA

I want to work good directors, young writers, filmmaker, and good scripts. I am a sucker of a good script!

POPP DAPP: Whether it is 'Super 30', 'Made in Heaven – Season 2', or 'Archies', your project/ role choices have been versatile. What is your checklist while choosing a project?
MIHIR AHUJA: To be honest, I have been lucky to be getting these roles. I always wanted to be known as the versatile actor and I consider myself to be one. My only checklist while choosing any project is a good scrip. If a script has the potential – it does not matter how big or long my part is. If I love the story – I am sold!

PD: Who is Mihir?
I am an actor. I am born and brought-up in Jamshedpur and I have been staying in Mumbai since past 7 years. The main reason to be here was acting and that is why I chose HR College for Commerce & Economics (MU) for my graduation (B. Com). From the very first day of college, I started auditioning and after a lot of rejections for 2-3 years – I finally got my first break. I did an advertisement for Colgate Super Flexi alongside Virat Kohli. Since then, I have been giving a lot of auditions and doing advertisements. Then Super30 with Hritik Roshan and Bard of Blood happened.

PD: How did 'Archies' happen to you? And how has your experience been?
MA: While I was shooting for Made in Heaven S2, I had no idea that I will have scenes with Zoya (Zoya Akhtar). And no one told me beforehand that I would be shooting in front of her; I was a bit nervous about that. It was an interrogation scene in the police station which Zoya was directing. After the shoot, she took me to a corner and said, "where did you learn acting from? I really loved how you did the scene;" and I was on cloud 9! There she told me about 'Archies' and she would want me to audition for it. After when the casting director for Archies, Nandini Shrike and Karan Mali (who were the casting directors for Made in Heaven as well) called me for the audition. And after 2-3 round of audition – I got the part of 'Jughead' in the Archies! It has been a life changing experience for me as the whole cast was together for more than 2 years – we did a lot of workshops together. It felt like a bootcamp! Shooting with Zoya on set and Tiger baby Team was surreal.



PD: Was acting always the plan, or did that happen over time?
MA: Acting was always the plan. I do not remember but parents told me that when I was a toddler, I use to cry watching television shows. For e.g. 'Say na something to Anupam Uncle' was a show where Anupam Kher Ji use to interview children – I always use to cry to be on that show. I think I was born to do TV and cinema. I always was inclined towards performing arts, street & stage plays, dancing, beatboxing in my school and college. And I chose acting as my career as it is the amalgamation of everything.

PD: Though 'Archies' has received a mixed bag of responses from the audience (so does every not-so-mainstream work of cinema, it has received a lot of reverence from critics and Industry veterans. How do you handle both appreciation & criticism?
MA: It is part and parcel of our job to handle appreciation and criticism. You need to handle criticism really well, because you need to move on – you cannot sulk or be happy for just one project. For eg. If a project does really well, you can't just be happy and not do anything else. Everything has an end – you got to move on. Lots of people did love the movie, and it is better to focus on the positives of life. People would have different opinions about anything as life is like a yin-yang

PD: What fires you as a performer?
MA: My passion and drive for performing arts, to play different characters, and to be in front of the camera. I still remember the day when I first faced the camera, I am still grateful to all the directors, casting directors, and producers for trusting me and giving me the work. Thinking that there are so many people working for you on a filmset – fuels you as an artist. I was to do good stories – that fuels me.

PD: What does your preparation process for any specific character look like?
MA: Preparation for any projects starts 2-3 months prior for me (depending on the gravity of the character/ role). But me preparation process is a secret!

PD: How do you maintain your mental health in such a competitive industry like entertainment?
MA: Mental health is extremely important these days as in the era of social media where people just comment anything and everything and they have the freedom of speech – you got to have a string heart and personality to not let that affect you. You need to love and believe in yourself. You should be moderately open to criticism, but with a limit – because it is a scary word.■

I want to work good directors, young writers, filmmakers, and good scripts. I am a sucker of a good script!

The Skincare Fanatic
SUNGJEMLILA LONGKUMER
Certified Cosmetologist & Content Creator

POPP DAPP: What is the major misconception of the current generation about skincare and cosmetology procedures? SUNGEMLILA LONGKUMER: There are a lot of misconceptions - that Skincare isn't necessary for men, or that kids as young as 9 or 10 need an extensive Skincare routine and these are false People are also hesitant to get cosmetologically procedures done as they have this notion that it is somehow dangerous and that once you start a treatment your skin becomes worst if you happen to stop the treatment. This is not true.

PD: What is your diegesis behind this skincare enthusiasm? SL: I have always had breakouts since I have an oily skin type but when I was in the 12th grade, I developed a severe amount of acne I consulted a few dermatologists and if it helped but this also gave me a strong desire to have control over my skin and to be able to understand what my skin needs so that is when I started doing my research to understand skincare better.

PD: What is the approximate percentage contribution of good genetic makeup while determining skin quality and texture? SL: Perhaps 60%.

PD: There is a lot of skincare information available over the internet. What is the trick of identifying the authenticity of any cosmetology procedure recommendation? SL: Check the previous works and testimonials before doing any procedures.

PD: How did it feel to win the NDTV 2023 Skincare Influencer of the Year award? SL: Winning the award was such a joyous and rewarding achievement for me. Content creation as my profession is what I enjoy and keeps me happy every day and to win an award for my profession just was the icing on the cake. I was also the only Naga from my state, to be nominated for the awards so I was immensely proud to represent my state.

PD: How effective do you feel homemade skincare packs and lotions are while maintaining skin health? SL: With the right Homemade DIYs, we can boost a Skincare routine but there are many DIYs to keep away from your skin.

PD: Our skin quality majorly depends on what we eat. What are the dietary dos and don'ts that you would want to recommend? SL: Having acne-prone, my major concern is to avoid sugar, dairy & white flour. I do not restrict myself to other foods much because I do not want my life to pass by while I live in fear.

