

HOME & DESIGN

A TIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION

TRENDS

VOLUME 8 NO 3

Alan Abraham

*On shaping
a city and its
communities
through design*

PARTNER PORTRAITS

Alan by Anca Abraham

Krupa by Zubin Zainuddin

Pashmin by Satyajeet Patwardhan

Piyush by Priyanka Mehra

Vishakha by Muninder Chowdhry

ESSAYS

Designers' State of Mind

AYUSH KASLIWAL

BRINDA SOMAYA

JAIDEEP MEHROTRA

SUMESSH MENON



#GOVOCALFORLOCAL

PRODUCT DESIGN STUDIOS THAT DEFINE THE CREATIVE SPIRIT OF INDIA

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Image: Anca Abraham



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What we, until now, called an unprecedented situation has become a way of life. Each one of us responded differently to the pandemic, some fretted, some panicked, some discovered a renewed sense of positivity and optimism, while some resigned to the situation. As for us, at Trends, we plotted and planned the D/code Design Biennale, the country's first virtual art and design festival. And what a response it has been! Might I say, it is our most ambitious project yet!

Curated by architectural designer Shantanu Garg, Casamia presents D/code Design Biennale will bring together over 100 creative minds on a virtual platform. It's a mammoth! Now this, is unprecedented. I'm sorry, but I can't talk about anything else, except that I'm consumed, or rather the whole team is consumed, by DDB.

As far as the issue is concerned, we shine the spotlight on some really interesting homegrown brands. And as we slowly begin to tread into the outside world, this month's cover star Alan Abraham gives us a peek into our cities, and whether they're post-pandemic ready.

Happy reading.

Seema Sreedharan
Editor

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EDITOR'S NOTE



For some reason, I've been obsessed with the idea of budgeting, this last month. If you ask me about myself, that's quite out of character – considering I'm not a big spender in the first place. Come to think of it, I've never been a money-minded person, either. Quite the opposite, in fact!

In hindsight, I think “conscious” fits better with my current frame of mind. I feel the need to explain. It's one of those periods in my life when I've become poignantly aware of everything I'm doing. And I'd like to thank the 'Rona for it; because I don't ever remember not being impulsive before this. Some of you may argue and say that it's a sign of maturity. May be. I still believe it's got something to do with the pandemic.

How wonderful it feels to be able to hear your inner voice amidst all the din! Of course, I'm holding my tongue in my cheek while I say that. With all nine of us home for the quarter, there's quite a bit of noise that we generate at every given point in time, and it's a luxury to be able to hear anything above that cacophony. So I'm loving being all conscious about everything right now. What I eat, how I eat it, where I'm going, what the kids are doing, how my parents are doing, what I'm spending on and how much, who the kids are talking to, what is their screen time, what is my screen time, how much water I'm drinking (and how much wine!)...and generally why we're making the choices we're making.

Clearly, I don't mean “budgeting” in the conventional sense of the word. I'm thinking budgeting as being conscious of everything I do...my thoughts, my actions, the consequences...and as impulsive as I normally am, learning to be budget-friendly is a good thing. At home, by design, is a good way to start.

Get the hint, guys?

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Ronitaa'.

Ronitaa R. Italia
Editor in Chief

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D/code

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INDIA'S FIRST CURATED
VIRTUAL ART AND
DESIGN FESTIVAL

DESIGN BIENNALE

JAIPUR EDITION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2020



CURATED BY
SHANTANU
GARG

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DESIGNERS

50+ COLLABORATIONS

20+ BRANDS

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THE FIRST TIME EVER
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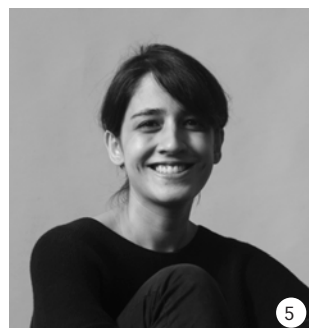
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DESIGN IN CONTEXT

Product design studios with Indian roots and a global outlook

Text **TINA THAKRAR**

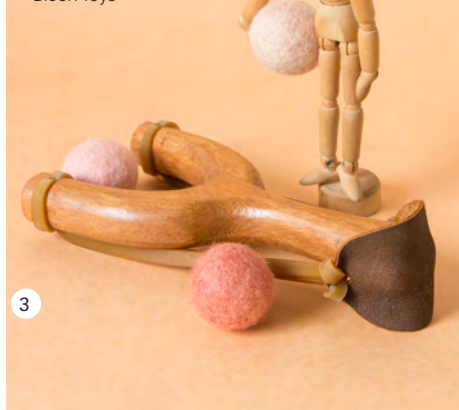


BLOON TOYS

Children learn in so many different ways - by being taught, by observing, and by playing. But in these methods, there is always something or someone directing the child. Intuitively, however, children are capable of free play - a self-directed, imaginative world where they make the rules. Feeding this innate ability is Isha Gopal of Bloon Toys, which works at the intersection of education and design to make Waldorf classroom-inspired toys that invite open-ended play. Crafted from natural materials, Bloon Toys are minimal, sustainable and gentle, making them perfect for unsupervised play. ►



1. A selection of Bloon Toys, including the Curvy Board 2.0
2. Zen Blocks
3. Sling Shot & Felt Balls
4. Modelling Beeswax
5. Isha Gopal, Founder, Bloon Toys

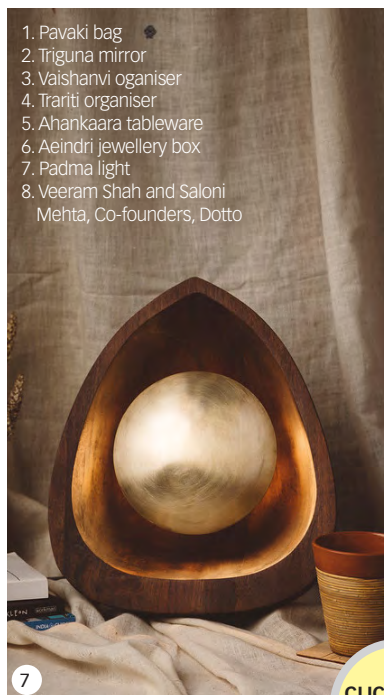


"Play is a natural instinct and when given enough time to self-direct, all children naturally slip into free play. They can spend hours in a magical world of their own making."

– Isha Gopal, Founder, Bloon Toys



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"The idea behind Dotto was to 'design sans scale'. The dot is the origin of everything, and our central design philosophy.

– Saloni Mehta, Co-founder, Dotto



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DOTTO

In Indian philosophy and religion, the 'dot' signifies the entire universe. Its various traditional connotations, like the shunya or bindi, also encompass this metaphor. But its latest, contemporary connotation is in the design world, as Dotto - an Ahmedabad-based brand conceptualised and inceptioned by architect Veeram Shah and designer Saloni Mehta. The duo uses the dot as the foundation to create functional objects of all forms, backed by rich stories rather than trends, and art rather than marketability. Their inspiration comes from creative mediums like literature and cinema, as they seamlessly infuse art and functionality into lifestyle products. ►



1

"As designers, we consider it our priority to narrate the stories of our artisans and their crafts through our products."

– Sarthak Sengupta, Co-founder, Sarthak Sahil Design Co.



9

SARTHAK SAHIL DESIGN CO.

Over a decade ago, designers Sahil Bagga and Sarthak Sengupta stepped into the design industry in India with their unique 'global meets local' approach. Very quickly after the inception of their studio in Delhi, they established themselves as specialists in designing and fabricating furniture, products and spaces that honour traditional Indian crafts and sustainable production systems. From small lamps to large boutique hotels, their projects have spanned the board, and are recognised as design ecosystems that focus on ethics, ecology and ethnicity. In a way, their pieces give back to the society they inhabit, by involving the local community and embracing the 'Zero Kilometer' concept. ►

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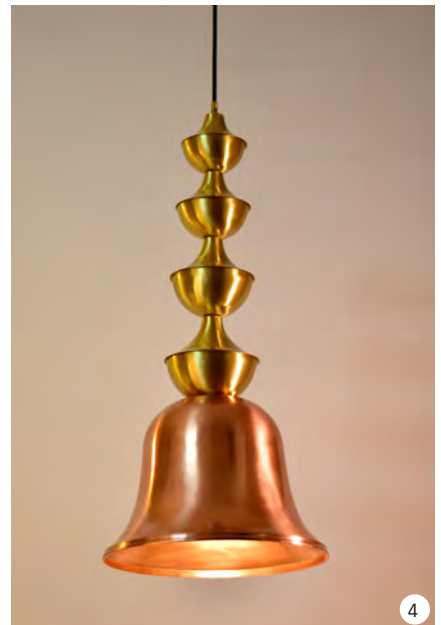
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6

1. Defragment Matka Light
2. Pom Pom Siesta Chair
3. Pom Pom Rocking Chair
4. Garland Pendant Lamp
5. Bird Watchers Chair
6. Noor Console Table
7. Kalash Console Table
8. Saint Glass Chandelier
9. (L-R) Sarthak Sengupta and Sahil Bagga, Co-founders, Sarthak Sahil Design Co.



5

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TO READ
MORE



1

1. Cloth
2. Surface_Work
3. Hold
4. Surface S|MJL
5. Prachi and Vineet Vora, Partners, Studio UF+O



5

STUDIO UF+O

In the words of Prachi and Vineet Vora of Studio Urban Form and Objects, +Objects is a series of “functional sculptures”. As the name suggests, their studio melds Urban Form (architecture driven by innovation in material research and construction) with Objects (sculptural works of art). The duo take their research seriously, steadily rendering new designs that truly represent the firm’s philosophy. +Objects is the result of five years of investigation and dialogue about the use of marble and natural stones. This collection challenges the static nature of stones and softens them with movement. ►

“+Objects aims to bring art into everyday items. The folds of fabric and flow of fluids has inspired these sculptural forms.”

– Prachi Vora, Partner, Studio UF+O



4



2



3

"Our motto for everything we make is something that motivates young minds and excites older ones. Simply put, our work is 'for the young (at heart) and the restless'."

– Navya Aggarwal, Co-founder, Studio Wood



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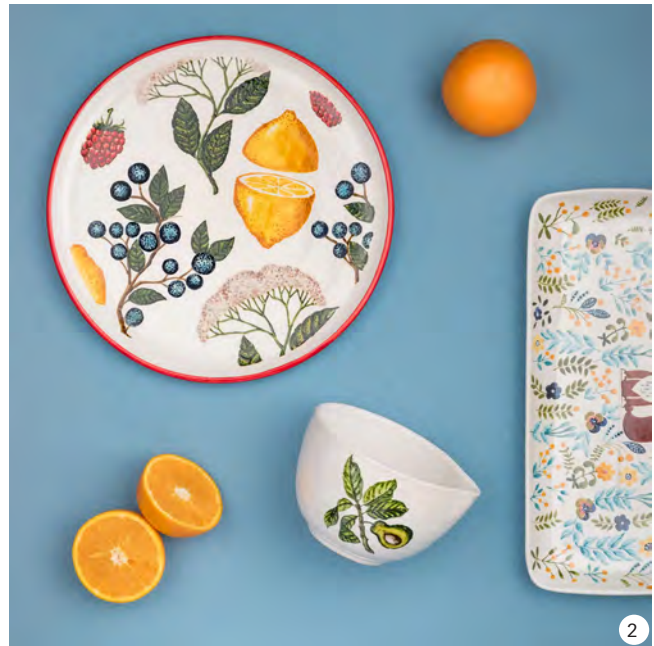
STUDIO WOOD

In the summer of 2014, an architect, an interior designer and a product designer put their heads together to create a line of furniture that was essentially a set of deconstructed sample pieces. The collaboration became an amalgamation of their different skill sets, all directed towards one vision - to create effective, functional and clean products and spaces that metamorphose the perception of the Indian design industry. That vision has now taken the form of a collective called Studio Wood, and its founders, Vrinda Mathur, Navya Aggarwal and Sahej Bhatia are now known for their 'in the moment' aesthetics and ingenious quirks. Clearly, they're partial to wood, which takes the lead in almost all their product and spatial designs in vivid ways. ►



1. Disc-O TV Console for Magnolia from the On The Dot collection
2. Gingham from the Figments collection
3. Plank Storage Shelves for Magnolia from the On The Dot collection
4. Shoot from Collection 3.0h!
5. Connect from Collection 3.0h!
6. Vrinda Mathur, Navya Aggarwal and Sahej Bhatia, Co-founders, Studio Wood





"Our designs are based mainly on Goan art, but with distinct influences of Indian art. Our design aesthetic is to keep our lines simple yet classy."

