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CHANGE MAKERS



Amit Aggarwal *pg 08*

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Designindia was founded in 2002. It was started as a platform for interaction for the design community in India and abroad. Over the years it has grown into a forum spread over many social and professional networking domains, linking design professionals into an active, interactive and thought leading community.

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Transferable Value of Design

We all know that as designers we work beyond ourselves, we work for others, we work for projects and solutions that make sense and create value for others. This value is often not just a number and very often it is much more than we can imagine. Most of the time the impact is irreversible and triggers cumulative impact. We know till someone else benefits from our value creation, as designers we are not satisfied. Whether it is a logo for a machine or an app, or just a rearrangement of furniture, we feel fulfilled by the way it changes the world around us.

Most of our work is such that we can communicate it to others, make them comfortable using it, and transfer to other stakeholders to manage it further. A designer or a studio also build value for themselves when they are doing such projects. Each project adds to its portfolio, brings in more work and attracts people who want to work on such projects. Many studios, as well as designers, become aware of the value they are creating at this stage and start introspecting. At this stage, much of this value is the designer's talent itself. Very few studios in the past have been able to create processes and systems that account for talent. With these in place, the value of the studio becomes transferable and scalable.

Design as an industry becomes valid only when the designers and studios start building value that is transferable and scalable. A freelance designer could be very talented and may do fantastic work, but that kind of work will not continue in his/her absence.

I think it is time for us to include creation of the Business Value of Design as a topic in design schools. While we have started teaching Design Management to designers, they also now need to start planning on creating a transferable and scalable value for the work they do.

Sudhir

ValueLabs

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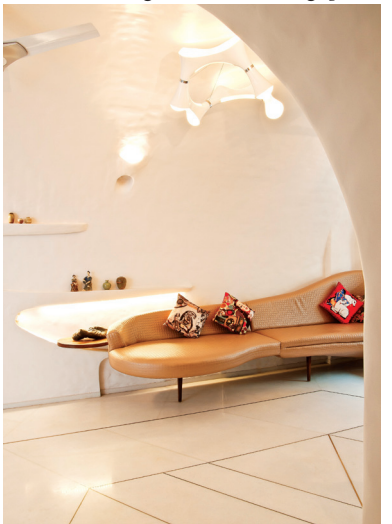
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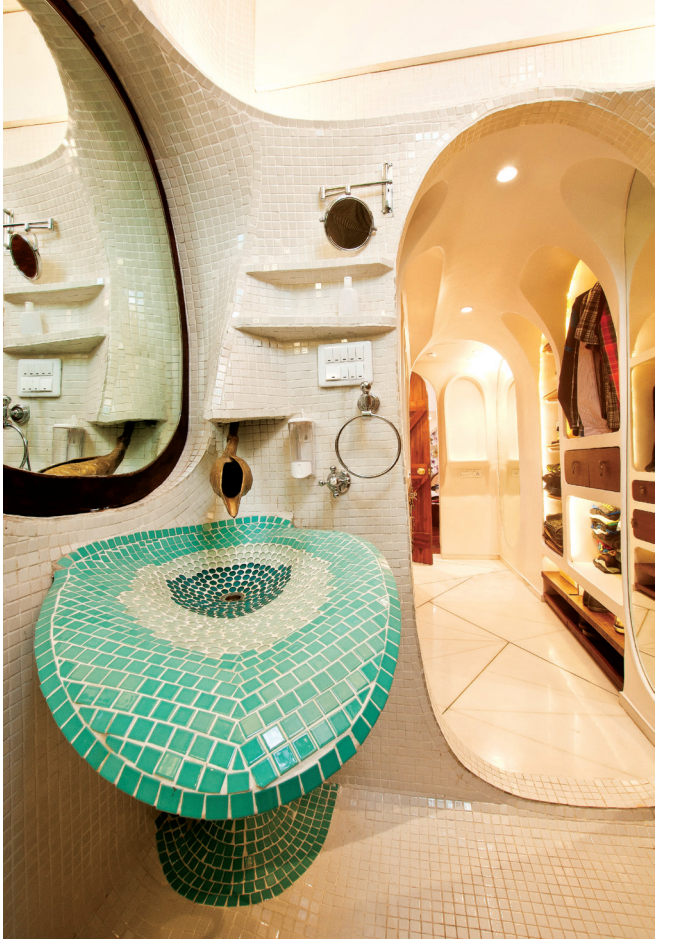


Disney Davis' *architectural practice is based on the principle of enhancing the bare beauty of materials*



Organic house (living space)





Organic house (bathroom and the walk-in wardrobe)

How were you drawn to architecture?

DD: I was always fascinated by comics. I loved to draw, and make origami and paper models of structures and objects. As I grew older it became very obvious that I would like to be an architect. Creating and designing would make me happy. I went on to pursue a B.Arch degree at D.Y. Patil College of Architecture. Learning about architecture has helped better understand the role design has in our lives. It teaches a lot about how to go about building your ideas into reality. It also teaches us to keep trying different ideas and design possibilities before we finalize on one. The in-depth knowledge of the history of architecture, the different styles, and the technical knowhow of structures, services and planning helps.

How did The White Room come about?

DD: After receiving my degree I spent a few years training with architects Mujeeb Ahmed and Lalita Tharani from Collaborative Architecture as well as with architects Rahul Gore and Sonal Sancheti from Opolis Architects. These years gave me a foundation and helped me grasp



Garden Room (master suite)

and understand architecture in a much better way. It was during my tenure with Opolis Architects that I met Nitin Barchha. Together we started The White Room studio in Mumbai in 2006.

The name signifies clean spaces, uncluttered and minimal. The firm strives to create design that inspires. We believe in approaching each project, regardless of size and scale, with an understanding that architecture has a unique power to influence lifestyle and society. We are dedicated to unique design approaches, to adapt to each project, and achieve a balance between functionality and esthetics, context, climate, material, cost and time-frame. The design studio is built on the basic principles of enhancing the bare beauty of materials.

What is your approach to design? How do you enhance the bare beauty of materials?

DD: Our forte is keen attention to details and customization, remaining true to design and using sustainable architectural practices.



Garden Room (entrance sequence)

We love to constantly explore and evolve with the new. We believe in exposing material in its bare form; for instance, when using wood we love to expose the grain in the wood so one can feel and enjoy the vivid natural textures.

Which materials do you love working with and why?

DD: We love working with wood, concrete, and steel. Wood allows us to form intricate details like handles, and thin frames for windows, apart from using it to build rafters and structural members.

Who/what are your inspirations?

DD: I admire the works of Architect Nari Gandhi, Antonio Gaudi, Carlo Scarpa and Geoffory Bawa and would want my work to be as free spirited. Inspiration is a continuous process and one would like their work to have its own freshness. I believe that nature can teach us a lot and help in designing and coming up with extremely innovative constructs.



MAI Salon entrance



Mediterranean Garden

PRODUCT OF INDIA

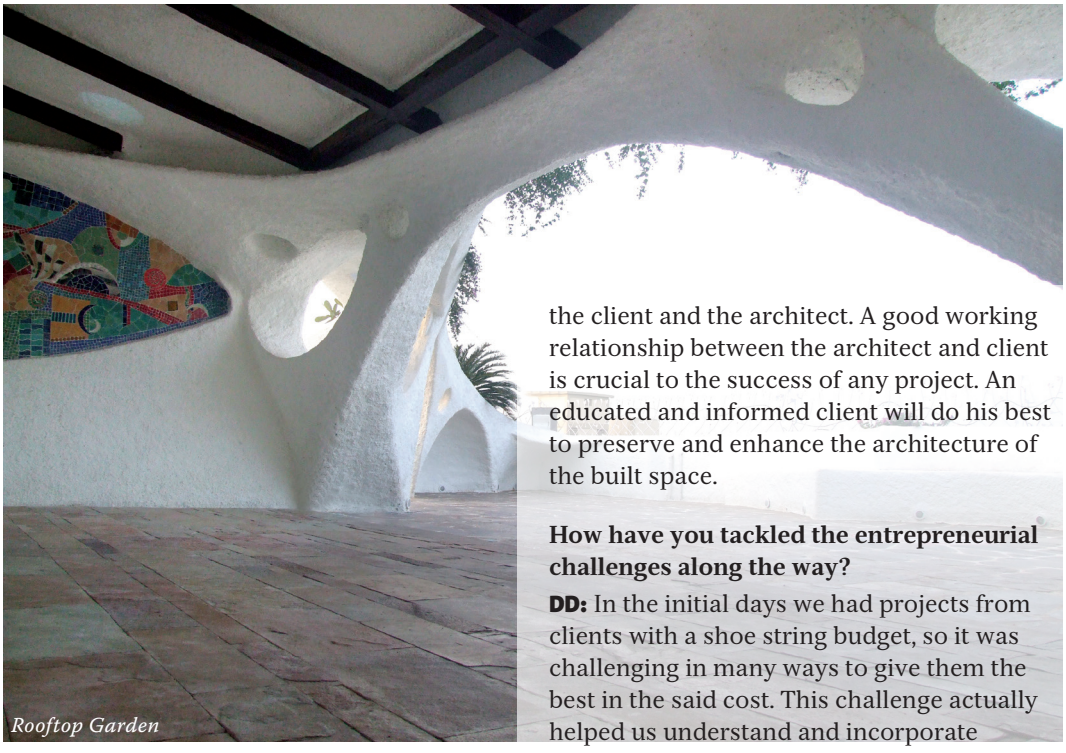
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EXPERIENCE



Rooftop Garden

Which have been some of your more memorable projects?