PD: India is a diversified country where skin quality, texture, tone, and skin needs/ requirements change in every state. What is the one work-for-all skincare hack that you can give? SL: One hack that works for all is hydration in and out. A healthy barrier is happy skin

PD: As a cosmetologist, what are the major skin issues young adults face in the winter? How can they overcome them? SL: Skin dryness is a major factor in winter. Combat winter dryness with ingredients like ceramides, snail mucin, peptides, and hyaluronic acid.

PD: What are your future plans? SL: I plan to continue doing what I love and not fall for societal norms to do anything else that doesn't bring me joy. ■

"There is nothing better than taking care of yourself and taking care of your skin is of utmost importance as this is the one thing that you will be wearing for the rest of your life.

THEY ARE US!

THEY ARE US!

HE/HIM

Kristimus Sohshang

As a photographer, the pursuit is to encapsulate the essence of authenticity in every shot. Whether it's manipulating light, selecting the perfect lens, or finding the ideal vantage point, the technical aspects pale in comparison to the profound uniqueness of certain subjects. "They're Us" is a photograph series dedicated to capturing individuals from the LGBTQ+ community in their most unfiltered and genuine state.

The societal discrimination faced by this community, labeled as 'not normal ' and subjected to derogatory terms, has always stirred emotions within that transcends verbal articulation. Witnessing members dressing up for events only to endure judgment and name-calling for their self-expression and flamboyance deeply unsettled me.

In these portraits, I aim to strip away the facades and capture them in their rawest form—their expressions, faces, and body language, free from the burden of societal opinions. The deliberate choice of black-and-white photography serves a dual purpose. While the LGBTQ+ community is rightfully associated with vibrant colors, presenting these images devoid of literal color, emphasizes their commonality with all of us. Their colorful personalities and flamboyance are facets, not defining features.

Just as in any person's life, a subtle undercurrent of sadness may exist, serving as a poignant counterpoint to their ever-illuminating and evolving rainbow. I extend my gratitude to the members of the Rainbow Hills Association for graciously participating in this project, and helping to shed light on the shared humanity that unites us all.

- RAJAT CHAND

SHE/HER

Dilu Gurung

Safal Subba

HE/HIM

HE/SHE/THEY

Sajan Basnett

Sajuri Desu

SHE/HER

THEY ARE US!

HE/HIM

Nigael Chettri

HE/THEY

Aranck

SHE/HER

Pema Choki Bhutia

THEY ARE US!

Yashu Lama

HE/HIM

SHE/HER

Viveka Gurung

HE/HIM

Bishal Rai

THEY ARE US!

Rishab Nanda

UNAPOLOGETICALLY IN FASHION

"I want to represent the community (LGBTQIA+) with a very true picture of what it stands for!"

I have been out of the closet since I was 15 and one of the first people, I told were my parents – and they reacted well. I am from Delhi living with my mother, father, and younger brother. I was born and brought up in Hyderabad, moved to Bangalore, and then finally I am in Delhi. I did my double major in Business and Marketing from Delhi University.

POPP DAPP: What is the story behind 'a.list.club.'? And what does it stand for?
RISHAB NANDA: 'A.list.club' is a beautiful marketing agency which is a friend of mine's. They reached out to me when I was just starting as a content creator. They have helped me build my profile, pushed me in the right collaborations, circles, areas, and events, and encouraged me to make more content. They accepted me as who I am and pushed me to be myself. The growth that I have as a content creator is all because of them.

PD: Did fashion & lifestyle always fascinate you?
RN: Fashion has always been fascinating for me as I took the route that people do not usually take. I will not mind going to the women's or kid's section to buy something if I like that. If I like a skirt or a furry jacket, I will not shy away from shopping from any place other than the contemporary. I always go for something different, wacky, loud, and which people will not usually do!

PD: Your bio says, "Gay content specially made to trigger homophobes." Being homophobe is equivalent to being anti-human. What is your take on that?
RN: Being homophobic is what our culture has inculcated in us. Our forefathers told our fathers, they told their children, and so on. The cycle has been going on for ages. That is why I am here to break it and let people know that though change is difficult – but we can do it. It is not anti-human as they have been told for their entire life that this is wrong. But at the end of the day, they are human beings – they learn through mistakes. But they are also open to learning.

PD: You love traveling! What does your 2024 travel itinerary look like?
RN: Exploring places. Explore the North-East and South of India. I love Bangkok, so would want to go back there again. Then south-east countries such as Japan and Vietnam. Also, the middle-east.

