



Silken knots

Having found artistic success late in life, Neerja Mohunta paints a glorious story to **Kanika Rekhi**, on how it's never too late to achieve the 'colourful' life you want!

Always having been zestful and creatively inclined, Neerja Mohunta found her calling at an age when most of her counterparts chose to retire! "I got married when I turned 18 and at the age of 56 when both my children had settled, I thought it was time to relax and enjoy the fruits of the seeds sown. But there was always a feeling of emptiness in me to do something for my personal attainment, that the candle had not burned fully. I tried to brush aside this feeling as all my peers were in the retirement mood, and I was well aware that to start something anew would require a lot of effort! But I decided to take the plunge, and let my creative juices flow, once again!"

Mohunta recalls how while taking the responsibility of family

she developed her artistic flair; "Just like an energetic river flows to make its own path, I too with all my enthusiasm and energy made my way in the natural space I got. I was lucky in having Vineet as my husband who was not only encouraging and supportive but was the answer to all my problems in arts."

With an idea to explore various creative styles, she started taking classes on cooking, icing, sugar craft and garnishing. She soon moved on to Tiffany stained glass, mosaics, marquetry, porcelain, Tanjore painting, moulding, statue making and more. Dabbling with an array of creative skills, she eventually landed up taking 25 courses! Then again life took a steep turn when her kids

"It's never too late; Invest in yourself!"

were going abroad to study and she decided to join the growing family business.

"Life was going on smoothly with the kids settled and me enjoying life with family and friends. But again lockdown halted our lives. It jolted us and we were forced to face the new reality," she recalls. Rather than sitting idle, she decided to spark her creative mojo again! "I used to scan a lot of new creative stuff and was working on writing a book on how to tie scarves, 200 ways. That's when I happened to come across silk painted scarves and instantly I was glued to them as a moth to flame! It reminded me of my stained glass days. The colours on silk just fascinated me and I decided to explore this art form."

Thus began her journey of self-learning through books and videos... It took her six months to conquer this detailed and difficult art form as silk is non-forgiving; "It was difficult to self-learn this form of art, but knowing there are a very few silk painters in India and no one in Nagpur, that again gave me a boost! I realised it was a sophisticated, intricate, elegant art form even though expensive, just worth it!"

"Single-handedly doing all myself, now making silk scarves has become a way of life," she says, "I received a lot of appreciation from friends and orders started pouring in, that's when I decided to make it a venture." She now has clients all over India via Etsy and her website and plans to showcase her scarves in USA too. "Apart from this I plan to start an online school of all my arts in near future. Today I'm my mid 50s and yet I found myself and my passion, even if it's at this age! That's why I keep saying and believing in - It's never too late; Invest in yourself!" **F**

CUPPA LOVE Coffee-holics unite!

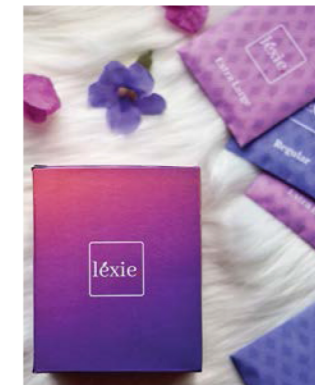
What: Premium pour-over coffee bags from Coffeeza
What's interesting: Drinking a hot cuppa perfectly brewed coffee has never been as easy. The Coffeeza pour-over coffee sachets are available in four variants like Light Roast, Medium Roast, Medium-Dark Roast and Dark Roast. These pour-overs are 100% Arabica coffee are sourced from the best coffee plantations in India. Simply pour hot water into the pre-packed coffee filters and your coffee is ready in minutes. The month of February saw their online store having a specially curated Valentine's Coffee Gift Box with an assortment of 40 Coffeeza pour-over coffee sachets available.
Valentine or not, these boxes of coffee make for a great gift for your friends and family, or even yourself!
Price: On request
Available at: www.brew.coffeeza.com



WOODEN WONDERS Creative contemporary customized wooden creations

What: Bespoke personalized wooden gifting hub
What's interesting: Naaz Studio believes in engraving precious memories onto chunks of wood. Wood grows and changes over time, it 'seasons' like us, doing so with grace, and thus same way their wooden gifts are beautiful and brimming with sentimental value. Their founder Arwa Ali, an architect by profession, transferred her love for ancient rich wood carvings on monuments to creating eccentric engraved wooden pieces. They believe in personalisation than mass production, so each product is handcrafted and customized with a picture or message of one's choice. They deal with different wood species and their product line includes customized gifts, home decor, artefacts to furniture.
Price: On request
Available at: Instagram @naaz.studio

WOMAN WOES, NO MORE! Eco-friendly menstruation products curated for a comfortable feminine experience



What: Organic and biodegradable menstrual products
What's Interesting: Lexie was started with a mission of eco-friendly menstruation, working on sustainable and organic lifestyle and creating a value for life. Lexie offers efficient and easy to use Organic Sanitary Pads which will ensure that you have a safe, rash-free and comfortable period without the fear and impact of any harmful chemicals or plastic. Lexie pads are made of cotton and organic polymer making them biodegradable and since they are also light and ultra-thin, makes them breathable. The Sanitary Pads can be customized according to your flow with variable sizes available. Packaging makes it stand apart since Lexie provides with disposal envelopes and doesn't use any plastic packaging, but only cardboard. They also have other array of products enabling you to have carefree experience.
Price: ₹99 onwards
Available at: Instagram @mylexiewoman **F**

- Compiled by Kanika Rekhi

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