DD: One is the rooftop garden we did in Bandra. The complete space was conceptualized and conceived on site itself in a period of 45 days. We would build mock shapes of the forms and get them erected at the same time. It was also fun as this is an outdoor space facing the sea. We spent time framing views and openings to get the best in form and design.

How do you deal with clients? Please share your tips.

DD: We love working with our clients. The architect-client relationship is a unique one. As architects it's our duty to understand the client and his requirements, but it's also important to educate our clients; this helps in building trust and good communication which goes on to building a successful relationship with the client. I believe that great architecture is a joint effort between the client and the architect. A good working relationship between the architect and client is crucial to the success of any project. An educated and informed client will do his best to preserve and enhance the architecture of the built space.

How have you tackled the entrepreneurial challenges along the way?

DD: In the initial days we had projects from clients with a shoe string budget, so it was challenging in many ways to give them the best in the said cost. This challenge actually helped us understand and incorporate methods by which the contractor could build homes in cost effective, yet efficient ways, sometimes even saving time; in turn the client would also save money.

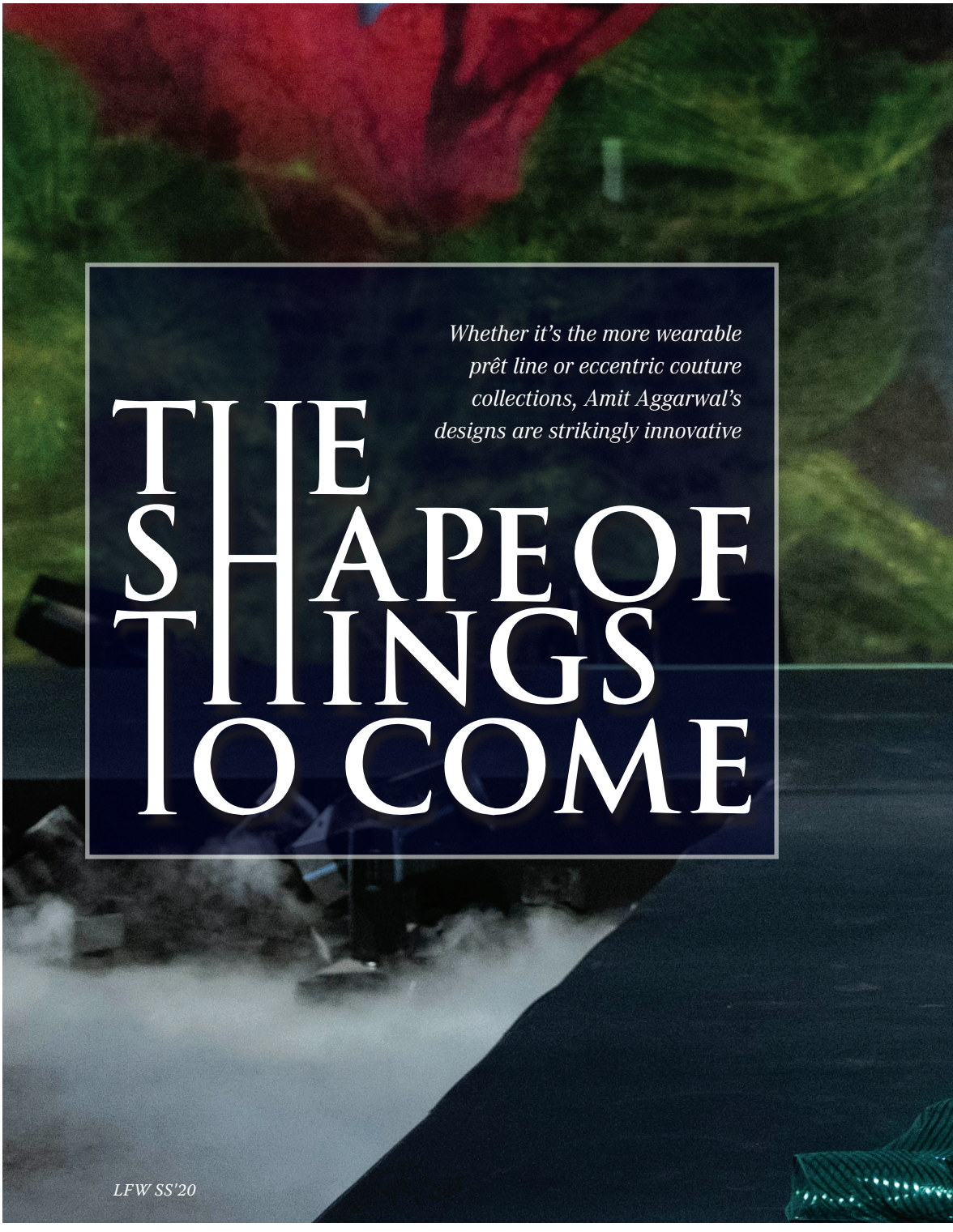
What do you envision trending in Indian architecture in the next five years?

DD: Sustainable architectural methods are trending. There is an inclination to push the reuse of construction material debris in new building construction. The rise in 3D printing in building construction methods is also going strong. I'm hoping this will help us build more efficient and cheaper homes for the masses in urban areas. This will also help reduce our carbon footprint.

What's next?

DD: I'm working on a prototype to build our first 3D printed earth dome on the outskirts of Mumbai. It is still in its nascent stage - we are doing this with our friends at IIT Powai.

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Whether it's the more wearable prêt line or eccentric couture collections, Amit Aggarwal's designs are strikingly innovative

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

LFW SS'20


GRAND
FINALE



LFW SS'20

How did your tryst with fashion begin?

AA: As a child, watching my father work with his mathematical blueprints was my introduction to drawing as a means of expression. That memory has inspired the genesis and esthetic on which Studio Amit Aggarwal built its work and continues to do so. Observing my mother drape her sari every day is another key instance that connected me to the idea of fashion.

My time at NIFT Delhi was critical as it helped me create a worldview of my own. Of course, one learns the technical bits which are extremely important, but a formal education also allows a person to experiment around that. In college I experimented with draping and pattern cutting and that remains a crucial part of the work that goes into our collections.







As part of an internship I visited Japan, where I lived with a local family. I think that was a great learning experience. The landlord, who was a major textile merchant, sponsored my final year collection and I got to use the best textiles. It was a dream back in 2001, but Japan has gained its due multiple times in the last 20 years.

Describe your design process.

AS: Multiple factors impact our collection. We definitely have a mood in mind or a

part of an ecosystem or perhaps a natural phenomenon that we can explore through drapes, patterns or embroidery. While a part of the team works on the patterns and drapes, there is one that is out in the field looking for unusual materials that we can experiment with. Once we zero down on certain materials, the team works on different ways we can mold, fold, cut, or tear this material. It is an important aspect and in some ways, defines the nature of the collection. Through these forms, we try to depict a mood or a mechanism we want to build our collection around. I think many forces come together in the making of a collection. Once the garments are ready, our teams of merchandisers and stylists work on them further to make them wardrobe friendly.







Left to right: LFW SS'20

Often, the collection starts from a material. Sometimes I conceive an idea in the middle of my travels. There can be tangible or intangible influences. The idea is to make an experience that our client can celebrate.

Which materials do you enjoy working with?

AA: Every material has a different behavior and that is what we incorporate in our work. Every collection uses a mix of textiles with different falls and nature. We love our chiffons, hand-woven textiles and enjoy



experimenting and making our own textiles. These materials help us achieve forms and structure. With each new textile, comes a new structure and that is what we feel joy in working with.

What inspires you to create designs that combine the fantastical with the mundane?

AA: The idea of fantastical and mundane is solely based on how a person views an object or a notion. When I come across things I think I can use in my collection, there is a lot of excitement and for me, most experiences are fantastical. However, the world is obviously divided so you can say all material comes from the mundane and we work on these materials to render ideas and imagery from nature that is, in fact, extraordinarily fanciful. All it takes to design unconventional silhouettes is to be inspired and have the belief to translate inspiration into wearable garments.

How do you achieve a cross-culture blend in your designs?

AA: It takes some amount of relevance for influences from different cultures to work together in a collection. Be it a play between manmade or natural or a symphony between industrial and organic influences, it comes down to forces that make them one. I think there is great beauty in opposites and all our collections have attended this idea in some way or the other.

Your eclectic design language is seen in both your labels. How is your prêt line different from the couture one?

