

HOME & DESIGN

A TIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION

TRENDS

VOLUME 9 NO 5

ALSO FEATURING

Amoeba Design
Curio d'art
Es Devlin
Federico Angi
Lex Pott
MuseLAB
Tejal Mathur Design
The Act Of Quad
Uchronia

Nram Sultan

KEEPING AN EYE ON THE BIG PICTURE

FROM THE FIRST NAIL
TO THE FINAL COAT

(and everything
before, after and
in between!)

11TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Image Courtesy: The Designer

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EDITOR'S NOTE



A few days ago, Jenny Holzer's #hurtearth illumination at Tate Modern, questioning the world at large about their intention and commitment to the planet. "If not now, then when" is a question only too relevant to our lives today on multiple levels.

In fact, this is something that I've been asking myself incessantly about a lot of things. Living well, making the right choices, putting myself first, quality over quantity, doing the things I've always wanted to do, taking the risk, pushing the envelope, making the difference...if not now, then when?

It's true. With everything we've experienced, seen, heard, and felt, all we can be sure of is the present. The now. And if you're not going to do what you want to do NOW, how can you ever be sure of being able to do it ever?

Before the year ends, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you (and myself) of all the missed opportunities because you (and I) decided to put things off. Holzer's message has made me promise myself to commit to living by design. My own design. And considering the industry we belong to, as easy as it seems, it's one of the most challenging oaths to live by, because there's design all around. But then, as they say, it's all about what's relevant to you. Today. Now.

Ronitaa R. Italia
Editor in Chief

MEET THE JURY

TRENDS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2021 - DECADE SPECIAL



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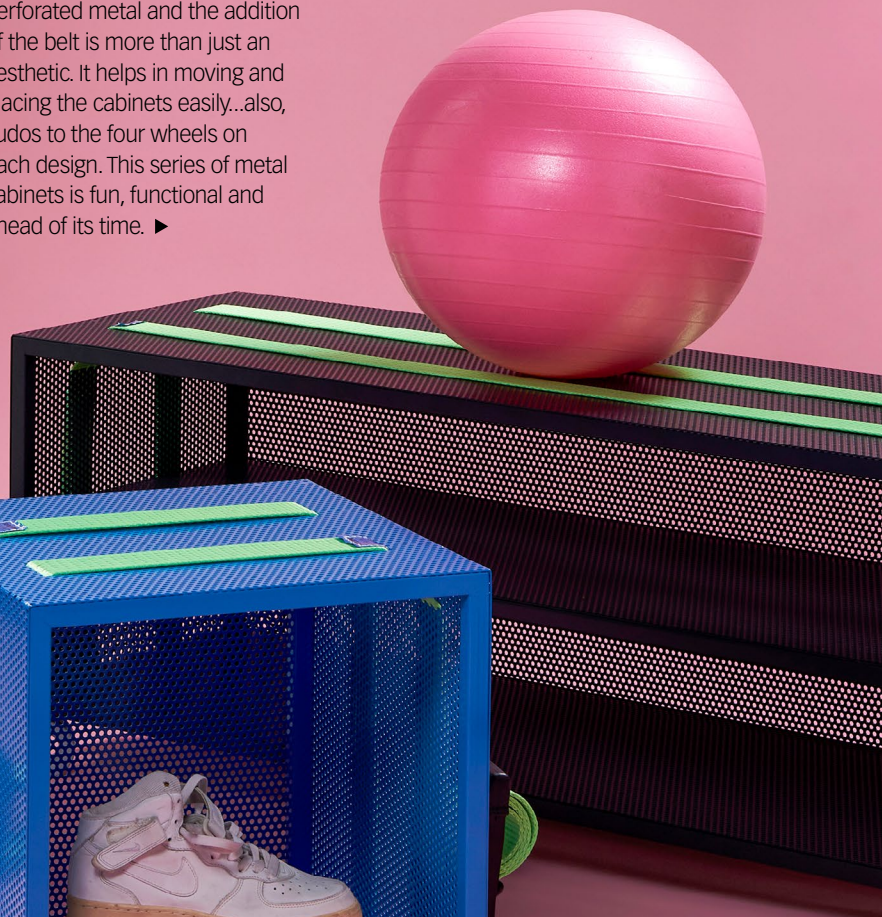
DESIGN IN CONTEXT

Products where design blurs the lines between art and functionality

Text **AVRIL NOEL DSOUZA**

STRAP IN TIGHT

Belt Furniture, a series of designs by Claudio Larcher Design Studio introduces an interesting approach to themed-based creations. There are three primary designs that are available in various colours, and all of them have a pair of belts running along the sides. The designs for these cabinets are made up of perforated metal and the addition of the belt is more than just an aesthetic. It helps in moving and placing the cabinets easily...also, kudos to the four wheels on each design. This series of metal cabinets is fun, functional and ahead of its time. ►





