

FASHION

ELLE Exclusive: Maria Grazia Chiuri Commissions Indian Artist Rithika Merchant

In a stroke of genius for Dior haute couture Spring Summer 25 collection, Maria Grazia Chiuri yet again engages in a creative alliance commissioning Rithika Merchant to conceive an immersive artwork comprising nine paintings.

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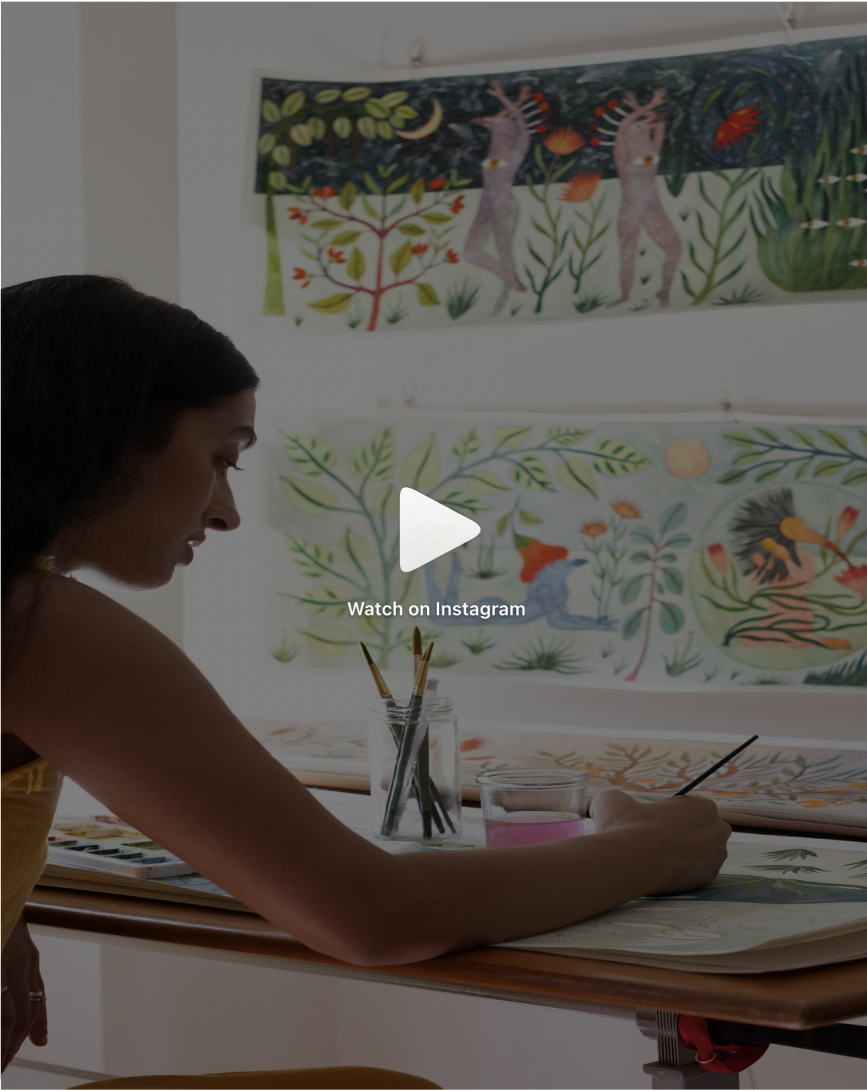
Ever since she took over the creative and artistic reigns at [Christian Dior](#), the unstoppable Maria Grazia Chiuri has been on a relentless mission to empower, enchant and engage thinkers, artists and visionaries. Every outing under her aegis has been a powerful socio-cultural commentary bringing together artists from different parts of the world thus lending them a hallowed platform to create original works of art.



Reconciling the magic of haute couture with empowering femininity, she has time and again given women across generations a distinctive voice and crafted impossibly timeless creations which offer them strength, freedom and a sense of fearlessness. Superimposing the sheer force of feminine power with the beauty of haute couture has been central to Maria's vast and significant body of work.

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Get ready for the [#DiorCouture](#) Spring-Summer 2025 show, live from Paris today at 3pm CET on Instagram. In another anticipatory indication to the unveiling of [@MariaGraziaChiuri](#)'s collection, [@RithikaMerchant](#) discusses 'The Flowers We Grew', her artwork commissioned specially for the show.

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Translated into large-scale textile panels by Karishma Swali, the Chanakya ateliers and the Chanakya School of Craft, these works form an immersive visual landscape convening stories of womanhood across generations. Reflecting Maria Grazia Chiuri and Dior's commitment to supporting women artists around the world, this original collective artwork is unveiled during the Dior défilé in the garden of the Rodin Museum. The public will be able to discover it, following the show, over five days – from January 28 to February 2, 2025 – in an exhibition open to all.



Born in Mumbai, Rithika Merchant gathers stories of her ancestors originating on her maternal side from the region of Kerala. “The seeds we plant in the past grow into the flowers of the present,” she says, highlighting the continuous narratives passed on down the years through a powerful line of matriarchs. Drawing from her own aesthetic vocabulary informed by the study of botanical drawings, her paintings in gouache, watercolour and ink on paper, engender a natural landscape punctuated by universal symbols, floral and organic shapes.



Referencing a variety of literary and mythological sources, she creates a storyline rooted in past narratives, opening a positive future, celebrating female force, energy and joy. For this installation, Karishma Swali, the master artisans of Chanakya and the graduate women students of the Chanakya School of Craft have interpreted her artworks in a great range of stitches, colours and materials. A testament to interdisciplinary artistry, the tactile and consciousness-altering brushstrokes of Rithika Merchant’s paintings into a

monumental creation combines their crafts and savoir-faire of excellence in a multi-sensorial visual experience.

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