– Aparna Khaunte, Founder, Terravida



TERRAVIDA

In the quiet village of Corlim in North Goa is an artisanal workshop of 12 artists from across India, who bring elements of nature alive on handcrafted ceramic tableware, tiles and home decor items. About 25 minutes away, in the city of Panjim, their designs are put on display at Terravida, a bespoke ceramics store and brand run by Aparna Khaunte. Inspired by rustic Portuguese elements, these pieces are minimal, contemporary and shaped not only by hand, but also by culture. The limited-edition designs represent the Portuguese influence in Goa, and on its art and craft. ►



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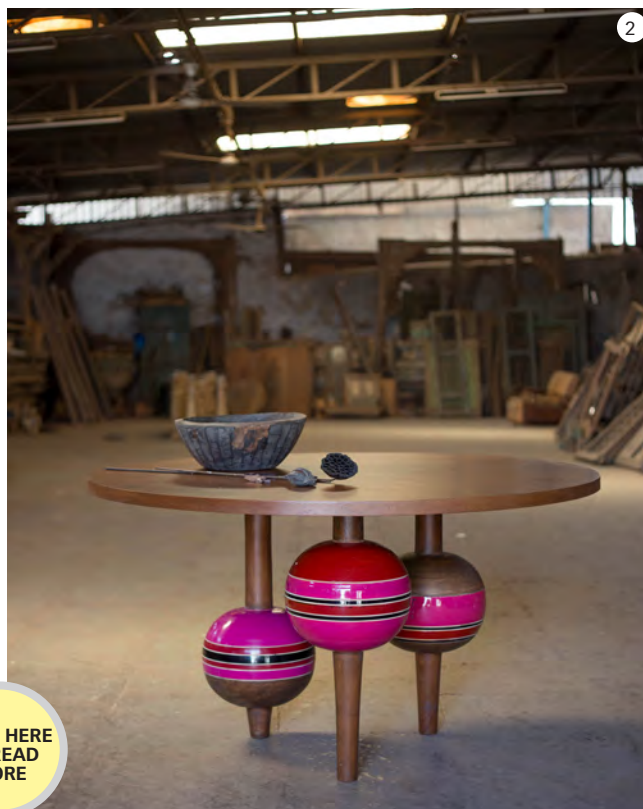
1. Christmas collection
2. and 4. Summer Blossom collection
3. Portuguese collection
5. Tropical collection
6. Aparna Khaunte, Founder, Terravida



1. Terracotta Cylinder Centre Tables from the Maati collection
2. Laakh-Gola from the 2020 collection
3. Gills Pink Pouf from The Forest collection
4. Ekatva Green Cane Bed and Side Table from the 2020 collection
5. Revival Upholstered Chair II from the 2020 collection
6. Ariane Thakore, Founder, This and That



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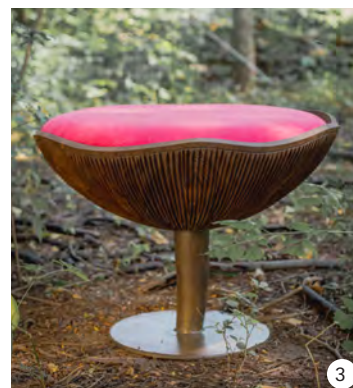
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6

"I begin with observation. If something catches my eye, I explore the form, colours and textures and translate them into furniture pieces."

– Ariane Thakore, Founder, This and That



3

THIS AND THAT

It was a deep passion to propagate India's traditional art of handcrafting furniture and decor items that made Ariane Thakore transition from economics to interior design early in her career. It's been over two decades since, and the Ahmedabad-based designer has created quite a niche for herself in the Indian design industry. Besides the numerous residential, retail, restaurant and spatial design projects she's worked on, she also runs This and That, a dedicated furniture design store that takes artisanal techniques and gives them a modern twist. Her approach is sustainable, human-centric, and most importantly, celebrates India. **H&DT**



5



4

SHOWCASE



EXCELLENCE THROUGH DESIGN

ARCHITECT GIRISH PATIL, FOUNDER CORE DESIGNS TAKES US THROUGH HIS DESIGN JOURNEY

Soon after graduating from the Academy of Architecture in 1997, Architect Girish Patil started working in the civil architecture sector; he also dabbled in residential and commercial projects. However, over a period of time he developed an inclination towards designing state-of-the-art commercial spaces. "The projects are fast-paced and challenging. But I also realised that most of the works being done in this segment were stereotypical, with hardly any thought given to detail and aesthetics in design," says Girish Patil. Understanding this lacunae, and in an attempt to bridge this void between functionality and aesthetics in the commercial segment, Mr. Patil started his on practice in 2002. Since then,



he's added to his repertoire some really prestigious projects including Barclay's Bank, Ascendas, NSE etc.

Talking about his design philosophy, Mr. Patil says, "As the name suggests we at "Core" try to deep dive into the design problem and arrive at the best most creative & viable solution. We spend a lot of time deliberating over the design in detail, keeping in mind the functionality and business requirements of our clients, once this is taken care of we add the quirky elements which add to the visual treat and makes the space interesting." As someone who has dabbled in both residential and commercial projects he infers that residential projects are more time consuming, while the commercial projects are fast-paced. "There is a lot of modularity involved in commercial spaces and the projects are time bound, whereas in residential interiors the attention to detail is much more as each and every corner needs to be customised to the user's design appetite and lifestyle."

Mr. Patil's most challenging project so far has been the Corporate Head Office of Barclay's Bank in 2008. "We bagged this project through a competition with the top Architects in Mumbai. The challenge in this site was the double height space which was about 28 feet from the floor. The premises was designed as a swimming pool and spa in the building plan, we had to convert it into an office space for a Multinational bank. We delivered this project within the stipulated time period of 75 days. Arguably one of our most challenging and satisfying project till date," Mr. Patil informs.

For someone who has designed some fabulous and complicated projects, does he have a dream project? "I come from an army background. I would love to build a monument of public significance. Maybe something like a war memorial...yes, that would be my dream project."

In Conversation with **SHANTANU GARG**

Young and dynamic, architectural designer Shantanu Garg is synonymous with the India-modern design aesthetic

Shantanu Garg is the undisputed champion of modern Indian design. Through his eponymous design practice, Shantanu Garg Design, he advocates transforming design into idiosyncratic concepts, turning them into compositions derived largely from customisation. He is on a quest to create spaces that are an amalgamation of international design aesthetics and functionality, whilst catering to native sensibilities and demands.

Shantanu took on his first project when he was barely 18. Since then, he's worked on numerous prestigious commercial and residential projects not just in India but internationally as well. His designs, whether seen in residential, commercial or retail spaces, or even the exhibitions or experiences that he curates, are based on a beautiful blend of contemporary minimalism and traditional extravagance.

It is this passion to carve a distinct identity for Indian design that led to his collaboration with the D/code Design Biennale (DDB). As curator of the virtual edition of D/code Design Biennale, (Phase I of Jaipur Design Biennale), he brings together over 50 illustrious names in the worlds of art, design and architecture.

"Through DDB, we aim to essay the fables of rich Indian heritage, culture and traditions and narrate its architectural history. From the influence of multiple dynasties that had ruled this country to a confluence of crossover boundaries and styles in modern Indian design narratives, we wish to project India through its crafts and artisanal approach," says the designer, whose own designs are evocative of the rich cultural heritage of India. "It's about time that Indian designers get their due. It's about time that we not only provide a platform for them to showcase their designs, but also catapult them to the International design arena."

Shantanu Garg, the undisputed champion of the India-modern aesthetic, comes on board as the curator for D/code Design Biennale, Jaipur Edition.



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"From the influence of multiple dynasties that had ruled this country to the confluence of crossover boundaries and styles in modern Indian design narratives, we wish to project India through its crafts and artisanal approach."

— Shantanu Garg, *Interior Designer*





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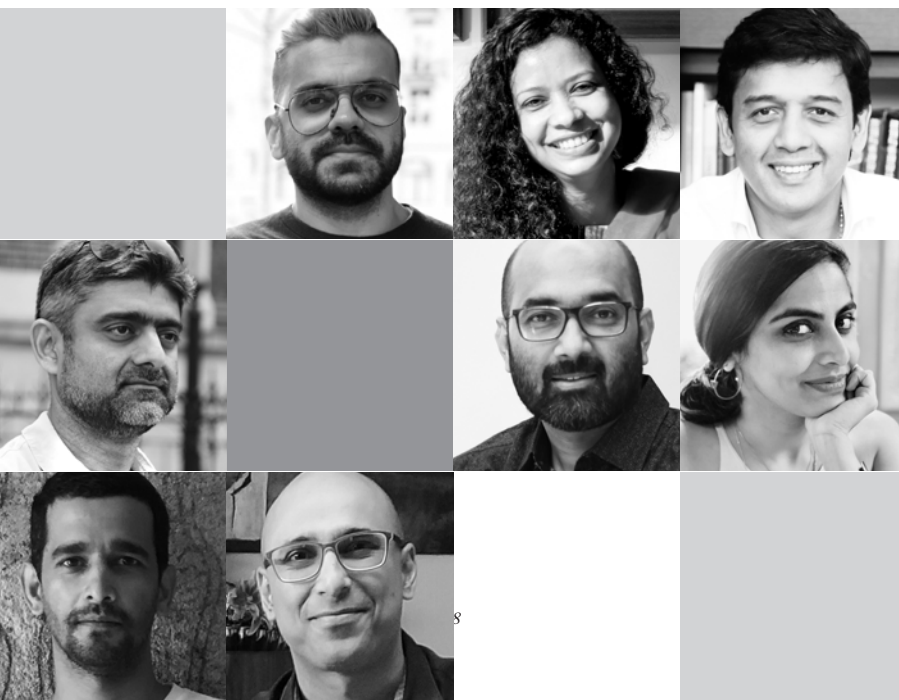
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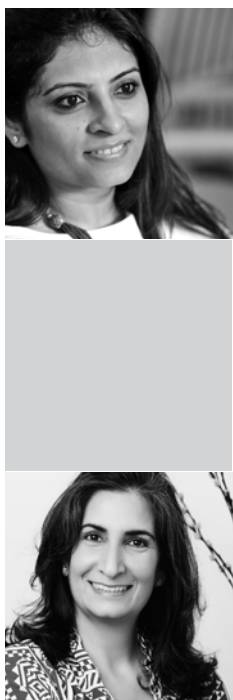
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MEET THE DESIGNERS IN COLLABORATION



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Ahsan Ansari
Ajay Patil
Ali Baldiwala
Amrita Guha
Anand Menon
Anjali Mody
Annkur Khosla
Anu Chauhan
Aradhana Nagpal
Archana Baid
Ayaz Basrai
Ayush Kasliwal
Dhaval Shellugar
Ekta Parekh
Farah Ahmed
Fenny Ganatra
Hameeda Sharma

Huzefa Rangwala
Iram Sultan
Jannat Vasi
Jasem Pirani
Jason Wadhwani
JJ Valaya
Joya Nandurdikar
Kanhai Gandhi
Kiran Gala
Khushboo Khandelwal
Kunal Khandelwal
Kunal Maniar
Malvika Vaswani
Mangesh Lungare
Meera Goradia
Muninder Chowdhry
Neesha Alwani





Introducing the designers in collaboration for Casamia presents D/code Design Biennale. These pioneering architects and designers are setting the stage for ground-breaking design, with installations, products and spatial experiences like you've never seen before, in virtual reality. Casamia presents D/code Design Biennale, India's first curated virtual art and design festival, curated by Shantanu Garg, is officially opening on **Friday, September 18, 2020.**

Nishita Kamdar
Noor Dasmesh Singh
Pavitra Rajaram
Piyush Mehra
Prashant Chauhan
Priyanka Mehra
Rajiv Parekh
Ravi Vazirani
Rohit Bhoite
Rooshad Shroff
Rupesh Baid
Sahil Jain
Saniya Kantawala
Sanjyt Singh
Sarah Sham
Shantanu Garg

Shernavaz Bharucha
Shobhan Kothari
Shonali Mahajan
Shresht Kashyap
Shruti Jalan
Siddhartha Das
Sonam Gosalia
Sumesh Menon
Vaishali Kamdar
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SPECTACLE

Transformative public interventions that alter perceptions and neighbourhoods

Text **TINA THAKRAR**

They call it the Wall of Gratitude - a full-scale artwork that is the newest addition to the 45-year-old RPG House in Worli, Mumbai. Designed by visual artist Sameer Kulavoor with the support of design consultant Elsie Nanji and industrialist Harsh Goenka, this public art piece pays tribute to everyone fighting the pandemic - from the frontline workers to the citizens staying home. Its creation was challenging, but the message is direct and uncomplicated.