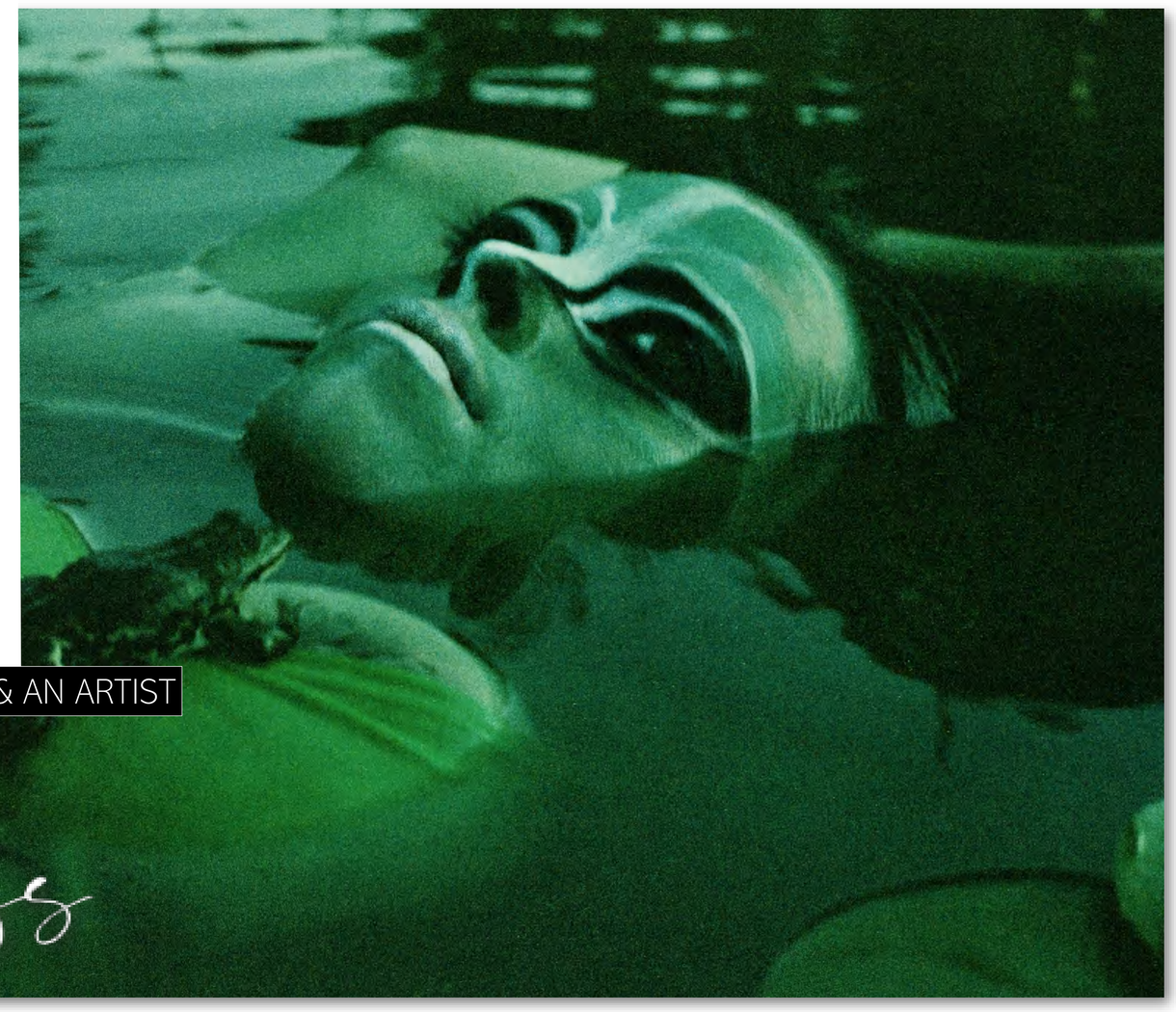
PD: Are you a solo traveler? Do you believe that solo traveling helps you find your true self?
RN: I have solo-traveled once and it was an amazing experience, as I met a lot of new people. And I love meeting new people and listening to their experiences & stories. In a way, it gives me a heads-up of what I should and should not do in life. I am not necessarily a solo traveler, but when I once went on one – I loved it!

PD: Makeup for men is the latest talk of the town. What do you think about that?
RN: Makeup is definitely for men. They do not need to go for a full face all the time. They can just apply concealer, a little bit of foundation, and a clear mascara – so that they look groomed and clean. I love to go for louder looks, as I like being that way – loud & proud.

PD: How supportive has your family been in your entire journey?
RN: They have been the biggest & strongest pillars of my life. My mother has always been there and supported me, regardless of the objections from the elders. I absolutely love her for that. My brother is a sweetheart and he loves me no matter what! My father is also a very kindhearted person.

PD: What are your future plans?
RN: To grow as an individual and go forward in life. I want to represent the community (LGBTQIA+) with a very true picture of what it stands for. I would want to spread awareness through Instagram or doing a gay role in a movie. I think the LGBTQIA+ roles in the Indian movie world are done by straight actors and most of the time – they miss the essence of it.■

POLAROID NINJA



EDITORIAL PHOTOGRAPHER & AN ARTIST

Alina Gross

I have been taking photographs for 25 years and have experienced the change from analog to digital photography. The photographic models have also changed in the meantime; Photographers like Helmuth Newton or Terry Richardson used to be my role models, but today I see their view of femininity through different eyes and have developed my position on it.

POPP DAPP: The main inspiration for your artwork is the "female body." What aspect of it fascinates you the most?
ALINA GROSS: I discovered the subject of the body intuitively: I first started taking self-portraits of myself and then when I became pregnant, it was clear to me: the subject of sexuality, birth, and becoming a mother are all connected and it felt right, to take up and address these topics photographically. I used flowers as a metaphor for sexuality and birth, I showed pregnancy from a new perspective. I then developed concepts and compositions based on the themes and motifs and then received a great response to my work through Instagram, especially from feminist platforms such as @curatedbygirls, @girlgaze, @feminist, and more. My works were published in Vogue Magazine and more. I am interested in the changes in the body, which, despite the challenges of life, transforms its dignity and beauty into the present. I see this beauty, the beauty of imperfection, as my task and goal in my work. To get women to appreciate themselves and their bodies instead of feeling guilty or ugly because it does not conform to presumed perfection.

PD: The definition of femininity is constantly evolving through study, exploration, and research. What is new-age femininity for you?
AG: For me, new-age femininity means talking about taboo topics as a matter of course. It is a de-romanticization and idealization of femininity. An example: Mother-child images are shown very romantically in art history (think of the Madonna images with Christ), especially in Christian iconography. When I became a mother, I understood that reality is different. I felt guilty and powerless. I then began to take pictures that also showed the melancholic side and spoke to the grief and despair.

PD: How did you develop your interest in photography? AG: I have wanted to do photography full-time since I was at school, but it took studying and a few years of apprenticeship to earn money with photography. My passion for photography has only grown since then.

Alina Gross
Orchid Woman

PD: Gender has moved away from male-female polarities and has become a continuum. Do you think femininity is no longer limited to a "she"?
AG: Gender fluidity has become socially acceptable in the Western world. There has always been travesty and androgyny, especially in art, theater, and fashion. This is a gift of democracy to us. There are of course many totalitarian countries that reject non-binary people and even put them under the death penalty. Tolerance and education will be necessary to move the fixed structures.

