

COLOUR

Brush in hand, a posse of young designers is converting mundane home accessories to cutting-edge lifestyle products

of money

The thin line between art and design has long been erased by décor connoisseurs. When out home-accessory shopping these days, be prepared to encounter savages with baleful expressions painted onto bike helmets, vintage telephones daubed with ochre, and quirky chairs with Barack Obama painted on their backrests. You can even find faux-antique railway clocks, peppered with stylised doodles. With art-inspired lifestyle products being the flavour of the season, the stores are chock-a-block with hand-painted offerings that are both fresh and fun. We take a look at three designers who are wielding the colour-soaked magic brush, and having a lot of fun doing it.



VINTAGE CHIC

National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Delhi alumnus Rohit Kant's design ethos is a modern take on antiquated household articles such as hip flasks, canvas shoes, pocket timepieces and Royal Enfield fuel tanks. The 24-year-old product designer says transforming ordinary objects into spiffy home accessories is exciting for him. "It's about adding respect, peace and love to a mundane-looking product and giving it a totally new meaning and identity," he says. Kant's offerings flaunt illustrations and sketches in fluorescent hues. The bright colours show reality and the dark illustrations show the distortion. All his artworks are a balance mix of happy and the happier, he explains. He creates both off-the-rack items and customised ones. About his bespoke creations, Kant says, "I aim at completing a story in people's life, which they didn't even know was missing."

Kant's pieces can take anywhere between three to eight days to complete and start at ₹680 and are available at "By Rohit Kant" Store, T 49, Hauz Khas Village, New Delhi. Tel: 09810396132.

BOLLYWOOD CALLING

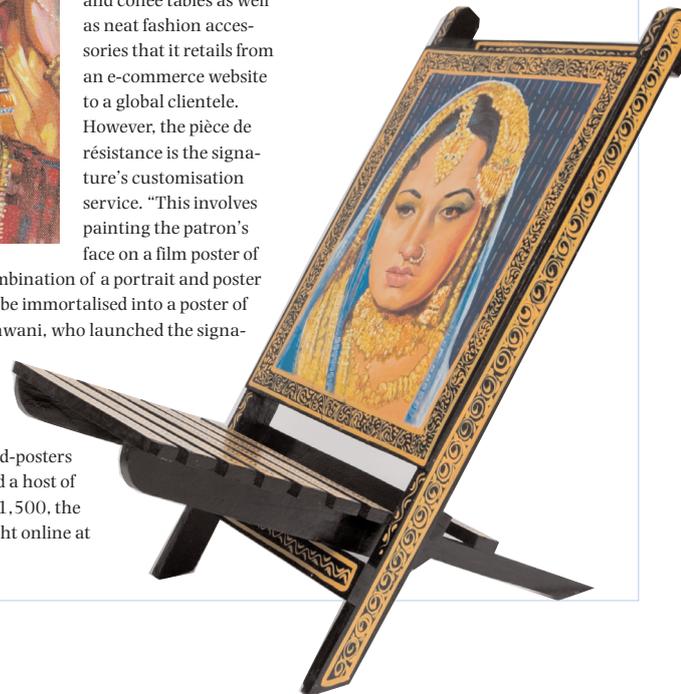
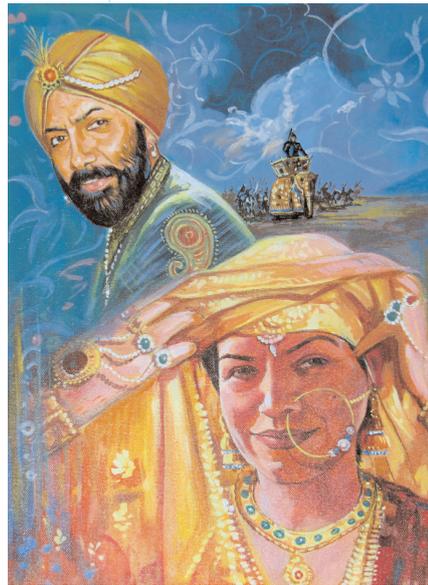
It's clear that Hinesh Jethwani, like most Indians, is in awe of celluloid stars. Out to stem the decline of film-poster art in India, the computer engineer-turned-entrepreneur sells an assortment of vintage posters and furniture with kitschy movie-related pictures painted on them. "Bollywood posters combine the concepts of advertising, art and storyboard depiction," he says. Lending Jethwani support are some old poster and billboard artists,

whom the designer has brought together to form a collective called Indian Hippy. The 'Hippies' use the traditional style of mixing colours and interesting poster-art techniques like using knives to add texture and contour to the faces of their matinee idols. The brand has a line-up of hand-painted chairs and coffee tables as well as neat fashion accessories that it retails from an e-commerce website to a global clientele.

However, the pièce de résistance is the signature's customisation service. "This involves painting the patron's face on a film poster of

his or her choice. So, it's a combination of a portrait and poster and it's a fantasy for many to be immortalised into a poster of their favourite film," says Jethwani, who launched the signature concept six months ago.

This one-of-a-kind service is a hit with film lovers and Jethwani has shipped customised Bollywood-posters to Italy, the US, UK, Dubai and a host of other countries. Starting at ₹1,500, the brand's products can be bought online at www.hippy.in.





HOME | DESIGN



ONE WITH NATURE

Who said art is only appreciated when seen hung on walls? Kalyani Ganapathy figured that there is more space for art in our homes, than just the walls and she initiated Kye. Ganapathy, the proprietor of Kye, is a former graphic-design consultant, who makes and paints on home furnishings and bags. "I put in a lot of detail by playing around with thin brushes," explains Ganapathy. The Bangalore-based designer spends between two and three weeks on each piece. Though most of her motifs are inspired by nature,

occasionally, she is inspired by the textures of traditional art forms like Madhubani and Gond which she uses in a modern context. "The south Indian-girl child also features in my work in a big way. Other motifs that fascinate me are leaves and animal forms like elephants and dogs," says the 27-year-old designer.

Kye items are modestly priced between ₹800 and ₹5,000 and can be picked up online at www.surfkye.com.

TANVI RUSTAGI