Mumbai was over a month into the lockdown when the idea was borne. "Early this year, I was working on a project for Harsh Goenka, when Mumbai went under lockdown. That project was put on hold, but Harsh saw first hand the sacrifices of the frontline workers and wanted to express gratitude in some way. At the time, I came across a mural of Irrfan Khan on the Mumbai streets and suggested something similar to Harsh. We decided to bring Sameer Kulavoor on board, and before we knew it, the project was underway," reveals Nanji.

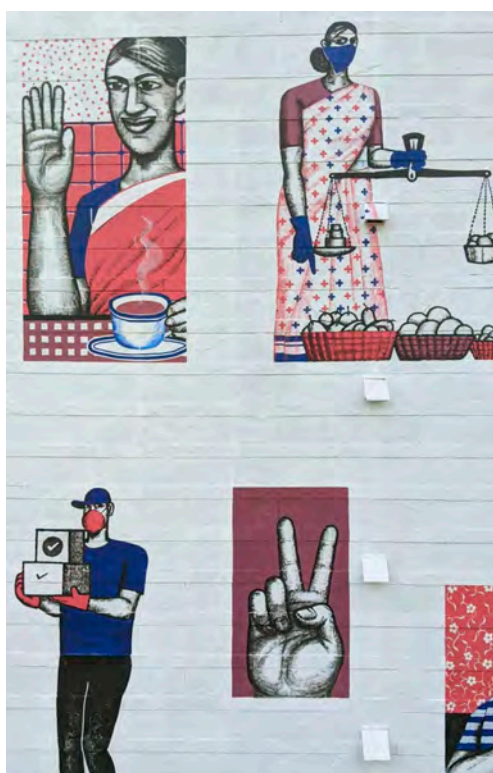
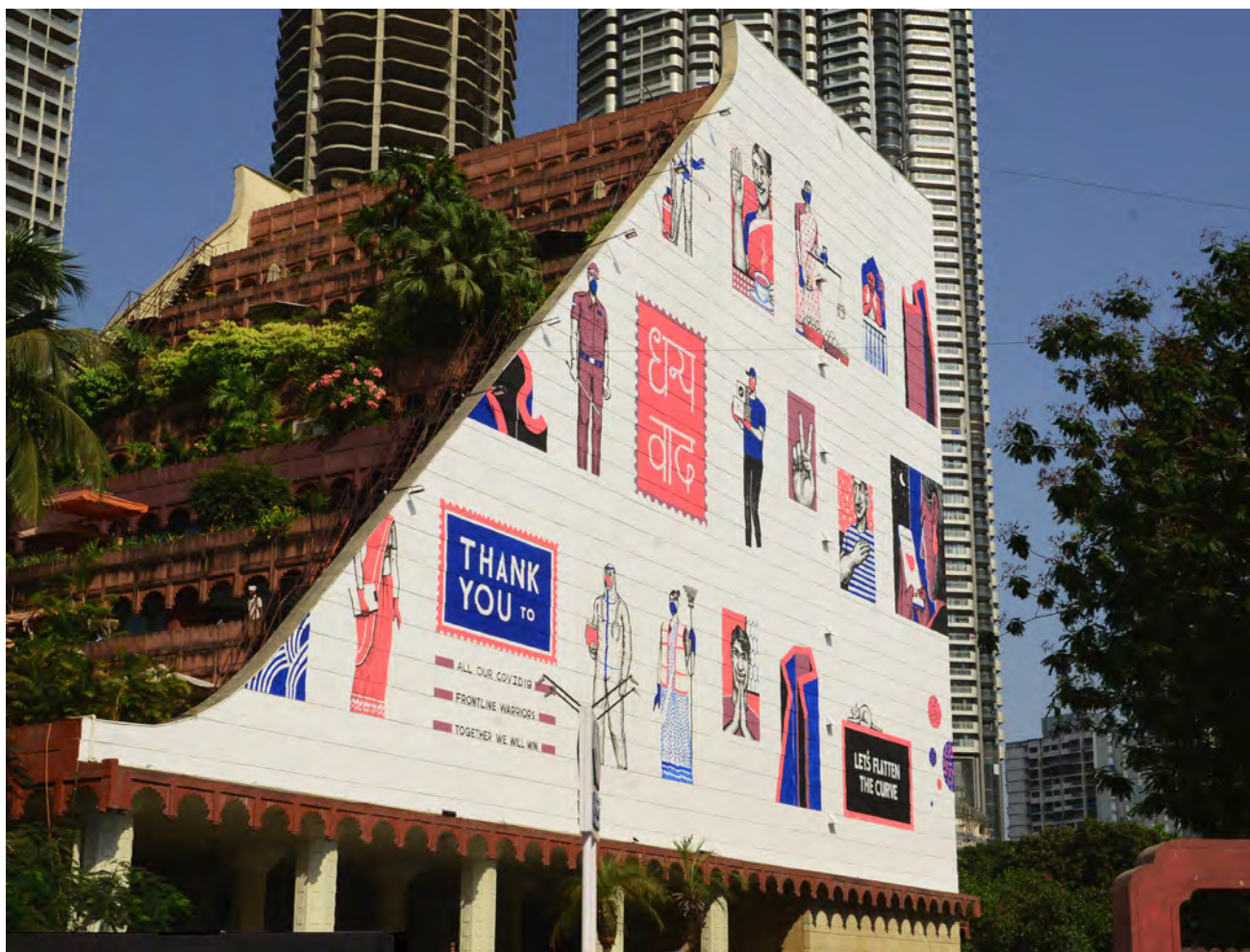
Kulavoor, who was itching to get back to work, saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Overwhelmed by the statistics of the pandemic, he had already created a series of artworks on the plight of the migrant workers. For this project, he brought his sister and partner at Bombay Duck Designs, Zeenat Kulavoor on board, and the two set about working on the design and planning the logistics for this challenging project.

"I began by sketching out a few ideas, but given the nature of the wall, its shape and build, this final design fit perfectly. It's a three-part design that represents the frontline workers, the people staying home, and a motif that is an abstract version of the statistics we hear on the news every day," he says.



Far left: Elsie Nanji
Left: Sameer Kulavoor





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Finalising the design was probably the easiest part of the process. Sameer, Zeenat and their team of four artists had to then blow up the design and paint it on the wall, all the while ensuring that they strictly followed health, safety and sanitation guidelines.

"The building is clad in red sandstone tiles, which gave us a ready grid. We used two crane lifts with four artists always on the wall and two on the ground to help with perspectives and body proportions. We worked in tight morning and evening batches and wrapped it up within a week," states Kulavoor, who kept the composition simple and comprehensible, and used just a single layer of paint so as not to damage the stone tile.

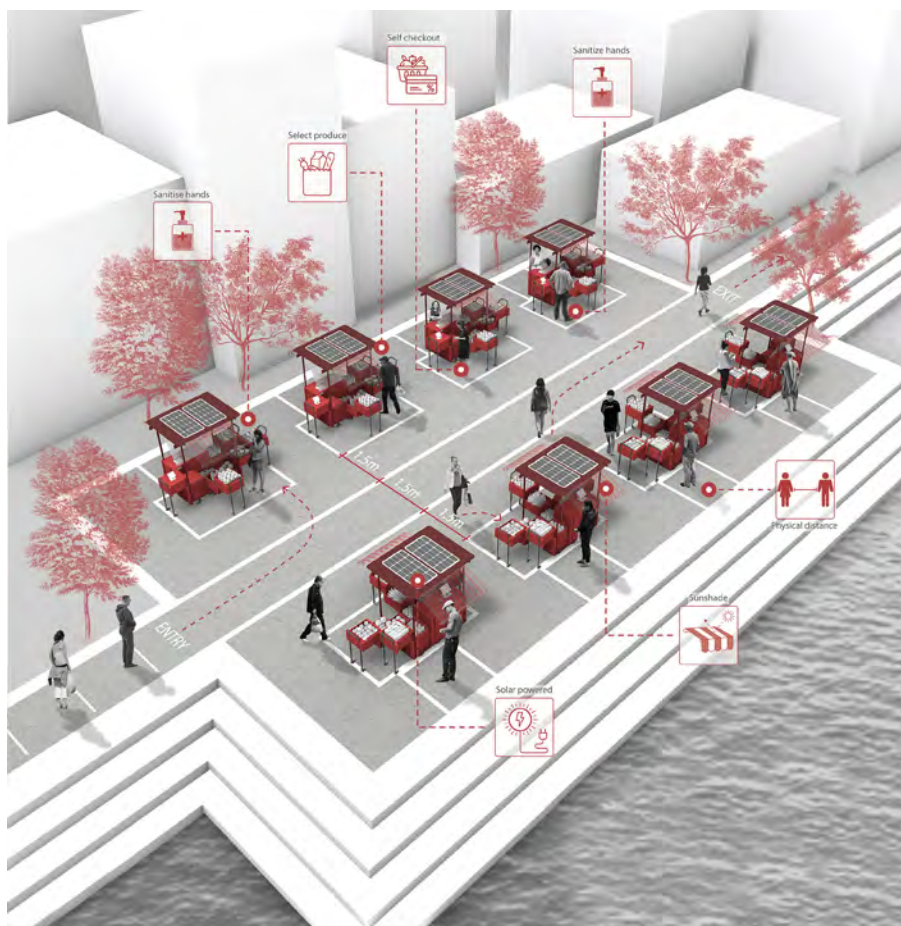
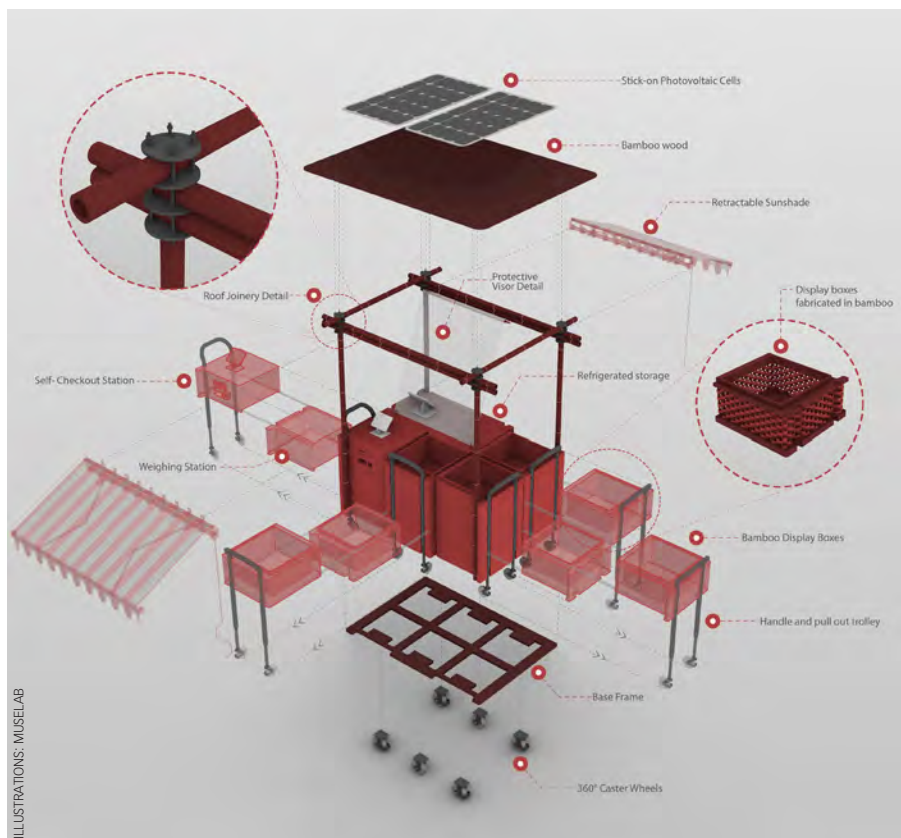
"The piece is only temporary and will wear off soon. We hope the pandemic does too." **H&DT**

MARKET PLACE

Inspired by the humble handcart, MuseLAB proposes the concept of Market on Wheels as an alternative solution to traditional markets. Pictured in different situations, the cart can be plugged into existing markets and open public spaces. These makeshift decentralized markets allow us to be a step closer to having 15-minute cities.