PD: Have you faced challenges and obstacles in your career because of your idea of femininity?
AG: I have experienced a lot of positive things in my career so far, especially in the form of great projects with great artists and new experiences. I am very grateful for that. But no light without shadows. I have often been attacked online, insulted with nasty comments, and have also experienced envy and resentment. But I think that applies to many successful people.

PD: Giving women a voice and sensitizing society to listen to women - these are two completely different things. What do you think of it? And how far have we come as a society so far?
AG: Women must give themselves a voice. They cannot expect anyone to do it for them. They must emancipate themselves by finding the voice that is right for them. Through my photography, I have found my voice, which is also understood interculturally. There are other ways too. Society can only listen to them when they take themselves seriously enough.

PD: Is there any advice you would like to give to young aspiring photographers and artists? AG: Change industry. (Joke)

PD: The female body is too complex to understand or explain. He just needs to be respected and not stereotyped. Do you believe in it?
AG: Every woman is physically built differently and their access to intimacy is more difficult than for men. The clitoris is hidden in the vulva and must first be laboriously explored. Reproduction requires a male orgasm, not a female one. Men often have more direct access to their sexual organs and are satisfied more quickly. Women often need more time and must get physically and emotionally involved in sex. This is often a long process and not always productive.

PD: Tell us about your current projects.
AG: I am currently working on a project about the connection between humans and machines. I find it exciting how AI is taking over many fields of photography, science, and communication, and would like to talk about it in my next exhibition. In May I will take part in the Image Nation Paris group exhibition in Paris. I am looking forward to this.

PD: What are your future plans?
AG: I would like to do more teaching and research in visual arts. I love talking to others about my passion and sharing my knowledge. I would also like to work with Vogue magazine and exhibit and publish internationally.■

"The female gaze in photography exists. It is ruthless and self-critical!

Do not take fashion too seriously, have fun with it. Try to create your style. And it is okay to repeat an outfit (if you change 50% of it).

Adil Lokhandwala

HE'S A SNEAKER MAVEN

I have always been artistic since I was a kid. Heavily influenced by hip-hop culture from the West. I started doing graffiti and started doing graffiti on sneakers as walls were more of a cost. My friends kept giving me their pairs to customize and that is how I got into sneakers. While doing this I studied marketing and understood how brands work. I learned graphic design to create digital design assets. Soon I started designing print packaging for brands and then the creation of a brand identity together along with go-to-market strategy. Last few years I have been working with an automobile company to identify industry trends and design vehicular aesthetics. On my own time, I take up new and unrelated branding projects to stay creative.

POPP DAPP: Tell us about your admiration for sneakers.
ADIL LOKHANDWALA: Where do I begin and what do I say? It is not admiration it is passion it is love. I am not a collector or anything. I love the thrill of cop sneakers and wear them. Every year while I add to the collection, I also remove or give away a few pairs as they are beat up, or just gone out of style. I rarely buy resale. And only a handful of luxury pairs. But I recently had a yolo moment and bought my grails at resale. The Jordan 4 kaws. Pls do not ask how much!

PD: Was getting into fashion always the plan, or did that happen over time?
AL: I think it happened as a by-product of being a sneakerhead and into graffiti and street culture through hip-hop music at a young age. It is funny how I started with Baggy in the 90s and here we are back into it.

PD: How do you measure the success of your influence and the ROI for the brands you partner with?
AL: I am not an influencer; I just make content that I like it is mostly funny stuff. The brands I have made content for, have been in my style and I measure it by feedback from the partnering brand itself. Or recurring projects from them.

PD: What is fashion for you?
AL: Fashion for me is just how you style. Without style, there is no fashion. I can have the coolest stuff in my closet but if I do not style it right, I am looking like a branded fool.

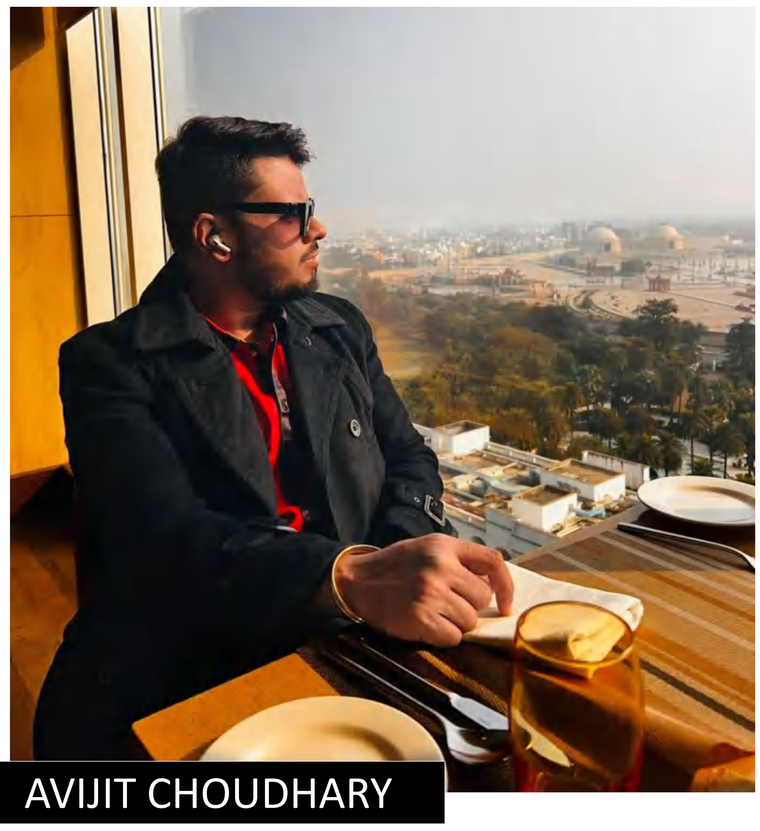
PD: How do you adapt to the changing needs of the fashion & entertainment industry?
AL: I think if you are into a hip-hop lifestyle, it just happens to you subconsciously. Suddenly it all makes sense and you are in the middle of it.

