

HOME & DESIGN

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EXCLUSIVE

HUZEFA
RANGWALA
& JASEM
PIRANI

Looking forward
to the future

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celebrity-owned
castle home
by THE
NOVOGRATZ

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meets
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meets
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Image: Mandar Deodhar



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There's so much to be said about what we do for a living. Let's start at the legit beginning though. What is it that we do? When I get asked that – and I do get it a lot – I say I work with design. Not 'in' design, not 'around' design, not even 'with designers'...simply, with design.

Design, today, has expanded beyond the norms of our erstwhile expectations of it. Even if you look at it purely in the aesthetic sense, the evolution of our sensibilities over the last couple of years (especially the last one) has been remarkable, to say the least – but to do that is highly limiting. In any case, my attempting to try to “define” design is a highly futile exercise, considering how at-once absorbed and distracted by it I am!

However, for the fun of it, let's say we took a bird's eye view, and drew a satellite map of it...what would it look like? India? Australia? The North Pole? Or all of them put together? From the way I have grown to understand design, it would look different every day, constantly metamorphosing into whatever/however the viewer chooses to perceive it. There is no single definition of what design today is. It's a conscious idea that lives in every choice we make for the way we'd like our lives to be.

That is why I believe I work 'with' design. And you?

Ronitaa R. Italia
Editor in Chief

DESIGN IN CONTEXT

Products where design blurs the lines between art and functionality

Text **TINA THAKRAR**

FLEX THAT FURNITURE

Furniture has always been an essential need for the home, but it has only fulfilled that one use so far. Amsterdam-based design studio H-O-TT has now introduced a new typology of furniture through Furfit. It combines the functionality of common home furniture (fur) with the ergonomics of fitness equipment (fit). Furfit brings home the gym with five pieces that combine the most popular home workout equipment (light/heavy dumbbells, kettlebell, pushup bars and curl bar) with common household items (coffee table, clothes hanger, side table, bar chair, stool). The brightly-coloured pieces have been made from an assortment of materials and transition from one form to the other via an easy screw-like system. ►





MARK OF A MARINE

Using just beech plywood and stainless steel, young Seoul-based designer Woocheol Shin has designed the Whale Chair for contemporary spaces. Reminiscent of the tail of a whale as it cuts through the surface of the water, the backrest has a characteristic curve that not only looks visually comfortable, but also envelops the user in a secure, open embrace.

The seat does the same, with an upturned curve achieved by softly bending the plywood.

A set of sturdy steel legs in two versions hold up these curves. The entire piece has been bathed in a Sumi Ink finish to give it a clean, distinct look. ►



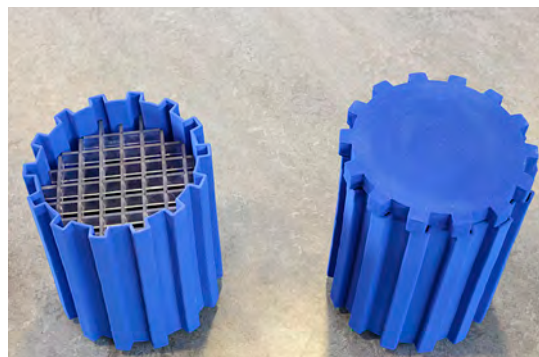
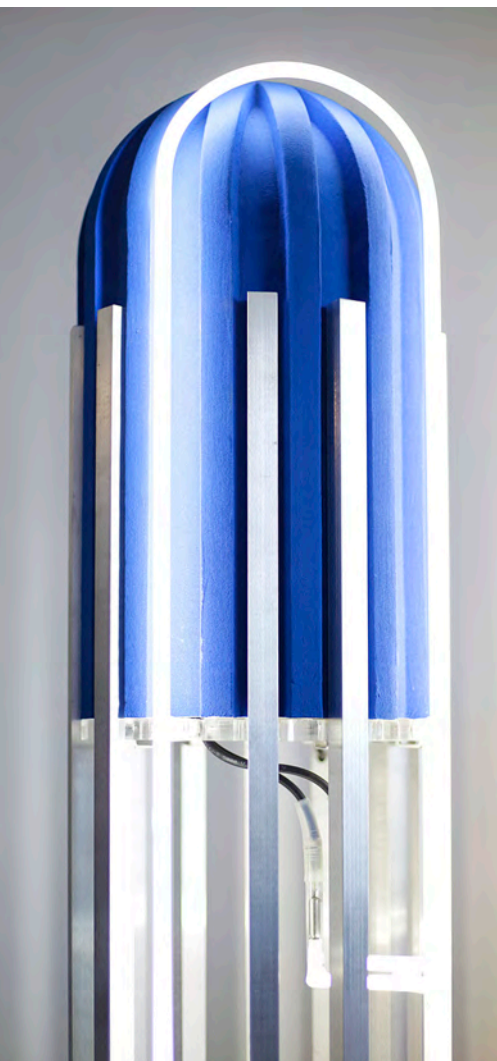
WASTE TO WONDER

Steel construction mesh, brick dust, discarded cement and sand, chipped bricks and gravel, and broken insulation panels form the core materials of Spanish architect and designer Irene Roca Moracia's latest furniture collection entitled Appropriating the Grid. Identifying the overproduction of construction material, Irene intervened in the process to stop it from being wasted. With these discarded pieces, she created 11 elements (she refuses to label them with conventional furniture names) that can be easily put together to fulfill all kinds of daily needs. Her ultimate goal is to encourage people around the world to make their own compositions. This process and the materials themselves make every piece exclusive. ►



MACHINE AS OBJECT

Exploring the manufacturing process of a product and the push and pull between techniques and aesthetics in mass production and artisanal craftsmanship, French-designer Célestine Peuchot has devised the Inert Domestic System - a series of six furniture pieces that look like they're mid-process. Fitted with blue ceramic gear, glass neon tubes, acrylic elements and an aluminum structure, the furniture considers the machines as the objects themselves, and reflects on the impact of a slowed-down production line, as seen in the last few months. At its heart, it disrupts notions about how things are made and used. ►





A MOMENT IN TIME

Designer Chaeyoung Lee's Time of Action series is an all-black, bold collection that imparts the message of focusing on the here and now. The birth of the range is rooted in the basic idea of the form of life, and how it's important to enjoy the process rather than just the outcome. The size of the pieces represents small parts of the present through ebonising and carving techniques that reveal the basic dark black and raw texture. The range, carefully built over time by repetitive brushing and chiselling of wood into lines and curves, is made up of four seating pieces. ►





IMAGES: CAFÉINE



A PURIST'S WAY OF LIFE

"In my projects, I would strive to create quiet and balanced interiors, while I myself was constantly on the move. During the lockdown, I literally and figuratively came home. My many walks in nature brought inspiration and clarity to my thinking. Simplicity in design, materiality and connections became the thread of the Nomad collection," says Belgian interior architect Nathalie

Deboel of her maiden furniture collection. Made of solid oak and walnut with minute brass details, the furniture consists of a library, a rectangular and a round table, a daybed, and an armchair, with scope for new designs. As the name suggests, the entire range is built around the concept of the rounded wooden stick used as a 'travelling companion' by the nomads. **H&DT**



THE PERFECT REAL WORLD

Designer Jiri Prihoda's Biblio-Pavilion celebrates the pleasures of imperfection, escapism, reading, and carefree lounging, thus re-imagining the context of new work-from-home scenarios

Text TINA THAKRAR



The open, sculptural version of the pavilion is akin to one giant bookcase, which encourages reading in the outdoors.

