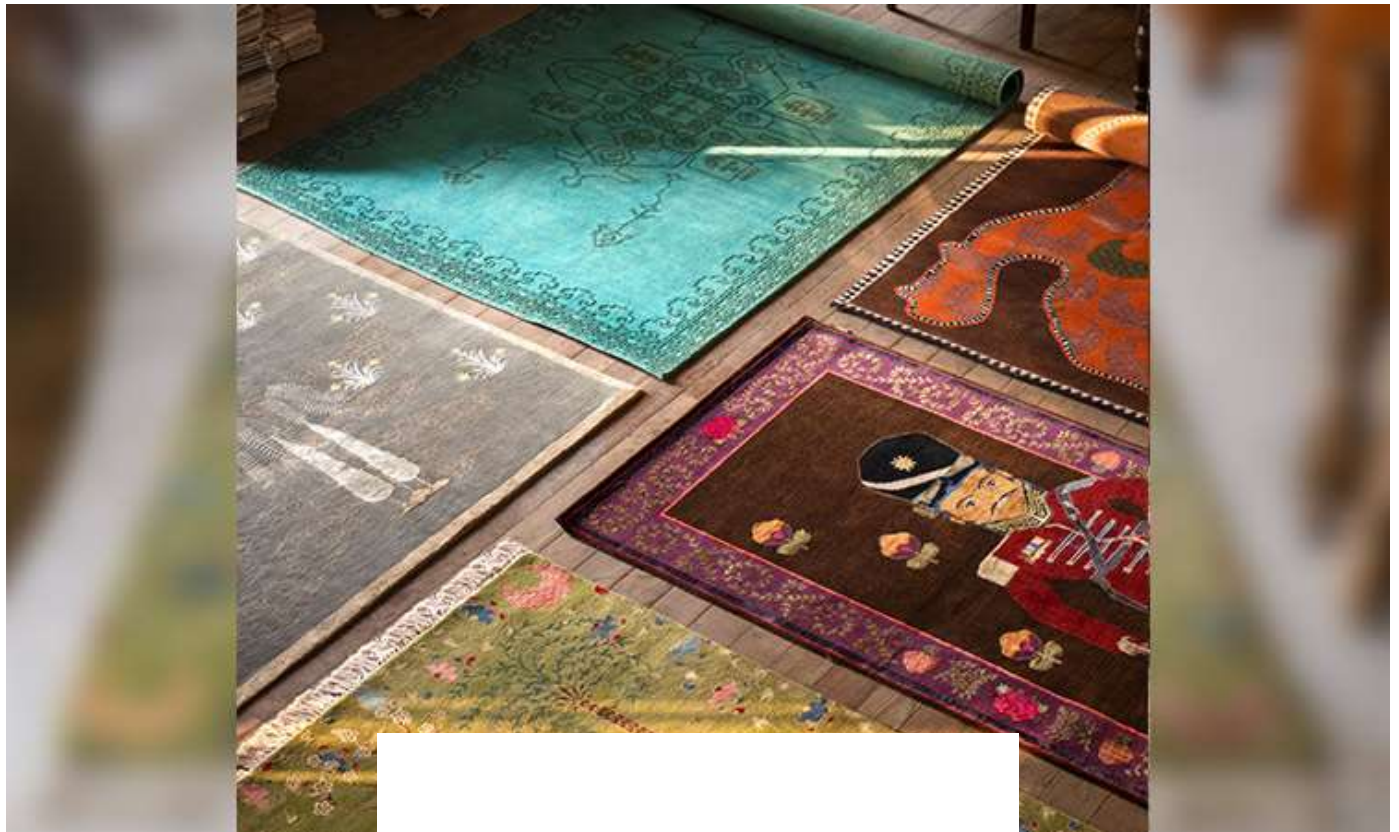


Jaipur Rugs and designer Pavitra Rajaram knot Majnun for Milan

07 Apr 2023



The carpets unrolled.

Muhammad Yusuf, *Features Writer*



For this year's Salone del Mobile in Milan (Apr. 18 – 23) considered the global benchmark event for the furnishing and design sector, leading social enterprise Jaipur Rugs from India has collaborated with multidisciplinary Indian designer Pavitra Rajaram to create a new rug collection that celebrates ancient weaving history, generational craftsmanship and the power of purposeful design. While embedded in the age-old culture and weaving traditions from Persia, China and India, Majnun — as the collection is called — offers a contemporary reading of this venerable creative legacy. Says Rajaram: “Design is always in a continuum. Motifs that have stood the test of time are constantly — and simultaneously — revisited in as many different ways as there are creative minds. “That’s how design travels and design legacies are kept alive. With Majnun, I wanted to imagine a collection that is as old as it is new, with roots steeped in the cultural tradition of the ancient Silk Road, but interpreted in a modern idiom.” Majnun blends Jaipur Rugs’ expertise in creating well-crafted hand-knotted carpets with Rajaram’s sense of design and graphic forms. “Every rug in the collection tells a distinct story of love, passion and perseverance, conveying the resilient spirit of each of the Jaipur Rugs’ artist weavers spread across 600 remote villages in India,” says Jaipur Rugs.