PD: What do you believe is the most important trend in influencer marketing right now, and how are you leveraging that?
AL: The most important for sure needs originality. Whatever I do, I do it my way with my essence and humor and that just comes naturally. (Again, I am just someone who does this for fun and not for money so I do not care how much I am influencing anyone if I am enjoying making content).

PD: What recent trends in the fashion industry have caught your attention and why?
AL: The 3D printed fabrics, return of the retro and glitter for sure! I see the class meeting street and that is fascinating.

PD: How do you stay up-to-date with the latest fashion trends, technologies, and innovations?
AL: I think it has got a lot to do with music and Instagram. More importantly one needs to have the ability to register what they see. Visual consumption is at an all-time high and we just see and forget anything.

PD: What are your future plans?
I need to buy two additional rooms in the house. One for sneakers and one for my clothes haha. I am wondering if I should get into streetwear. I created this local Pune streetwear brand a few years back for someone. They could not handle their operations so it went bust. But it gave me some very interesting insights and an idea for something different.■



AVIJIT CHOUDHARY

Celestial Trailblazers

Welcome, to celestial trailblazers! Our latest edition on "Popp Dapp", where we invite you to immerse yourselves in the cosmic currents as we blend tarot magic with fashion charisma, vibrant hues, and the intricacies of human connections. Unveil your unique style, decode the celestial messages, and embark on a journey through the realms of friendship and situation-ships.

Embark on your cosmic journey, where style meets destiny, and relationships dance under the celestial sky. May your wardrobe and connections sparkle with cosmic allure! For a personalised reading get onto to chat with Avijit, founder of @yourtarotindia on Instagram.

LADY GAGA

Aries (March 21 - April 19):
Tarot Card: The Emperor – You have a Leadership quality and very ambitious.
Fashion: Bold power suits, statement accessories are worth your class.
Color: Fiery reds and yellows, will suit you best
Relationships: Best paired with Leo for passion.
Friendship: Aries aligns well with Sagittarius for adventurous camaraderie.
Situation-ship: Dynamic connections with Gemini for spontaneous fun and pleasure.

ADELE

Taurus (April 20 - May 20):
Tarot Card: The Hierophant - You are very Grounded and traditional.
Fashion: Luxurious fabrics, timeless pieces are your things
Color: Earthy greens and browns will make you look wow
Relationships: Harmonious with Virgo for stability.
Friendship: Taurus finds a loyal friend in Capricorn.
Situation-ship: Taurus connects well with Scorpio for passionate flings

MARILYN MONROE

Gemini (May 21 - June 20):
Tarot Card: The Lovers – You have the Duality and an adaptable personality.
Fashion: very versatile, eclectic, vibrant patterns will make you look amazing
Color: Playful and vibrant hues will suit you the best
Relationships: Thrives with Libra for shared communication.
Friendship: Gemini bonds effortlessly with Aquarius.
Situation-ship: Flirtatious connections with Aries for spontaneous fun.

MARGOT ROBBIE

Cancer (June 21 - July 22):
Tarot Card: The Chariot – You are Nurturing yet determined.
Fashion: Soft fabrics, vintage-inspired looks, are only for you
Color: Sea-inspired blues and whites, are your colour pallet
Relationships: Flourishes with Scorpio for depth.
Friendship: Cancer connects emotionally with Pisces.
Situation-ship: Intense attractions with Leo for passionate moments.

JENIFER LOPEZ

Leo (July 23 - August 22):
Tarot Card: Strength – You are Bold and charismatic.
Fashion: Regal, attention-grabbing, gold accents, no one can carry the way you do it.
Color: Rich purples and golds, as you need to stand out in the crowd
Relationships: Ideal match with Aries for passion.
Friendship: Leo enjoys the company of fellow fire sign Sagittarius.
Situation-ship: Spontaneous connections with Gemini for playful encounters on bed.

BEYONCE

Virgo (August 23 - September 22):
Tarot Card: The Hermit – You guys are very Analytical and introspective.
Fashion: Clean lines, tailored pieces, neutral colors, you know that's the best for you
Color: Earthy and muted tones, you carry it with confidence
Relationships: Flourishes with Taurus for long supportive relationships.
Friendship: Virgo connects intellectually with Capricorn.
Situation-ship: Virgo values stability and may find it doing more often with Taurus.

KIM KARDASHIAN

Libra (September 23 - October 22):
Tarot Card: Justice – just like your zodiac your card also says you are Pursuit of balance and fairness.
Fashion: Elegant, balanced, soft fabrics, pastels, its hard to carry pastels but you guys can do it so well. That pastels synonym is Libra 😉
Color: Soft pinks and blues are your thing.
Relationships: Flourishes with Gemini for shared values.
Friendship: Libra enjoys the harmony of Aquarius.
Situation-ship: Flirtatious connections with Sagittarius for seductive moments.

MICHELLE OBAMA

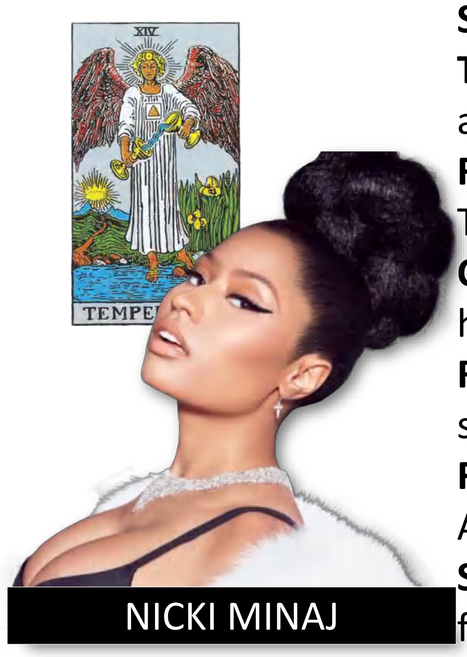
Capricorn (December 22 - January 19):
Tarot Card: The Devil – I know I am Ambitious and disciplined.
Fashion: Classic, sophisticated, structured pieces, only a Capricorn knows to team it all
Color: Dark greens and blues, will attract more eyes
Relationships: Thrives with Pisces for support.
Friendship: Capricorn connects with Virgo for practicality.
Situation-ship: Capricorn values stability with one partner than many and may find it with Taurus.