New and extensive work-from-home policies, limited international travel and a potential long-term lockdown led designer Jiri Prihoda to devise the sculptural Biblio-Pavilion that diverts attention from precise and calculated machine craftsmanship to the deliberately imperfect exclusivity of handmade pieces. Built with an exterior and interior version, Biblio-Pavilion provides an escape from our work screens, and instead offers a private space for comfortable lounging with a book. Flooded with daylight due to the lack of a solid, opaque ceiling or wall, the pavilion has been crafted from soft fabric and plywood.

Biblio-Pavilion is an example of modern architecture, albeit on a small scale. It takes the shape of an empty Baroque helix column, with a grid of horizontal and vertical planes, and a winding staircase from bottom to top.

In the interior, sculptural version, Prihoda has designed a completely open piece that can be placed within a larger architectural structure. Devoid of walls and a ceiling, it takes in sunlight from all directions. Seating pockets dot all levels, including the horizontal plane at the top. The bottom rungs accessible to standees outside the structure can be used as book or display shelves.

In the exterior, architectural version, the designer has covered the entire

structure in clear corrugated sheeting, which privatises its use to the inside. The winding stairwell runs around the outer circumference, and while the top level is inaccessible, the pod-like interiors offer a quiet, private place for book lovers and readers. Books and knick knacks can be stacked along the interior wall of the planes.

In terms of its build, Biblio-Pavilion is a clear departure from the AI and robotic perfection of the architectural, and professional world. It gives home workers an opportunity to enjoy the simpler activities the way they're meant to be experienced - free of technicalities, rules and regulations and perfection. **H&DT**



SPECTACLE

Transformative public interventions that alter perceptions and neighbourhoods

Text **TINA THAKRAR**



SOCIAL NETWORK FACTORY BY PEOPLE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE SHEKOU, SHENZHEN

A unique public-use instrument on the grounds of The Sea World Culture and Arts Center in Shenzhen, Social Network Factory is a series of intertwined tubes and pipe horns that can be used as telescopes, periscopes, and public furniture. Built to stimulate aural, visual and physical interactions in unexpected ways, the artwork is about 20ft high and has four sets of large and small pipe horns. While its build mirrors the cantilevered volumes of its larger parent building designed by famed architect Fumihiko Maki, its impact is limited within the grounds. The small horns can be used by people to communicate with each other, and the larger ones function as seating and collective areas for social activities. The twists and turns of the tubes are reminiscent of the maritime heritage of Shekou.



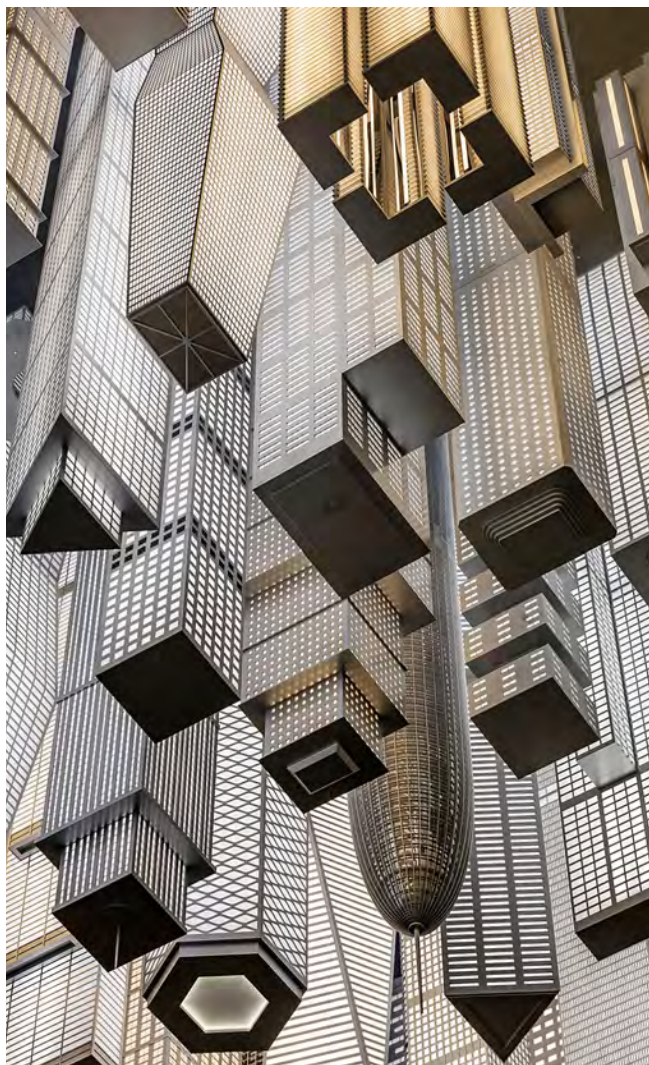
IMAGES: ZHANG CHAO

IMAGES: NICHOLAS KNIGHT, COURTESY EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC ART FUND, NY



THE HIVE BY ELMGREEN & DRAGSET NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

On the first day of 2021, when the new Moynihan Train Hall opened to the public, visitors first set eyes on The Hive - a site-specific permanent art installation that adorns the ceiling of the 31st Street midblock entryway. Designed by artist duo Elmgreen and Dragset, the inverted, LED-illuminated cityscape is inspired by the world's most iconic buildings. Similar to the complex architecture of a hive, the artwork pays tribute to our bustling cities as well as our cave-dwelling origins. Although it looks weightless, the heavyweight comprises 91 buildings, some almost 9ft tall. The LED lights keep the hallway illuminated day and night, while the monumental piece itself represents the synergy of the city of New York. **H&DT**



TO BE YOUR OWN MUSE

Every project by **MuseLAB** frontrunners **Huzefa Rangwala** and **Jasem Pirani** is a deep dive into research and exploration. For this feature, they probe their past, with an unwavering eye on the future

Text HUZEFA RANGWALA AND JASEM PIRANI

Profile images MANDAR DEODHAR



THE MuseLAB story defies most conventional norms. When we started, we wanted to build a place that encourages creative thinking and pushes the dialogue on design possibilities. Everyone at MuseLAB contributes to the design process, but the final say is ours. We share equal creative duties, a close relationship built on trust, our occasional disagreements, and have never had defined roles. What keeps us, and our boutique practice, going is our constant hunger to explore newer pastures in product design, interiors and architecture.

We met in Savannah where Jasem was attending Savannah College of Art and Design and Huzefa was visiting a common friend on a weekend break from his Masters at Georgia Tech. In 2008, while we were travelling across Central America, our conversations revolved around launching a space that functioned as a gallery/boutique during the day and transformed into a bistro-bar by dusk. Interestingly, there was no discussion about launching a design practice at all (blame it on the Cenote swims, the Mayan ruins, the Tulum beaches and all that ceviche!).

Cut to the last quarter of 2011, when we both decided to move on from the Indian firms we were working for and dive into the pool of design start-ups. Design, at the end of the day, is nothing but an exercise in solving problems creatively, sans scale. And it is this philosophy, combined with our love for travel, food and fashion that formed the genesis of a coalition, and an idea that we could collaborate in some capacity on a creative platform.

As individuals, our dynamics are very different. Huzefa is energetic, pragmatic, constantly looking to connect with as many people as possible, and keeps the studio on their toes and in splits. Jasem keeps everyone glued together, is a stickler for processes, and is constantly reminding everyone to explore the intangible.

The struggle of the early days was real. We first set up shop in Jasem's father's conference room in Sewri. Our families were supportive enough to present us with a project each at the start, both of which became testing grounds for us to explore craft, technique and materials. From then on, we lived



IMAGE: SAMEER TAWDE

from project to project, but were blessed with the right ingredients - a supportive family, a zeal to excel, a passion to create, and most of all, we had (and still have) each other's backs.