Text SEEMA SREEDHARAN

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE



PARTNER PORTRAITS

These design duos live and work together, raising families and projects alongside each other. In this series, we get one to capture the other at work, at home

Text TINA THAKRAR

ALAN, AS PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANCA ABRAHAM

"We are both passionate about advocating for public open spaces, and finding solutions to urban issues. Anca has been the motivating partner in turning my many frustrations about the city infrastructure into focused ideas and proposals. Our young kids are a constant inspiration and motivation. Seeing the city through their eyes is both a privilege and a great responsibility."

- Alan Abraham, Partner,
Abraham John Architects



**KRUPA, AS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ZUBIN ZAINUDDIN**

"This picture by Zubin is a perfect representation of a busy day, I don't see myself working any other way! For me, design is an expression, a state of mind, and it comes through best when the process takes over. Our partnership is a catalyst in creative intervention for whatever I do; food, travel, art, fashion, movies and of course, design. The inspiration is always around us, as we spend hours rejoicing in design. I find it difficult to sum it all up into words somehow."

- Krupa Zubin, Co-founder,
ZZ Architects



**PASHMIN, AS
PHOTOGRAPHED
BY SATYAJEET
PATWARDHAN**

"Working together as a team on a design is never an easy task. Every project is the result of numerous discussions, arguments and compliments! But in the interest of the larger goal, we put our egos aside and try to reinvent ourselves with every new project. This has now become the core spirit of our design studio."

- Pashmin Shah, *Partner,*
Amoeba Design Studio



**PIYUSH, AS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
PRIYANKA MEHRA**

"We are two compatible but opinionated people, with crazy levels of obsessiveness and drive. As partners at home and at work, we feed off each other's energies but also strive to give the other space. Our work results from a constant exchange. Over the years, we have started to understand each other's language and collaborate seamlessly, but it's the violent disagreements that have created some interesting results! This picture represents a day in our lockdown life, as we juggle multiple responsibilities."

- Piyush Mehra, Co-founder,
PS Design



**VISHAKHA, AS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
MUNINDER
CHOWDHRY**

"When it comes to our design methods, I am intuitive, free-wheeling and whimsical, and go with my gut. Muninder is more analytical, critical, contextual, process-driven and works from the detail up. Our design methods may be different, but they compliment each other, fill in the gaps and create new and interesting design outcomes."

-Vishakha Dholakia, *Director,*
SiCiDi Architecture

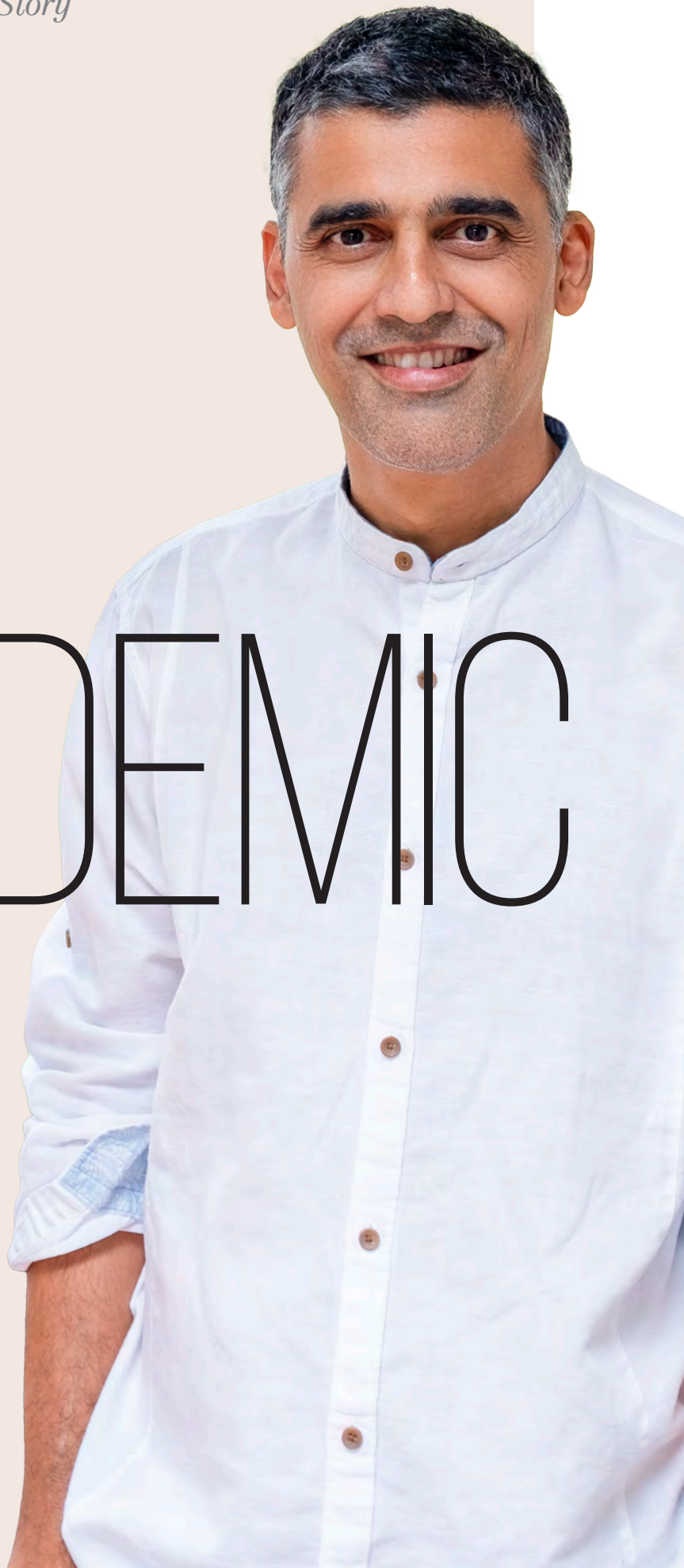


THE PANDEMIC CITY

As our cities find their feet again, architect Alan Abraham gives us a peek into the outside world, and how it can and should change to make our post-pandemic lives better

Text and Conceptual Images **ALAN ABRAHAM**

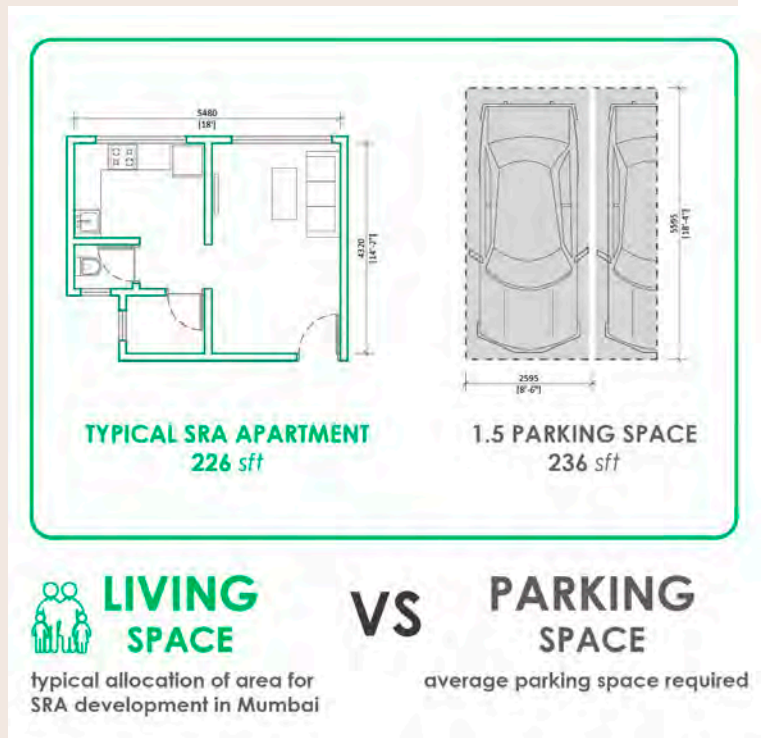
Profile images **ANCA ABRAHAM**



Pandemics have helped shape our cities. From London's sewage systems to New York's Central Park, many positive design changes in the urban realm have been driven by disease outbreaks. We are in the middle of a pandemic and already witnessing severe lifestyle changes, from work-at-home to social distancing, from the lockdown to compulsory facial masks.

THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM

The city is our living room. It is also our dining room, our entertainment room and our study. The city, in effect, is an extension of our homes, and essentially determines our lifestyles. Most of us probably spend more of our time outside the home than within; the recent lockdown imposed by the pandemic has, of course, temporarily changed that equation, and our home as we knew it is now also our workplace and school – an all-in-one space that we have been confined to. So as planners, we question the city and its design, and wonder why the outside is not as beautiful or as functional as the inside of our homes, and how we can make that happen.



“

We all want lovely homes; why should our cities be any different? I think we all deserve the best of infrastructure and a great lifestyle.

– Alan Abraham, Partner, Abraham John Architects



(Above) The area of a typical home in Mumbai versus the parking space required.
(Left) Alan and Anca Abraham of Abraham John Architects

THE PROBLEMS AND THEIR ROOTS

DENSITY & NEIGHBOURHOODS

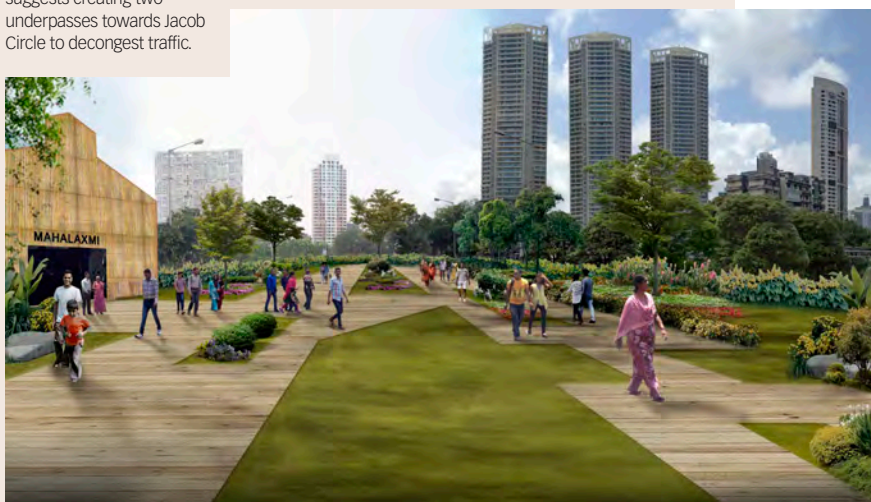
First, let us look at density, which has been blamed for many of our urban problems. This is an oversimplification and incorrect. The real issue is crowding or the lack of both private living space and neighbourhood civic spaces. The conditions people live in are far more important than the number of people living in a certain area.

Density can in fact be good for health, allowing for a more active neighbourhood, which encourages people to walk to parks, shops, school, medical stores and other services. Lowering the urban density, on the other hand, would call for a greater need for land area and transport. The use of private cars would naturally multiply, leading to more problems – respiratory illnesses, diseases due to inactivity and injuries or deaths due to road accidents (India leads the world in road accidents). There would also be an increase in our carbon footprint, which would be unsustainable.