DELICATE, MINIMAL

Presented to the public at the Salone del Mobile 2021 at the new ADI Design Museum in Milan, Beep Beep, is a collection of minimally crafted designs created by Milan-based designer Federico Angi. Based on the idea that laminates can be used to cover curved surfaces, Federico collaborated with Abet Laminati, a laminate company. This has resulted in a straight-forward series of designs that have a unique look from different angles. Each design has a black outline to visually showcase the thickness of the laminate. Federico selected colours from the Abet Laminati catalogue that reflect a narrative that is simple. The designs are multifunctional and can be used as a coffee table or a stool. ►



AN HINGED AFFAIR

Lex Pott finds interest in everything, and that's a fact. For his latest series of furniture, the designer looked at a hinge and found inspiration. He has based his new collection of side tables on how well two interlocked metal plates connect with a rod. It's that simple, and yet, that dramatic. The design is muted and minimal, while the addition of the hinge elevates the narrative. The Hinge Side Tables are available in various dimensions and three muted colours. They lend offer themselves as unique pieces to the landscape of design. As Lex puts it, "The functional is now ornamental." ►



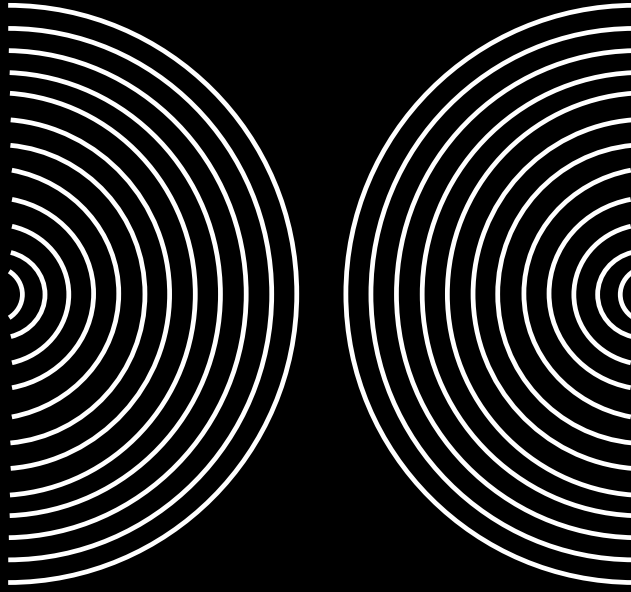


FROM MOTIF, TO LIFE

Uchronia is a creative collective that works towards crafting design that aims create artistic works of function. The team, at this Paris-based design think-tank, worked on 'Wave' a series of designs that is transcending and designed as a tribute to French craftsmanship. As the name of this series suggests, the pieces that form a part of Wave, are inspired by the wave motif, its free-flowing form and how it lends itself to many undulations. Julien Sebben, the founder of this design atelier says, "Above all, Wave is a tribute to the French savoir-faire of yesteryear. Classic design methods find in these co-creations a new expression, like a breath of fresh air, graphic and fresh. Stucco-marble, raku and resin finishes, each technique and association births the origin of a piece." **H&DT**

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A FUTURISTIC VISION

Transformative, educational and immersive, the UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai is conceived by artist and stage designer Es Devlin as a high-sensory experience center

Text AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA



This conversation has been had in corridors and in hushed whispers. Now, it finds itself as the central talking point on the world stage. The UK Pavilion is designed to share a message, an introspection if you may, on what the human race wishes to communicate should we one day encounter other advanced civilisations in space. Part of the ongoing Expo 2020 Dubai that is from 1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022, the pavilion is designed and conceptualised by Es Devlin, an artist and stage designer. It is a high octave experience center that visitors can immerse themselves in. Devlin has curated a sensorial experience as one navigates through the corridors of the pavilion.

Devlin was inspired by 'Breakthrough Message', one of Stephen Hawking's final projects. The design is built to cocoon visitors, as if they are stepped in comforting embrace. The all-brown interiors, proscenium-like steps, and the dramatics of the interior's emphasis on the message, the UK Pavilion wants to share. That in the face of crisis that the world is battling, UK is proactively contributing to provide future, sustainable answers. The pavilion is designed to help visitors get a sense of this trajectory.