We went from door to door showcasing our portfolios, and within the first six months of 2012, had worked on proposals for a 16,000 sqft home in Chennai, a public toilet, a high-rise residential building in Mumbai, and about 10 interior design projects. All of these remained on paper, but we ended our first year with the completion of a compact two-bedroom apartment in Mumbai we lovingly call Braided Comfort. This is another thing we impressed upon - to design, detail and even name each project as if it were our own.

(Above)

The Confederate Rose project in Pune. The MuseLAB Stepwell series rug sits on the plum wall against a houndstooth floor in white and black, in the bedroom foyer of this 7,000 sqft home.



To an outsider, ours may seem like a madhouse, but there is a method to the madness. With each project, we consciously try to do something different, through a gesture, detail or play of material.

– Jasem Pirani, *Director, MuseLAB*



In our formative months, we realised that the philosophy of good design is simple – listen, learn and narrate. One needs to be sensitive to the context.

– Huzefa Rangwala, Director, MuseLAB

We started with a wide range of interior design projects, and just one architecture project in Jamshedpur. Soon, we were labelled an interior design studio with a focus on compact apartments, and wanted desperately to break away from the mould. As we juggled work, our team grew – Bhakti Loonawat, our first member, joined us as an intern in 2014, and Namrata Tidke, our backbone, who we dragged to Mumbai from New York that same year. We were all housed in the conference room; when we started tripping over material samples and battling for meeting space, we moved to our current space in Prabhadevi, Mumbai in 2015.

In our formative months, we realised that the philosophy of good design is simple – listen, learn and narrate. One needs to be sensitive to the context. With this, one must create an opportunity for self-styled storytelling, which is integrated with the design process to focus on creating transformative experiences. The work and aesthetics of a good designer are a reflection of his/her understanding of the client's brief. So far, this approach has worked brilliantly for us; each project, irrespective of scale and typology, is concept-driven and relates to a central narrative.

We often get asked about the name – MuseLAB – and have frequently been mistaken for a sound or path lab. From the get go, we were sure of using 'muse'. A 'muse' is an inspiration that we seek in our client's stories, our projects and everyday objects. Also, to 'muse' is to think, to ideate. On the other hand, the contenders for the second half of the word were kitchen, factory and lab. After much back and forth, we unanimously decided on LAB to signify a space in which one explores, experiments, researches, develops and eventually creates.

Ours is a collaborative practice. As principal designers, we ensure that designs conceptualized by us evolve through creative discourses

with our team. For us, every viewpoint of every individual counts. Outside the studio, we extend our collaborations to our vendors and fabricators, who are resourceful and just as excited about adding value to the project as we are. We also encourage our clients to engage with us in the design process; in some cases, we collaborate with them too.

As our practice grew, the goals of each individual at MuseLAB had to be aligned to those of the studio. We ensure that we are accessible to the team, and have open conversations about their expectations and goals. Every individual comes with certain strengths, maybe in writing, illustrating and food styling, and we use them to add value to our projects and also fuel their ambitions. This approach has led to us presenting zines and coffee table books to our clients as final deliverables, and this hunger for self-expression led us to launch MuseMART, our product design division, in 2015.

(Below left) Cane Crush from the Hedonist Collection marries a lounge chair and a pouffe. It is characterized with a left or right cane screen.

(Below) The linear Glass House block sits within an introverted site in Alibaug, against the knife-edge pool with the dining pavilion and the rock garden in the foreground.

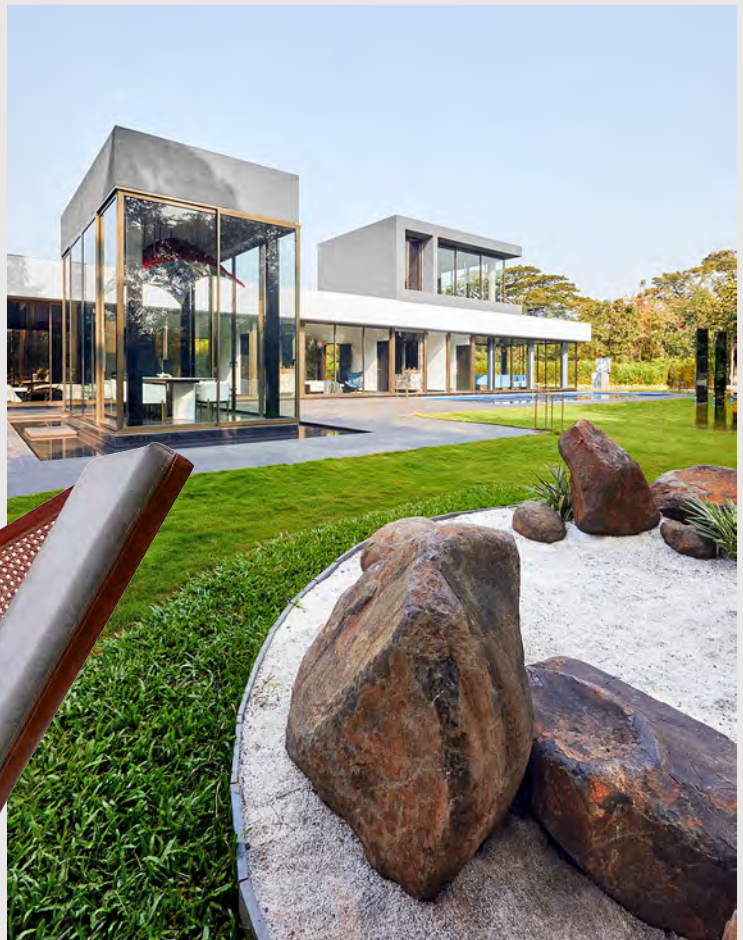


IMAGE: SAMEER TAWDE



Design, at the end of the day, is nothing but an exercise in solving problems creatively, sans scale.

– Jasem Pirani, *Director, MuseLAB*

MuseMART is a vehicle to explore and research materials and design independent of our projects. Through this, we embrace the uncomfortable, learn from our failures and nurture our creativity. Rather than focusing only on architecture, we decided to make ours an end-to-end studio that creates thoughtful and engaging architecture, interior environments, furniture and products. We use both intuitive and traditional methods of analysis to identify the tangible and the intangible.

To an outsider, ours may seem like a madhouse, but there is a method to the madness. Over time, we have developed a systematic and stage-wise process of conceptualization, schematic design and design development to provide pure and focused experiential design. With each project, we consciously try to do something different, through a gesture, detail or play of material. At MuseLAB, we have been in the practice of customisation, and have often made things hard for ourselves. But with so much experience of furniture customization and our learnings from MuseMART, it was the organic choice for us to launch our furniture line - The Hedonist Collection in 2019 – as an exploration of technique, form and materiality.

In the more recent years, we were itching to dive into research-based projects. In consultation with our first ‘museling’ Bhakti, we launched MuseX in 2020. MuseX is our dedicated research arm that explores relevant technological tools to be able to adapt to changing environments and deliver unique solutions through collaborations. At present, through MuseX, we are exploring algal cultivation, a prototype for a market on wheels inspired by the humble cart, and a design proposal for a human-centric public toilet system.

We turn 10 in 2022, and the next couple of years are crucial and exciting for us. We are working on a school project, private villas in Coimbatore and Ahmedabad, penthouse interiors in Mumbai, a line or two of furniture, and the possibilities of working with the city to come up with solutions for urban conditions. As for our wish list, we plan to add a workshop space, our literal Muse ‘lab’, for experimentation, and maybe our own bed and breakfast with an artist-in-residence program. There will be definite challenges, but we are confident of the eco-system and the culture we have created at MuseLAB, and in our undying hunger to create.