KENDALL JENNER

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21):
Tarot Card: Death – Don't worry Death in tarot means Transformative and intense. Yes that's your personality
Fashion: Edgy, mysterious, dark and sensual styles. Damn you look hot in these.
Color: Deep reds and blacks are your favourite
Relationships: Strong connection with Cancer for loyalty.
Friendship: Scorpio bonds emotionally with Pisces.
Situation-ship: Intense attractions with Leo for passionate moments under the blanket.

JENNIFER ANISTON

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18):
Tarot Card: The Star – You are Quirky and avant-garde.
Fashion: Quirky, avant-garde, futuristic styles, will make you look best
Color: Electric blues and silvers are your colours.
Relationships: Strong connection with Sagittarius for adventure.
Friendship: Aquarius enjoys the intellectual company of Libra.
Situation-ship: Flirtatious connections with Aries for spontaneous fun.



NICKI MINAJ

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21):
Tarot Card: Temperance – Such a Bohemian and adventurous personality.
Fashion: Bohemian, adventurous, bold prints. That's my style I'm a Sagiiiiii..
Color: Warm and vibrant hues, before the bros & hoes!
Relationships: Compatible with Aquarius for shared freedom.
Friendship: Sagittarius enjoys the spontaneity of Aries.
Situation-ship: Dynamic connections with Gemini for those extra hours of pleasure.

RIHANNA

Pisces (February 19 - March 20):
Tarot Card: The Moon – Dreamy, ethereal, and classy as hell
Fashion: Dreamy, ethereal, flowing fabrics will make you going
Color: Soft purples and seafoam greens,
Relationships: Harmonious with Capricorn for grounding.
Friendship: Pisces connects emotionally with Cancer.
Situation-ship: Intense attractions with Scorpio for passionate moments.

ABOUT THE TAROT READER | AVIJIT CHOUDHARY

Avijit is a seasoned tarot card reader with 17 years of experience and the founder of Your Tarot India. Inspired by a TV series in 9th grade, Avijit ventured on a voyage into the mystical world of divination, specializing in love, relationships, career, and even situationships. His holistic approach incorporates numerology, signature analysis, and palmistry. As a block chief of Nichiren Buddhism, Avijit finds solace and positivity by guiding clients worldwide - to self-discovery and empowerment.

AGILE, AUTHENTIC, & AMBITIOUS

"From being an entrepreneur to taking up jobs in varied sectors and then again to entrepreneurship, I have many experiences to share and a story with many career advices to tell"

- CHARU SRIVASTAVA, Entrepreneur & Chief Relationship Mentor at LetsMarry

I am Charu Srivastava. Age wise have completed my half-century. I started my entrepreneurial journey at the age of 22 with a 4-month-old baby in my lap. Started a CAT Prep institute named Institute for Careers & Competitions (ICC) in 1994. The best team of faculty and professionals grew to 4 centers in Lucknow and other 3 franchisee centers in Kanpur, Allahabad, and Varanasi. Trained 50,000+ students during this very satisfying journey which transformed the careers of many students. Helped many lives associated with us. We also helped many start their businesses allied with our institute like hostels, tiffin services, photostat, printing, etc. A research paper on my entrepreneurial journey was published in Serbia in “The Journal of Women Entrepreneurship and Education” Institute of Economic Sciences.

In 2014 had to close down all centers due to some family reasons. After a short break, I started working and took up a job in the Real Estate Sector (Ansals and Oranje Castle). Then moved to New Delhi to work for a Skill Development Company (Labour Net). Then moved to Gurugram to work for a British Company working in the Education Sector (Global University System-GUS which runs UPES and Pearl Academy). During Covid had to move back to Lucknow. To help those who lost their spouses during COVID-19, I started a Personalized Matrimonial Alliance Services Company called LetsMarry.

Then I started serving ALL who were interested in matrimonial alliances. During this, I found that people with physical disabilities have problems finding a match. With the help of an NGO, I have started helping this group also. I have working partners in Lucknow, New Delhi and Bangalore. Shortly will have a working partner in Philadelphia (US) and some other metro cities in India.

Charu Srivastava (Chief Relationship Mentor)

She is a well exposed to various Indian cultures and peoples from diverse backgrounds, has sound understanding of people and is keenly interested in helping people finding the soulmates. Charu is a main force and inspiration behind LetsMarry.

She mentors the whole team for servicing people with full sincerity. She is a business and social networking expert with an experience of 28 years in developing alliances. She is an amalgamation of emotional intelligence, spiritual quotient and people’s skills.

She guides the team towards genuine service to her clients in the most effective manner.

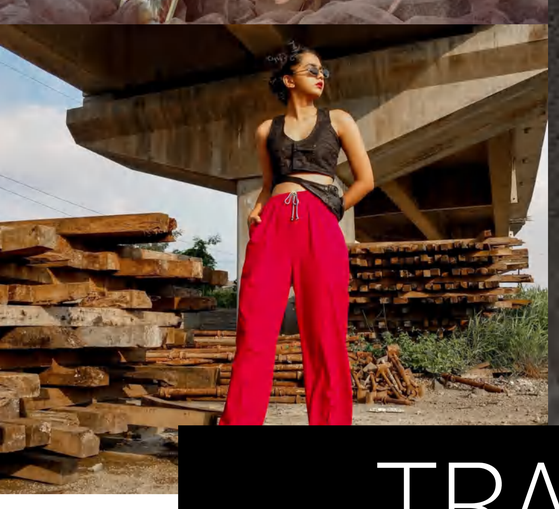
LETS MARRY

LetsMarry is the most reliable offline matrimonial alliance company. They serve confident and happy people who are willing to share a life with someone compatible. They serve the elite Indian diaspora in India and abroad. They are passionate about helping you get married to the person you would be most compatible with. At LM they sincerely believe that helping people find a compatible life partner is a genuine service to people and families. LetsMarry focuses on two attributes essential for a happy marriage, one is compatibility and the other is authentic information. They work with full dedication to find a suitable life partner for our clients. They connect compatible people and turn it into lifetime relationships.

