



# James Ferreira

## Blend of Style and Sustainability

Pioneering Indian fashion designer, James Ferreira, has decades of experience in creating style stories. In an exclusive conversation, the veteran designer talks about sustainable design, the importance of hair and make-up, and his journey through the world of fashion



### **What motivates you to keep going?**

For me, it is about meeting people and playing with fabric. I do not feel compelled to bring out something 'new' because I have found my comfort zone. So, no matter what other designers are innovating on, I concentrate on improving myself in a way that I am comfortable with.

### **What is the role of hair and make-up on the runway?**

Hair and make-up are meant to accessorise or enhance the garment. In one of my recent collections, I had garments in muted hues and so, chose shocking pink to enhance the make-up to lend a modern vibe. For my Khadi show in 2011, I used the white Indira Gandhi streak across the face, and for another show, instead of rings, I had diamonds hanging from the model's fingertips. Now, a lot of brands like MAC, Lakme, Lotus and so on, are sponsoring shows and making way for exciting collaborations on the ramp.

### **What are your favourite hair and make-up looks from the ramp, so far?**

For my Mumbai-Tokyo show at LFW 2007, I used an oversized gold bindi going up into the hair. The hair was simple and sleek to keep the garments in focus.

### **One make-up or hair artists' work that you admire?**

Daniel Bauer is very creative, as I have worked with him on an ad shoot. There are so many artists, designers, and brands heading to India. I teach my students that they are not competing with me, Tarun, or Rohit but Chanel, Gucci and a whole lot of international brands who have found their customer base in India. The same is true with make-up and hair, too. Brands are sending their stylists to our country and until we push our standards up to meet what they are offering, we will be left behind.

### **Would you be keen on aligning with the hair or make-up industry?**

I would like to promote herbal make-up. There are many brands following it as a concept, but they need to keep it pure.

### **What are you currently doing and looking forward to?**

I am teaching design at a college in Jaipur and helping students look at fashion through an Indian perspective. Besides teaching, I have dedicated the next few years to the upliftment of handloom artisans. They are currently underpaid and underrepresented - my international project focuses on changing that. 🌱

### **What are your views on the growth of Indian fashion?**

I do not think it has grown at all, and if it has, it has been lopsided progress. We do not even have an Indian size chart, and then, we have done nothing to train the support staff. Where are the trained tailors, cutters, embroiderers, and artisans to support the designers flooding the market every year? If we do not take immediate action, our traditional art could be lost. Also, I do not see any sense in having a fashion council with just 40 to 50 designers as members. Related industries such as textile, manufacturing, accessory, footwear, and jewellery, need to participate, too. The idea should be to broaden the reach and share the credits so that we all can grow together as a better and vibrant industry.

### **Tell us about your concept of design – how has your style evolved?**

My clothes are about drape and Origami; one seam is my style and I think, the designs are easy to wear. Sustainability is another factor. I make clothes out of a single piece of fabric and use every part of it; even the pieces left from cutting armholes and a neckline. Traditional Indian designs have zero-wastage.

I DO NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO BRING OUT SOMETHING 'NEW' BECAUSE UNLIKE OTHER DESIGNERS, I HAVE FOUND MY COMFORT ZONE.