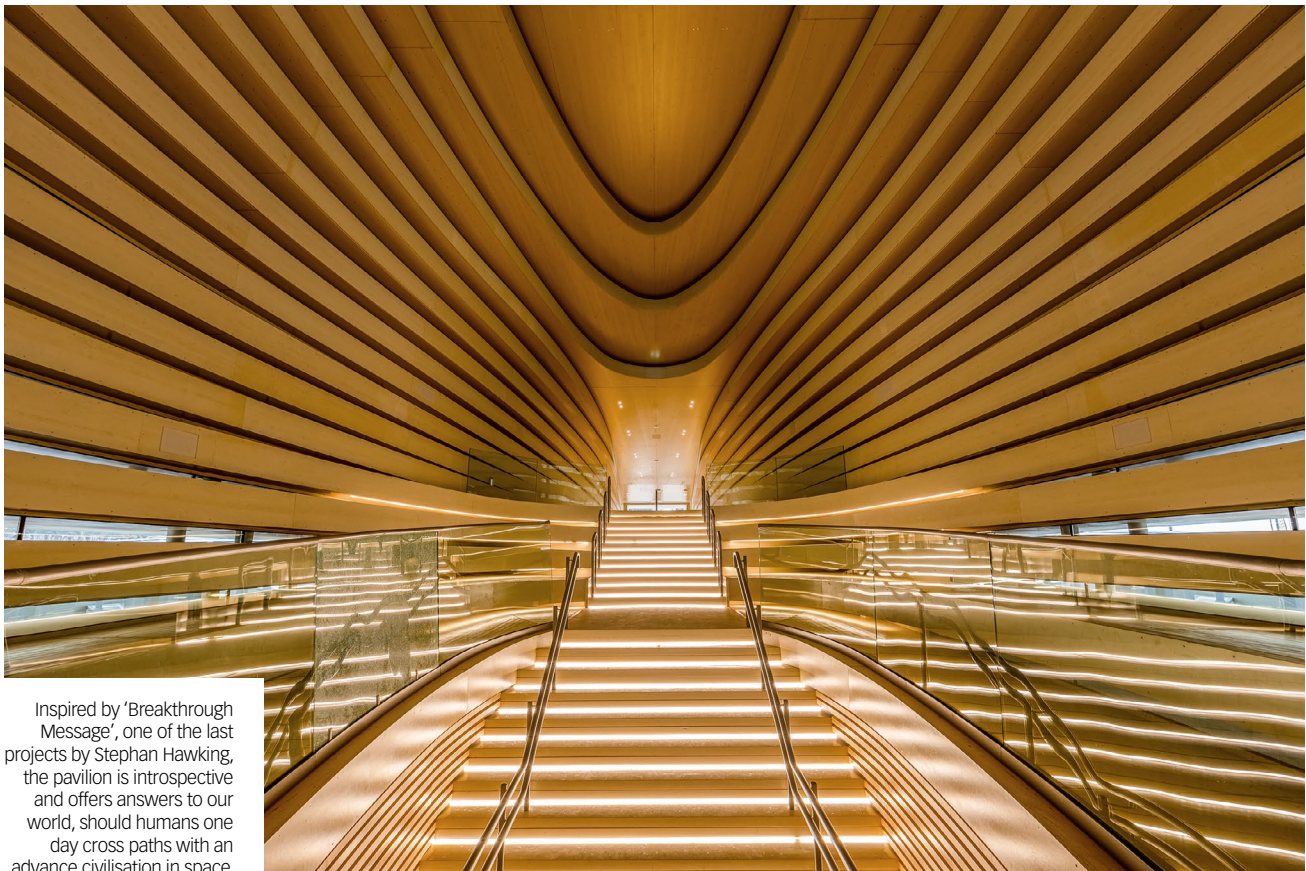
The custom-curated music that plays at the Choral Space of the UK Pavilion has a hypnotic effect. After an open call for anyone to perform - entries closed in November 2020 - the entries were mixed into the Soundscape sounds that guides all.

The UK Pavilion is based in the Opportunity District at Expo 2020 Dubai and it will be open from 10am - 10pm every day. **H&DT**

FORM AND FUNCTION | *Concept*



The UK is participating in Expo 2020 Dubai from 1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022. The UK's participation theme is 'Innovating for a Shared Future' and its presence will consist of a self-build country Pavilion designed by artist and stage designer, Es Devlin.



Inspired by 'Breakthrough Message', one of the last projects by Stephan Hawking, the pavilion is introspective and offers answers to our world, should humans one day cross paths with an advance civilisation in space.

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

Behind the dramatic overtures and picture-perfect vignettes, there is an incredible amount of work that goes into the realisation of any design. In her most candid conversation yet, designer **Iram Sultan** lifts the veil on the glamour to reveal the details that make the big picture

Text **IRAM SULTAN**

Profile Photographs Courtesy **THE DESIGNER** *Project images* **ISHITA SITWALA**

Iram Sultan is known for her wide range of designs including everything from interior design to commercial and more. One of the binding forces among her peers, Iram has come to be known as one of the thought leaders of the Indian design industry today. In spite of this, she shies away from the spotlight and prefers to work behind the scenes curating, plotting and ideating on design concepts with her team and fellow professionals from the industry...be it on design, art, or both. In her most honest words, here, she lays down all the cards to give us an unfiltered look into the world of design.

REASONS FOR BEING...

I am an eternal student. Everyday is a new day. New spaces, new people, new materials. My endeavour is to keep my mind open, and I hope I can learn from everyone I meet. One of the best parts of this design profession is the exposure you get to multiple methods of thinking about the same thing. What I can do with a space or a material, and what my friends and colleagues (not to mention heroes) from the industry can do with the same can produce hugely varying results. And all of this essentially boils down to details.



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.

– Iram Sultan, *Interior Designer*

THE GROUND REALITIES

Whenever you see our work, what you see are beautiful photographs with everything looking impeccable. But what you don't see is what it took to get there. That is the biggest reality of our lives and something I am keen to share. Obviously, it takes sweat, blood and tears from many people to get there. As a designer, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a collaborative approach in my life. Our industry is based on it. My first point of collaboration is always my clients. I approach every space by standing in the client's shoes, by being aware that they are the ones who will inhabit it every single day.