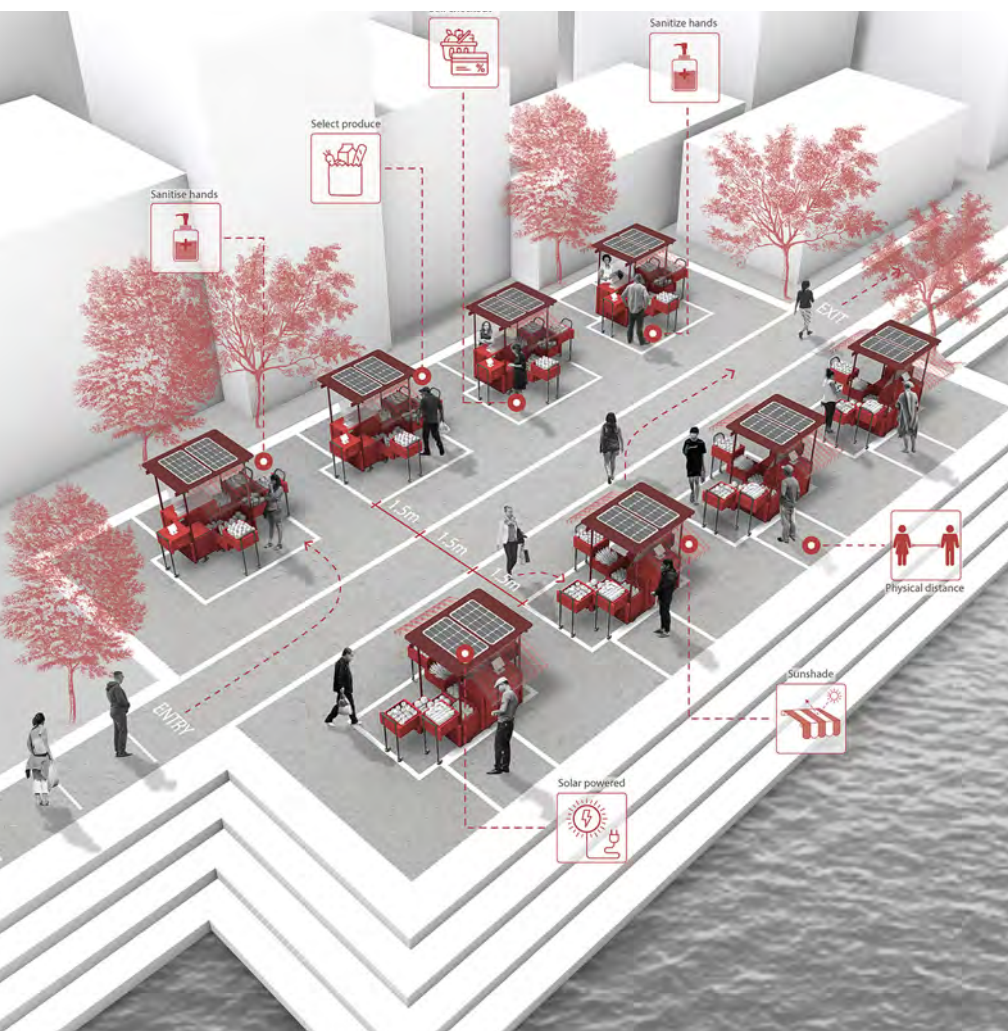
(Above) An L-shaped outhouse in Ludhiana, finished in a concrete texture inside out.

The MuseX Folio



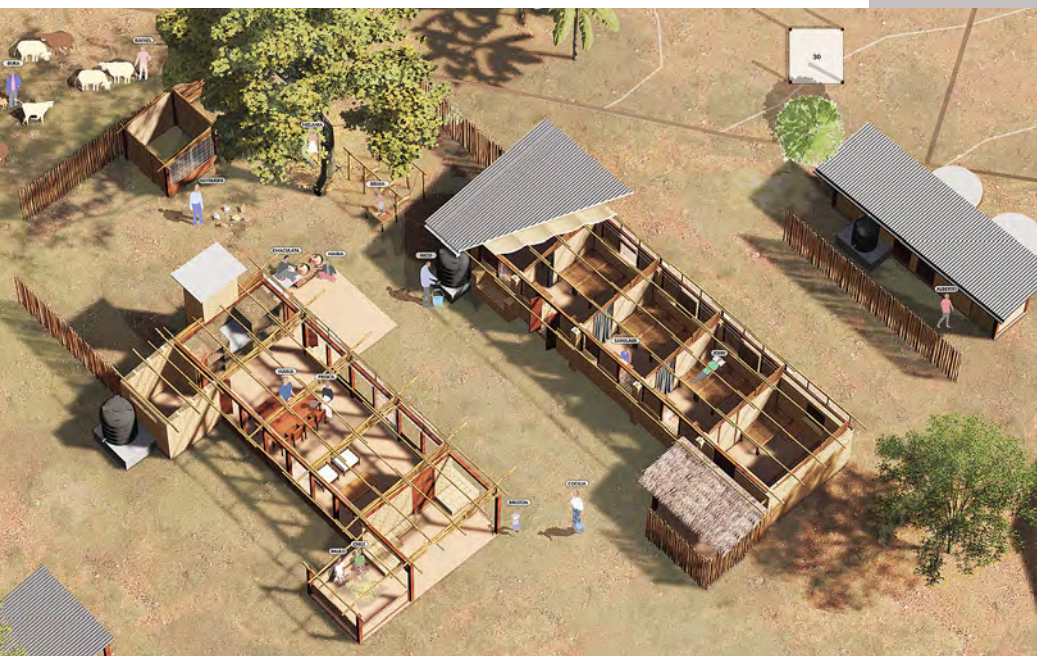
ALGAL MICROFOREST

MuseX's algal cultivation project, Algal MicroForest is a 6.5ft-tall, tree-like rig for public spaces, to combat the harmful effects of air pollution. The team has harnessed the power of one of nature's tiniest yet most resilient representatives, algae, to act as a carbon filter. Emulating traditional forest cover, the MicroForest offers shade throughout the day, and emits a soft green glow at night. The hexagonal panels at the top have Marimo Moss Balls, or macroalgae, in test tubes, along with individual solar powered light sources to help propagate it.



MARKET-ON-WHEELS

Conceptualised during the pandemic, Market-on-Wheels is a makeshift decentralised market inspired by the humble hand cart. Designed to ease the delivery of essentials and shorten the supply chain during times of crisis, the compact modular system is fitted with sliding tiered bamboo modules, refrigerated containers, sanitisation points, a self-checkout area and retractable awnings topped with solar panels. Besides acting as a dependable delivery medium, Market-on-Wheels also sustains the livelihood of the vendor and safeguards the health of its users.



JOREJICK HOUSE

The Jorejick are a Tanzanian tribe family of 19, living in a small town in the north of the country. Designed as part of a competition to combat the unplanned and poor quality of housing in the African country, the Jorejick House is an easy to build, cost-effective, vernacular-style home inspired by housing blocks, where people share social experiences on a daily basis. Hand-built by local craftsmen using traditional methods of construction and organic materials like bricks, wood, mud plaster, bamboo and cow dung, the home will function primarily on low-energy strategies like overhangs and cross-ventilation, instead of mechanical systems, to combat Tanzania's high temperatures.

