

# umdasch

THE STORE MAKERS

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## Inspiring forest of bags at Aranyani in London umdasch The Store Makers builds sustainable concept store for Indian luxe bag brand

**At the beginning of the year, Aranyani, India's first international luxury handbag brand, opened its exclusive flagship store in London's Mayfair district. Based on a concept by the renowned design studio Kinnersley Kent Design, umdasch The Store Makers was responsible for shopfitting and general contracting. The store is a tribute to craftsmanship, tradition, sustainability, longevity and timelessness – the core values of the Aranyani brand.**

Located right next to Hyde Park, Bruton Street in the heart of Mayfair has become a hip shopping destination for exclusive brands in recent years. Alongside household names such as Maison Margiela, Elie Saab and Kenzo, luxury handbag brand Aranyani, founded in 2016, has been another addition to this luxurious fashion enclave since the beginning of the year.

"The opening of our first store in Mayfair is our commitment to our global audience and our brand. The store embodies the values, aesthetics, and experience that we wish to share with everyone", says Aranyani founder Haresh Mirpuri. The shopping experience at the store is spread over two floors. The 50-square-metre ground floor primarily serves as an inviting retail space where the high-quality bags are prominently displayed. The basement, measuring just under 80 square metres, features a classy consultation room where customers can discuss their individual wishes for a custom-made piece based on a wide portfolio of leather finishes, precious stones and other details.

### **Inspired by the goddess of the forest**

Aranyani has declared war on fast fashion and instead of short-lived trends, focuses on timeless handbags made with traditional craftsmanship and inspired by the beauty of nature. How fitting, as "Aranyani" means "goddess of the forest". A name that underlines the brand's core values of sustainability, longevity and timelessness. The design was inspired by a journey through Aranyani's forest and aims to create a space that embodies her spirit. The creative team at Kinnersley Kent Design poured warm light colours, rich tones and natural materials into a virtuoso design, which umdasch The Store Makers translated into a matching shopfitting to bring the Aranyani story to life.

### **Beauty of the forest as a source for unique shopping experience**

Upon entering the boutique, the customer's journey begins at the edge of the forest, so to speak. Even the exterior façade with its green tiles is reminiscent of the variety of leaves on the trees. As the customer journey progresses, customers move deeper and deeper beneath the canopy of leaves. There they discover a selected range of bags placed on tiered shelves, highlighted by spotlights as if they were resting on tree branches and illuminated by individual rays of sunlight. Undulating

niches rippling down the perimeter walls provide the minimalist wall display features. The combination of leather, stained oak, as well as brass and bronze, creates an elegant setting. At the centre of the store, the central "glade" awaits customers – a light-flooded area with sculptural rings that represent Aranyani's monogram. The organic architectural forms symbolise the energy and vitality of the forest goddess. The soft light skilfully sets off the highlight products on large slabs of British stone and Irish marble. Here, too, different lighting conditions have been played with: The backlit ceiling panel with its irregular cut-outs creates a grazing light effect on the floor. The time-controlled lamps, which are switched on and off throughout the day, create a changing light effect. Like a forest glade, this zone invites you to pause and experience the beauty, quality and craftsmanship of the products.

### **Sustainable from the handbag to the shopfitting**

The Aranyani brand places great emphasis on sustainability in the production of its bags, which is also reflected in the design of the boutique beautifully conceptualised and designed by KKD. The store design includes a wide range of natural materials that have been handpicked with sustainability and the environment in mind. Particular care was taken in the selection process to ensure that the materials were ethically sourced in the UK. Working with UK suppliers gives the spaces a unique feel and creates a connection with the local landscape. An example of this is the use of a unique blend of unfired clay, minerals and pigments from the UK as breathable finishes for interior walls. Stones from regional quarries have also been used. The existing shopfitting was reworked, with some existing elements retained and reused. The dark flooring was sanded down to reveal a beautiful light oak parquet underneath. This was reclaimed and re-stained to match the lighter colour palette of the floor.

### **The complexity is in the details**

The realisation of such a multi-layered project requires close collaboration, coordination and a shared philosophy between all the teams involved in the project. For the Store Makers, there were some hurdles to overcome in both general contracting and shop construction. "It was a challenge to maintain the desired aesthetic while balancing it with the organic clay cladding throughout the ground floor", says Michael Smart, Sales Director at umdasch The Store Makers. Adding to the complexity of the project, from the Store Makers' point of view, was the sourcing of the different types of stone and the bespoke fixtures. In addition, according to Smart, the construction of the glade with its organic shape proved challenging: "The leaning, conical shape of the glade presents itself with precise cut-outs and had to blend with the adjoining walls and ceiling soffit."



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umdasch: rooted in craftsmanship, visionary in the digital, always with human standards and one goal: to realise successful stores. The Store Makers at umdasch create extraordinary worlds of experience for exquisite customers. With their four business units – Multistore Solutions, Premium Solutions, Construction Solutions and Digital Solutions – they serve numerous fields of competence from Design Consulting & Value Engineering to Project Management, General Contracting and Shop Systems to Digital Retail. With around 1,400 employees, umdasch is one of the leading shopfitting companies in Europe. The headquarters are located in Amstetten, Austria. The company realises more than 7,000 shopfitting and 200 general contractor projects every year. Together with the Doka and Umdasch Group Ventures divisions, the Umdasch Group is active on five continents with over 170 production, logistics and sales branches. It has been in the family of siblings Hilde Umdasch and Alfred Umdasch for 155 years.