While my home reflects who I am, the homes I design for others must speak for them. This journey that I undertake with them lasts not just through the course of the project but far beyond it. It is in the form of learnings from them, of looking at things with new eyes, ensuring that mistakes made earlier are not repeated, of discoveries and so much more. We all tend to have our comfort zones and our clients are that magic push we need to step out of it. To walk into things that may make us hugely uncomfortable at first but prove to have rich results as well as a lot of learning for me!

The studio team that we work with is our spine, our core. That is where all the ideas, the mad dreams are started. Drawing work, getting details right and ensuring that our work is packed with information is a constant process in the studio. Everyone brings different skill sets to the table as well. It is the brainstorming and exchange of ideas that elevates a project. Then there are the consultants whose specialized skills are essential to a project. MEP, structural, lighting and landscape are just a few to name.





We cannot miss the importance of a good contracting team. It is not just about the quality of finishing or the understanding of construction materials. It is most significantly about the willingness to push boundaries and collaborate with the design team. Some of our best projects have been where the contracting team has gone above and beyond the brief and tried to share their own understanding of the design details we have shared. Enough cannot be said about the workers at every site. To those who get the plastered walls in plum, to the stone masons who lay all the stone perfectly, to the carpenters, polishers, painters, electricians, plumbers, and many more. We cannot exist without you.

Enter the genius of furniture designers, millwork specialists, craft companies, bespoke fabric and linen studios and art galleries. This is the umami bomb for any project that we work on. My obsession with details is satiated only by working with these teams and creating customized beauties for my projects.

I learn from the work of design heroes and my colleagues. I discuss my projects and ideate with some close friends from the fraternity and always walk away feeling enriched. I am sure I carry some learning from all of them in my work.

All these so-called clichés apply to us. It takes a village to build a project and no man/woman is an island.



ON WORK LIFE

We love designing homes, personal offices, and boutique hospitality projects. I think the common factor between all of them would be the intimacy and variety of approach. A synergy between us and the clients is something we look for. It is not about matching design philosophies but rather a love for a few things in common. If a client wants me to build them a library filled with antiquarian books, they climb to the top of my charts. Should you love to fill your home with art, then you are my soul mate. I must admit that I love it when the client and I are sync. While challenges can teach you and give you a giant push out of your echo chamber, harmony is not necessarily going to lull you to sleep! The other factor that helps hugely is mutual faith. When a client lets go and trusts you to make calls for them without too much debate, you try ever harder to deliver something supra special for them.

(L-R) Seen at the latest residential project by Iram Sultan, the entertainment area that opens onto a sunken courtyard that is lined with brickcladded arches. Within these arches are handpainted art murals of plant life and vegetation.



ON BRAVING CHALLENGES

I often joke that we have two-day jobs and one of them is being fire fighters! I don't know a single designer who doesn't wear this hat. The process is only consistent in its use of basic logic and design / construction principles since each problem is unique. Otherwise, this is where teamwork and collaboration come into play once again. Project managers, contracting teams, consultants, and us, we all work on a lot of design and site issues together. What keeps us going? Never say die!

APPROACH TO DESIGN

...With empathy, with teamwork, with an open mind, with a deep desire to innovate, to push my comfort zones, not just think outside the box but maybe not think of the box itself! I like spaces that speak about the people who inhabit them. I want to design spaces that have warmth, a feeling of welcome, comfort and bring a sense of joy. That influences everything about design, from the macro aspects like space volumes of a room to the feel of

a fabric when your hand touches it. I will obsess over tones, tints and shades depending on how the light hits the room and the length of slot diffusers with the same zeal. I am not really about the big statements or bells and whistles in design but more about the million details that come together to form a balanced whole. If the balance is off, then nothing works for me.

Design is layered for me. Once I have a sense of the volume and light of a space the journey begins. All services are the first to be considered as they affect what we do with the entire area. The hard finishes make their way into the design next with particular attention paid to their finishes and their interaction with each other. Plans and elevations are worked on laboriously. This palette brings clarity, and we move to other fixed details like wardrobes, kitchens etc. Furniture curation follows thereafter since we like getting a lot of the pieces customized. It is all the micro details from here on, like choice of polishes, fabric, carpets, decorative lights, accessories etc.

Iram's latest residential project has two staircases. This design has broad treads and height risers, all clad in a Burberry grey marble. From the clean lines of the railing to the choice of the hard finishes, this is a classic example of a staircase.



Heartwarming, the design world has seen a movement back to crafts and handmade objects. Communication has become so much easier and new presentation tools are explored regularly.

– Iram Sultan, *Interior Designer*

This page:
Here's a look at the informal living area of this multi-leveled home. The walls are paneled in a creamy finish and this space enjoys natural light filtering in through the day. The doors across the private floor, are finished in a common tone, to distinguish them from the rest of the home.