AA: Both lines have the same crux of architectural shapes juxtaposed with natural organic forms. However, our couture comprises of standalone pieces that are a complete look in themselves. Our prêt line is designed to be paired with one's existing wardrobe without diminishing the extravagance that makes an Amit Aggarwal ensemble.





A structured zip up jacket in a textile made by handpleating recycled metallic leather cords



Wave lace midi dress with recycled polymer details

Above: LFW - WF'18

What does it take to make a fashion label commercially viable?

AA: For starters, a fashion label must design something that a person can use, i.e., wear it for any occasion it is made for. I think that is a deal-breaker for most people. Sometimes a garment is too outlandish for a regular wearer. I believe that an item of clothing can be both extravagant and wearable. I am all for fashion that redefines ideas, trends and pushes the boundaries of the discipline, but it must also address the basics of what will fit a human body. It sounds like a tricky thing to do, but can be a fulfilling experience to create something like that. Apart from that, a fashion label can also work around price points that are comfortable for their target audience.







LFW - WF'19
1. Sequinned metallic plissé dress
2,3. Prêt collection made with R Elan free flow fabric

How do you overcome a creative block?

AA: I think I am in a space that I truly consider my own, so I don't usually have a creative block. My team and I discuss ideas and it's an open place for anyone to express how they think we can do something. Exchange is important; I have an incredible team on whom I can bounce off ideas. I may not like a result of an experiment, but we rework the same design or take a different route.

What entrepreneurial challenges have you faced?

AA: As a fashion studio, our product may not fit into the existing domains of the Indian fashion market. A lot of the buying culture is dictated by the style of garments already in the market. To introduce something new can be a challenge. A lot of our couture uses



1



2



3

Left to right:
LFW - AW'17
1. Upcycled vintage Banarasi sari
2. Moulded vintage Banarasi sari dress
3. Draped pleated sari with a moulded bodice

shapes and forms that may be unusual for many people. However, we make an extra effort and showcase our work in a way that people get a chance to see our product in person, and experience it before forming their views on whether they like it or not.

What are the trends you are betting on for SS20?

AA: We are counting on interdependence and sustainability as big trends for all upcoming seasons. Our collection for the grand finale of Lakme Fashion Week uses these ideas coupled with biomimicry and three-dimensionality as inspiration.

How do fashion trends affect the wardrobe choices of people in India?

AA: Trends are influences that are used to design garments or looks. As Indians, we were not consuming trends directly, but now with fast fashion, we end up picking clothing that is at the top of the trend cycle. Sometimes we see celebrities or an acquaintance wear something and it catches our eye. There are different ways trends

are formed within India and globally. I think it is an exciting cycle, especially when a decade-old trend comes back into fashion and suddenly the entire market is full of it. As designers, we see textile shops full of fabrics that are in trend at any given point. Or even at trade fairs. There are colors dictated by food, climate, politics, etc.



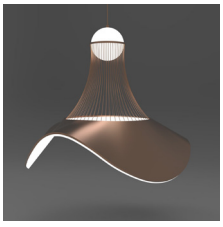
How will the face of Indian fashion evolve in the next five years?

AA: I think a bunch of people will continue to buy fast fashion, but at the same time, there will be an increased awareness around sustainability and homegrown fabrics such as khadi. There is a lot of investment around sustainable clothing, both in retail and in fashion design. In the next five years, both



Couture Week 2019 - Lumen

IF WORLD DESIGN GUIDE

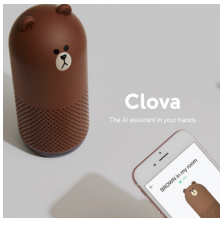













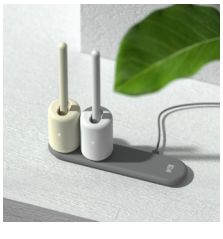











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fast fashion and sustainable clothing will be a hit for different kinds of people. Hopefully, in the future, fast fashion will improve its method of production and someone will decide to do something with all the discarded garments. It is going to be a crucial time for the entirety of fashion around the world.

What is the role of sustainability in your couture?

AA: Two things drive the idea of sustainability at our studio: beauty and circularity. I believe that luxury and sustainability can go hand in hand. There is a way we can experience the best of this world without harming nature and that is what we aim to explore in our work.

For the Festive 2017 collection, we used upcycled discarded vintage Benarasi weaves. There is something is so mesmerizing about vintage Benarasi saris with their subdued colors and softened zari in gold and silver; there was no way I could not have used them once I got my hands on them! There is a certain allure to vintage or even discarded items. We have also used recycled plastic in our work, as we want to rotate materials that are often considered waste. We try to give these materials a new identity. It is high time that brands start taking circularity into account.

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This story was coordinated and designed by Anshika Seth, student at NIFT Patna, interning at Designindia Magazine.

chisel in hand

*Glorified carpenter is how furniture designer **Aditya Somway** describes himself but it's obvious that he wouldn't dream of being anything else!*



What made you swap industrial design for furniture design?

AS: I've always been interested in making things, from having spent a summer making and selling candles in 5th grade to trying to build a go-kart using a moped engine in the 8th grade (the go-kart never quite saw the light of day, but it was a summer of learning and exploring the city).



I studied Industrial Design and went on to do a Master's in Furniture Design from NID, Ahmedabad. With industrial design, I learnt a lot about the process of design and everything that needs to come together to actually get a product made. While I loved how meticulous industrial designers needed to be, the process itself is quite long drawn before one gets to hold a tangible end product. Whilst studying industrial design, I had the opportunity to build furniture along with my roommate for the rented apartment we stayed in. Working with wood was immensely satisfying, and I realized, with furniture, I was so much more in control of the building process - something I've always loved.



'Soikea' bench



Above: 'Soikea'; Right: 'Soikea' bench detail

Share your experience of working in India and Germany.

AS: I had the opportunity to work with Coordination Berlin, a Berlin-based design firm, for just over a year. I primarily worked on developing furniture for the studio's projects and also worked on the 'Thread Series', which was displayed at the Milan Furniture Fair and continues to be sold by the studio today.



Europe exposed me to a lot of new materials and processes and while I would say the approach to design wasn't too different from what I learnt at NID, I do think I learnt to pay more attention to the finer details of how things are made, and how processes can enable and influence design. I also marveled at how the Germans managed to compartmentalize their thoughts and time.



'Animal' foot detail



'Animal' small

Back in India, I worked as a consultant with a number of manufacturing units and the focus was always on improving the product and optimizing design. While this wasn't exactly exploratory design, I valued the time I could spend on the shop floor with the carpenters. Their ingenuity in problem solving that comes from years of experience is something I truly appreciate and admire.

What is the story behind Studio Chisel?

AS: Having worked as a consultant to furniture manufacturing units for a few years, I decided to set up Chisel in Hyderabad in late 2016 to provide expertise in furniture design in a more organized and scalable manner. The interest I had in making meant that a prototyping and small batch manufacturing set up was a natural addition to the design studio. Over time we developed products for clients and dabbled with our own designs, which have now started to find a market for themselves.

We call ourselves Chisel, because the things we make with make us. The studio's own products are reflective of a process driven approach where materials and manufacturing processes define the product rather than an esthetic direction. We enjoy the process of designing and making, and always hope our products convey the same. The studio currently does a lot of bespoke manufacturing for architects and interior designers based in Hyderabad.

What goes into bespoke manufacturing for architects?

AS: We've been fortunate to work with some very talented architects and interior designers, and most of these connections developed organically. We either work with a brief that the architects set out for a product or develop an idea that they already might have. Our expertise lies in translating an idea from paper to a fully built product. Our workshop can handle



Left & right: 'Filet' series desk

most woodworking requirements and we have a good network of vendors and craftsmen in the city that we bring in when needed.

Which materials do you prefer to work with?

AS: We love working with wood and metal, and over the years our prototyping set up has been refined to allow us to explore these and other materials. More often than not, it's a new process of manufacturing that influences how we use a material. Typically we don't have a form in mind when we set out to design something and the form that the end product takes is often a result of the material and process.

What led to your own product line?

AS: All of our own products stem out of our desire to try using a new material or process. Often these are experiments that never go beyond a prototype - our studio is filled with numerous





Below: 'Mez' (plywood)

'Mez' detail (wood)



such pieces. With our own products and collections, we are always looking to do something exploratory and try to have fun doing it.

How do you market and distribute your products?

AS: We currently display our furniture at Room Therapy, a curated furniture store in Hyderabad, and also ship our products out of the city on order.

Which have been some of your most memorable projects?

AS: While the bespoke designs we do for architects/interior designers and clients are always interesting, we find most joy in doing our own exploratory products at the studio. The 'Mez' stool for instance, is particularly memorable. We've all played with the handcrafted maze toy. There's a neat groove in which the ball runs, but have you ever wondered how the ball is put inside in the first place? How does it not fall out? This

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'Pigeon Trestle'

curiosity drove us to devise our own methods of making a maze. It took us over a year to perfect both a low-tech craft based way to make a full wood version as well as a more refined CNC based technique to make a plywood version of the maze. Supersizing the toy to make it a fun and playful piece of furniture seemed a fitting end to a year long journey that started with "how do they do that!"