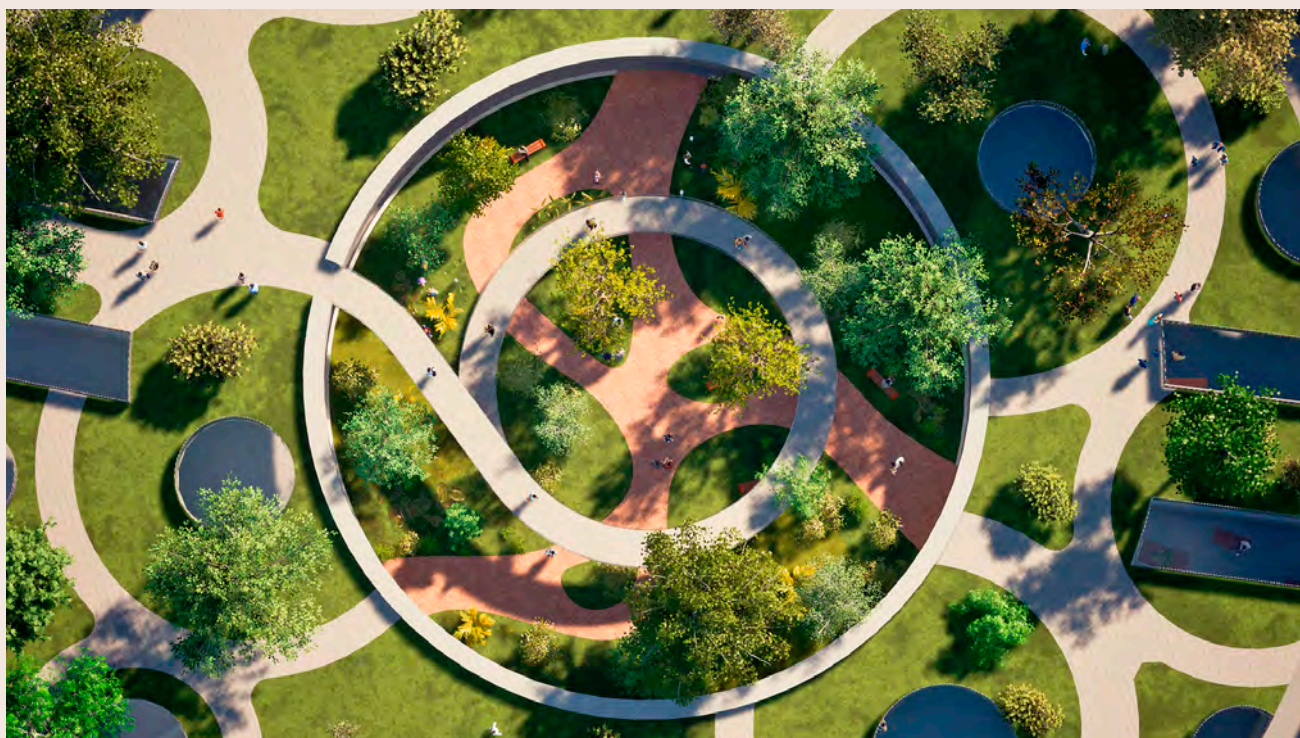
Solution: To decentralise, have smaller neighbourhoods with a 15-minute walking radius for all essential and other activities, increase the number of accessible local parks, and importantly, keep them open for people to have more space. In cases where this is difficult, we can reclaim a part of the streets.



The existing and proposed Saat Rasta Project, which suggests creating two underpasses towards Jacob Circle to decongest traffic.



By connecting the missing links between Dr. E. Moses Road and Jacob circle via underpasses, the overtly congested Bapurao Jagtap Road can be turned into a pedestrian-only 1.8 acre space, turning the current eight roads into seven roads again.



ROADS

This leads us to next point – roads. Roads can be both good and bad. During the lockdown, we have realised that roads are the only true civic spaces (when they were open, of course). Unfortunately, and foolishly, parks have been closed.

However, roads are the city's main problem, and are consequently being given much importance in urban design in the 20th century. Cities have lost their human scales, and people have become more disconnected. Many cities worldwide have been reclaiming their streets from cars and opening them up to pedestrians for walking, cycling, playing and dining -

activities that have become more popular during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, Mumbai is going in the wrong direction by cutting down forests to build a metro yard (to aid future “development”, no doubt) and by reclaiming the sea to build roads. Instead of being able to access the coastline, the city will now be divided by roads that will serve only under 1% of the population.

Solution: To reclaim the streets to allow for more physical activities that also serve as alternative transport solutions – viz. walking and cycling, and to add social functions to improve street character.



The existing and proposed Juhu Beach Project, which involves the expansion of Juhu Beach for public use. The concept aims to improve vehicular traffic movement by providing a simple, straight 850ft-long underpass below the Juhu Aerodrome in lieu of the current congested and convoluted 1,310m-long road.





(Above) The Andheri Station Project suggests an upgraded railway station that doubles up as an urban park that would eliminate the east-west divide, improve the daily commute and provide upgraded facilities to accommodate the predicted increase in passenger numbers.

(Below) This is a small but impactful project that bridges the 50ft gap between Carter Road and Joggers' Park at Otters Club to transform the 1.6km waterfront to 2.2km of continuous urban seafront.

THE RAILWAYS

The railways have been Mumbai's lifeline and without it, the city is paralysed in these times. Pedestrians and cyclists have to be considered as part of the transport infrastructure to relieve the public infrastructure as well as to allow for public recreational spaces while connecting the east and west sections of the city.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Humans need to be connected to nature. Our studies on parks and open spaces have made us aware of how deprived we are of such spaces. Most of our so-called open spaces were open 8-10 hours per day pre-pandemic and zero hours during the pandemic, which is when people need these spaces the most.

Solution: We need parks to be more locally accessible; this would naturally reduce the need to travel or the crowding in our open seafront spaces.



“

Neighbourhoods matter. Connecting communities with people-friendly parks, open spaces, and sustainable infrastructure is the key to a livable city.

– Anca Abraham, Partner, Abraham John Architects

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Would you be okay with garbage in your living room, a very congested and convoluted passage causing insane troubles and delays in your access to your study, and bad air quality in your home? Would you also be okay with the largest open spaces in your home being locked away from use? Or would you like the sea-facing window to now house a passage of infinite-rolling pollutants?

This is exactly what we accept and have been accepting from the city. This leads to a sub-standard quality of life, and having been fed excuses for years, one is accustomed to hearing them.

The solution begins with every one of us. We must treat the outside like the inside of our homes, treat it like personal property, do it up and take care of it, and then use it to the maximum.

The concept of ‘turning spaces into places’ sounds easy, but requires a lot of work. Spaces only get their meaning when people inhabit or use them, conveying a sense of function.

The ground floor spaces in the city must all be publicly accessible and not divided by compound walls. It’s important for a city to have art, and not just private art in it. The city should speak art and culture and we must see this in our daily grind to and from work/school/play. Art should be in the public eye. Additionally, all open spaces including forests, parks, sea-facing areas, and gardens must be easily and always accessible to the people and not divided by physical, over-ground infrastructure like the Coastal Road and the Metro.

Imagine a sustainable city, where flooding is tuned into water harvesting, where the sun is turned into solar energy, where the carbon footprint is at its minimum, where cars aren’t needed because places are well connected; where the city owes its citizens comfort. As dwellers, people can be the real changemakers here if they take an interest, lend a hand, and set true development into motion. **H&DT**



Newly inaugurated in December 2019, the steps outside St. Stephen’s Church in Mount Mary, Bandra is a successful example of 18,000 sqft of space given back to the city. Once a derelict, faceless place, it is now a regenerated multi-use space for gatherings, performances and community events.



Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the publisher or editor.

THE FEELING *of Design*

**BRINGING YOU
ANSWERS TO THE
QUESTIONS WE
HAVE AND ASK OF
OURSELVES AND
OUR FRIENDS IN THE
DESIGN INDUSTRY, IN
INDIA AND AROUND
THE WORLD.**

Compiled by **TINA THAKRAR**



BRINDA SOMAYA



AYUSH KASLIWAL



JAIDEEP MEHROTRA



SUMESH MENON



BRINDA SOMAYA
Architect

One of India's most prolific architects and urban conservationists, Brinda Somaya has merged architecture, conservation and social equity in a portfolio of projects in diverse typologies. In a career spanning four decades, she has amassed numerous awards and recognitions for her work and initiatives in spearheading movements for a better planned Mumbai, thus putting her firm, S&K Consultants on the global architectural map.

With decentralisation now coming under the radar, how do you think the design and layout of neighbourhoods is destined to change? How will this affect large cities and their infrastructure?

These are enormous questions, and very relevant during this time. Every country will have to create its own questions and naturally, its own answers. In India, our lives are intertwined with our history, geography, culture, and architecture. We have a multiplicity of civilizations, so the solutions and answers will be complex. We need new and relevant long-term strategies to learn from the situation today and plan the way forward. Urban planning is very important today and the power of good design is even more crucial. Simple design changes will have to encourage and emphasize social distancing.

Real estate needs and hence construction activity will be impacted in the short term, and this will mean an escalation in infrastructure activities, roads, metros and bridges. This will also have a huge environmental impact, which we need to address.

We have a large critical mass of existing buildings. They may be ordinary, but we do not always have to build new. We can restore, we can retrofit, we can rebuild, we can recycle, we can have re-architecture. It must begin with a change in the mindset that says we must break everything down and build afresh. It's as important to save the ordinary buildings as the iconic ones.

A lot of directives have been issued by the Central and State Governments, but unless there is a change in government policy and political and bureaucratic will, there cannot be a change in the way we look at informal housing. If the government still owns the land, the people, no matter how rich or poor, will not invest in upgrading their accommodations, or even their public utilities like medical facilities, toilets, sanitation, water supply and drainage systems out of fear that the government may take away the land. The first step here is to give the land with these informal houses, at least in our cities, to the people who are living on it, and help them to help themselves improve their basic living conditions. I have full belief that they will be able to do so.

For now, we need new ideas from farsighted individuals, and fast. A lot of democratic policies will also have to come out from think tanks. However, there are always winners and losers as a result of such situations, so we must devise a program for survival and resilience, and a medium-term blueprint for growth and structural transformation.

We are all in the midst of this journey together, and we have many obstacles and challenges ahead.



AYUSH KASLIWAL
Designer

A furniture design graduate from National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, Jaipur-based Ayush Kasliwal is dedicated to reviving and using local crafts to create products that stand out in the global design market. His work is deeply rooted in traditional Indian art, and uses simple materials and honest techniques.

How would you define the Indian design identity? What role does it play in our past, present and future?

Did you know that there is actually no word for 'design' in any of the Indian languages? That is because design as an act pervades our society, it's something not easily discernible to an outsider looking for 'design'. The concept of Indian design is incredibly layered and hard to capture in an 'image' or 'look'. Our design is a framework of thought, similar to a strand of DNA, which, while being invisible, wholly determines what the creature looks like.

Genetic variation is crucial for resilience. Indian design too, without compromising on the essence, is manifest in many variations on a theme. The acknowledgment of 'we are many' is central to the idea of Indian design. The concept of *anekantwad* espouses the validity of multiple points of view and forms the basis of dialogue, a principle we would do well with in many other areas as well.

Design schools teach us the 'process' of designing; something I spent many years trying to unlearn. There is no real template to designing. It's a process of discovery. Following a predetermined process risks missing out on valuable opportunities. I have found it to be a very effective method, when the design process is left to evolve rather than managing the outcome. We always end up with something beautiful that everyone loves.

For a project in Bikaner, I confronted my aversion to colour. I prefer to let objects speak in their original colours, but I decided to take inspiration from those who live off of it and celebrate the bursts of colour in their dry land. As we went forward, I grew from that experience. If we hadn't challenged the process of design, we

wouldn't have had the wonderful outcome we did. Design as a concept is far bigger than that. I don't prescribe to a particular style as I find it limiting. It causes people to leave their visual stamp on their project, even when it isn't the most appropriate solution.