No project is complete without art as far as I am concerned. I collect art myself and believe that it imbues soul into places. We start exploring art early in the project and continue till the last day and beyond. I am thrilled to say that my love for art has found its way into the hearts of some of my favourite clients who have become collectors now. Our conversations and collecting continues till this day.

ARSENAL OF MATERIAL AND COLOURS

Ummm... this will start a lot of jokes, but I must admit it is all black and white for me. As I get older, I tend to gravitate more and more towards this palette. Glass, textile, plaster, wood, stone, concrete, terrazzo, bronze, ceramics- they all speak to me. I am a huge fan of all-natural material and enjoy using finishes like a honed finish for stones and dead matte polished wood and veneer.

PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY

I am where I am because of the people I have met. The wonderful clients who put their faith in me and entrusted me with their homes and their hard-earned money. A massive thank you. You gave me the wings to fly. My partner in crime, Mohit, who has giant reservoirs of patience and calm that are much needed by me! Each consultant, studio colleagues from the past and today, everyone from all my sites - I owe them a huge thanks. My friends from the fraternity who let me brainstorm with



them, who share resources and inspire just by creating the beauty they do.

DESIGN TRUTH

Design is such an essential part of my life, and I cannot separate it from the rest of it. I think the same truth and principles apply everywhere.

What matters most is empathy, collaboration, honesty, open mindedness, and people. I was laughing and sharing with friends from the fraternity last evening that we are shallow people - in the sense that we only like good looking things! I hope that the rest of it redeems me a little bit! **H&DT**

Iram goes on to stress on the important role objects play, and their role in defining the finer details of design. She points us to the images above and draws our attention to the composition... the muscled legs of the console, the inky art works, the alabaster, and marble lamp, etc.

DESIGN FROM THE HEART

The *Beso* collection of furniture by Jenny Majmudar is handmade with reclaimed teak and hand woven cane

Text **AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA**



The future, post 2020, has gotten entirely digital. Those who hasn't already jumped on the virtual bandwagon have done so now. Well, almost everyone. Architect, interior and product designer, Jenny Majmudar is still a purist at heart and insists on handcrafted pieces of furniture and home design. Her design house, Curio d'Art is young multidisciplinary studio that takes a consistent, holistic approach towards design. Jenny believes in honouring history, craftsmanship, functionality and the context design finds itself in. The *Beso* collection of furniture and home design is her latest offering, and it reflects everything she stands for.

"*Beso*", very simply in Gujarati means to sit. This range is an invitation to sit, to feel at home while being held by various handcrafted forms and shapes," says Jenny. The birth of this series started off with some simple introspection on the part of the designer. As she sat to understand human interactions around home, and how individuals carry out different activities within spaces, Jenny saw a pattern. Pieces of utility were prioritized over aesthetics and stylish forms. She wanted to create something that would be a union of form, function and soul. "From seating to storage, we developed a



For *Beso*, her latest collection of furniture and home design, Jenny Majmudar collaborates with cane farmers and the West Bengal Forest department to source good quality cane. Since inception, Curio d'art has focused on using local, or Indian raw materials and products, while working closely with craft communities.

BUILDING CONVERSATIONS | *Spotlight*



Jenny primarily uses reclaimed teak that is directly sourced from broken down havelis or century-old traditional houses, around Gujarat, thus giving the material a second life.



range of pieces and other objects of utility; pieces to store, serve and save what we hold important. Being rooted in our local crafts, each piece is handmade, with reclaimed teak and handwoven cane.”

Each piece evokes a certain abstract sentiment, embodied by the beautiful Sanskrit language. For example, the coffee table is called Sama, meaning ‘to gather’. The tall dresser mirror is titled Mohana and personifies beauty. Swara, is a personal favourite with Jenny. This extended dresser/credenza is the exact embodiment of her initial sketch, right from the materiality, finesse and details.

At the heart of everything the designer does, sustainability is constant. For Jenny it is not an additional layer or an effort. “...It is the core of our design practice. The idea of using local, ethically sourced and minimally invasive materials is central to all our processes. We thrive on this idea. Even in our furniture workshop, we respect the work done by hand much more than machine-made, even though it might take slightly longer to finish sometimes. The smallest of ingredients, such as the oil we use to polish wood too is chemical free and locally produced. “Designing to do good, not just to create less harm”, is a maxim we have followed right from the start. All of this together not only creates a sustainable and minimally invasive practice, but also gives us a sound conscience and a good night’s sleep!” **H&DT**

BLURRING THE THRESHOLDS

*In order to create a coherent plan that connected the overall design of this home, **Amoeba Design** executed some major modifications*

Text AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA *Images* TALIB CHITALWALA



"We were tasked with creating a house around the aspirations of our clients. Our own sensibilities lie in extremely simple, rustic and earthy aesthetics. This project was a challenge for us but we found the middle ground."