What inspires you?

AS: For most of our in-house projects and products, we find the process of making to be inspiring. Be it the Mez, or the origami inspired Animal series, the process of making always guides the journey a project takes. We enjoy the process and some of our products are reflective of the fun element of our practice.

How do you tackle the inevitable entrepreneurial challenges?

AS: On one hand we are trying to build a design studio that can offer furniture design as a service (much like architects and graphic designers). On the other hand we're also trying to expand our workshop to be able to offer high quality manufacturing services. In essence, these are two different businesses, and for someone with almost no business experience it's been a great learning curve. We're always trying to balance the fun design side with the more serious financial side of the business. All our growth has been organic up until this point. The big challenge that lies ahead is to make both parts of our business fully independent and sustainable. The journey has been really enjoyable so far, and we're pretty certain we'll have fun with whatever path the business takes.

What's next?

AS: We'd love to retail our products in other cities and will soon be actively looking for avenues for the same. We'd also love to spend more time designing our own furniture and also collaborate with other studios, manufacturers and architects on pieces that are exploratory yet well refined. All this while enjoying the process and our Hyderabadi *chai*! I have also taught a few times at my alma mater, and would at some point like to dedicate more time to teaching.

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learning the ropes



Gauri Agrawal's *Skilled Samaritan Foundation helps women with traditional charpoy-weaving skills to create functional but beautiful products out of waste*

What made you swap investment banking for social entrepreneurship?

GA: History demonstrates effectively that individuals who took their own path, and listened to their inner callings despite the current norms of society, were empowered with the ability to effect real change around them. We might not all be able to go down in history and become prolific game changers, but we can all certainly learn the value of listening to our own inner voices.

In 2008, I was finishing my Master's in Finance and Economics from the University of Warwick and had three months to complete my dissertation. A strong need to deviate from the norm got me thinking about traveling to a country I had never been to before and exploring my education in a completely new context. My research on the 'Success of Microcredit Provision' led me to an internship with a small NGO in Trujillo, Peru.



I'm from India, so I had plenty of reasons to find an equally compelling town or village back home. It would have been cheaper, and I would have had more than adequate research material for my dissertation. But moving out of my own comfort zone and finding similarities in unfamiliar territories was a truly

inspiring experience. How many opportunities would I have to fly out to a completely new space and observe life, compare statistics, and learn how unique new communities could be?

This decision, however, was not an easy one. It was burdened by the apprehensions of my parents and relatives, by financial constraints, and a general lack of confidence in my ability to pull it off. Fears projected by other people – fears of disease, kidnapping, and difficult language barriers – paralyzed me. After a few sessions with my academic counselor, I made a fund raising page online, and raised enough money to buy my ticket to Peru.





After this unique experience, I knew I wanted to keep the rush of what I had done alive and effect true change in India as well. Although the sequential lifestyle we lead pressured me into a job with a bank, my internship in Peru gave me an edge during my job hunt. I eventually worked with Deutsche Bank for two years but increasingly numbed by the monotony of an investment banking job, I quit to finally consider what really tickled my

fancy. Drawing from the confidence and insight Peru had given me, I followed my gut once again. It gave me an understanding why many of us often leap into making futuristic plans without evaluating the possibilities of making those fancies come alive. This was my personal 'Ahaa' moment and the Skilled Samaritan Foundation (SSF) was born; from conception to launch, my passion for its intent has never wavered.

What was that intent?

GA: Skilled Samaritan's initial projects focused on lighting villages using solar power; we lit almost three villages and 10 schools in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. During my time in these villages I noticed that the charpoy they were sitting on was made from candy and chocolate wrappers and soon realized there was an opportunity there. Our focus in 2018 moved to working with women from the same communities to provide employment using their existing skill-sets of charpoy weaving.

We work with women from villages that are tucked away in the interiors of Northern India. These communities are governed by traditional norms; the women are subject to age old customs that include child marriage, financial dependency on the patriarch of the family, and lack of opportunities, plus social practices that prevent the women from working. SSF has built a strong





bond with the communities to understand innate and existing skill-sets, and ways we can leverage their skills to create models of employment, and help them gain financial independence. While we cannot break the rules, we are here to bend them, by providing these newly trained artisans a global platform to market their products, thereby creating a model of sustainable income and employment.

How does this work?

GA: Our idea is to encourage the revival of traditional craft in order to hand craft functional yet beautiful pieces and products of every-day use, by reusing waste plastics and fabrics, and recognizing skill-sets of artisans from our existing project sites to create a model of holistic community development. We aim to revive age old forms of weaving and furniture styles that originated in India almost 5,000 years ago.

Said to be the most functional piece of furniture ever created, the Indian *charpai* (charpoy) is and was synonymous with siestas, conversations, gatherings and even childbirth. Weaving the intricate pieces of a *charpai* was a craft that provided employment to many till the introduction of the modern bed. SSF currently works with 88 women with charpoy weaving skill-sets, from the villages of Sujroo, Khurd Bushina and Budhina Kalan in Uttar Pradesh, where an average SSF bench or product takes four woman-hours to weave, using almost 7.5 kg of plastic/textile waste.

As part of our 'Wastetowow' initiative, the challenge was to use industrial plastic and textile scrap to make designer yet sustainable furniture and accessories of contemporary appeal. We currently use industrial scrap comprising MLP plastics, textiles and natural fibers like jute and banana fiber ropes to handcraft products that define sustainable living. The aim is to keep plastic and textile waste in the economy and out of the environment.

We currently have the capacity to weave 1,500 products on a monthly basis once the frames of our products are made. The great part is that based on market demand, we

can provide opportunities to the hundreds or even thousands of women from 235 villages in Muzaffarnagar district who either have charpoy weaving skills or can be trained to make products, based on mass consumption and demand. We are looking to collaborate, partner and work together with design houses and fashion brands to handcraft sustainable products while providing employment to thousands of women and addressing issues related to plastic and textile pollution.



How do you market and distribute your products?

GA: Currently we have four sales channels, website and e-commerce partners; we are in conversation with Jaypore and artisanal initiatives of Flipkart and Amazon. We do a lot of offline activations including pop-ups and exhibitions in various cities. We also supply to co-working, co-living spaces, hotels and restaurants and do B2B sales and store in store partnerships. Our aim is to go global via partnerships with smaller boutiques that value products that are sustainable yet very contemporary in nature.

How did you build a system to collect and treat industrial plastic and textile waste?

GA: We have partnered with local rope-making units set up in villages in Northern Uttar Pradesh. These units are regular buyers of plastic waste from an informal economy of rag pickers that pick up discarded sheets of multi laminate plastic wrappers (HDPE and LDPE) from flexi packaging units, which is converted into usable ropes using indigenous machines set up by these units. The ropes are light weight, have good strength, are grease and water resistant, and attractive in design.

Have you had to deal with many challenges?

GA: Most of the women we work with are engaged or married by the time they are 15 years of age and most of them drop out from school or study only till the tenth standard. In these communities, there is generally a lower value attached to daughters. Considering the women do not step out of their villages and are solely responsible for most household chores, we are currently figuring out the best way to centralize operations so the women can work in a common facility in the vicinity of their homes.

What's next?

GA: By 2025, SSF aims to create income opportunities for more than 50,000 women from western Uttar Pradesh. Our model of combining existing skill-sets of rural women using modern designs, and locally sourced

WHY ENTER?

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28 Jun 2019	Early bird registration
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18 Oct 2019	Last chance registration
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May 2020	iF design award night

THE DISCIPLINES

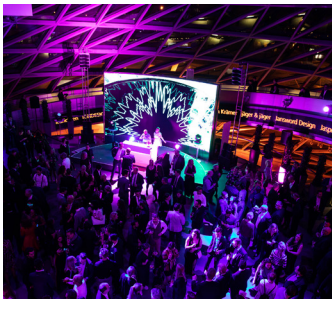
Discipline 1.0	Product
Discipline 2.0	Packaging
Discipline 3.0	Communication
Discipline 4.0	Interior Architecture
Discipline 5.0	Professional Concept
Discipline 6.0	Service Design
Discipline 7.0	Architecture

FEES

Discipline	Registration by 28 June 2019	Registration by 27 Sep 2019	Registration by 18 Oct 2019	Fee for Award Winners
Product	EUR 340 per entry	EUR 450 per entry	EUR 490 per entry	EUR 2700 per entry
Packaging	EUR 250 per entry	EUR 375 per entry	EUR 425 per entry	EUR 2700 per entry
Other Disciplines	EUR 250 per entry	EUR 375 per entry	EUR 425 per entry	EUR 1600 per entry







Contact: iF DESIGN AWARD India

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www.ifworlddesignguide.com



Above & below: KurKure box

waste plus natural fibers as raw materials can be easily replicated and applied to women micro-entrepreneurs across India who wish to sell their products to a global community of buyers through the SSF online platform. We aim to be a strong contributor to a world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality where all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed.

