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THIS MUMBAI ATELIER IS THE SECRET WORKSHOP OF THE BEST FRENCH FASHION HOUSES

January 24, 2023 | Entertainment | 0 Views

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Fournie works with a company called Creations By Shanagar (which means “to decorate” in Sanskrit), which is housed in a nondescript beige building near Mumbai International Airport.

Dozens of men in gray polo shirts sit cross-legged on cushions, heads bent over large cloth covers. Silence reigns except for the click of needles and beads, the whirl of ceiling fans, and the occasional airplane overhead.

“MUCH IMAGINATION”

For decades they have played an essential but unsung role in the fashion industry in Europe, Japan and the United States.

“I enjoy working with Julien because he is another master craftsman who is very knowledgeable,” said director Chetan Desai, 55.

“He has a lot of imagination. He develops his own concepts and I have to translate these ideas into embroidery.

“It was a very challenging experience and at the same time very fruitful,” he added.

Back in France, Fournie sends back the compliments.

“What they do better than anyone is embroider with degraded gold thread and thread it through transparent beads to create gradients. It’s unprecedented,” he said.

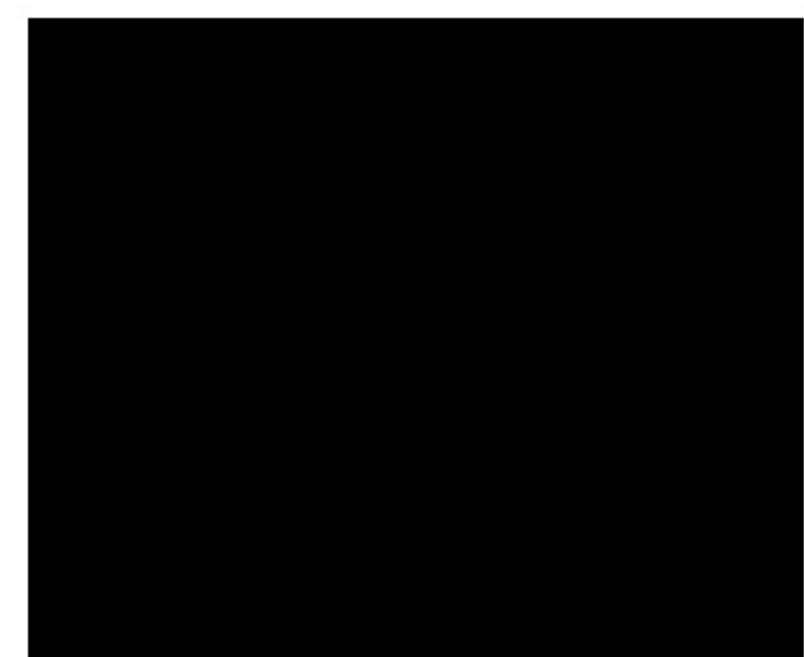
It gives silk an aged, elegant look for wedding dresses that are “shiny but not too shiny”.

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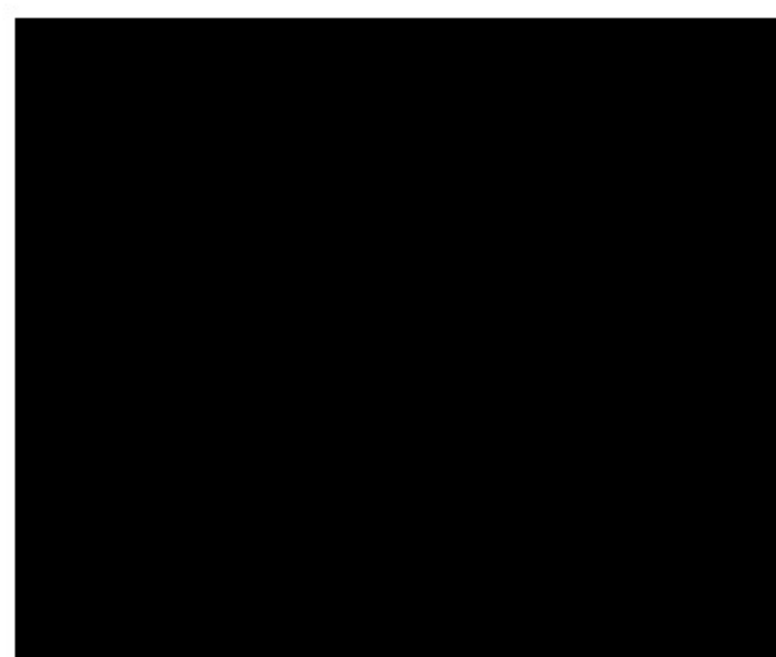
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