SAAJHA SAAMUDAYIK SHAUCHALAYA

This sanitation project, devised in line with the Swachh Bharat Mission, addresses the problem of limited and mismanaged public toilets in densely populated settlements. It utilises a circular economy system that combines human-centricity, technology and materiality to promote safer sanitation practices, proper waste management, and a thoughtfully-planned program and schedule for use.



THE COURTYARD OF KNOWLEDGE

Making knowledge and education accessible to everyone, The Courtyard of Knowledge is a school premises that is open to the community and students. It's been conceptualised for the people of Marsassoum in Senegal, to encourage sociological engagement and technological innovation. The project expands the local building system by introducing a modular steel-jointed bamboo frame and brick masonry slabs, and takes an effective approach to water and hygiene management through rainwater harvesting and an ecological sanitation system. **H&DT**



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 SEEMA SREEDHARAN



ANKIT PATEL



ANKURA PATEL



SANJANA SHAH



ANKURA PATEL
Director & Co-founder, ANA Designs

What do you foresee as the future of Indian workplaces, and how can business owners and designers adapt quickly and effectively to the challenging new world?



ANKIT PATEL
Director & Co-founder, ANA Designs

Designer Ankura Patel and business whiz Ankit Patel set up ANA Designs in 2004. The duo has worked on commercial spaces and offices across the country, establishing themselves as a formidable duo in the design industry. The award-winning firm puts creativity and innovation at the forefront of its design approach.

The Covid-19 pandemic has morphed the very definition of normalcy across all facets of day-to-day life. It has coerced every fragment of society to come face-to-face with an unprecedented humanitarian challenge, one that has to work with the resources at hand and an unclear end in sight.

Workspaces and professional setups have faced the wrath of the situation, much like all other sectors; the only discernible solution being a shift to the 'new normal'. The largest of the business titans and the most affluent names in the world have adopted renewed methodologies of working to see themselves through these arduous times.

As workforces across the globe steadily strategize controlled returns to their formal office spaces, there is

a lot at stake - employees lives and livelihoods both in tow. The 'role' of a workspace has to be reimaged at an intrinsic level, and the challenges have brought about the pressing need for an evolved design sensitivity and thinking that puts human life at its nucleus.

Through this new lens, business owners and designers need to conceive workspaces as tools that conjure a safe, adaptable environment with maximised efficiency and functionality; a space that also ensures that the regenerated workspace model is economically and socially viable. The core idea driving the endeavours needs to be centered on creating spaces that the end-users feel safe and comfortable in, after months of working within the confines of their homes.



After months of observing government-mandated lockdowns, as teams slowly plan to trickle back to work in offices, one is also beckoned to think of the undeniable pragmatic facets a physical workspace offers. Human interaction can be crucial to productivity measures and the establishment of a structured work culture underscores the importance of collaboration that the now widely used Zoom and Skype meetings cannot simulate.

While there is no 'one size fits all' guide to this process, there are a few key steps that can be implemented. After all, the question at hand doesn't address when workspaces will open their doors; it asks how they'll go about doing so.

Hygiene and Cleanliness Norms:

Hygiene is of paramount importance when it comes to reopening plans of office spaces. 'Hands-free' is the way to go to eliminate non-essential physical interactions with surfaces across the workspace.

Technological aids such as sensor-controlled sanitisation-dispensing machines, UV-enabled sanitisers at nodal entry and exit points, door pedal-controlled doorways, automatic thermal scanning gear in key circulation areas etc., are some of the examples of provisions that business owners should consciously strive to install in their offices.

Bathrooms are often the breeding grounds for proliferation of infections. The installation of systems like automatic flushing features in the water closets and urinals, sensor-enabled taps, soap dispensers and hand-dryers make these zones easy to utilize with reduced risk of cross-contamination.

Cleaning and sanitisation of common surfaces should be carried

out in a timely fashion every few hours by staff in suitable protective gear. The HVAC system ducts should be routinely checked and cleaned to ensure optimum air quality indoors.

These systems allow employers, employees and other stake holders to feel reassured about inhabiting a space that is being shared by multiple people.

Spatial and Functional Planning:

There needs to be a clear demarcation between the public and private zones in any given workspace. We believe that the compartmentalised cubicle system of desks might make a comeback given the times.

The celebrated open-plan offices can also be replanned in light of the safety measures. The linear running workstations needs to be rethought because while they work pragmatically in open offices, they need to be avoided in the evolved workspaces. An alternative can be the inclusion of staggered workstations that are in sync with the distancing norms. This ensures the absence of back-to-back seating plans and hence, minimises the exposure amidst employees.

The inclusion of glass, acrylic or other temporary partitions can help prevent the unnecessary spread of potential infections between workstations. These can be treated as design features via the inclusion of colour, subtle patterns or textures!

Technology too, will continue to play an integral role in the way physical workspaces shall function. Remote video conferencing with the batch of employees working from home, standardised systems to ensure no-touch clocking in systems, and cutting-edge A/V technology shall help maintain distance while still occupying a shared workspace.

Mindful Collaboration:

Since some functions in the office require collaboration in some way, shape or form, areas like meeting rooms, board rooms and collaboration pockets should be designed keeping social distancing parameters in mind.

Teams can achieve this effectively by occupying spaces at half-capacity and leaving seats between two users vacant, establishing a distance of 6+ feet sideways and while facing each other. Teams should structure virtual group calls and collaborative sessions remotely as much as possible, even with the flexibility of having the office space at their disposal.

Social Distancing:

While this term seems to have become a part of everyday jargon, the observation of the principle cannot be stressed enough!

Within the common circulatory areas of the office, signages and wayfinding techniques can be of great assistance to avoid users occupying common areas for prolonged periods. In confined spaces like elevators, a maximum number of passengers should be established based on the capacity of the elevator. Ideally, no more than 3-4 persons should occupy medium or large elevators.

Desks in workspaces need to be staggered and planned following the spatial requirements. A controlled percentile of the workforce should be allowed to occupy the office premises during functional hours.

The designing and functioning of the transformed workspace needs to be a fine-tuned balance between productivity, cost-efficiency and well-being for all users. These optimised workspaces shall bestow office-goers the world over with gumption to slowly yet steadily find their way back to their places of work. **H&DT**



In your opinion, how has the pandemic impacted and transformed the art world, and how do you perceive it in the post Covid-19 scenario?

SANJANA SHAH
Creative Director, Tao Art Gallery

Sanjana Shah has successfully positioned herself as a leading art curator in India. With a dual Bachelor's degree in English Literature and the WPP Communications work-study program from the Parsons - Indian School of Design & Innovation, Mumbai, Sanjana has taken over the reigns of the family's art gallery business – Tao Art Gallery. In the role of Creative Director, she co-curates exhibitions, writes concept notes, ideates on new collaborations and manages the gallery's brand image and sales. She also works as an independent art curator and consultant both in India and across the globe.

This page: The
Arte Laguna Prize
Competition, Arsenal
of Venice

Following page:
Neeraj Singh Khandka,
Stories of Walls in the
Lockdown, 2020

Like any momentous event usually tends to do, this pandemic has completely shifted perspectives and propelled us towards a new norm. The shift has been so defining that there will, now onwards, be a clear pre-Covid and post-Covid era.

The art world, perhaps even more so than any other industry, has been transformed for both good and bad. On the upside, there has been a renewed increase in the number of art connoisseurs and collectors, as people understand the irreplaceable value of creativity in the time of crisis. Stuck in our homes, unable to make sense of the situation, we all cling to creativity as a means of connection. As a result, content

creation has increased and has been adapted to fit into the new virtual reality. Most Mumbai galleries, including my own Tao Art Gallery, were quick to create online viewing rooms and continue exhibitions as planned. There is a renewed desire to consume art and people have the luxury of viewing it from the solace of their own spaces now. Recent art auctions have made some incredible sales, like that at AstaGuru where the famous Husain painting, Voices sold for a record-breaking Rs. 18.5 crore!

