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Designer Spotlight

When costume designer Swati Argade used to walk down the street in ensembles she had created for herself, women would flock to find out where she'd bought her outfit (of course, the former South Indian classical dancer's graceful model's carriage probably didn't hurt). So, in true modern day Schwab's fashion, intrigued strangers became clients and soon a ready-to-wear business was born. The resulting designs are a beautiful blend of classic shapes—her new season in particular is built around the ever-iconic trench coat silhouette—and ethnic touches (lots of linen shot through with metallic thread, a sunny, sumptuous color palette). All that, and Argade's conscious decision to honor the workers behind the products by focusing on developing local economies and keeping alive ancient traditions like weaving and dyeing, make her Bengali Girl Spring/Summer 2006 line the last word in guilt-free glamour.

Click here to view more looks from Swati Argade

Asha Dress, $335, at Layla (Brooklyn), call (718-222-1933)

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Swati Argade 3/4th tea cup coat, $310, at Indomix (NYC), call 212-334-635

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