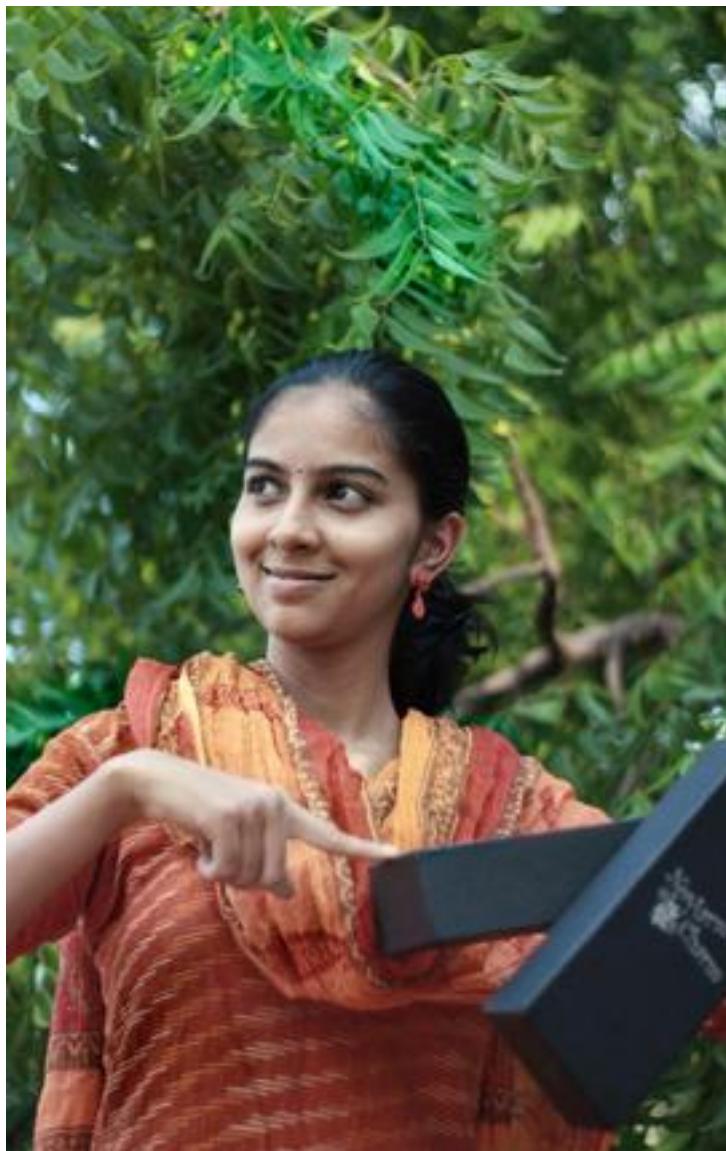


'If we were silkworms, we'd be boiled alive for our threads'

SRIYA NARAYANAN



Vegan entrepreneur Preethi Raghav asks why animals should be dragged into our desire to go bling



The earrings and necklaces are eco- and pocket-friendly.

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She loves shiny, pretty things just as much as the next person – but Preethi Raghav shows us that our love for exquisite jewellery can be indulged without resorting to animal cruelty or environmental damage.

The vegan entrepreneur founded ‘No Harm Charm’, a cruelty-free jewellery brand, last year when she became addicted to designing, after a workshop on terracotta jewellery making. When friends and family posted enthusiastic responses to pictures of her creations (that use no animal products or harmful ingredients) on Facebook, Preethi decided to follow her passion and make a difference at the same time.

She launched a wide range of colourful, non-toxic earrings, necklaces and sets that were both eco-and pocket-friendly. Her specialties include alternatives to pearls and customised jewellery. Speaking about pearl alternatives, Preethi reveals that as a vegan, she finds it unacceptable to harm any living being in order to turn them into ornaments.

“If we were silkworms, we’d be boiled alive for our threads; if we were oysters, we’d be tortuously injected with irritants to give

(manufacture) ulcers i.e, pearls; if we were pretty birds, someone would be hunting us down, to use our feathers to make jewellery”, she says.

“I’ve worked on creating the faux-pearl just so we can consciously replace the cruel pearl with more ethical options. Like racism is wrong, i.e. just to discriminate against someone based on their birth, speciesism is wrong too.”

She also found through research that much of the bling in our wardrobes contains dangerous substances such as lead, arsenic and epoxy, and that there is a dire need for accessories that do not contain these poisonous ingredients.

In order to make her products easily accessible, Preethi ensured that the price range made it affordable to all budgets. Some of the pearl alternatives are priced as low as Rs. 50.

“I discovered that baking at home using terracotta ovens and fire wood, creates a final product that was just so rewarding... that beautiful piece of jewellery. At times, I do not even paint it!” she says. “It easily takes around three to five days for me to work on a single piece of jewellery. I want to help people wear what they imagine. I feel that it’s an art in itself to read someone’s mind, understand their needs and bring it into a product. I want to master it and that’s why most of what I make is custom-made.”

Preethi has her hands full with ongoing orders and her experiments with different techniques of baking, glazing and painting. And keeping her primary goal of animal welfare in mind, she recently set up a stall at the Blue Cross Adoption Drive and donated 50 per cent of the proceeds to the cause of homeless pet adoption. *To order her products, visit www.noharmcharm.com, email noharmcharm@gmail.com or call 9566051179.*