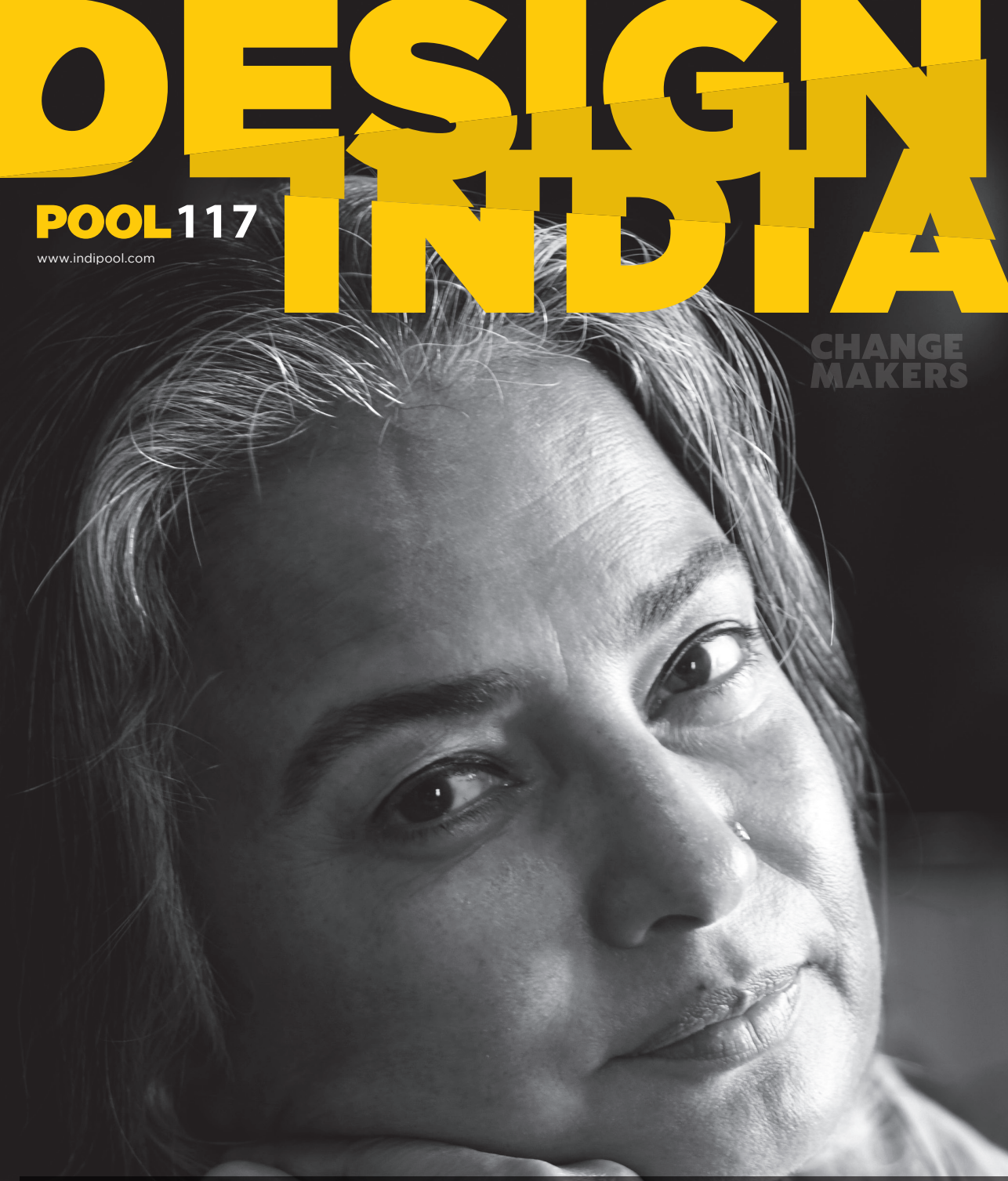
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CHANGE MAKERS



