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*Fashion stylist Kshitij Kankaria rounds up 10 young labels that are adding a radical new narrative to the story of Indian fashion*

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## *ANAAM by Sumiran Kabir Sharma*

Fashion is not just about beautiful dresses. For Sumiran Kabir Sharma's Anaam, which recently debuted at the Lakme Fashion Week, fashion is about equality. For one, every Anaam garment made till date is gender-neutral. He has no qualms about using men's suiting fabric for women's clothes. Neither does he worry about men wearing skirts. "He mixes extremely masculine shapes with extremely feminine shapes, making it work for both genders equally," says Kshitij Kankaria. The result is a collection of fluid, loose garments with no definite drape—permeating barriers and dissolving stereotypes. ([anaamofficial.com](http://anaamofficial.com))



**POOCHKI** by *Isbanee Mukherjee & Anirudh Chawla*

They love animals. They love textiles. For the designer couple who make up Poochki (named after their pet Manx cat), the fashion brand for the 'progressive woman', the two passions merge into a third: clothes. "Poochki has versatile statement pieces, with a touch of delicate romanticism," says Kankaria. Most Poochki outfits move away from traditional block prints, and use self-created animal motifs, thus making their clothes about animals and craft both. ([wearpoochki@gmail.com](mailto:wearpoochki@gmail.com))

**Paridhi Jaipuria**

For 24-year-old Paridhi Jaipuria—already a two-time participant at Lakme Fashion Week—building a relationship between clothes and culture is of utmost importance. So it's not surprising that her Jaipur-based label is heavily influenced by Rajasthani crafts. "She has a great sense of silhouettes and I love how she mixes her fabric surfaces," says Kankaria. Simplistic clean lines and relaxed silhouettes are worked upon with intricate beading and hand-embroidery. The result: clothes for a modern Indian woman with her roots firmly in place. ([paridhijaipuria.com](http://paridhijaipuria.com))



**OSHADI** by *Nishanth Chopra & Richard Malone*

If names are anything to go by, Oshadi, founded by 21-year-old Nishanth Chopra, has a very appropriate one. Meaning 'essence of nature' in Sanskrit, Oshadi uses natural dyes and handwoven fabrics to make contemporary women's clothes. "Perfect for tropical climes like India," says Kankaria. Based in Erode, a small town in Tamil Nadu, Oshadi has already showcased capsule collections in Paris and Milan. Clearly they are going places. ([oshadi.in](http://oshadi.in))



## AD perspective

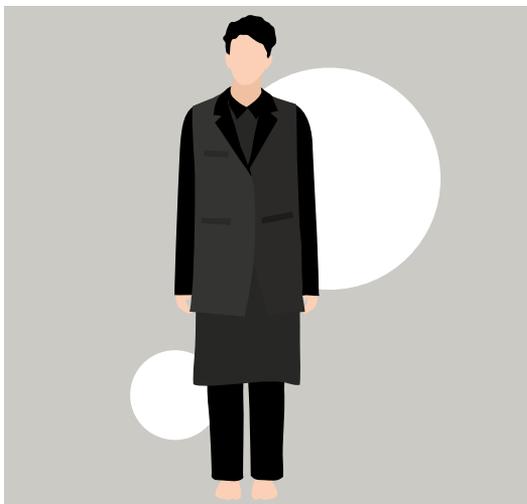
### *BENNCH* by Neha & Naina Chaudhary

It's a different, rather oxymoronic kind of opulence that sisters Neha and Naina Chaudhary's Bennch strives for. An opulence in minimalism. The beauty in less. Bennch reinterprets wardrobe essentials, like classic white shirts, in typically bold aesthetics—and yet, manages to keep it simple. "They are 'anti-fashion' yet their clothes are fashionable," says Kankaria. ([bennch.com](http://bennch.com))



### *KALEEKAL* by Alan Alexander Kaleekal

For Alan Alexander Kaleekal, a product of Paris-based Studio Berçot, fashion needs to be self-aware—and his Trivandrum-based brand reflects that. Each design takes forward the aesthetic of his hometown, shying away from unnecessary ornamentation and bright colours. The awareness seeps into other realms too. "These are clothes that are fully handwoven, and sensitive to the cause of artisans," says Kankaria. And also, ones that transcend gender norms and reinterpret traditional tailoring. ([info@kaleekal.com](mailto:info@kaleekal.com))



### *VAIBHAV SINGH*

Like the man himself, Vaibhav Singh's eponymous label, too, is non-conformist. For one, his is one of the few menswear labels—first showcased at the Lakme Fashion Week 2016—that does sportswear in traditional textiles like wool and heavy cotton. "If you want to look sporty and classy at the same time, Vaibhav is the man," says Kankaria. Characterized by loose shapes and asymmetrical lines, Singh's clothes are the very definition of new-age fashion in India—relaxed, unhurried and yet making a point. ([vaibhavsinghindia.com](http://vaibhavsinghindia.com))

*UNTITLED CO by Rinzin Lama & Sheñali Sema*

The duo at Untitled Co (part NIFT, part NID) regard their products as works-in-progress. So much so that they refrained from even naming their brand, much like an untitled piece of art.

They work and function like artists, too—"not confined to any technique or aesthetic. So they just pick up fabric, manipulate it, and make beautiful clothes," says Kankaria. Executed in clean, modern lines, but inspired by traditional Japanese techniques—Untitled Co clothes are just like wearable pieces of art. (*notjustalabel.com*)



*MAKU TEXTILES by Santanu Das*

When Maku Textiles, conceived at NID by Santanu Das, call themselves "ethical clothiers", there aren't many reasons to contest their statement. Organic textiles and indigenous practices make up a collection that is earthy, rooted yet effectually current. "Maku's clothes are new takes on traditional textiles. You can be 18, and still work a Maku polka-dotted sari," says Kankaria. Minimal clothing, maximum style. (*makutextile@gmail.com*)



*OLIO by Aashna Singh & Sneha Saksena*

Just like an architect would, the Olio ladies (creative director Sneha, an alumni of NIFT, and brand architect Aashna, a PR professional), use geometry to create forms, structures and shapes. These can range from whimsical ones of watermelons and egg yolks to quite unapologetically graphic depictions of sushi. "Simple geometry inspires extremely cool graphic designs. And that's what I like about Olio," says Kankaria. (*theoliostories.com*)