– Satyajeeet Patwardhan, Co-founder, Amoeba Design

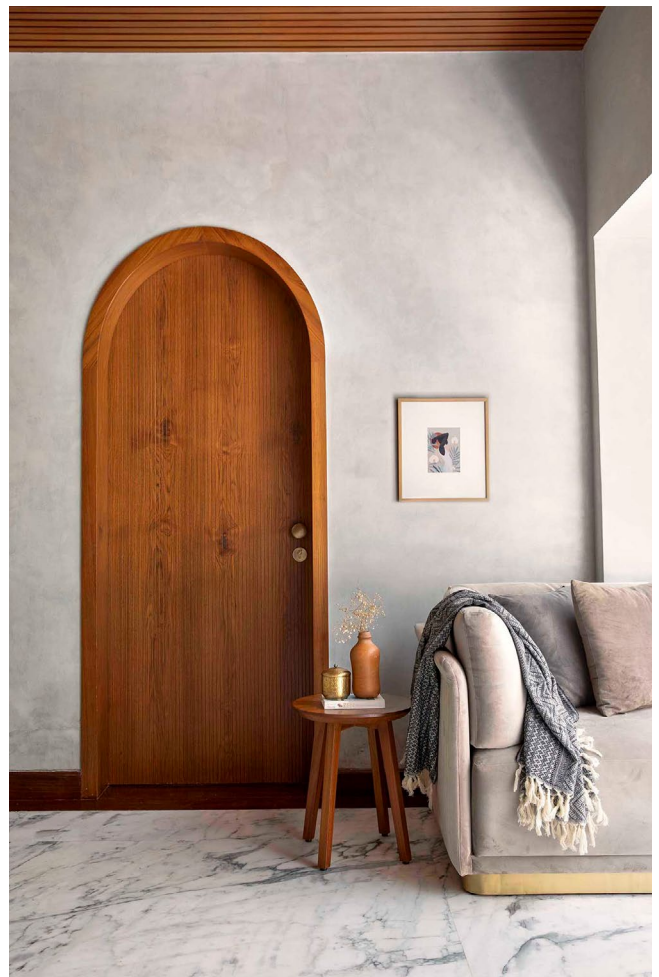


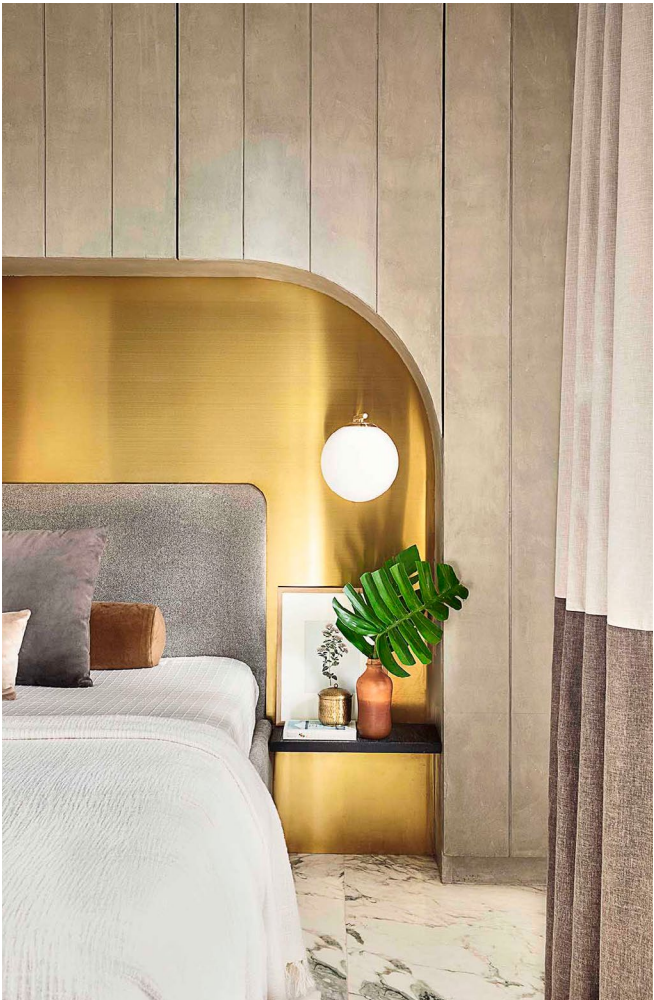
"The key move was enclosing the balcony with a tall window and a sky light placed on the wall above. It not only brought in some filtered eastern light but also brought grandeur to the overall space."

– Pashmin Shah, Co-founder, Amoeba Design



To fulfill the client's aspirations for a dressy home, the right amount of gloss was clubbed with cement finished walls and wood accents, while the elements of arches ensure a home-like quality.