However, the contemporary art world has taken a hit. Though the modern masters have and will always have buyers, it is the younger, experiential artists who are bearing the brunt of this period.



Contemporary art by nature is better showcased through physical shows and direct sales with previews and other interactions. This group of artists is far greater in number and appeals to an audience of 'young collectors'. Unfortunately, this collector demographic has been hit the most as a result of the economic situation. With the lockdown, many artists have pulled out of doing virtual shows and prefer to wait it out until times are back to normal.

But the key question remains: Is there really a normal to return to?

In the foreseeable future, the art world is going to primarily be online, interspaced with some rare physical shows. Sales will also happen online and the whole model of networking and client relations will have to be re-thought, with the main agenda of replicating a sense of intimacy virtually. Webinars, Zoom calls, live videos and other ways of social media engagement are critical. It is also

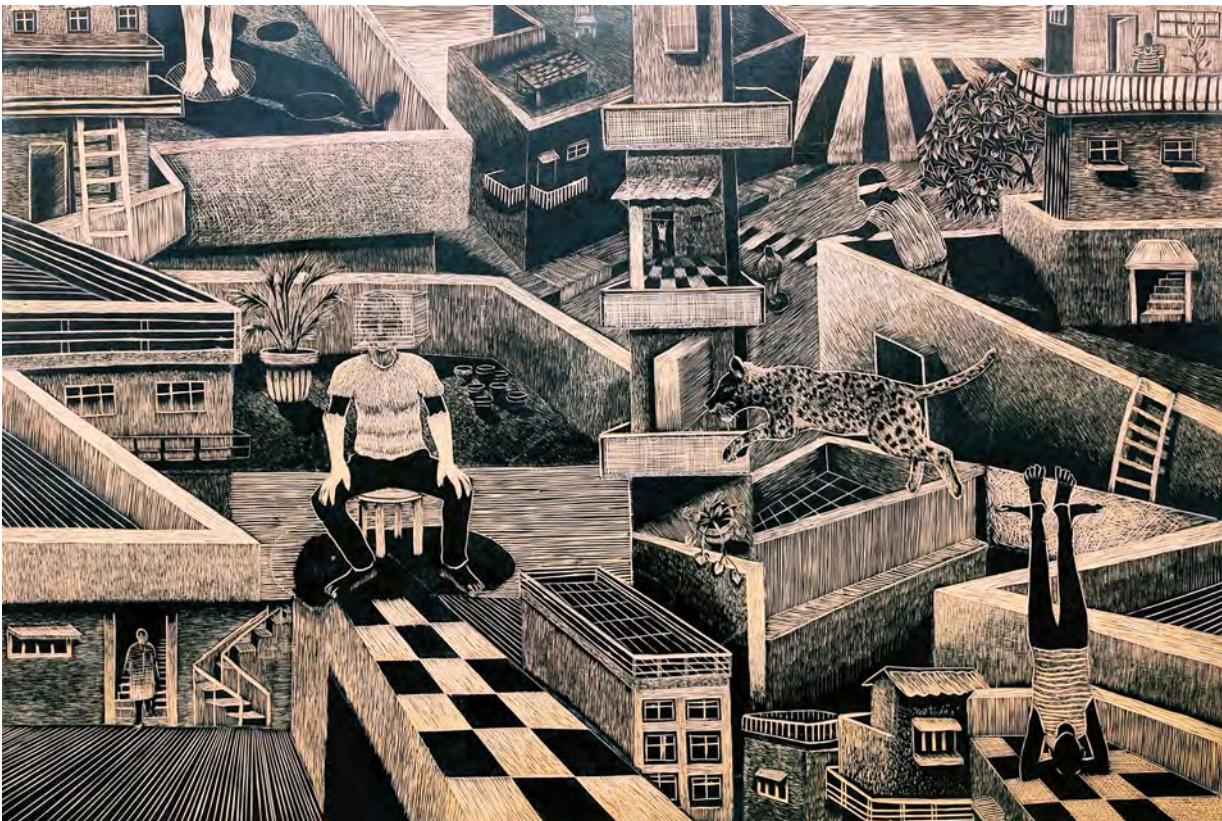
important to curate exhibitions that are well suited to the online medium and focus more on the new-age digital and performance art.

There is an Israeli startup called, Niio, that is working on a digital art platform that will allow artificial intelligence (AI) to personalise digital art for consumers. This is comparable to what Spotify does for music and Netflix for film! Such innovations may indeed help strengthen the appreciation for contemporary art in the long term. However, staying relevant and grabbing eyeballs online will be a struggle for galleries and artists alike. The audience is harder to please and making big-ticket sales will be a feat for the newer artists!

Another interesting development is the potential for collaboration that an online world provides. Physical borders do not limit us any longer and many art institutions, both national and international,

are coming together to support of one another. My own nomination as the Indian ambassador for the Arte Laguna Prize Competition is testament to the truly united global spirit of art. Avenues have now opened up to conduct virtual exchange of artists and moving art fairs online has allowed for more flexibility and less bureaucracy. Art Rio and Al Tiba9 are two examples of international digital show editions that have recently been received very well.

How sustainable these formats are and whether they will help the art world evolve for the better is still to be seen. The one thing that is undeniable is the fact that the art of these times has been influential in opening up an avalanche of creativity in expression and will remain iconic forever. The future is bright with possibilities and the industry is optimistic. Adapting is the only way forward and perhaps in this adaptation, we may find true identity and purpose once again. **H&DT**

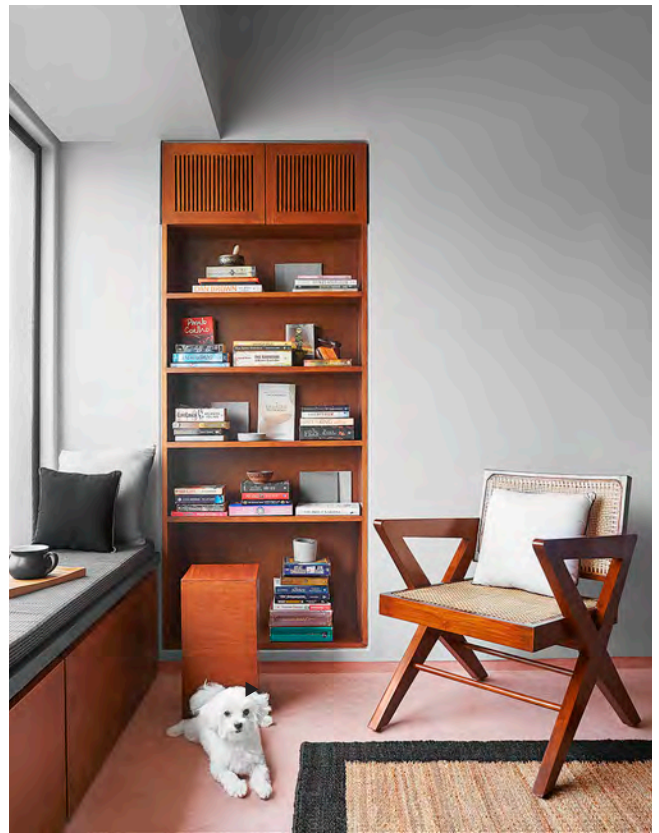




DESIGNING WITH PURPOSE

*As strong as it is soft, this compact apartment by **SML Architects** has an honest take on what design can and should do for its users*

Text TINA THAKRAR *Images* YADNYESH JOSHI





"The home celebrates the idea of 'slow-living'. In a world that worships the fast, it is important to appreciate the sensuality, specificity, delight and contentment that good design can bring. This, we believe, comes across in every space of this home."