Gurmeet Sangha Rai *pg 10*

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READ

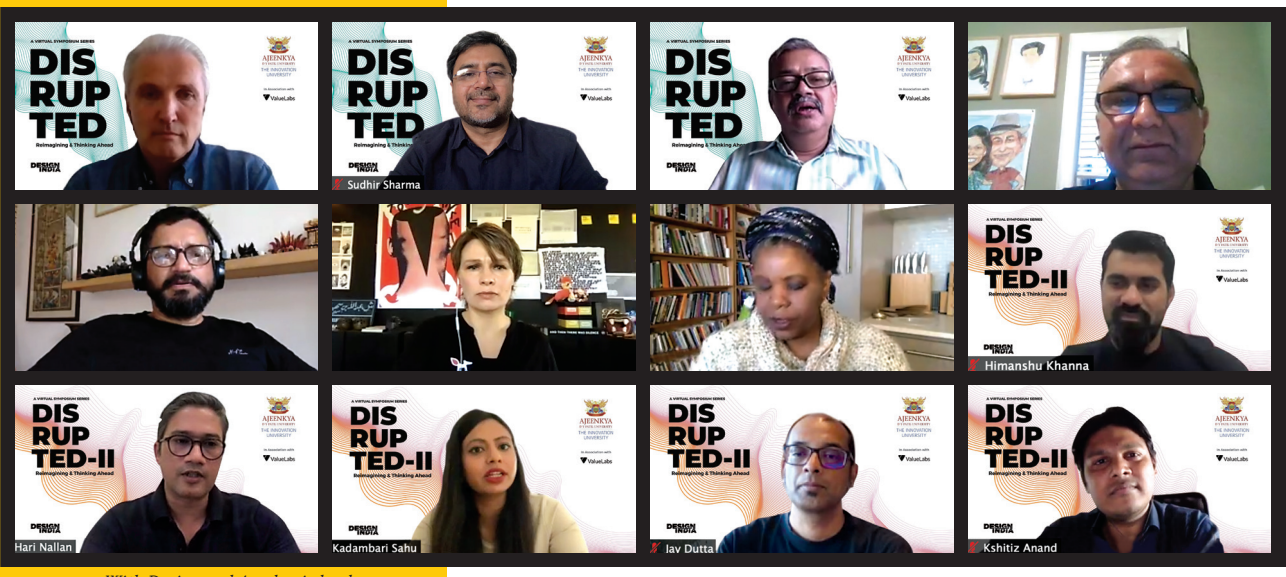
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With Design and Academic leaders during the 'Disrupted' Virtual Symposium series



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DESIGN INDIA

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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Disrupted

Any discussion about the relevance of design today goes back to the basics - Needs vs. Desires.

For a very long time greed has been moving designers to create desires, increase sales and add to profit margins. This wasn't always bad...it brought jobs to many people, but it also served only a select fewer who could afford to pay for that extra differentiation and luxury.

Classic design teachers have always insisted on design being an activity of problem solving. This has been a fundamental difference between designers in developed countries and those in developing countries (also named 'emerging markets' - another way to see development from a consumerism point of view). Thanks to COVID 19, we are back to square one. Design needs to go back to serving the needs of people rather than their desires. While desire factories will not stop producing, people will take time to get back to being indulgent again.

Needs are basic and must be met for our survival. Desire is something that brings us subjective value. Needs are necessary for survival; desire is not. Needs are mandatory to live; desires have been considered as sources of sorrow for human beings. Needs and survival define our priorities for now and that is where our role as designers comes to play. If we are working in the need sector of design, we will be relevant and we do not have anything to worry about.

It is time to repurpose your skills and tools; redirect them to work for purposes that solve survival issues and you will stay relevant. Design and solutions towards essential objects, products and services have a great demand and will remain relevant. Design in technology, media, and logistics is a new survival need. Designers in many borderline fields of needs and desires will require to become more creative and showcase their relevance.

For some time, till economies around the world gain their senses, and people start trusting other people and offerings, brands will have to stand up to their names; experimentation and forays into new fields may not be accepted readily. Brands will be trusted more than ever, but they will also be expected to come clean on that trust. Their promises will need to be tangible and not just superficial. Industries such as hospitality, FMCG, aviation, and e-commerce will have to focus on delivering promises, maybe strip off their frivolousness and become more need-fulfilling. In fact, for some time, stoking of desires might be seen as negative, and products and services will have to tone down their pitch. Marketing has to become sensitive to the noise and sentiments around.

Our world stands disrupted, but as designers we become more relevant now.

Sudhir

ValueLabs

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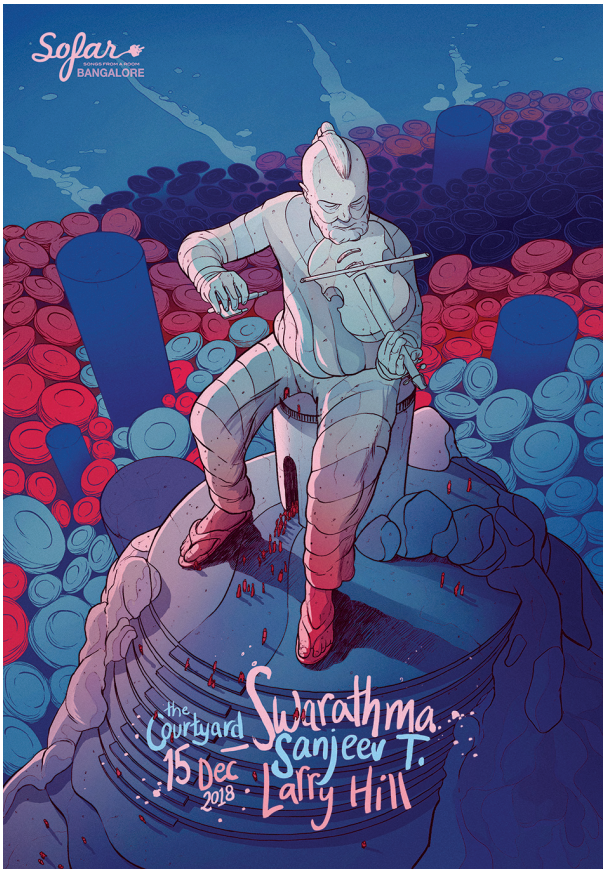
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'Ocean', an artwork made for Anuv Jain's single

