

MAISON & OBJET

BACK TO BASICS

*Rudimentary with a dash of contemporary minimalism, the collaboration between Jaipur Rugs and Gauri Khan speaks volumes about the power of local craft*

WRITER PALLAVI PUNDIR

In a rural Indian home, mud forms a fundamental part of construction; its substance lies in not just its abundance but also the fact that, when hand-sculpted and heated, it transforms into an architectural medium. So, when the design team of Jaipur Rugs and interior designer Gauri Khan ventured into the nooks and crannies of Rajasthan, looking for inspiration for their first collaborative project, they found practices like the mud houses in the state an ideal departure point. Launched at the January 2018 edition of Maison & Objet, Paris, the collection, titled Tattvam, features rugs that emulate the earthy charm of rural India.

“The rawness in rural India is flawlessly simple. From cowdung-covered walls to hand-painted *aangans* (courtyards), rustic designs hold a unique charm,” says Yogesh Chaudhary, director of Jaipur Rugs, whose brand works with weavers from 600 villages across India. The line, hence, brings forth a captivating visual of earthy palettes—one that doesn’t shy away from imbibing the imperfections of the rustic and infusing it with the minimalistic order of contemporary design. Khan worked with weavers, mostly women, from villages in Rajasthan. “I got an opportunity to create something that places a lot of emphasis on social impact and women empowerment within a rural setting. Also, as this is my first tapestry design, I got to test my creativity on a new medium, a canvas that is large, profound and has the ability to set the tone of any room it inhabits,” says Khan. Each rug took four to five months to create, taking inspiration from the images that the research team took in villages across the state. From ‘Ellura’, which emulates the coarse surface of a mud house, to ‘Sahaj’, which is reminiscent of stone-carved *jalīs*—“It’s all about creativity, design and colour. And, of course, women empowerment!” says Khan. If inspiration needs to take a step back, let it be to the fundamentals. ❖



The ‘Ithir’ rug, from the Tattvam collection, was designed by Gauri Khan and made in wool and bamboo silk by artisans from Jaipur Rugs.