Using a circular economy model, we envisage an India where consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources are sustainable, and there is a significant increase in usage of waste plastics and textiles by keeping them in the economy and out of the environment.

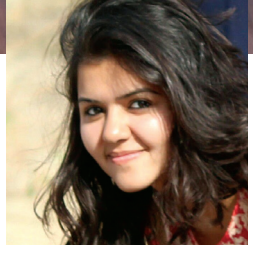
gauri199@gmail.com





Srishti Arora uses intricate Indian embroidery to make jewelry that immediately draws the eye

Artful Accessories



The Elegance neckpiece

What drew you to creating accessories that are a wearable expression of traditional Indian embroideries?

SA: Usually people think of an accessory as a decorative item that contributes to the wearer's outfit and style. It is often used to complete the look. However, I believe that

an accessory can express your style, taste and preferences. I wanted to create classic, timeless pieces that become a primary part of the wearer's style and identity – the first thing someone notices about them, with attention to the finer details. I believed that the intricacy that can be achieved in Indian embroideries would be bold enough to make that statement.

What took a trained textile designer to jewelry design?

SA: I studied textile design at a reputed design institution in Jaipur during which time I discovered my love for traditional Indian embroideries. I am most inspired when my hands are involved in the process of making and interacting with the materials, when I can work intuitively while investigating new techniques. I used to embroider for most of my design projects. After working in the industry for three years, I was still soul-searching for something different and undone that would define me more as a textile artist than a designer. I wanted to create a textile art-form - patiently made by hand - that expresses your style and who you are.

How did Akihi come about?

SA: I am an introvert and love to pen down my thoughts and feelings. I used to collect a lot of good words that have beautiful meanings and 'akihi' was one of them. 'Akihi' is the state of illimitable and instinctive pursuit. It speaks of the journey one takes to find oneself within the many layers of the self. It is the detachment from worldviews and ideas in order to pave one's own path and make one's own meanings. I believed it would best define the accessories I planned to make.





Left: Starburst lapel pin
Below: The Grid cufflinks



1



3



2

What is your design process?

SA: All the pieces we produce are handmade, designed for women who love details, and have great sensitivity towards the beauty of art/nature. We start by sourcing different fabrics that act as the canvas for our jewelry. It is then embroidered very patiently using ancient and modern techniques. Then the embroidered patch is tied on a brass base which is later encased in hand-crafted brass (lead, nickel and cadmium free). We are open to customization for all our clients.

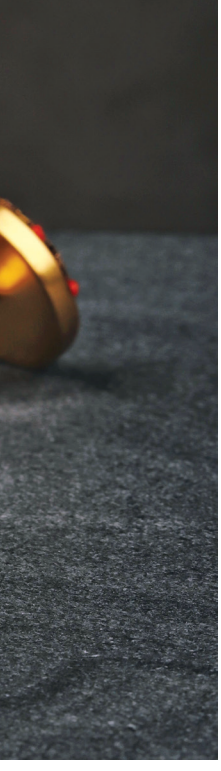
How do you market and distribute your products?

SA: Akihi is retailing out of many multi-brand stores across India and slowly expanding globally. All the stores we work with share the common interest and love for handmade.

Have there been many entrepreneurial challenges so far?

SA: The journey has seen many challenges, but there is a sense of satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment at having faced them head

1,2. Sustainably made Alpha Collection
3. Bold geometry cufflinks
4. Dastoor earrings
5. Colorful bloom ring





4



5

on. When Akihi was just an idea, it took me nearly six months to achieve the quality I had in mind for my products. Finding labor has been the biggest challenge for us. It is hard to find textile embroidery artisans with the finesse to handle intricate details. We have to train them for a couple of months to get those fine details.

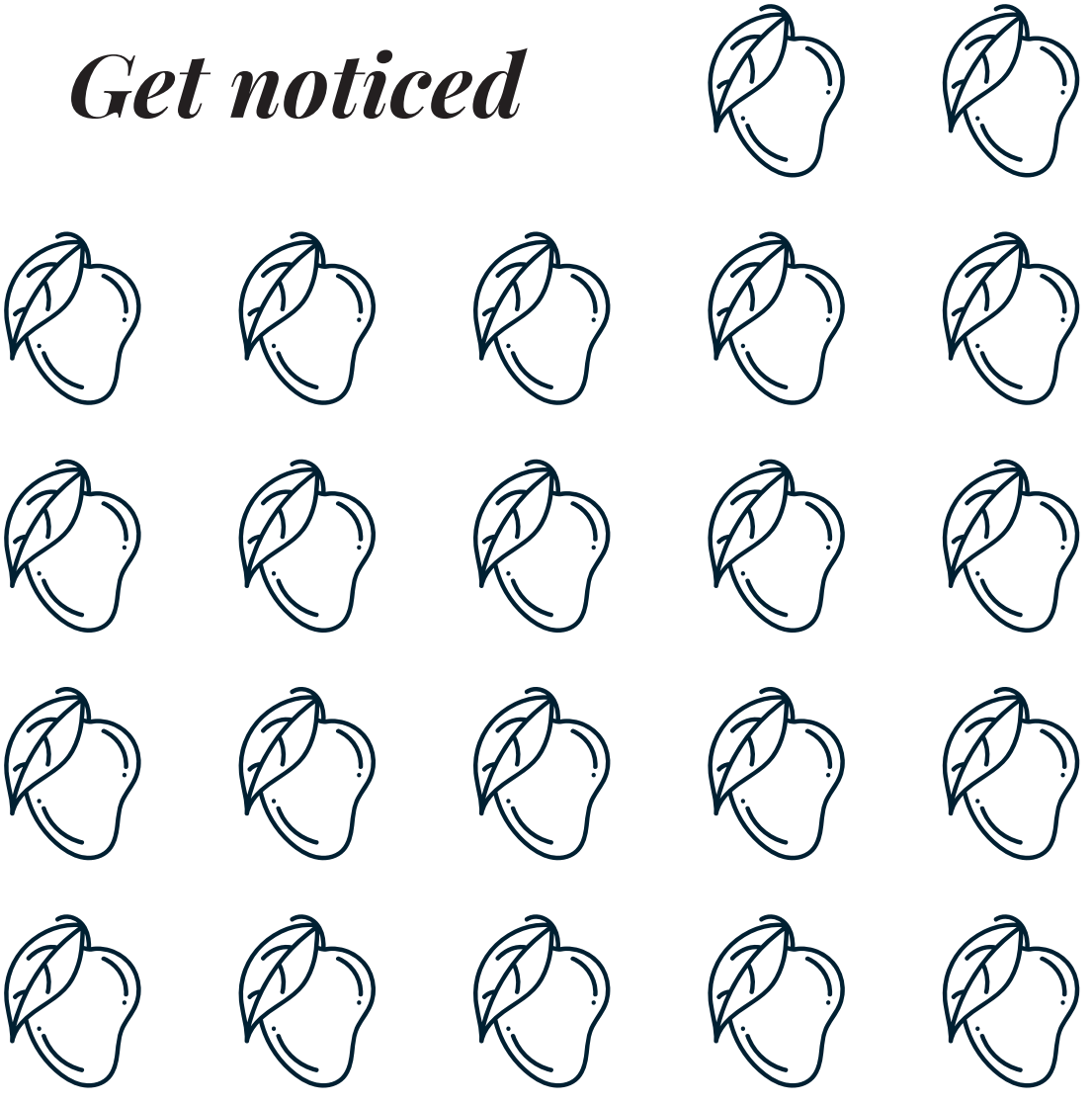
How do you plan to expand your brand?

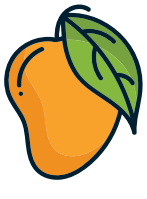
SA: I want to dig deeper to explore the next level of intricacy in hand embroidery and other textile crafts. We want to grow more sustainable as a brand. The one-of-a-kind sustainable pieces in the Alpha collection received a lot of admiration and I am more motivated to work on such collections.

How did living in Jaipur impact your designs?

SA: I am fortunate to have grown up amongst such rich culture and heritage. Every corner of Jaipur holds an interesting anecdote and a touch of old-world charm. Design is fundamental here. Color is a fact of life in Jaipur, whether it's on buildings or on the bright saris that women drape themselves in. The diversity and vitality of the crafts and folk art has had an indelible impact on my design sensibilities and esthetics.