The projects I do are the outcome of a dialogue and an understanding of the context. I am never the only designer – the client, the carpenter, the contractor, and everyone who engages with it works towards our common goal together. The final work will not belong to any ONE of us, nor can it be separated from its environment, culture or language of the local artisans involved. The final product will live, breathe and simply co-exist. It has integrity. There is nothing missing; not in the eyes of those who experience it every day. It just is. Similarly, I don't develop an identity or a style from the work. The work I do is far greater than me.

During my vacations from NID, Ahmedabad, I would train under Padma Shri Kripal Singh Shekhawat, a Shantiniketan alumnus who revived Jaipur's forgotten art of Blue Pottery. Under him, I learned about a new world that was in plain sight all along but had remained my blind spot. That world was this incredible country that we call home – India. It was about seeing our country, not through the trained western eye, but from within, as an Indian.

It is becoming increasingly clear that we need to use our own DNA as a template. We must avoid falling into the trap of a singular idea of design, as is commonly perceived. If we don't remain mindful of this, I believe we risk losing the wonderful plurality of Indian design, where everything is connected, and yet has its own identity. This is the idea we need to move forward with, into the future.



JAIDEEP MEHROTRA
Artist

Considered one of India's finest inventive contemporary artists, Jaideep Mehrotra is known for pushing the conceptual thresholds of his visual language through an array of traditional and modern mediums. He has showcased his work across the world in group and solo shows and has worked on everything from wine labels to short films, besides artworks.

Has the scope of art in current times changed for the art world, and for you? What does the future hold?

We're living our lives in a goldfish bowl. Art, in these circumstances, has become the result of a plethora of scenarios and perspectives. In the scheme of things and in our limited perspective of the future, virtual art exhibitions and seminars, where visitors can see but not touch the work, have become the new mainstream. The word 'digital' is going to take a new turn. Change has already taken root, with advancements in 3D printing and Virtual Reality in a short span of time.

People will begin to realise the value of work of art, whether created by hand or on the computer, and understand that physical and monetary acquisition of an artwork is still important to sustain creativity. While we are all experiencing a sense of 'virtual immersion' in large installations, museums, galleries and art fairs, albeit on a small scale, I am hoping that more art will become available in the virtual space.

As for me personally - I prefer to work in isolation anyway, so nothing has changed there. But now, I find myself longing to extend my time in the studio so I can escape the drudgery of housework! The act of painting has become even more inclusive, more meditative. I'm enjoying the introspection, the casual pace and the voyage of discovery into every piece of work.

There are just a handful of art stores in Mumbai, so most artists have always been dependent on individual stockists for their art supplies. Materials have now started to run out, and suppliers have either migrated to their villages or are struggling to secure stocks. Over the years, in my quest to venture into new avenues, I have inadvertently stocked up on all kinds of material, most of which remains unused.

Take watercolours, for instance. I had a set of enormous watercolour sheets, the finest archival paper imported from France, that was tucked away in storage. Painting with watercolours is a technique one cannot err on, and one cannot afford to waste these enormous, frightfully expensive sheets. At the moment, with no canvas available, I have turned to them for my painting escapades. I'm refining a process of painting I haven't used in years and I have to admit, it's thoroughly enjoyable!

Another thing that's worked to my advantage during this time is a habit I inculcated years ago, of mixing pure pigments with different mediums to create unusual watercolours, acrylics and oil paints. Making a new range of these trusty blends has been easy and exciting.

Art comes in all forms, and their creators, even more so. It's the artists – actors, musicians, authors, performers, curators, yoga teachers – who've helped us through this lockdown with online entertainment, virtual galleries, books and exercise modules. I've found inspiration in them, from the Broadway musicals to the magical performers of Cirque du Soleil, in the comfort of my home. I'd consider this an 'essential' need too, as other creative processes are the stimulus one often needs to explore and discover creative ideas of one's own.

Most of all, I am thrilled to have my family around me. They're my think tank of ideas and creativity. We owe this time, our safety, to a host of people - doctors, nurses, police officers, delivery staff, cleaning staff and many more, without whom all our creativity would be naught. In my opinion, they're the true artists.



A sketch created by Mehrotra in lockdown



SUMESSH MENON
Architect

Mumbai-based architect and interior designer Sumesh Menon has been at the forefront of high-end hospitality design for over a decade now, taking raw spaces and transforming them into an experience for patrons.

How is the hospitality industry gearing up in terms of design, to embrace the new health and safety guidelines laid down for the post-pandemic world?

The million dollar question for the hospitality industry in the aftermath of this pandemic-struck 'socially distant' world is – What next? As our daily life becomes 'contactless', there seems to be no industry more involved or affected than hospitality, which has taken a major economic hit and is currently going through a whirlwind change to be resurrected in a brand new identity of 'socialising with care'.

Although the after-effects of the pandemic are sure to resonate through the industry for quite a while, restaurants are confidently gearing up to accept new challenges. It has become vital for them to not only accommodate the concept of social distancing by way of generous utilisation of personal space for dine-ins, but also consider viable options of contactless home delivery services, and find the right balance between the two.

When it comes to dining in, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and several other government bodies have released stringent guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with regard to health and hygiene. With this as the underlying protocol, it's up to us to scout for new technologies that will improve and enhance the dining experience for patrons in this new world.

For our ongoing hospitality projects in Dubai, Riyadh, Bahrain, and across

India, we are ensuring flexible layouts with intelligent seating concepts, touch-free surfaces, more viable and natural material palettes, enhanced ventilation systems, and thermal and sensor based equipment and sanitary fittings. Home delivery services will inevitably go hand-in-hand with this, and as a restaurant designer, my advice would be to structure a new vertical of 'ghost kitchens', which serve as a cloud kitchen platform to service deliveries across a large geographical range.

Whether it is washroom design or HVAC consultations, hygiene is the new mantra. It's important to adhere to the strictest measures to enhance indoor air quality and promote clean socialising spaces through state-of-the-art air filters and purifiers, and highly efficient fan and filter systems that go a long way in containing airborne infections and allergies. Washrooms need to be largely contactless, with sensor-based sanitary fittings, touch-free doors and surfaces and use of antibacterial ceramic material.

Now more than ever, the industry is seeing a massive shift towards the open-air and rooftop concept that brings in the natural outdoor ambience by way of biophilic design elements. There are definite challenges to overcome, but it will be interesting to watch how the hospitality industry revives itself with a never-before-seen avatar. **H&DT**

IN THE EVERYDAY

'Life with/in Objects' by Farah Siddiqui Khan and Natasha Mehta takes a closer look at the objects that shape a designer's inner and outer lives, and discovers their true meaning

Text **TINA THAKRAR**

What constitutes our everyday? Now more than ever, it's our homes, and the objects that populate it. The pandemic has compelled us to lead our lives within four walls, but somehow, we've found imaginative ways to look in and around us, and reflect on what we choose to live with.

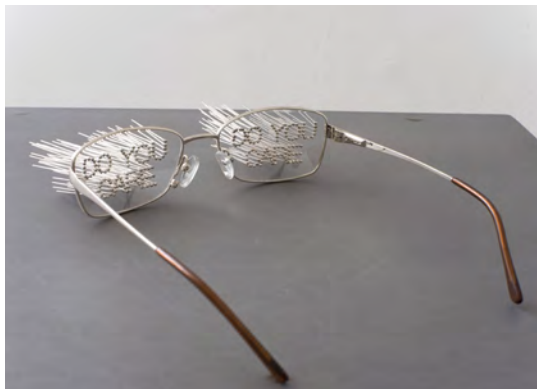
Amongst us are architects and designers, who spend most of their time crafting spaces that do not belong to them. The spaces they do inhabit, however, have always been a source of interest. Every element tells a unique story and resonates with deep meaning, but these objects have always remained private, something that they enjoy in solitude.

Now relaying this story to a broader audience are curators Farah Siddiqui Khan and Natasha Mehta from the art and design world respectively. The duo has recently launched 'Life with/in Objects', a repository of images shared by designers around the globe, of objects that form part of their inner world.

"We approached design practitioners from different genres to share images of objects that hold meaning for them. These are objects they could have bought, acquired, inherited, or even designed, and that they live with every day," explains Khan.

The founders first met on a project for the Chamar Foundation, and found great partners in each other for their ideas about furthering art and design in the country. Life with/in Objects is just one of the projects they have begun working on.

What they have in common is a passion for design, and through this project, they hope to provide a platform for designers to exhibit a part of their lives to a global audience. They are currently hosting a virtual exhibition of these objects on their website, which will eventually transition into a live gallery of exhibits. On display right now are some captivating objects by the likes of Anupama Kundoo, Abha Narain Lambah, Brad Ascalon and Mayice Studio, and their long list of upcoming additions includes Studio Sangath, Rajiv Saini and Annabel Karim Kassar among many more.



(Top L-R) Natasha Mehta and Farah Siddiqui Khan
(Above) Nostalgic Flora by Tessa & Tara Sakhi of T Sakhi
(Left) Nearsighted by Pascal Hachem



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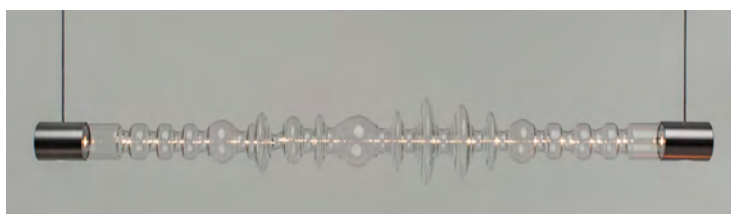
(Above) Untitled /
'Kitchen' by Rana
Haddad & Pascal
Hachem of 200 Grs.

(Left top) Wave by
Tracy Wilkinson

(Left bottom)
Filamento by Marta
Alonso Yebra &
Imanol Calderón

Elósegui of Mayice
(Below left) La
Lavadora by Yago
and Juan Cuevas of
Estudio Cavernas

(Below right)
Lumbro | Pendant
Lights by Carolina
Palombo Píriz



EXCERPTS FROM OUR CHAT:

What was the idea behind *Life with/in Objects*?

Farah: I had the idea when I was listening to a talk by Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk, where he made an interesting remark about our homes being the museums of the future. The thought stayed with me, and magnified when the whole world went into lockdown. I contacted Natasha, and we decided to invite architects and designers, who primarily work outside of their domesticity, to look inward and identify objects from their personal surroundings that mean something to them.

What is your ultimate aim with this project?

Natasha: Farah and I believe that design is a universal language. This period in lockdown is a historic moment, and we wanted to play our part by urging designers to use this time to reflect, and share a piece of their lives with us. What we have now is something like a digital museum; a library that visitors can explore to see the exquisite objects that designers have in their lives. There is no commercial end goal to this, but we would eventually like to bring this virtual library to life with an exhibition of these beautiful, very personal objects.

Considering your gallery is currently virtual, how do you retain the designers' perspectives in your displays?

