



*Pictured, Mumbai  
co-working space the  
Ministry of New*



STYLE FILE

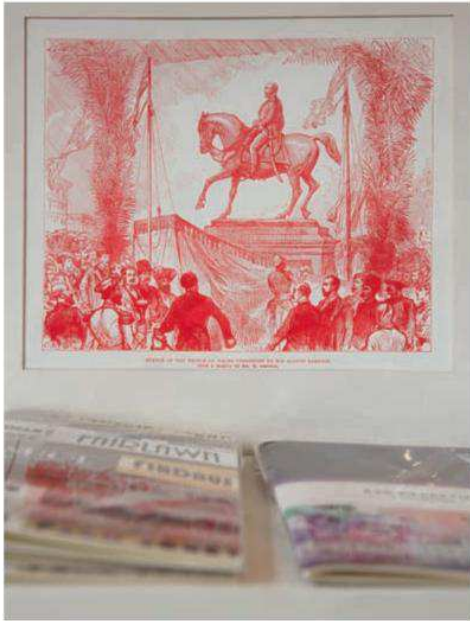
# SHOPPING IN MUMBAI

CURIOSLY CREATIVE HAPPENINGS ARE GOING ON IN THE GLORIOUS OLD HERITAGE BUILDINGS OF DOWNTOWN. SCOPE THEM OUT AMONG THE LEFTFIELD DESIGN STORES, 21ST-CENTURY CO-WORKING SPACES AND FORWARD-THINKING BOUTIQUES

BY CARLA POWER

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS SCHALKX







SOUTH MUMBAI – the city's downtown – is where you'll find the particularly vibrant warren of streets known as Kala Ghoda, which translates as 'black horse' after an equestrian statue of King Edward VII that once stood here. In the past a centre for banking and naval administration, later a hub for machinery and car-parts salesmen, the area became Mumbai's creative hotspot in the late 1990s after designers began moving into its rundown Victorian-era warehouses. Now it's the nucleus of the city's contemporary-art and hipster scene, and the place to hunt for exquisite handmade clothes, artisan homeware and modern paintings.

## DAG MODERN

Founded in Delhi, and with a more recently opened branch in New York, this airy, four-storey gallery is an impressive space, staging auctions and showing such 20th-century greats as the painters MF Husain and FN Souza. DAG's director Ashish Anand began buying art in the mid-1990s, and is widely acknowledged as the world's largest collector of Indian pieces. Those keen to make a smaller investment should visit the shop, which sells facsimile editions, books on art history for both adults and children, as well as silk scarves and mugs embossed with contemporary Indian art 58 Dr VB Gandhi Marg ([dagmodern.com](http://dagmodern.com))

## ARTISANS' CENTRE

One flight up from street level is a gallery and store focusing on work by indigenous craftspeople. 'I wanted to give artisans an elevated platform,' says founder Radhika Parekh. The centre collaborates with NGOs and champions women in rural areas, but the wares carry no whiff of a charity catalogue; the hand-blocked indigo scarves and jewellery designs in semi-precious stones – clean-lined like Monica Vinader's – would look as smart in Paris or Barcelona as they do in Mumbai. Delicate tan shawls woven in Nagaland are understated enough to be paired with a Jil Sander suit, and so soft you'd never guess they're made from stinging nettles. 52-56 Dr VB Gandhi Marg ([artisanscentre.com](http://artisanscentre.com))

## KULTURE SHOP

If you want to bring something back from a switched-on, modern Mumbai, this is the place to come. It's a colourful showcase for

home-grown graphic designers and artists, whose work is emblazoned on walls, T-shirts, cushions and notebooks. The vibe is global: many of the suppliers are Indians who live overseas. If you can't decide while you're here, Kulture also has an excellent website for shipping orders home. *Examiner Press Building, Dalal Street* ([kultureshop.in](http://kultureshop.in))

## OBATAIMU

Come to this small shop for bespoke, ultra-comfortable jumpsuits, structured jackets and T-shirts fusing Japanese and Indian aesthetics. Inspired by the farm-to-fork food movement, the boutique has the equivalent of an open kitchen where you can watch the tailors at work. As one heavily tattooed Obataimu designer explains, 'it's important that you see where your clothes come from and who is making them'. Shop G-3, Machinery House 11B, Bharucha Marg ([obataimu.com](http://obataimu.com))

## CHETANA CRAFT

From outside, it may look like the sort of dreary emporium that sells standard-issue Indian tchotchkes such as tiny elephants and peacock fans. But Chetana, which started life as a cultural café in 1946, contains hidden treasures: chunky metal jewellery from Orissa adapted to Western tastes by a design graduate who works with tribal women, and hand-painted shawls from Bihar and West Bengal. 34 K Dubash Marg ([chetana.com](http://chetana.com))

## ALINA JETHA

A hole-in-the-wall shopfront hides this boutique of silk sundresses and elegant tunics. Jetha's party pieces – beautiful shimmering pink and black silk sleeveless dresses with hand-embroidered gold thread – will still be wearable even when you get home. *Jatia Chambers, 60 Dr VB Gandhi Marg* (+91 22 2261 8747)

## BOMBAY SHIRT COMPANY

Men – and now women too – can custom order their own shirts, choosing from a range of collars, Madmen or Hipster, and cuffs: Neopolitan or Double Bond. The company's travelling stylists make house, office and hotel calls, in case you don't manage to visit one of the two stores in Mumbai. 3 Sassoon Building, Fabindia Lane (+91 22 4004 3455)

## FILTER

It takes vision to sell wrapping paper made from elephant dung, but Filter's stock of gifts by local designers has just that kind of playfulness. Bestsellers include watches with faces showing Indian Stretchable Time – 12ish, 3ish – and boxes of chai flavours: Railway Platform, Mumbai street stall and Dhaba (trucker's stop). There are also notebooks decorated with Raj-era English etchings, and a coffee-table book with sketches of Mumbai train-riders by in-house artist Cyrus Daruwalla. Shop 3, 43 Dr VB Gandhi Marg ([filtershop.in](http://filtershop.in))

## THE MUSEUM SHOP

From funky mouse pads to canvas bags emblazoned with Mughal patterns, this store is worth visiting even if you skip the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya museum itself. Scoring high on the cool quotient are sets of badges of Indian political figures, including both Gandhis, Mahatma and Indira. CSMVS, 159-161 Mahatma Gandhi Road ([csmvs.in](http://csmvs.in))

## STUDIO SCD

Designer Shafali Choudhrie Diwanji is known for her light-hearted homeware and clothing. Look out for cheeky wallpaper

## LOCAL KNOW-HOW

MAIA SETHNA  
FASHION BLOGGER

'I love to go to the Nutcracker, a small vegetarian café serving buttermilk pancakes, *akuri* (Parsi-style eggs) and phenomenal seven-layer cookies.' *Modern House, Dr VB Gandhi Marg*



'I'm getting married soon, and I'm hoping to find my dress at Sabyasachi because it's traditional, elegant and diverse. Even if you aren't a bride-to-be, it's worth stopping by. The shop is like a royal palace: a total sensory treat.' *Ador House, 6-K Dubash Marg*

'Theobroma has the best brownies; the red velvet ones are a brilliant pick-me-up on a gloomy day. If I'm travelling to Delhi, my friends there will ask me to bring box-loads for them.' *24 Cusrow Baug, Electric House*  
[maiasethna.in](http://maiasethna.in)