

## In this studio, old is gold

If furniture made using the age-old technique of Indian carpentry reminds you of bulky closets and Chikankari evokes images of boring dresses worn by aunties in the neighbourhood, the works at Urban Studio will make you think again

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Urban Studio at Le Mill is an initiative to bring Indian methods of craftsmanship to the forefront, with a modern twist. Cecilia Morelli Parikh, co-founder of Le Mill says, "We wanted to have an annual event that would give designers an opportunity to speak to the customers directly about their work. The products selected for Urban Studio show how Indian crafts and motifs can be used to create contemporary products for both men and women."

From the home décor section, one can browse through works by Rooshad Shroff and colourful, modern and ethnic upholstery by Seema Krish. "My furniture has been made from salvaged Burma wood sourced from construction sites and old bungalows. Apart from the idea of using reclaimed wood for my furniture I have also used the method of traditional carpentry, which is actually dying in India because of the amount of skill and time involved. They are all cantilevered pieces; you will find no screws and metal fasteners in the furniture and it can be dismantled and rearranged. It is very minimal in terms of design," says Shroff.

Another label to look out for is Banjanan by Caroline Weller, who has worked as a fashion designer with several international luxury labels. Weller says, "I was born in UK, spent my adult life in New York and as a part of an adventure with my parents landed up in India. I shuttle between the US, Europe and India now. Being a global gypsy, I thought of the name Banjanan that comes from the Indian word Banjaran for gypsies." A friend, who showed her a vintage Jamdani sari, introduced Weller to Indian vintage fabrics. She says, "I was blown away by it. In spite of being a designer for 20 years I had never seen



Pick up intricate linens by Bandit Queen

anything like that."

Weller felt the need to create outfits out of these fabrics and tracked down the artisans to create a line of clothes that a modern jet-setting woman could wear while supporting the Indian weavers. She has also worked with Varanasi silk and aims to discover new fabrics with every new line.

One can also shop for contemporary chikankari dresses by Gitika Goyal. Check out bed, bath and table linen that are a mix of Indian heritage and international design by Bandit Queen. If you are a bag person look out for bags with trendy typography on them by Joli Joli and rugs for your home by Jaipur Rugs. Eventually, if all the shopping makes you go hungry, attend a session by Chef Nicole, who will talk about using Indian ingredients in foreign salad recipes.

Between December 8 to 11, every designer participating in Urban Studio will have interactive sessions with customers. The sessions are open to all. **AT** Le Mill, Nandlal Jani Road, off P D'mello Road, next to Wadi Bunder Railway Bridge. **CALL** 23742415 **LOG ONTO** <http://lemillindia.blogspot.com>



Cantilevered chairs from Rooshad Shroff's C-Series