Get noticed



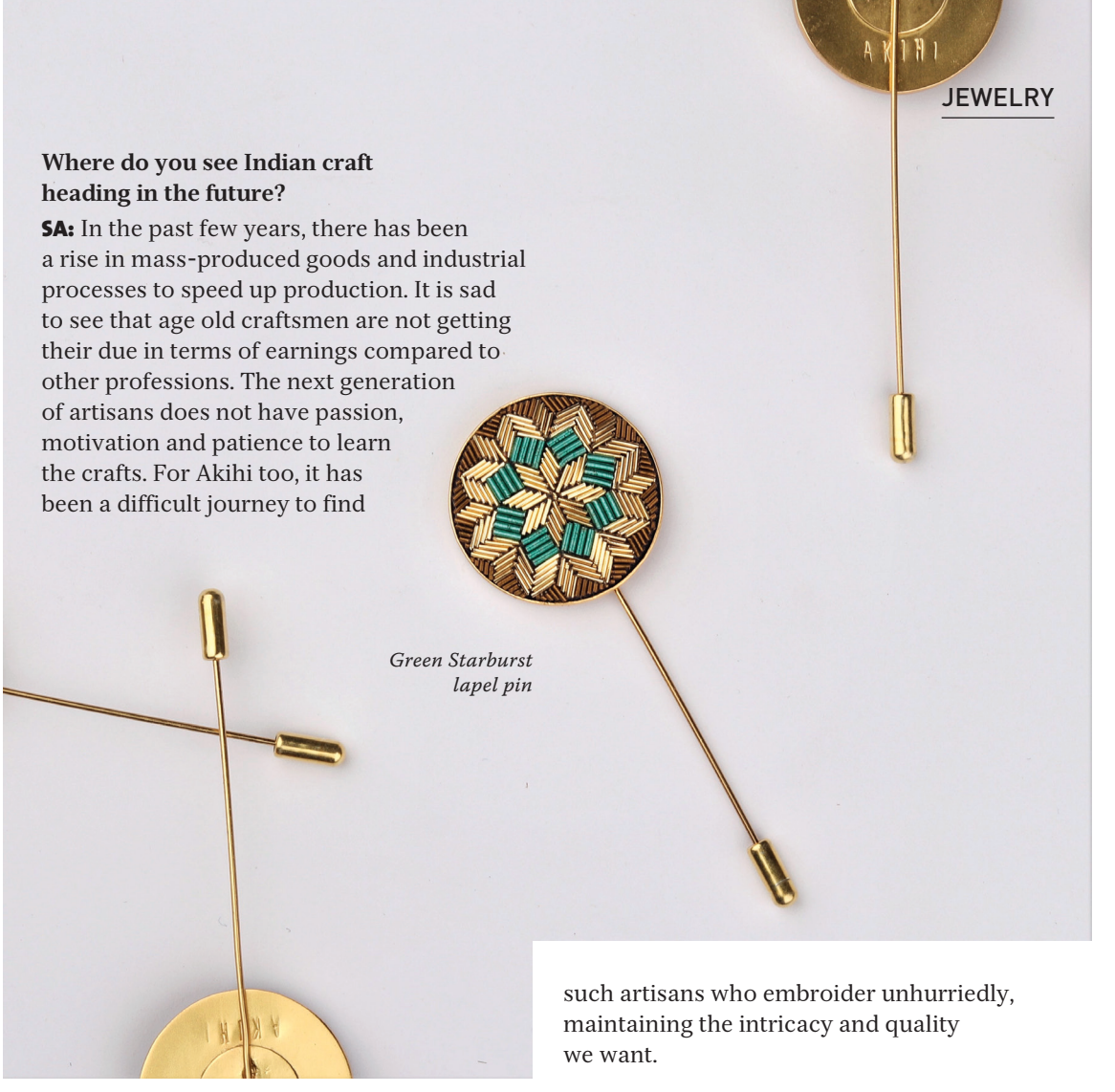


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Where do you see Indian craft heading in the future?

SA: In the past few years, there has been a rise in mass-produced goods and industrial processes to speed up production. It is sad to see that age old craftsmen are not getting their due in terms of earnings compared to other professions. The next generation of artisans does not have passion, motivation and patience to learn the crafts. For Akihi too, it has been a difficult journey to find such artisans who embroider unhurriedly, maintaining the intricacy and quality we want.



Green Starburst lapel pin



Asif, embroidery artisan

What role can designers play in conserving our crafts?

SA: Designers play a very important role in bridging the gap between crafts and consumers. They can use their innovation skills to create feasible products for retail markets. There is a tribe of designers, working consciously towards restoring and reviving our crafts; I am fortunate to have worked with a few of them. Their sustainable practices and thought processes continue to inspire so many young minds. I believe that if more such minds align together, we can save the Indian craft heritage.

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Learning to say NO

Apurva Kothari's *'No Nasties' brand eliminates all that is superfluous to truly sustainable clothing*





Introduce us to the concept of vegan clothing.

AK: No Nasties makes Organic + Fair Trade + Vegan clothing. The goal is to be as kind as possible to the people that grow our cotton, and stitch our clothes, and to our planet and all the beings on it. Organic implies no GMO seeds, no carcinogenic pesticides, and no toxic dyes. Fair Trade implies no child labor, no farmer or factory worker exploitation, no unsafe factories. Vegan implies no animal products or animal testing. So, no leather, no wool, no fur, no bone or shell buttons either.

Sustainable, ethical fashion is on the rise not just globally but in India too. Consumers are more conscious of the impacts of their lifestyles and are asking questions about the true costs of their purchases - who made my clothes, what's in it, were animals harmed in any way in the making, what's the impact on the environment. And they are backing this consciousness by voting with their wallets and buying products that are truly sustainable.

Tell us about the design philosophy of No Nasties.

AK: Everything we try to do at No Nasties has roots in sustainability and our design philosophy for our garments is no different.





Left to right: Cotton Pod





We try to make styles that are classic and timeless (no fast fashion trends here), which will serve you year after year. The brand language is muted shades on casual styles that can be freely mixed and matched, making each piece quite versatile.

How were you drawn to design?

AK: My switch from engineering to fashion was triggered by reading about the alarming rate of farmer suicides in cotton farming in India. With over 300,000 suicides in the last 18 years, it's the highest number of suicides recorded in human history and it's not showing any signs of slowing down. All this was happening an overnight train ride away from Mumbai where I grew up (and all across the cotton belt of India), and I felt compelled to research more and figure out what was being done to solve this crisis. When I discovered the organic and fair trade practices at the grassroots level, I was surprised there wasn't more awareness of this among urban consumers with our increasing purchasing powers. That's when I decided to create a brand that was founded on the principles of organic cotton and fair trade practices, but also where the product stood for itself in terms of quality and design. No Nasties was born from this vision of doing good and looking good. The name 'No Nasties' is a promise that nothing bad will go into our products. It's all good!

What is your design process?

AK: Each collection we design is a combination of a fresh artwork theme, and a mix of new and old styles. The process starts with creating a free-flowing mood board to capture everything our imagination can come up with - styles, textures, colors, prints, From there, we distil the ideas down to a few new

styles that we'd like to introduce and sketch them out to make a high-level product plan, before getting into the details. Each style is thought out individually based on our vision as well as the feedback received from customers in the past collections - trying to get the right product-market mix. This stage takes the longest and there's constant back and forth between the team before we send it out to the factory for sampling (which takes a few iterations to get it just right). From there, we create a final line-sheet with all the details for the styles, the fabrics, the trims, the whole nine yards, lo and behold, we have our next collection ready to share with the world!

What were the challenges you faced in your journey?

AK: The supply chain in India making certified organic clothing is completely geared for exports and not too open to work with Indian brands, especially the small ones just starting out like us. It took a lot of effort to get our foot into the door but even now, we struggle with getting products on time as we're always a lower priority compared to their large export orders. The only way to fix this is for us to become a larger brand and we're working on that every day!

The other challenge is awareness in customers on what is 'organic' or 'fair trade' or 'vegan'. When we started the company back in 2011, the movement for ethical fashion was in its nascent stages and these words were not well understood. Even now, it's an ongoing task to create awareness of the issue and the solution that we are offering.

The biggest challenge to the movement is the 'green-washing' by companies where they say they do more than they actually do, or worse, mislead consumers about sustainable practices and materials. This is causing confusion and slowing down the rate at which we can make progress as more and more time is spent on explaining what's good, what's not.







How do you market and distribute your products?

AK: Our primary sales channel is our website where we get customers from around the world. We have shipped to over 65 countries at this point! Our flagship store in North Goa has the largest range of products. There are also several stockists that retail our products around India and across the globe.

How has your brand evolved over the decade?

AK: No Nasties started out as a community-based t-shirt brand where we collaborated with artists, graphic designers and photographers to put their work on our printed tees! As we grew the brand, we expanded into plain tees, then tank tops and henleys, and basics. Around five years ago, my partner Shweta Deliwala joined the team and with her background in fashion, she transformed the brand into one with an extensive product range! Looking ahead, we want to solidify our position in basics and also explore more home and lifestyle products - all made with 100% organic, fair trade cotton, of course.

What is the scope for sustainable brands in the largely unorganized Indian fashion industry?

AK: At this point, sustainable brands are a niche, and are all trying to create awareness of the issues and working on creating a brand identity. In this environment, there are still a lot of opportunities to stand out and thrive. Once sustainable fashion becomes mainstream, it'll be a lot more competitive then and harder for smaller brands to get attention and make a name for themselves.