LetsMarry spends time understanding the clients and their families to help them find a life partner. It's a gradual and coordinated process and you and LM both have to work with patience towards it. LetsMarry is a Personalized and customized service for you. The Core team puts the best search in place to find you a suitable match. LM Provides you only verified proposals and helps you connect with them. They help you nurture a relationship with the prospective partner. Provides compatibility-related tools and counseling.

They cater to all Indians (All religions and castes) living in India and abroad. Their client segment is the upper middle class and elite strata of Indian society. Their clients belong to an educated and well-settled background. Punjabi, Marwari, Brahmin, Rajput, Agarwal, Marathi, Muslim, Christian, NRI whatever your background they are one spot to connect for the right life partner. Their team has worked diligently to create a rich and enormous database of elite-profile clients.

They serve professionals like Doctors, lawyers, Engineers, IT Professionals, CA's, Professors, Businessmen, and Entrepreneurs who are willing to share a happy life with someone for life.■



TRASH TO TREASURE WITH ECO-CHIC

Rachel D'Cruz

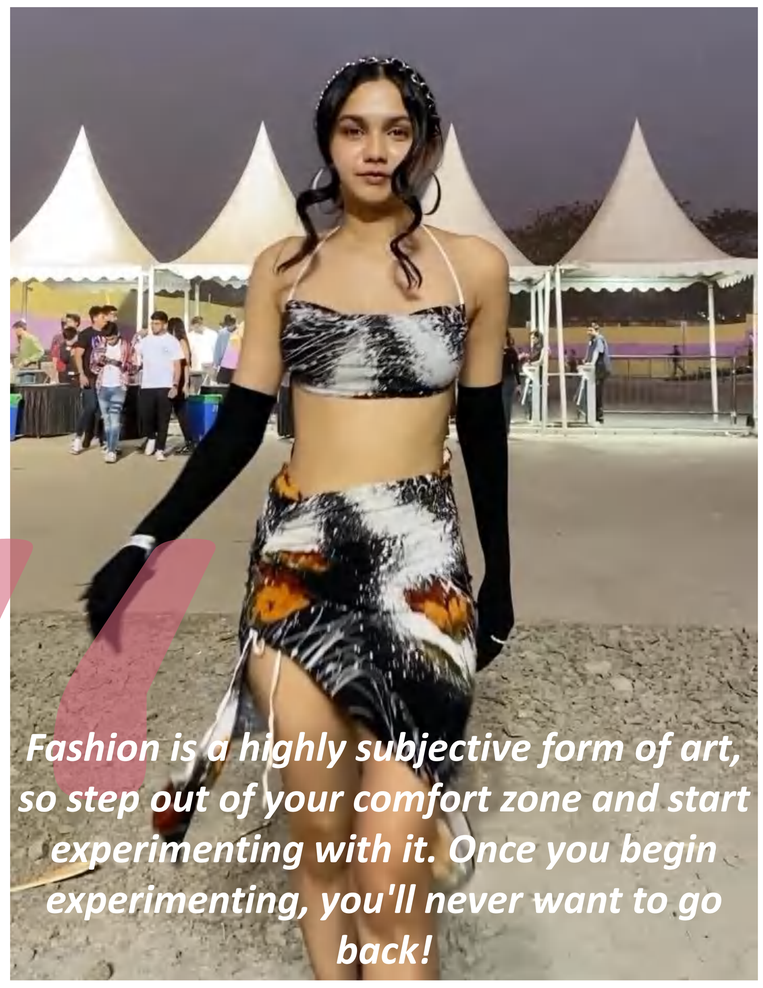
POPP DAPP: Upcycling clothes is not only in vogue but also is the need of the hour. What inspired you to upcycle your wardrobe?

RACHEL D'CRUZ: I used to thrift clothes with my mom even before I learned what thrifting was. So buying new or branded clothes before was a little difficult for us as it was expensive, but I also loved dressing up, so I had to do it cleverly within budget. I guess that helped me develop the habit of being creative with fewer clothes and styling them in a way that doesn't look repetitive. And because of how much thought I started putting behind dressing up by wearing fewer clothes, I always thought, what if I could make my own clothes, that would mean I never have to spend on clothes and could wear anything I like. I remember my relatives and friends giving me their clothes because they were bored with them or they didn't fit them anymore or they found them outdated, but I always had an eye to look at every piece of clothing as a potential piece that just needed to be styled the right way and turned into something cool. As I grew up, I realized what I'm doing is also indirectly sustainable fashion, so I loved the idea of upcycling even more because you get to wear whatever you like while doing good for the environment.

PD: Who is Rachel?
RD: I may first come across as shy and quiet but once you get to know me, you would only describe me with one word and that is "weird". I'm a deep thinker and once I start researching a topic I don't stop until I've read every conspiracy theory behind it. I struggle with making small talk but I also love having deep conversations with strangers. When I started my Instagram page, I used to take inspiration from different sources, and then I started my blog called thateclecticone.com inspired by the word eclectic (eclectic means deriving ideas from a broad and diverse range of sources), where I used to post creative pictures and write the thought process behind an outfit and sometimes also write about life. A year back when I uploaded my first sewing project video, I didn't even think people would like it because no one online was sewing or even talking about thrifting/upcycling clothes in India. I realized I enjoyed upcycling and started posting everything I upcycled without caring about what people would say or if the algorithm would even support it because no one in India was posting sewing videos or promoting second-hand fashion, but that's when people started enjoying my content.