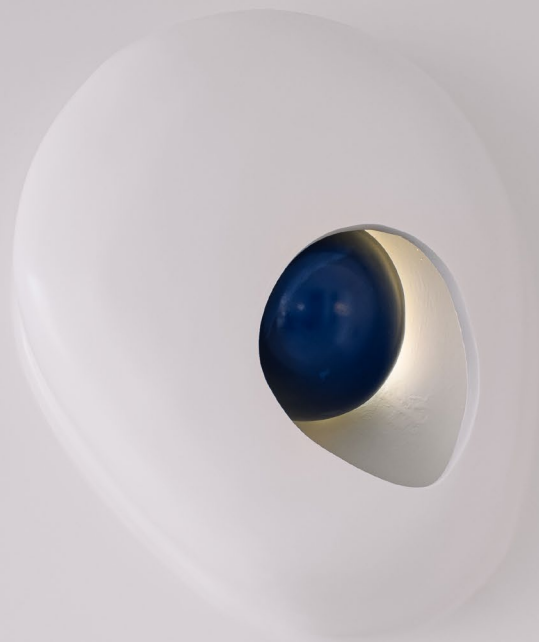
Polished brass was introduced in a controlled manner, making the overall space classy. However, the gloss of metal was balanced using contrasting concrete finish walls in order to keep the tactile quality of the space intact.

SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*



The material palette was restricted to marble, wood and polished brass, that was celebrated against the backdrop of cement wall texture. This created a coherent aesthetic language throughout the house making it clutter-free and hence more spacious. Marble was used as a primary flooring material thereby creating a sense of expanse and also bringing in the needed richness.





SIMPLE AND TO THE POINT

*A minimal narrative with curved forms and the colour blue, forms the crux of this fuss-free family apartment by **The Act of Quad***

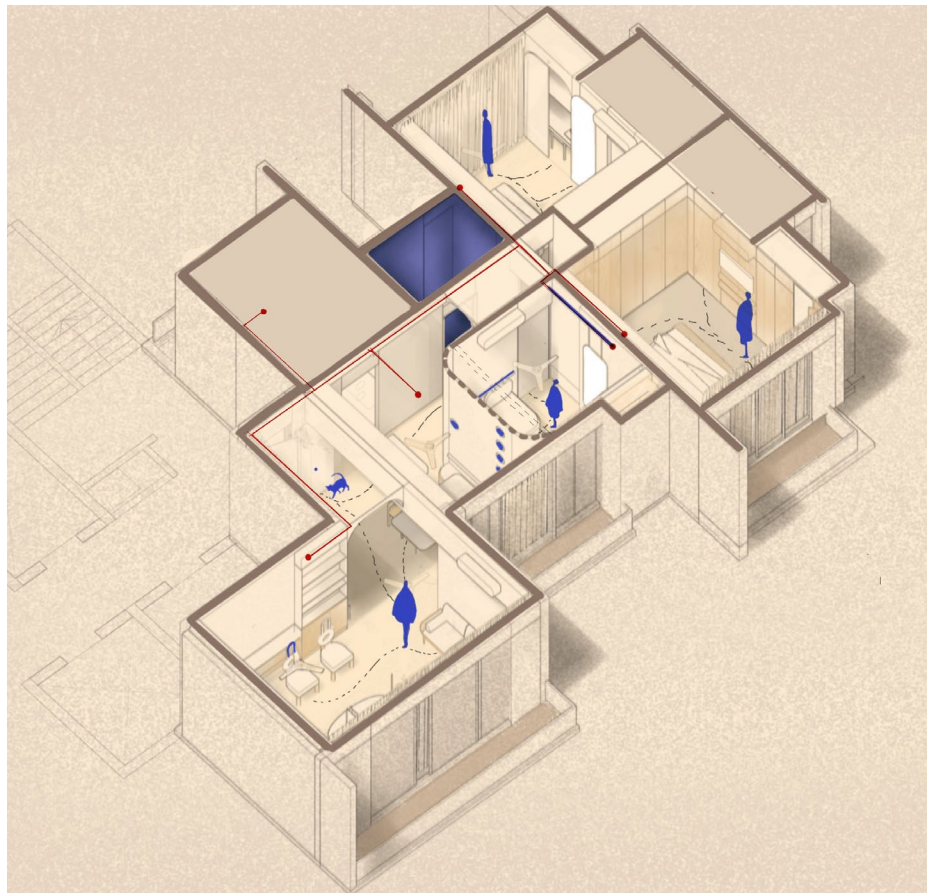
Text AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA *Images* ISHITA SITWALA



"Our inspiration is definitely related to how we had to push the boundaries within the limitations and the constraints of this apartment."

– Priyanka Itadkar,
Co-founder,
The Act of Quad

A delicate white was the starting point for the design of this 1,090sqft home. Over and above, blue accents introduce a touch of dynamic flair, while arches and curved forms breaks through the severity of white.



SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*



The half bedroom was extended into the dining area with the help of a faux curved wall. This becomes a key feature of the home without changing the window placements. This zoning creates open space and draws a connection with the panoramic city views.



“The home has many soft and sensual feminine elements, with a few firm and dark aspects to the design. This is in keeping with the confluence of styles that the family members wanted.”

– Falguni Bhatia, Co-founder, *The Act of Quad*



SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*

OF NOSTALGIC VALUE

*This legal office is a medley of bespoke meeting rooms and art deco-inspired breakout spaces by **Tejal Mathur Design***

Text AVRIL NOEL DSOUZA *Images* PRASHANT BHAT



"Considering the proximity to Mumbai's High Court, the client wanted an interpretation of the Art Deco heritage feel. We avoided too much of layering in the form of mouldings, architraves and panelled walls, and interpreted the traditional form as a line illustration, minimal but graphic."

