

AN ODE TO BLUE

THE BRIGHT HUES OF THE INDIGO DYE HAVE A VIBRANCY AND TEXTURE LIKE NO OTHER AND NOW A MUSEUM IN AHMEDABAD IS ALL SET TO PAY HOMAGE TO ITS VERSATILITY.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

The name Arvind Ltd. instantly triggers the word denim in people's mind. After all, Arvind is today among the world's largest producers of the fabric. So it was almost a natural corollary that the country's first ever museum dedicated to the indigo dye would be from the house of Arvind. I was lucky to get a sneak peek into the exhibits that will be part of the museum at Arvind Ltd.'s Alchemy, a special exhibition, ahead of the launch of its Arvind-Indigo Museum.

The soon-to-be-launched museum is to be the country's single largest indigo art-objects repository. It will be housed in a building within the company's Naroda facility in Ahmedabad. This building is being specially resurrected by a French architect and has special significance to Arvind Chairman and MD Sanjay Lalbhai (photo, right) – it was here that the first metre of locally produced denim was rolled out in the late 1980s.

Currently installed at the expansive Kasturbhai Lalbhai museum, the exhibits are stellar examples of a creative confluence of minds that show how the dye can manifest itself on materials beyond just textiles. So you have a display of weaves, furniture, paintings, sculptures and installations on a range of mediums like wood, steel, ceramics, rubber, canvas and paper that are an ode to the transformative properties of indigo.

INSTITUTIONS MUSEUMS



Several eminent artists and artisans from across the world have collaborated with Sanjay Lalbhai and his team to co-create stunning installations and contemporary art works and some of these will also be part of the new museum. Says the textile pioneer, “We have made a list of all the arts and crafts of each state in India and are identifying the best artists for each of them as we want to work with them to express their art through indigo. This is one dye that can keep the tradition yet be contemporary.”

Some of the artists whose works are on display include Megha Todi, Aboubakar Fofana, Kavin Mehta, Vyom Mehta, Umang Hutheesing, Shola Carletti, GR Iranna, Manish Nai, Annie Morris, Gregor Hildebrandt and Alwar Balasubramaniam. Adds Lalbhai, “Our intention is to highlight the immense potential of the dye. Some of the artists have never worked with the dye before and I believe this will create an ecosystem that promotes creativity and art and put India on the global map.”

Arvind's fascination with indigo goes

