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THE BEAUTY ISSUE



*Falling
in
LOVE
with*
**Alia
Bhatt**



CRAFTED WITH LOVE

Founder of the fashion label Miniaar, Tinaz Bodhanwala talks about the brand's philosophy, her journey so far, and much more.

Harper's Bazaar: How and when did you decide to become a designer? Take us through your journey.

Tinaz Bodhanwala: The decision of becoming a designer goes back to 2007 when I was in eighth grade. I have never had deviating thoughts about what I want to do in life. As far as the how is concerned, you can say genes because my maternal grandmother had a boutique. The love for clothes and creating them drove the decision all the way.

It has been a fulfilling journey with a fair share of highs and lows, learnings, and new experiences. As a person, I am not somebody who gives up easily. For instance,

during the pandemic, when business was on a halt, I was fortunate enough to be of help to some hospital staff. My team made reusable masks and PPE kits. A lot depends on your perception and the way you look at the negatives. I generally don't dwell on the lows for too long and just learn and get over it. I believe, the minute you decide to become an entrepreneur, you have to be ready for failures. I have had a lot of people trying to pull me down or put societal pressures on me, but I have learnt to ignore all of those because I am blessed with an extremely supportive and open-minded family. So the journey was not easy for sure, but I sailed through. I am where I am today because of the journey I've had until now and I am grateful for all of it.

HB: When did you decide to establish Miniaar, and what motivated you to choose Dubai as the location for your venture?

TB: The decision to have my own brand was always there since the day I decided to be a fashion designer, but I also knew that I have to first work to gain the real experience of the industry. So I worked in all the departments—from production to retail—to gain hands-on knowledge and experience. I finally took the leap of faith in December 2017.

Back in 2013, when I visited Dubai for the first time, there was a certain connect I felt. As time passed, Dubai started to feel like home and a city of opportunities to me. Its diverse culture, inclusivity, safety and security were the biggest motivations for me to make the move. I have made some amazing connections and relationships there with people who genuinely want to see me succeed, push me constantly to do better, help me with anything professionally and always there to celebrate the smallest of achievements.



Tinaz Bodhanwala

HB: What sets Miniaar apart? Could you elaborate on the underlying fashion philosophy that defines its identity.

TB: Miniaar is an ensemble of bespoke attires designed with love, and crafted with perfection, with extraordinary attention to detail. Its core philosophy is inclusivity, customer satisfaction, blend of modern and classic, and perfection in quality and finishing. Miniaar provides the best quality products suiting every client's demand to ensure the best customer satisfaction. We offer customisation options to make each and every customer confident in what they purchase and wear. Our mission is to create a "one-stop shop" for our clients by catering to different categories in terms of gender, size, culture and price points.

HB: What aspects of the current Indian fashion scene do you find most thrilling, and on the flip side, what challenges do you perceive as a part of this dynamic industry?

TB: The Indian fashion scene is constantly and rapidly changing. I love to constantly keep evolving with the changing times but at the same time stay connected to my roots. The biggest challenge now is the over saturated market, especially after Covid. The other challenges include the rise of plagiarism, and I have zero tolerance for that, whether it is my designs or any other designer's designs. The other challenge is still the mentality of wearing only a "well-known" name that suits the social circles. Thanks to social media platforms like Instagram, this is slowly changing, but there is still a very long way to go.

HB: Tell us about the factors that led to Miniaar's identification with values like elegance, modesty and inclusivity.

TB: The younger generation—teenagers and students—are heavily influenced by social media. What I saw was glam being associated with more skin show. But thanks to all my travel experiences and understanding of various cultures of the world—American, European or Middle Eastern—I never had that mentality and this is what I wanted to convey through Miniaar. I don't intend to be judgemental, but I am not in favour of trying too hard to be in an outfit only to please others,



Model and actor
Erica Fernandez
in an ensemble
by Miniaar

while being uncomfortable myself. For me, all the attributes of being beautiful lay on the single term—comfort. Every single girl and woman is beautiful the way she is, irrespective of body shape or skin colour. As a brand, we are more than happy to create a backless, thigh-high slit gown as well as an Abaya. The only goal with every customer of Miniaar is to make them happy, confident and satisfied with their purchase.

HB: In all these years, what or who has been your biggest inspiration?

TB: Undoubtedly, my family. My grandparents, who though are from a different era, were always forward thinking and open-minded. My parents have always taught us the correct values—live life on our terms, never get suppressed by what or how the society assumes, be independent in every way, never give up, always be kind and grateful, and be grounded. Whatever I am today, I owe it all to my parents.