

Schön! 28

#schonmagazine



maddie ziegler
by jack waterlot



editor's letter

"Forget your troubles, come on get happy. You better chase all your blues away..."

Judy Garland

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#happy #schonmagazine

Spring is finally here, summer is around the corner, and it's time to get happy! As the world around us bursts with new life, we celebrate youth and the promise of the future, starting with our cover star, Maddie Ziegler, the twelve-year-old girl who has danced her way into the limelight and onto the stage of the Grammys. We take a look at the most stylish little ones with a preview of the new season at Baby Dior, and we hang out with RJ Mitte, who not only stole our hearts in the phenomenal *Breaking Bad* but, aged just 22, is an ambassador for people with disabilities and a role model for us all.

Olga Kurylenko, the beautiful Bond girl, and now star of Russell Crowe's directorial debut *The Water Diviner*, puts us through our paces in a playful photo shoot and tells us why 2015 is such a big year for her. Both young and old will be looking forward to the hotly anticipated new version of *Cinderella*. We talk to one of its stars, Sophie McShera, about the switch from *Downton Abbey* to Disney blockbuster and to model and actor Colton Haynes about his transition from small screen to big in action thriller *San Andreas*. Fresh beginnings can come at any time of life and the stunning Pamela Anderson is certainly turning a new page. Read on to find out about the exciting and unexpected projects she has coming up.

As usual, we bring you the best of the season's bold, bright and downright beautiful fashion, from swimwear to sunglasses, to candy coloured jewellery, as well as beauty products that light up your looks and scents that put a spring in your step. Whether you want to reconnect with your childhood, or simply see out the season in sunny style, the #happy issue is sure to bring a smile to your face.



Maddie Ziegler
by Jack Waterlot & Coline Bach
Retouch / Lisa@theforgeuk.com

wearing
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handcrafted happiness

Nest's Varanasi Project aims to save and rekindle the 500-year-old silk weaving tradition in India by bridging the divide between trained artisans and luxury brands.



Pulsating colours and paisley patterns – that's what springs to mind when one thinks of fabrics from India, but not necessarily what one expects to find on the runways of the biggest international brands. All this is set to change with the spring/summer 2016 collections. Schön! gets an exclusive insight into a project that is translating centuries-old traditions into fashion-forward sensibilities.

Varanasi, in rural India, is home to an incredible heritage of artisan crafts, particularly creating textiles with the handloom, but this tradition is under threat from the invention of the power loom and outsourced labour to China. "We're used to making wedding dresses and saris," explains Jitendra Kumar, CEO and Founder of Indian textile company Varanasi Loom to Luxury. "Cuts and colours have changed. The business is getting slower. We need to deliver a modern design aspect to hand weavers to bring their jobs back."

This is where non-profit organisation Nest comes in. The partnership was forged to provide market access, bringing handmade silk textiles from India to the fashion houses of Paris. Design consultant Megan Ryley has worked for the likes of Oscar de la Renta and Carolina Herrera. She acts as a communicator for the Varanasi Project, but it's not always spoken language that proves to be a barrier. "It's a design language," she explains, "and that's purely due to what your cultural expectation of design is. In India, they love a riot of colour. As Westerners, we can appreciate the exoticism of that, but how do we translate that into something that we will understand?"

Following meetings with fashion houses such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, Cédric Charlier and Maison Margiela, Ryley reports an overwhelmingly positive response to the textile collection. "I was very confident that it would be," she says. "We want to make sure that the clients are pleasantly surprised and impressed. I see a change of perception of what people think they're going to see when I'm coming with fabric from India." Kumar and Ryley also set about expanding clients' mind-sets by showing them the possibilities of the handloom. Today, most jacquards are produced by machine using code, but with a handloom, no two pieces are alike. Also, unlike in other parts of India, where cotton may be used, the base for Varanasi jacquards is always silk.

"Loom to Luxury strives to preserve speciality weaving methods because nowadays everyone wants to make things quickly," explains Kumar. "In our designs, we are inserting patterns that machine looms cannot replicate." Ryley elaborates by showing us a beautiful fabric of flowers and describing how each petal can be made in individual colours by handloom, whereas it is only partially coded in the power loom.

"A couple of years ago, it was a trend to have metal woven through fabrics," Ryley recalls. "But in India, they have been doing this with real fine metals for 800 years. I'm happy to be in this project because we've been able to help preserve a craft and bring pride back to the community." Ryley shows us a fabric from The Caravan collection. It seems simple at first glance, but then she highlights a ghosted effect. As one of the most special textiles from the collection, five or six versions were made before arriving at the final product. "When [the weavers] saw the fabric executed as a garment, they jumped up and smiled with joy," Kumar beams. "This is the reason why I work."

"The weavers have this glow when they've come together and used their hands to create this," adds Ryley. "It's completely lost when you mechanise it. The social aspect of being able to employ so many people and give them a sense of livelihood is amazing."

In order to ensure this livelihood, Nest develops each artisan project with a view to making it an economically sustainable business, but it also considers the wider needs of developing communities. Director of Communications Kristin Lane illustrates the plan for Varanasi: "We received a generous grant from the Swarovski foundation that is specifically aimed at addressing social needs. Along with the construction of a new workplace, there will be a community centre. The goal is to bring clean water to the artisans."

Loom to Luxury alleviates poverty by bringing employment to skilled women and teaching them to tackle challenges. "Nest is working within capitalist forces and actually leveraging them as a means to create social change," Lane continues. "For every one artisan employed, we estimate that as many as 20 additional lives are impacted."

Whether in Varanasi, India, or the ateliers of Paris, the art of fashion begins with the fabric. Loom to Luxury emphasises a juxtaposition of worlds, demonstrating the potential for luxury brands and rural artisans to work together. Not only does this mission help to preserve a traditional craft and the livelihood of those who practice it, it restores self-confidence and happiness to the artisans who just want to weave more colour into our world – and this is perhaps the most precious luxury of all.

Words / Sheri Chiu

Photography / Nest

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