Made from wool and pure silk, Majnun comprises five different designs: Bahaar, Sipahi, Sakya, Arjumand and Maryul. Bahaar takes cues from the Iranian tradition of Shikargah, enclosed woodland areas where kings would hunt at leisure. The theme draws on the glorification of hunting in Iranian Persian and Mughal (Indian) design, featuring wild animals frolicking and playing in a natural forest setting.

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Sipahi is a tribute to the Afghan war carpets, visual storytelling of the often painful history of Afghanistan on tapestries and rugs where motifs often included military tanks and weapons. The designs of this collection adapt the concept to illustrate India's own history: the uniform of a soldier — locally called Sipahi — given to him by his British masters, rendered in a folk-inspired style. Sakya is influenced by Tibetan tiger rugs, signifying power, wisdom, and strength. The rug incorporates the “cintamani” motif, which has its roots in Buddhism and early Hinduism, which travelled westwards and become an all-time favourite of Ottoman Sultans. Sakya brings back the iconic “cintamani” to its original Eastern context.

Arjumand evokes the “Bid-Majnun” or weeping willow motif, which is reinvented in the manner of a Chinese scroll painting. Maryul is an embodiment of the “Persian flaw”, intentionally leaving imperfections in each rug as a testament that only the Almighty's creations are perfect. Not only does the Majnun collection delve into the rich history of the legendary Silk Road, it also aims to emulate Jaipur Rugs' philosophy established by its founder Nand Kishore Chaudhary, also known as the Gandhi of the carpet industry.



A room with a view of a carpet.

His passion for breathing new life into the ancient art form of rug weaving and particularly his commitment to elevating artisans into artists, was the starting point for Rajaram's collection. "I, too, am passionate about and strongly believe in advocacy, collaboration, and support for those whose lives and livelihoods are connected to craft and traditional practices in design," Rajaram says.

Likewise, for Yogesh Chaudhary, Director of Jaipur Rugs and son of Nand Kishore Chaudhary, Majnun comes as an opportunity to not just further strengthen the organisation's vision of combining the pursuit of profit with the spreading of service, but also to enhance it on a global scale. "For me, it's not just a company's vision. Even personally, it is important that we stay invested in keeping a dying art alive, in enabling a whole community of weavers out of generational oppression. We are thrilled to be partnering on collaborations such as Majnun, that are not only visually stunning and luxuriously made, but also bring a sense of social responsibility and commitment to manufacturing practices", he adds.

N.K. Chaudhary's Jaipur Rugs is a family business driven by the purpose of protecting ancestral know-how and connecting rural craftsmanship with global consumers. The company has grown to become the largest network of artisans in India. It uses the age-old art form of handmade carpets as a tool to bring prosperity into the homes of 40,000 rural artisans, of which 85 per cent are women. Founded in 1978 by N. K. Chaudhary with just two looms, it now has over 7,000 looms and sells in over 90 countries. Jaipur Rugs today creates contemporary works of art by collaborating with local and international creative talents who bring fresh vision to the ancestral craft of rug making. Rajaram is the founder and creative director of

Pavitra Rajaram Design, a multidisciplinary practice specialised in interior design, styling, graphic design, and brand strategy. The studio focuses on projects that involve the restoration of heritage spaces and crafts in the Indian subcontinent.

She runs the Sarmaya Foundation — a not-for-profit archive museum committed to bringing awareness of India's vast repository of historic and cultural art and craft traditions to a diverse audience through a digital presence, innovative programming and outreach. Rajaram is the recipient of the INTACH Urban Heritage Award, the EDIDA Award for Product Design and a five-time winner of AD100, awarded annually by Architectural Digest magazine to the 100 most influential designers in the Indian subcontinent.

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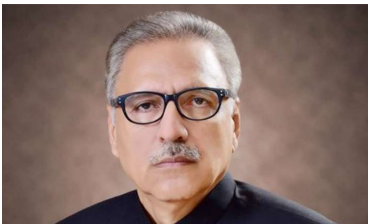
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