PD: Was getting into fashion always your plan, or did that happen over time?
RD: I was always inclined towards anything creative, but mostly DIY. As a kid, I participated in all types of competitions, with dance and fancy dress being the most exciting for me. I was almost going to take up science after my SSC, but I got into the college that I always wanted, and there was a spot in arts, so I had to take art, leading to taking up BMM. If you're a BMM student, you know how much the fest means to us, and half the year goes into participating in the fest, and, of course, my favorite was fashion shows. Contrary to now, I used to model for the fashion shows and not design the outfits. I guess fashion has just stayed with me forever, no matter what I'm doing in life. Currently, I work in the field of digital marketing, but not many know this as I only put up my creative work on social media. Though I've had a full-time job for a few years, I make sure to create/upcycle outfits every weekend. People usually enjoy partying on weekends, but I love staying home so I can DIY/Upcycle things because that's my type of enjoyment.

PD: Fashion content creation is such a competitive space to be in. What differentiates you from other content creators?
RD: The fact that I don't get affected by people's opinions on second-hand clothes and upcycling, and choosing a niche that others might find boring or risky, goes against the traditional content creation ideology. I'm proud of starting a trend of using old clothes and promoting sustainability in a more creative and fun way. I couldn't afford design school, but that didn't stop me from learning sewing at home, which has also inspired more people to start their upcycling journey without much knowledge about sewing. And that keeps me motivated to do what I do.



PD: A conventionally ideal body type and structure complement one's whole ensemble. What is your take on that?
RD: I don't believe in an ideal body type; it's subjective and depends on an individual's self-perception. Stereotypes formed by society through ads and movies create notions of an ideal body, but confidence is key. Loving what you wear and feeling comfortable in it reflects in your demeanor It's crucial to challenge these stereotypes, and many women are already breaking these barriers, which is commendable!

PD: When did you realize that you have a peculiar eye for fashion?
My mom always dressed me well as a kid, I was the kid who people called fancy (only because of the way my mom dressed me). I remember my relatives and friends giving me their clothes that they didn't want to wear anymore and some that didn't have them anymore. I would always like clothes given by other people because it gave me a chance to play around with a variety of pieces from different types of people. For me, styling "ugly" clothes was more fun than styling cute clothes because it helped me be more creative and unusually do things.

PD: How supportive has your family been in your career and lifestyle choice?
I had to start working at a young age to support my family as my dad was sick and I also paid my college fees so that I could at least complete graduation. Hence they knew that I was a responsible kid and trusted me with decisions, as they knew I would never let them down. They are not just supportive but they also help me create content at times, and my most favorite video is the one I uploaded with my dad on YouTube where I styled his shirts for a week, and the video starts with us jiving. My mom is the most creative person I know, and she was the one who made me participate in every fancy dress competition, and somehow I always won because of her creativity. I lost my dad 6 months back but he had always told me to smile and do what I love no matter if people find it weird/ stupid and I know he's looking after me as an Angel from above and is hopefully proud of me.

PD: Do you follow global fashion trends for your inspiration?
RD: People have a myth that if you're into fashion you need to know Trends. I would love to bust that myth. Contrary to the myth that fashion enthusiasts must follow trends, I often create spontaneously. While I may come across something inspiring and trending, I primarily focus on what feels right in the moment or the season. Fashion, to me, is about expressing oneself through art, and having a sense of style eliminates the need to strictly adhere to trends.■

Shweta Rohira
SHE HAS GOT IT ALL!
DIGITAL CREATOR, PAINTER, BOOK REVIEWER, & AN ARTIST.

POPP DAPP: Share a few highlights of your journey so far.
SHWETA ROHIRA: It has been a very interesting one and I started influencing a while back. I have been influential as a book reviewer and a bookstagramer. I have interviewed more than 100 authors in 3 years. I have an Insta live show called 'Chitter-chatter,' where I interview all sorts of professionals like writers, doctors, actors, etc. Besides that, I have been doing theater with Bharat Dabolkar – an English play called 'That's My Girl.' I am also an artist – have painted cafes! I am an expressionist and I express myself in the form of writing, painting, & influencing.

PD: Was acting always the plan?
SR: I was always very fond of acting, but was not over-ambitious enough. I enjoyed performing, dancing, & writing since my childhood. Acting happened to me naturally by coincidence! My first short film happened with Kanwaljit Singh – 'Parineeti.' After which theater happened with Bharat Dabolkar. Everything happened by chance! Life sometimes gives you chances and you just need to take them up – and it is one of the best things that could happen to you!

PD: As an artist, where do you get your inspiration from?
SR: I get my inspiration from my clients who I am doing commission art for. Because they have some concept in mind and I need to create their thought on the canvas. I am very observant as a person, so I get hugely inspired by the things around me.

PD: What has been the biggest roadblock in your journey so far?
SR: There were not any roadblocks, as I believe that there are speed breakers for you to slow down your car and get over it. It is a part of life and you need to enjoy that as much as you enjoy when it is fast!

PD: How supportive has your family been in your career choice?
SR: They have been super-duper supportive. If can enjoy all of this, credit goes to my mother. She has been there and supported me in all my madness. She has given me the freedom to do what I wanted to do and excel in it. For the life I wanted to live, I needed to have the parents that I have – probably that is why I chose them from the spirit world.

PD: If not an actor/ artist, what would have been your alternative career choice? And why?
SR: I do not see an alternative career because this is all that I ever wanted to do. I think I manifested it as a child; where kids play kitchen-kitchen – I played library-library. I enjoyed dancing and performing in front of guests or school – acting happened.

"Whether you want to say something to someone, or do something – do it now!

PD: How do you strike a perfect work-life balance?
SR: When you enjoy something that you are doing and your passion becomes your work; you do not have to strike a balance – you enjoy every moment of your day. I believe in living one day at a time, so I make the most of it. I have a diary in which I write what I must accomplish on the next day – and try to tick off as many points as I can!

PD: What has been your biggest learning in life?
SR: You cannot keep things for tomorrow. Whether you want to say something to someone, or do something – do it now! I work hard to live one day at a time because Shahrukh has rightly said – '*Kal ho na ho*.'

PD: What are your future plans?
SR: To entertain everyone, express my thoughts, and influence people through my Instagram, acting, and art. ■

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