Farah: The choice of objects and the way they are presented is entirely at the designer's discretion. We don't determine the number of objects, how they're photographed or what format they're shared in. The designers envision and present their objects a certain way, and we do not take that away from them. **H&DT**

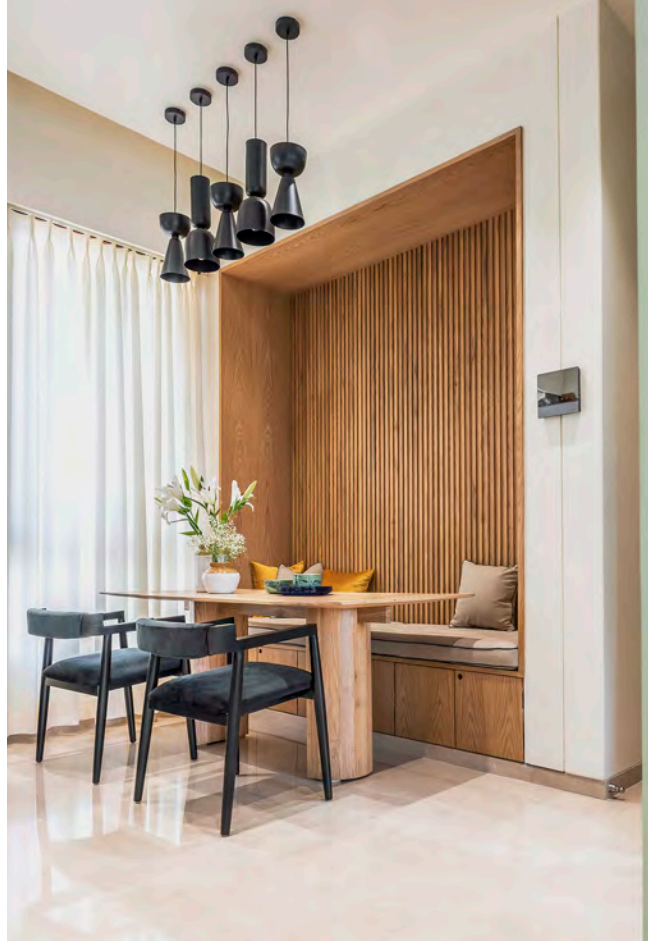
SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*

INCHING FORWARD

*The compact size does not inhibit this family apartment by **The Architecture Company** from putting its best (square) foot forward*

Text TINA THAKRAR *Images* ADITYA WARLIKAR

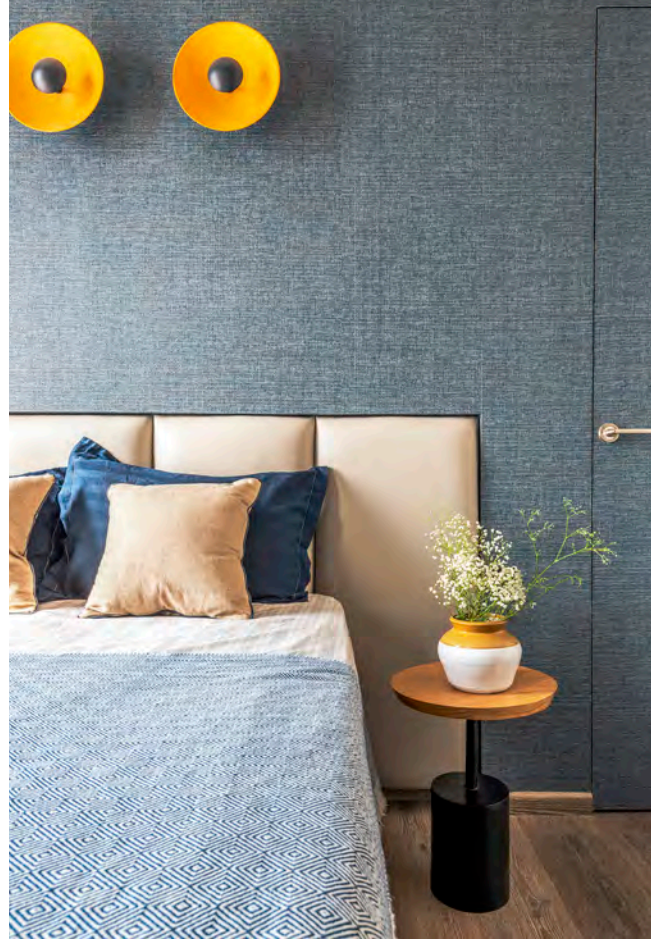




"The tightness of the apartment allowed us to focus on the details and surfaces to deliver a power-packed punch through focused design interventions."

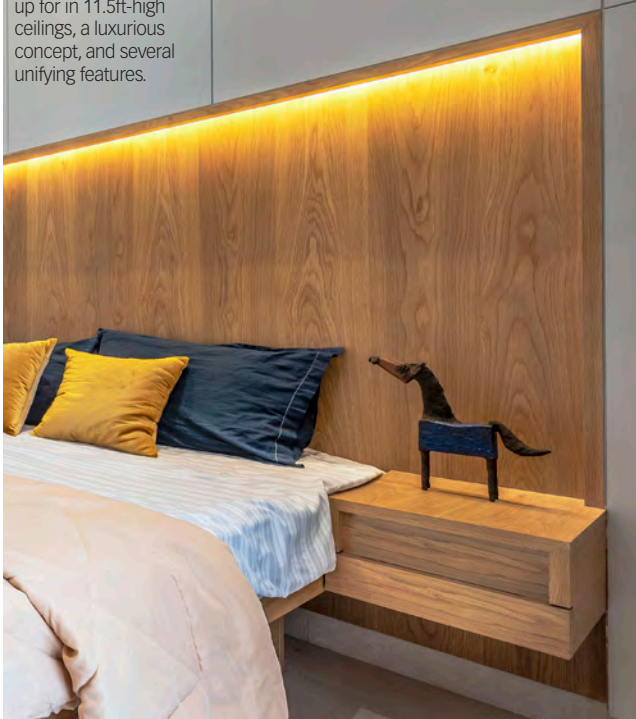
– Manasvi Bachhav, Co-founder,
The Architecture Company

SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*



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Designed by Rohit Walimbe, Manasvi Bachhav and Kulsum Tambawala of The Architecture Company, this 750sqft apartment, and its resident family, is small. But what it lacks in space, it makes up for in 11.5ft-high ceilings, a luxurious concept, and several unifying features.



NO PLACE LIKE HOME

*A no-frills design language in this Ahmedabad apartment by **Intrinsic Designs** offers a sense of calm to its residents*

Text TINA THAKRAR *Images* ISHITA SITWALA





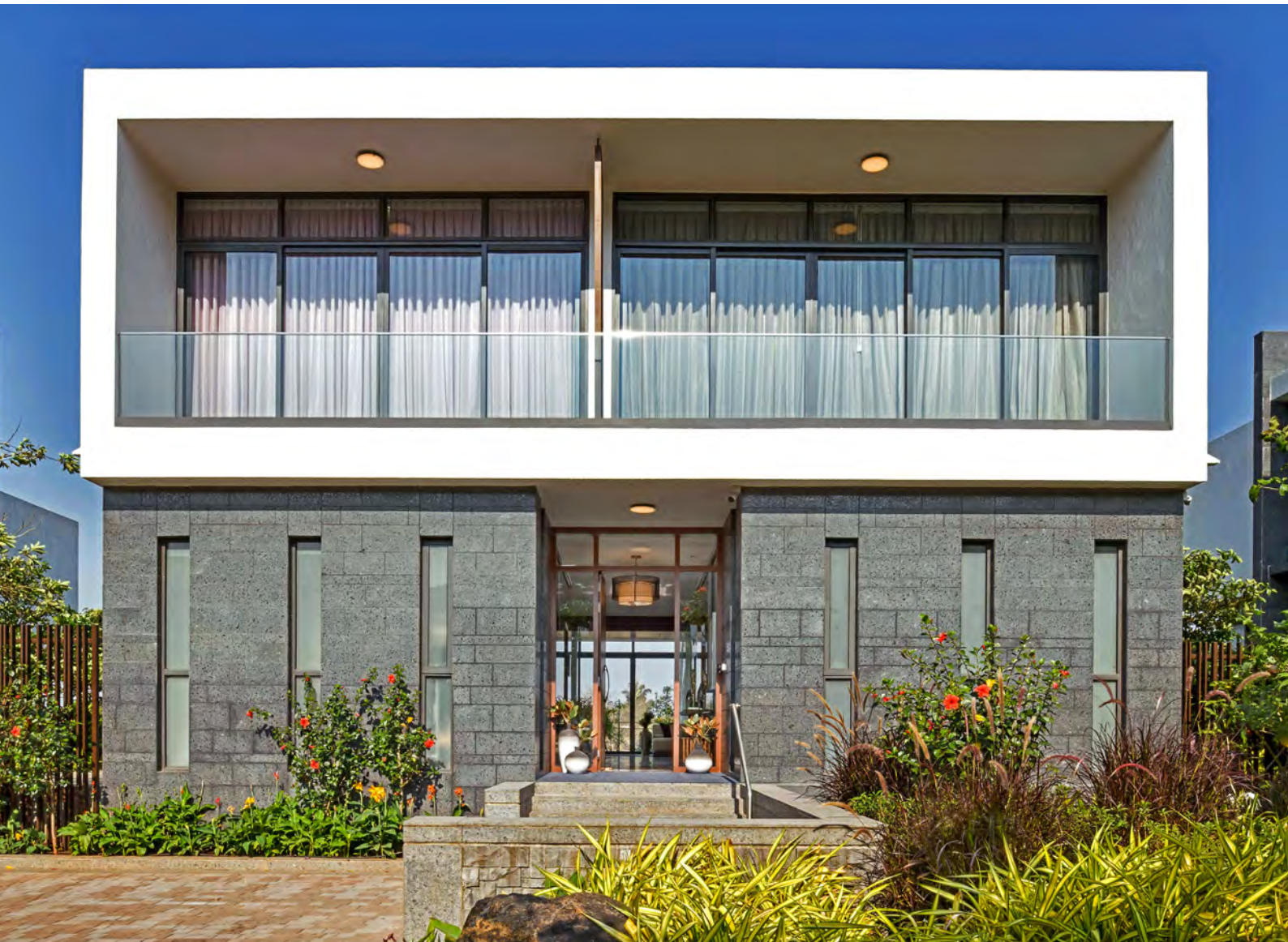
"Our aim with this project was to blend comfort, quality and timelessness to hit the client's brief, and ultimately, give the space a feeling of home."

– Shruti Malani, *Creative Head, Intrinsic Designs*



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The three-bedroom apartment by Shruti Malani and Shivraj Patel has a unified plan, combining the living room, dining room and kitchen to create an uninterrupted flow and the illusion of more space.



PLUSH ADDRESS

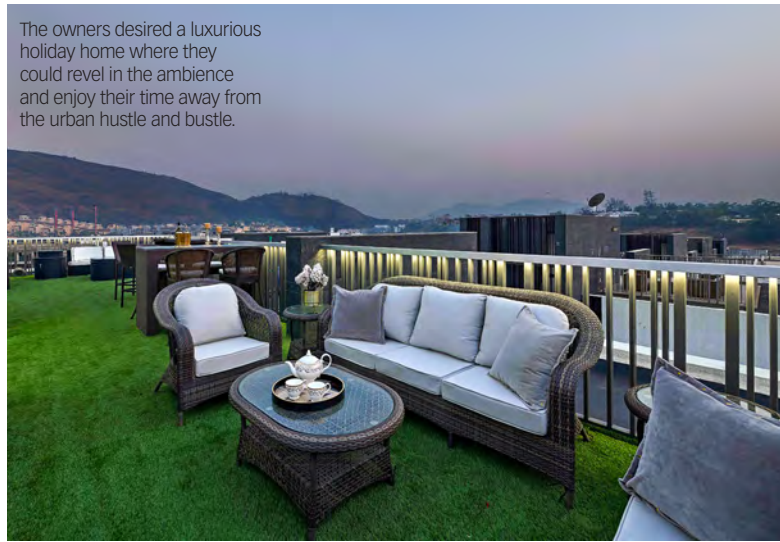
Architect **Rajesh Patel** designs the interiors of this bungalow in Lonavala, maintaining the opulence of its living spaces

Text **TINA THAKRAR** Images **STUDIO SP PHOTOGRAPHY**





The owners desired a luxurious holiday home where they could revel in the ambience and enjoy their time away from the urban hustle and bustle.





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This is the owner's second home, which is part of a community of condominiums. While the structure was provided by the builder, the interiors were designed by Rajesh Patel.



"The beauty of this space is truly revealed in natural light. It softly illuminates every corner of the home, which only requires curtains to control the amount of heat and light."

– Rajesh Patel, *Principal Architect, Architect*
Rajesh Patel Consultants



WHEN WORK IS PLAY

Artystry designs a tech office in Calicut that is a cafe, co-working space and hostel, all rolled into one vibrant package

Text TINA THAKRAR Images JUSTIN SEBASTIAN



"The project has been designed with minimalistic ideas for shared and private workspaces, where work and play overlap."