What do your efforts at sustainability involve?

AK: Our business activities have an impact on the planet:
Production - all goods, even sustainable goods, have an ecological footprint.
Packing - even though we don't use plastics,

cardboard and paper don't exactly grow on trees... oh, wait!
Shipping - thousands of orders shipped to different countries - imagine the frequent flier miles!

We do a lot to minimize this impact but it still isn't enough. Our farms are rain-fed and no toxic pesticides and fertilizers are used; there are no heavy metals in our azo-free dyes and plastisol-free inks. We use





organic cloth bags for packaging and our paper hang-tags are made of upcycled organic cotton fabric waste; our shipping boxes are made of recycled cardboard...

Tell us about the 'Buy-1-Get-1-Tree' concept.

AK: The Buy-1-Get-1-Tree program was launched when we turned seven. The idea is to reduce our carbon footprint by planting trees for every product we sell. Plus, one tree for every email sign-up and one tree for every day of our business existence too!

What is the 'Once Upon A Doug' project?

AK: We have started a non-profit project called 'Once Upon A Doug', working with women from the cotton farming communities in and around Wardha and Vidharbha (areas most hard hit by the farmer suicide crisis). The women make a cloud-shaped bracelet using recycled material in their spare time, and all the funds raised by selling these go back to the project.

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What would you advise youngsters pursuing fashion design as a career today?

AK: Do work that matters! It's fairly easy to make a good living if you are skilled, but just earning money isn't enough and isn't the point either. Try to make a difference with the work you do - that's a lot more rewarding in the long run.

How do you see fashion in India evolving in the next decade?

AK: My hope is that sustainable, fair fashion will be the norm in 10 years, and that we value long-lasting clothes a lot more than what fast fashion throws up these days. I hope there will be a thriving industry for recycled and upcycled products in the country. That would be fantastic.

yes@nonasties.in

This story was coordinated and designed by Anshika Seth, student at NIFT Patna, interning at Designindia Magazine.





MAKING *CREATIVITY* THE NEW *CURRENCY*

Sponsored by ValueLabs, Lopez Design recently conducted event that was aimed at making India a DesignFirst holistic economy







India is a young and agile country, buzzing with ideas that can very well shape the next big innovation to transform the world. However, over the past year, India has fallen ten places on the global competitiveness index; one of the reasons for the decline being the lack of IPs created by our nation.

Radical innovation lies at the intersection of desirability, feasibility and viability. Design, which has moved from a product phase to a strategic process, has created avenues for a new integrated approach towards problem solving. The big leap from a siloed department to a seat in the C-suite has opened doors to explore the Business Value of Design. As stated in the Mckinsey Report, 2018, design-led companies have 32% more revenue and 56% higher total returns compared to shareholders in other companies.

Fifty design thinkers from different sectors came together to explore the potential of



design in nation building. Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Aayog was invited to be the keynote speaker at the forum sponsored by ValueLabs. He spoke about how 'Design is a differentiator' and is the key to creating a global brand for India. "Design can penetrate the global market and push up our value," he said.



Anthony Lopez introduced two design initiatives to further this discussion: What Design Can Do, and Design First Policy. Through the 'What Design Can Do' initiative, it was proposed to create a ready-reckoner handbook/kit/web repository that will capture instances in each industry vertical where design thinking and design have made a difference with proven Indian or international examples.

The vision of a DesignFirst India was explored, visualizing a society that at all levels and in a responsible way integrates the use of design to improve the quality of





people's lives, creates economic value for businesses, and makes the public sector more efficient. There was emphasis on the process of design - design as a verb not a noun. This leads to the creation of an appropriate solution - be it a functional product, efficient public service, public health or public policy, or governance that genuinely accommodates the perspectives of people on the receiving end. It is imperative to create a new National Design Policy that pushes design out from isolated silos and across all-line ministries.

Through these initiatives, the potential of design will be explored to solve complex problems with unique contextual solutions developed right at home - a beginning towards forming an Indian DesignFirst policy.

Let's mark the beginning of this new decade by bringing people back into the system.

info@lopezdesign.com



Freedom TO BE

Jayesh Sachdev, *Creative Director of Quirk Box, presents Space Cadet 2020, a line of resort wear for the free-spirited*







My work explores the relationship between emotional identities in urban subcultures in a copycat society. With influences as diverse as Dali and Warhol, new characters are crafted from both simple and complex meanings.

In a society so influenced into wanting to be another, constantly seeking validation from external sources, we have lost the ability to be our own hero. Space Cadet explores the essential unreality of who we

are and who we want to be. We are an aping culture of over evolved monkeys lacking any self identity. Space Cadet brings this to light through its evocative illustrations and whimsical characters of humans as animals lost in an urban space.











Under the umbrella of Quirk Box, where art is portrayed through the medium of fashion, Space Cadet Resort Wear 2020 is a bold statement piece of fashion that urges us to have the courage to be whoever we'd like to be.

Quirk Box teamed up with Label Puja Pandey to craft an elaborate visual story through hand crafted details of embroidery, sequins and excellent craftsmanship to present an urbane prêt-couture line of resort wear including silhouettes such as jumpsuits, mini saris, crop jacket suits, lounge wear and midis.





Left: Space Cadet fabric

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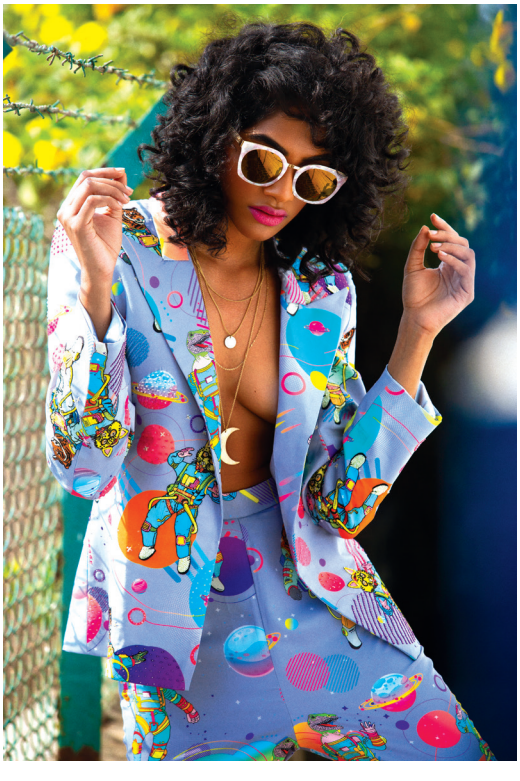


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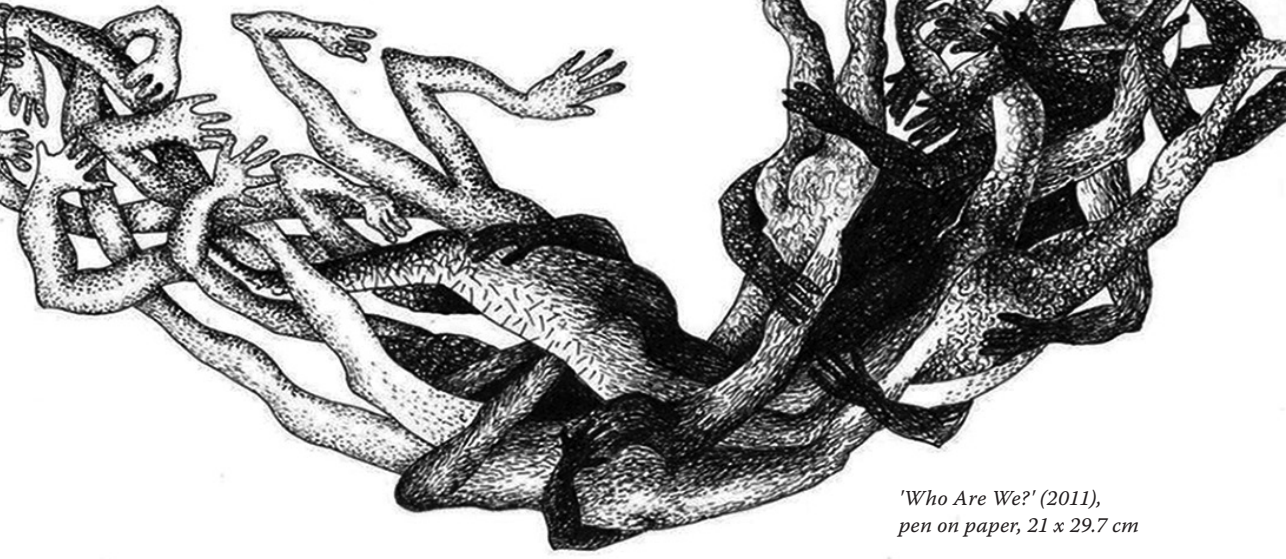






Artwork Illustrations: Jayesh Sachdev
Outfits: Quirk Box by Jayesh Sachdev
Photographs: Kaustubh Kamble/Harsh Jani
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Model: Krithika Iyer/Bishaka Thapa

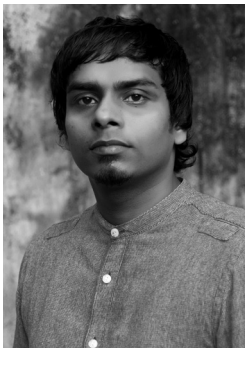
info@thequirkbox.com



'Who Are We?' (2011), pen on paper, 21 x 29.7 cm

when **tragedy inspires**

Sri Lankan artist, ***Pushpakanthan Pakkiyarajah*** *tells how deeply his work reflects his country's troubled past*



How did your tryst with art begin?