– Mahek Lalan, Director and Principal Architect, SML Architects



The home, designed for three millennials, has a linear layout, with spaces unfolding as one walks through the space.



"The flooring is a seamless, muted pink-pigmented, micro-topped surface, which is extremely tough and gentle at the same time. In a way, it contrasts with the harshness of the city of Mumbai."

– Mahek Lalan, Director and Principal Architect, SML Architects



HOLLYWOOD CHATEAU

This 1920s villa in the Hollywood Hills gets a glamorous update, courtesy The Novogratz

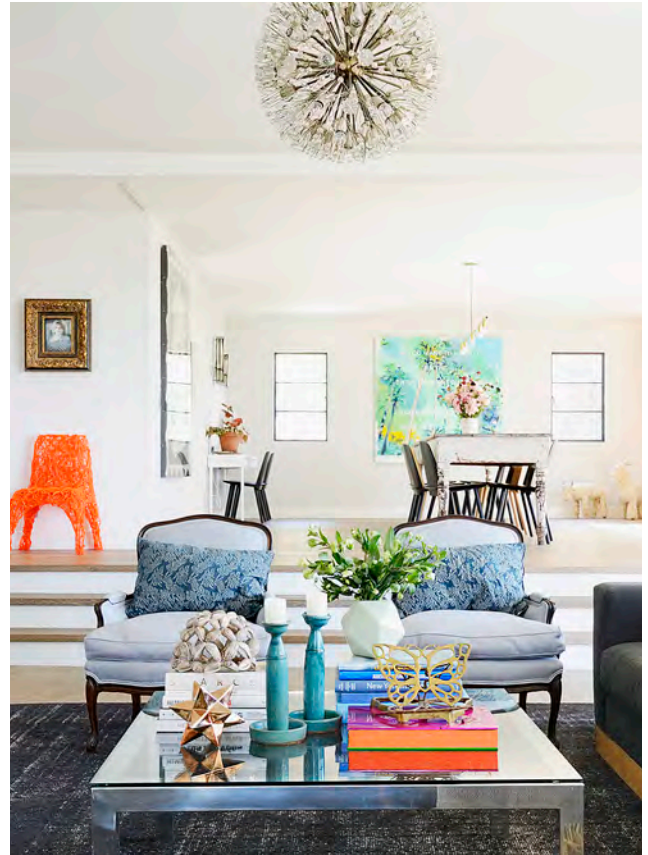
Text NITIJA IMMANUEL Images MATTHEW WILLIAMS



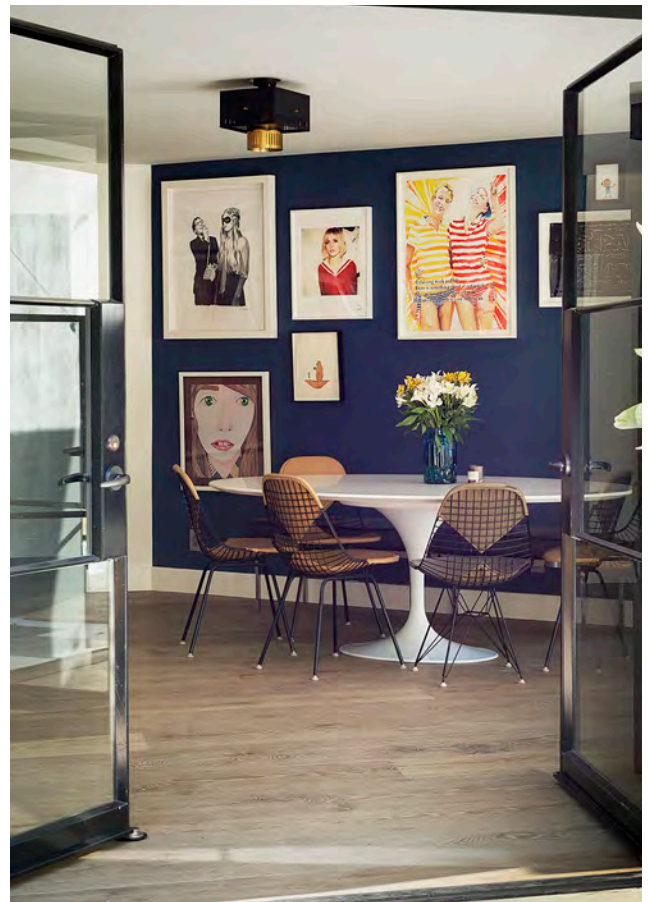
"The biggest challenge was to maintain the charm and period feel of the house while modernising the entire space. We opened everything up to give it a seamless, loft-like look. "

– Cortney Novogratz, Co-founder, The Novogratz

SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*



The modern and open-plan interiors include a colossal living and dining room, a premium kitchen arranged around a marble-topped island and an adjoining breakfast room that spills into the backyard through stylish, steel-trimmed French doors.





"The reclaimed wood floors were the second most expensive item on our wishlist. They are incredibly durable and well-made, and get better with age."

— Robert Novogratz, Co-founder, *The Novogratz*



A CENTRE FOR LEARNING

CPKA resorts to a sustainable design language for the Human
Resource Development Centre in Greater Noida

Text SEEMA SREEDHARAN Images CPKA



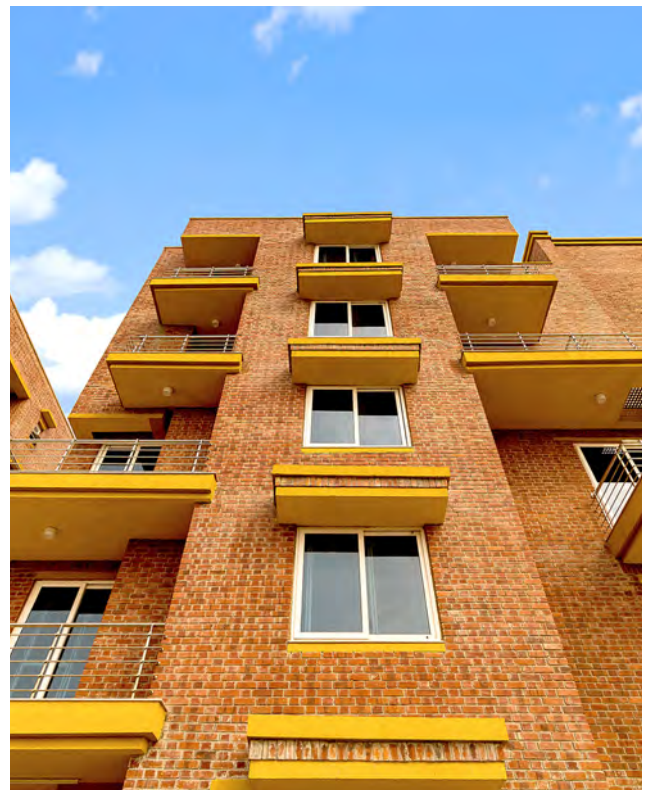
"Since Greater Noida is a thriving urban development, we felt it was imperative to weigh in with effective land-use and sustainable design features such as energy efficiency, water recycling and rainwater harvesting."

– Dikshu C Kukreja, *Principal Architect, CPKA*



“Keeping in mind the functionality of the Centre, we wanted the design language to be reflective of a balance between an educational habitat and a high-spirited learning endeavour.”