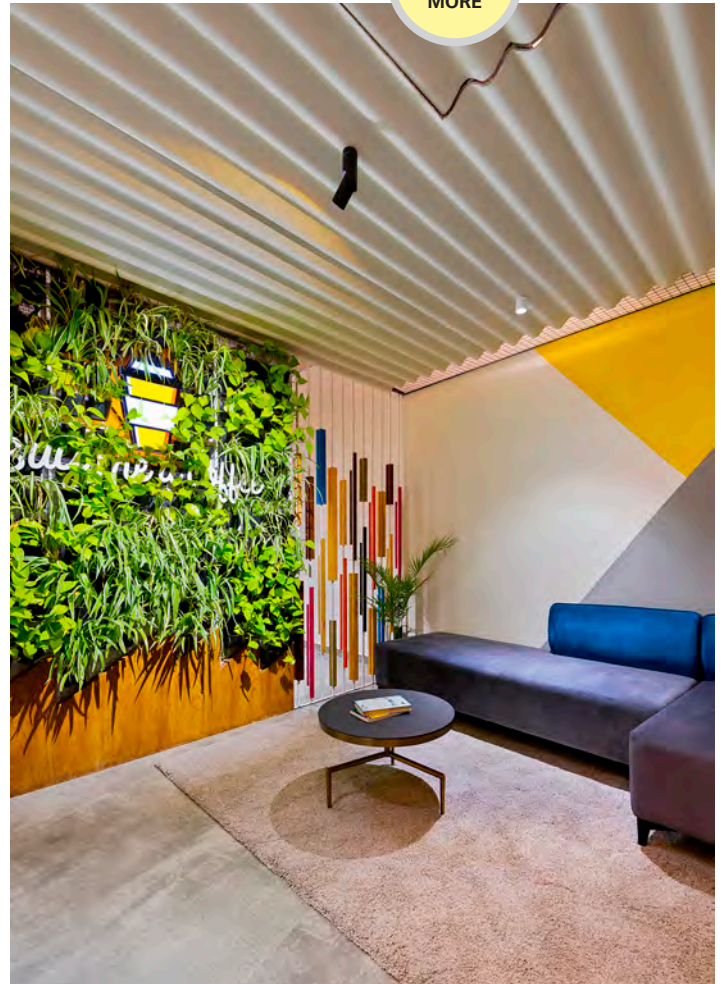
– Nahal Ahamed, Co-founder, Artystry





Designed by Nahal Ahamed and Anas Mohammed for an ambitious set of tech experts, this informal workspace is designed to be stress-free and warm with design elements that infuse energy as well as comfort.

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AT PEACE

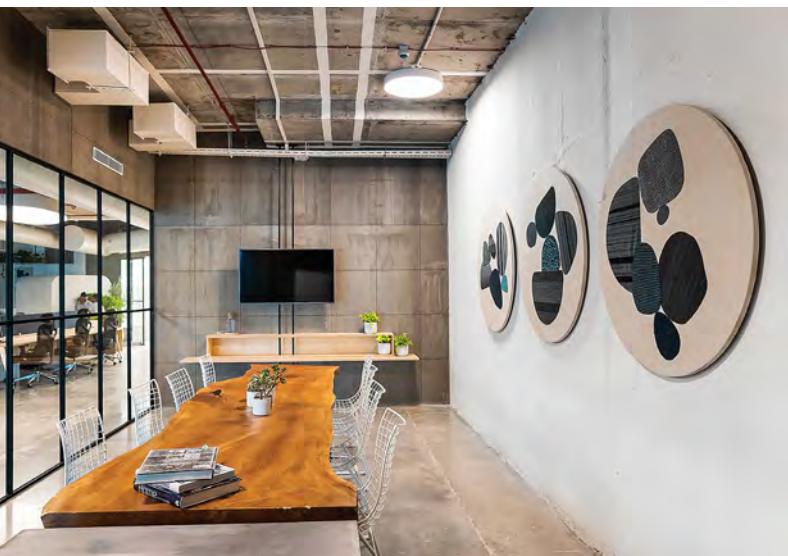
*This office by **Sona Reddy Studio**
has the interesting aesthetic of Zen
garden-meets-industrial workspace*

Text TINA THAKRAR *Images* RICHA KASHELKAR



“This workspace breaks all the moulds that confine a stereotypical ‘office’ construct. It weaves together an environ that blurs the boundaries amidst hierarchies.”

– Sona Reddy, Principal Architect, Sona Reddy Studio

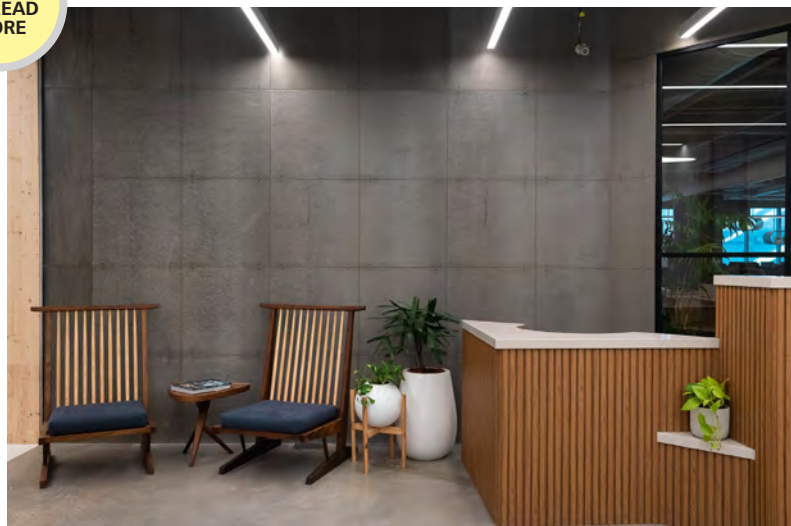


SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*

A concrete office infused with elements and colours that induce calm, Innopark has a simple plan highlighted by Zen elements - a garden-inspired collab space, fresh plants, informal pockets, cool colours and handcrafted furniture.



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JUST IN TIME FOR TEA

Studio Goya gives an eclectic twist to a colonial villa for a tea cafe in Bengaluru

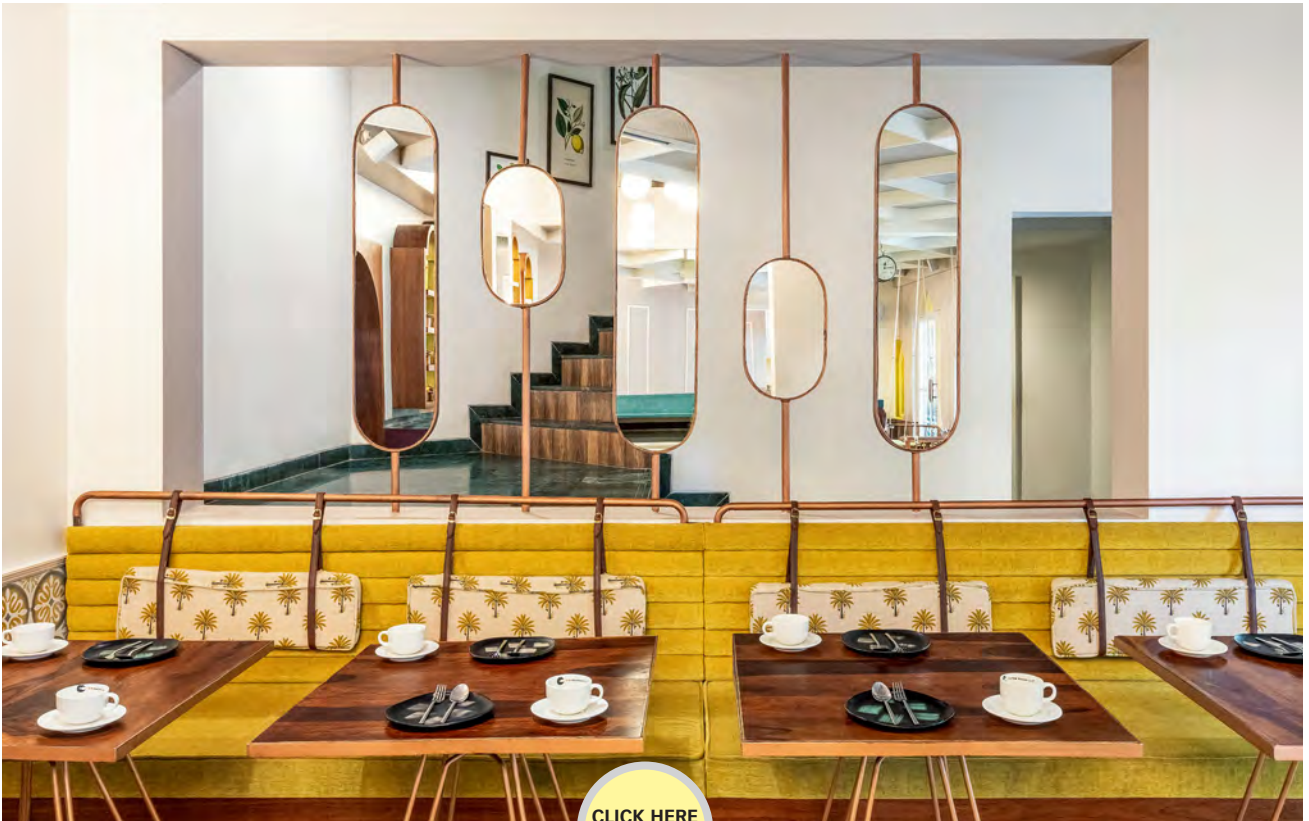
Text TINA THAKRAR Images RAVI ASRANI

SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*



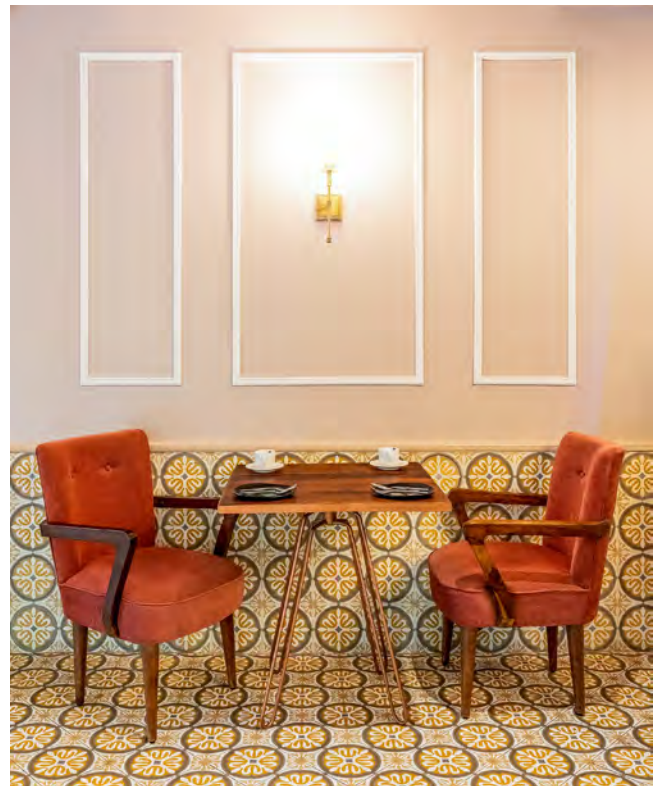
"The concept of a colonial villa has been derived from the architecture of the building. By taking the word 'villa' from the brand name, we gave it our own unique twist."

– Akshita Mehra, Creative Director, Studio Goya



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The three-storeyed structure has a cheery purple facade that is 80ft wide and punctured with windows and balconies. The inside has a double-height void for connectivity between the ground and first floors, and a volley of different seating options for visitors.



A PLAY OF GEOMETRY

*The Zuci Chocolates and Boulangerie store by **F+S Designs** draws elements of design from the luxuriousness of its product*

Text NITIJA IMMANUEL *Images* RICKEN DESAI



"Through our design, we created a platform that weaves a story with charming, luxurious decor, to make the chocolate treats an experience to revel in."

– Shamila Meeran, Co-founder, F+S Designs





The chic outpost of a chocolate brand in Hyderabad's Jubilee Hills celebrates its luscious product through old-world European interiors woven into a firm geometric, contemporary setting. The space has been designed by Faisal Vohra and Shamila Meeran of F+S Designs.

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HOME & DESIGN

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