

DESIGN

The next Louis Vuitton is going to come from India

Interview/ Peter D'Ascoli, textile designer



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Peter D'Ascoli | Vipin das P.

American textile designer Peter D'Ascoli came to India when he was 20 years old, and fell in love with the country. He moved back to New York as studio director of Diane von Furstenberg, but his love for India lured him back here. In 2006, he founded Talianna Studio in Delhi, creating luxury fabrics for interior decoration.

You are an American of Italian descent, your wife is French, and now you're settled in Delhi. How has such cosmopolitanism influenced your design sensibility?

It has influenced it a lot. The more we travel, the more we learn. Life is a constant learning process. I love diversity—in culture, food, crafts. It's one of the things I love about India. It's so diverse. This kind of cosmopolitanism has given me a global perspective, as a designer and an artist. I am creating works for a multiplicity of markets. The more I can understand those markets, the better equipped I am to sell to them.

Other than design and craft, what do you love about India?

I love the people. They're so warm. It takes a little longer here than in America to get to know people and earn their trust. In a way, living in India is like going back in time. Earlier, [in the US], you were more connected with your family and community. Things were more tribal. That has disappeared there. So, you can make friends quicker, but the friendships are more superficial, unlike in India. Delhi, where I live, is a very creative and dynamic place. I love it.

How was it working with Diane von Furstenberg?

It was great. She exposed me to two worlds—that of big business in America, and that of the sophisticated world that she herself belonged to. I learnt a lot from observing her homes around the world, her lifestyle, the designs that she surrounded herself with. The five years I worked there reporting directly to her helped refine my taste a lot.

What is the difference between the Indian and the international market?

This might be a generalisation, but, outside India, people want traditional, authentic look. Here, there's a desire for the modern. I am updating and contemporarising many traditional designs, mostly for the Indian market.

What is India's future when it comes to fashion and textiles?

I think the next Luis Vuitton or Hermes is going to come from the rich, creative resources that India has. Companies like Salvatore Ferragamo or Gucci were founded many years ago with a dedication to craft and aesthetics. Technologically and aesthetically, India has led the world in textiles for thousands of years.

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