PP: I was born in Batticaloa in Sri Lanka to an artistically-minded family who first understood art as a form of entertainment. I grew up seeing a lot of dead bodies in the streets and I responded to those experiences through my art. As I grew older, my approach to art shifted to reflect the violent society in which I grew up, as a means to psychologically analyze the pain that I, and those in my community, have faced. I always drew trauma and violence in some form, but I didn't know why until I started studying Art & Design at the University of Jaffna. There I began to experiment with the content of my artwork, which helped me understand why I was drawing these images.

I was lucky to have been taught by wonderful teachers like artist and historian Dr. T. Sanathanan, and Mr. P. Ahilan who is also an art historian and poet. The program introduced me to the wider network of artists from South Asia, which in turn allowed me to exhibit my work in the region through a residency in the Maldives in 2013 and in Colombo with the Asia Art Archive the same year. Since 2018, I have been working as a Lecturer at the Department of Visual & Technological Arts, Eastern University, Batticaloa.

Now, I aim to bear witness to the ever-present trauma from a distance and embed my artistic approach in a globalized context. Beyond the process of dealing with the past, I engage with the post-war space and ask, “What comes next?” As an artist, I often feel trapped by the burden of tragic histories even while moving towards reconciliation.

What is the primary role of an artist?

PP: Artists, in my view, have a social role. They are conscience-shakers who have the capacity to open people’s eyes and make them think. I am not very fond of the kind of artists who get more attention than their work, since for me artists are mere messengers of the story. The artist should also cultivate his role as audience and not only as creator, since it’s the only way in which he can understand the extent and ways his art is received.

How do you describe yourself in the context of challenging people's perspectives via your work and art?

PP: I would hope that people are struck by my work; that they find it thought-provoking, rather than merely beautiful. If they only contemplate the esthetics of the work, no doubt they will forget about it very quickly afterwards. But if they are impacted by my paintings, they will not forget so easily, and it will make them think. I think art should mirror society. But mirrors can be deceptive too - they can give you strange deformations of reality, they can magnify some aspects or shrink them.

What inspires you?

PP: Most of my creations depict experiences and discourses that have tragedy as the underpinning, all-consuming theme. Rather than the healthy and pleasant events in



'Disappearance I' (2017), pigment ink on paper, 70 x100 cm



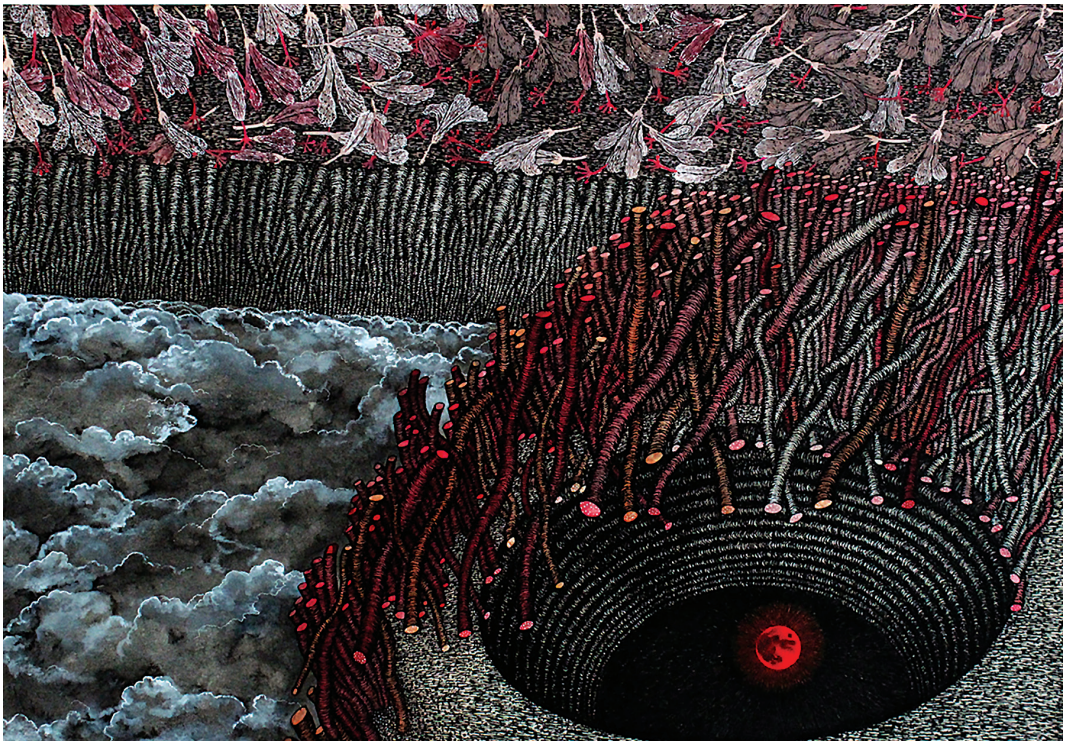
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life and in society, incidents of intense hurt and screaming, physical and mental suffering, compel me more due to the deep and prolonged pain my country is emerging from. My creations express themselves as the psychological analyses of the reactions that such suffering evokes in me. Nevertheless, I am trying to observe the ever-present trauma from a certain distance and embed my artistic approach in a globalized context by exploring ideas relating to agency, identity and gender.

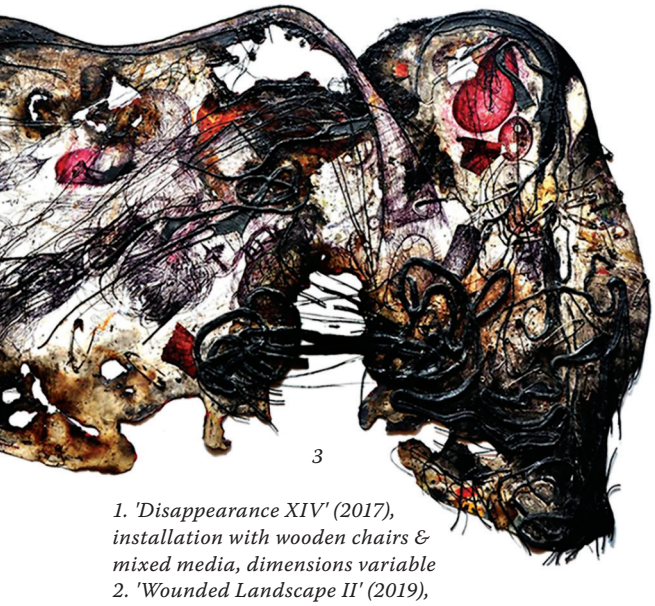
Beyond the process of coming to terms with the past, I take part in the post-war space where the question is "what comes next?". Therefore, in my role as an artist I express my generational outlook, a subtle feeling of being trapped by the burden of a tragic history, of being in search of reconciliation, and of experiencing cultural in-betweenness. While I don't yet have answers to any of these questions and tensions, through refined shifts of perception in my art, the spectator is able to empathize with the feeling of loneliness and what it means to be forced to start one's life all over again.



My art grapples with the emotional torture families endure as their questions persist, unanswered. Haunting memories, imagination and fear fill my work as suffocating mental constructions that strangle those imagining the suffering of their family members and their own inability to help them. They are trapped between surrealism and reality where disappearances themselves disappear; they vanish from political discourse and from collective memory. They disappear behind ethnicized politics yet lurk as specters of injustice. My work recognizes the human need to situate and share this suffering within the context of the suffering of others. My drawings depict the wounded landscapes by filling a



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white space that signifies the void left by the whitewashing of disappearances from history, landscape, and everyday lives. Abandoned furniture, roots, and discarded traces of ordinary life evoke the missing bodies sown in the soil that will eventually integrate into mediators (like furniture) between our body and the emotions of our daily life, shattered and burned by war.

theindiancurator@gmail.com



(Sonalee Tomar studied at NID and worked as the Editorial Director of Pool Magazine before founding 'The Indian Curator', a platform to support creative outliers with liberating resources)

1. 'Disappearance XIV' (2017), installation with wooden chairs & mixed media, dimensions variable
2. 'Wounded Landscape II' (2019), pigment ink and acrylic on paper, 71 x 101 cm
3. 'Burning Memories IV' (2015), mixed media, 75 x 130 cm

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