– Dikshu C Kukreja, *Principal Architect, CPKA*



The project included the design of an Administrative cum Academic Block, a Multi-Purpose Hall, a Gym Building, Hostel Building and accommodations for the lecturers as well as the support staff.



“Exposed brick expresses an earthy look. To break the monotony, bands of amber radiate throughout the campus, highlighting areas such as the grand entrance porch.”

– Dikshu C Kukreja, *Principal Architect, CPKA*



The entrance porch of the Administrative cum Academic Block is an extruding element, imposing massive columnar elements that support louvres on the roof.



OUT OF THE BOX

*Drawing inspiration from Dutch artist Piet Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism, **The B.A.D Studio** creates a well-defined workspace in Surat*

Text NITIJA IMMANUEL Images ISHITA SITWALA





“To resolve the clarity of spaces, the project takes its inspiration from paintings by artist Piet Mondrian, where he tries to find a visual within a framed network of unevenly-placed lines and balances them with colours.”

– Boney Keriwala, Co-founder, The B.A.D Studio



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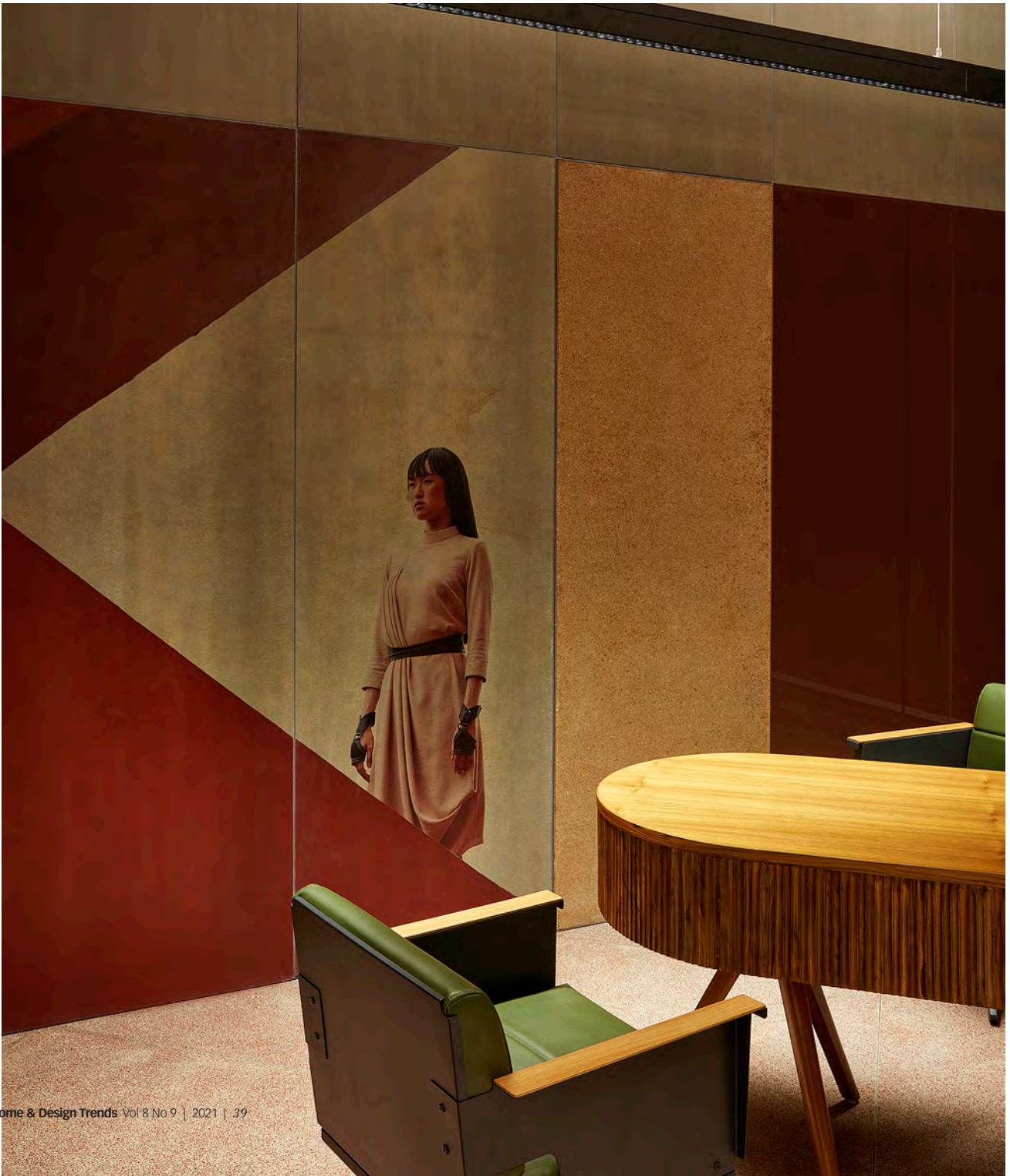
To allocate multiple functions in a compact space with complex structural grids, the designers segregated them into three zones based on the level of privacy. Clear glass partitions between the private cabins and passage area let natural light filter through.



IMPACTFUL MINIMALISM

*Distinct in its design lexicon, **Project 810** creates a functional yet non-heirarchial space for Shantanu & Nikhil*

Text SEEMA SREEDHARAN Images REUBEN SINGH



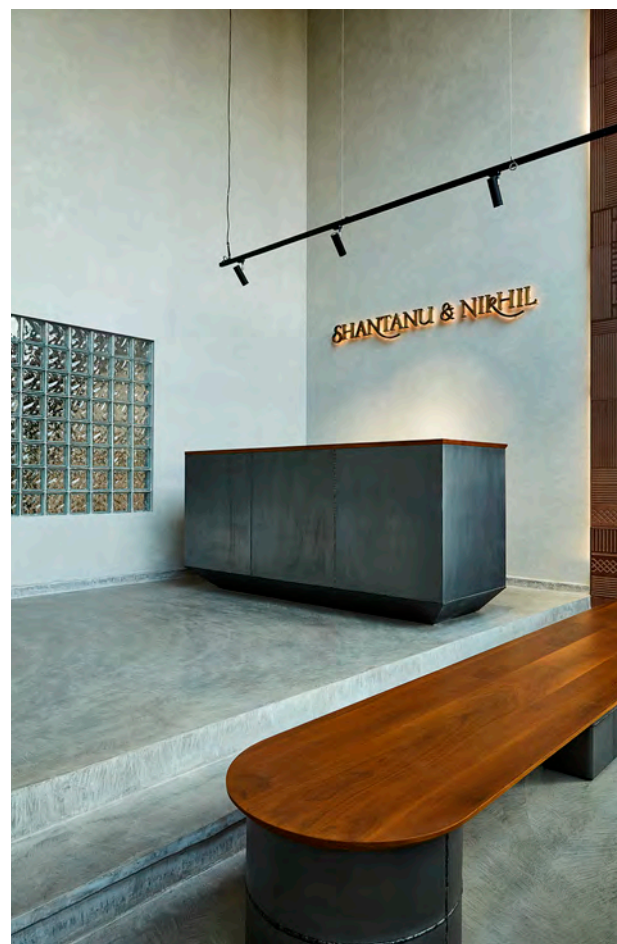


Defined by straightforward materials, industrial finishes, clean compositions and smart details, the material palette comprises locally-sourced Kota, red Mandana, gypsum boards, cement terrazzo, and subtle paint finishes.



"The vision was to create a space that is organised in function, non-hierarchical in layout, harmonious in design, and most importantly, representational of the brand."

– Vritima Wadhwa, Architect and Founder, Project 810



HOME & DESIGN

TRENDS