– Tejal Mathur, Founder, Tejal Mathur Design

SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*



Impressive arched colonnades form the architectural framework of the sections dividing the meeting rooms, client lounge and partner zones.



CALCUTTA HALL

SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*



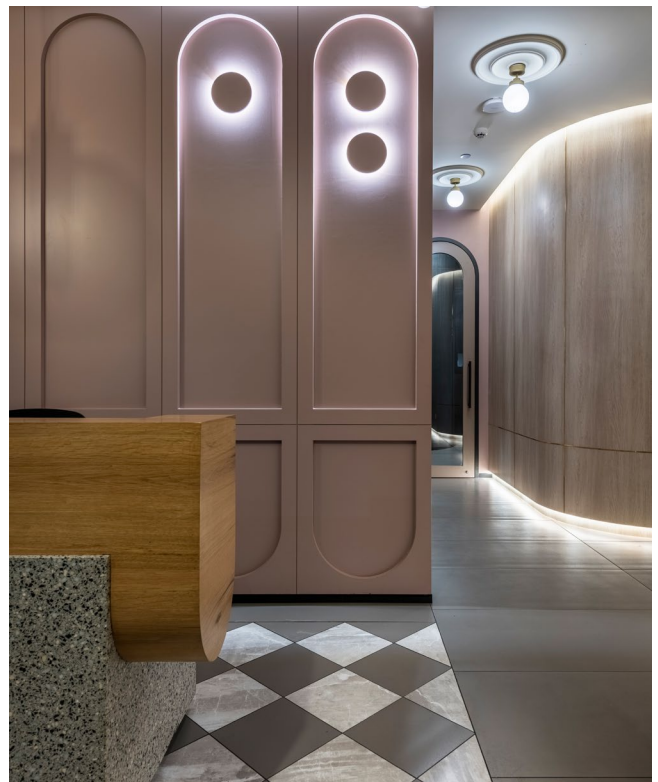
To resonate with the innate charm of art deco, Tejal stuck to a combination of a creamier colour scheme, light grained woods with trims, and two-toned walls in charcoal. Light pewter, clay and Mulberry form the reception background with a terrazzo table in the front.





"To help us render our creatives and execute the project to our high standards, we roped in Beyond Design Architects who we have worked with in the past as well."

– Tejal Mathur, Founder, Tejal Mathur Design



PERFECT CURVES

MuseLAB solidifies its philosophy
of keeping-it-simple in this kitchen
and wardrobe experience center

Text AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA *Images* SAMEER TAWDE



This experience center is designed as a cave-within-a-cave. Each cave (space) within the inner hall allows for the products displayed to stand on it's own and work as a collective.

"With the intersection of soft shapes and simple geometry, the idea was to create an immersive experience for the Collins India Modular Kitchen and Wardrobe Experience Center."

– Jasem Pirani, Co-founder, MuseLAB



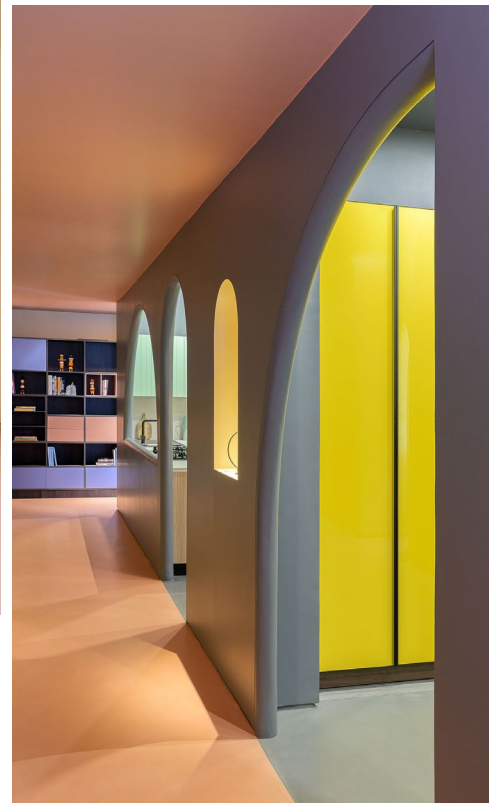
SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*



The plan and sectional relationship is what defines the gallery-like approach for this experience center. The redefined architecture of the space divides the gallery into two distinct spaces functionally; the inner hall and the outer shell. The delicate colour scheme adds to the warmth.

"The colour palette is simple - a terracotta colour on the floor and ceiling that highlights the catwalk. The inner volume which comprises of the display areas is defined by generous doses of charcoal."

– Huzefa Rangwala, Co-founder, MuseLAB



The space is peppered with niches to display materials and colour samples along with Stupa-like wall sconces. The overarching notion was to develop a very unique experience, one that breaks the norms of what one can expect from a kitchen and wardrobe store.

HOME & DESIGN

TRENDS