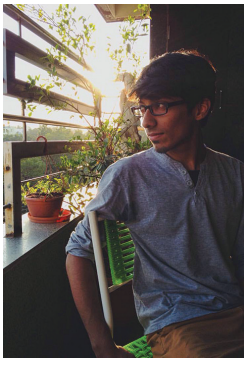
drawn to draw

***Vibhav Singh** is learning to juggle the demands of a full time job as a concept artist with the diversity of a career as a freelance illustrator*





Above: 'Professor Strong and the Brass Boys', poster for Sofar, Bangalore
Left: 'Pilgrimage at Symphony Island', poster for Sofar, Bangalore

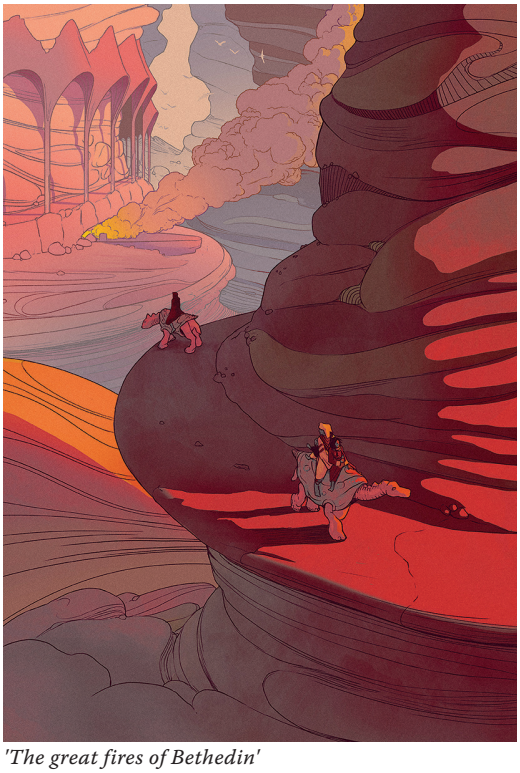


Were you always attracted to design?

VS: There is just something about telling stories through visuals that has always attracted me. In fact, as a teenager I was pretty sure I wanted to be an animator for Pixar. Although the specifics of that dream constantly changed over the next few years, the essence remained the same. When I graduated from high school in Ghaziabad I knew I wanted to do something in the realm of art and design, because the idea of drawing and creating for a living was honestly extremely exciting. Having said that, it was also extremely scary because I didn't really know enough about this industry back then to have any particular goals in mind.

How has formal education influenced your career?

VS: I joined Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology (Bangalore), where I pursued a Bachelor's in Design. Initially I had a slight inclination toward graphic design, but by the end of my foundation year I had discovered my love for illustration and filmmaking, which would eventually lead me back to animation. I majored in Information Arts and Information Design practices, with a focus on illustration. During my time at Srishti, I worked on a lot of my personal art, and



'The great fires of Bethedin'

posted it online, which led me to slowly start pursuing a freelance career on the side – something I'm still doing.

I think the very fact that college let me pick and choose courses in a way that I could better existing skills and pick up new ones gave me incentive to experiment. And then there was the exuberant atmosphere that an art school provides - suddenly I was surrounded by more like-minded individuals than ever before, and we were making art, doing theater, choreographing performances, exchanging influences and much more. And I honestly think that, more than anything, shaped the way I approach my career.

Tell us about your role at BombayPlay. What have been the challenges so far?

VS: I'm currently working full-time as a concept artist at BombayPlay, a mobile games start-up based in Bangalore. I'm responsible for conceptualizing, designing and executing the look and art-style of a game and its elements (characters, items, backgrounds, etc.). I also handle all character and cutscene animations in the game.

This being my first real job, it comes with its own set of challenges. A full time concept artist has to work on the same project for six months to a year - as a freelancer I'd never worked on something longer than three to four months. Keeping myself motivated while constantly working on the same thing day after day is probably one of the most challenging things about this job. I like to always experiment with styles and approaches, and it takes effort to keep my style at BombayPlay consistent during a project. Since I've never spent so long on a single project, it's also enlightening to see the benefits of an iterative project.



'A puff of fresh air'

Having only created artwork for print or video before, the video game development pipeline had some hurdles that I've had to become accustomed to over the past few months. Never before have I had the need to be conscious about file sizes, or the number of frames going into an animation. However, when it comes to video games, every single frame and artwork adds to the size of the game, making it the artist's job to be as economical as possible in the execution of their ideas.

Working at a small start-up with limited employees also leads to a bunch of overlaps in roles, and for me that means that on a lot of days I'm integrating designs and art into the game engine and doing other



'The 90s were a good time' comic series

menial tasks (basically not drawing) that although necessary, are simply too boring. *Chai* breaks and daydreaming are all too frequent on such days. All these challenges have been nothing but great learning experiences for me. Working at a studio like this instills a work ethic and a sense of discipline, which is going to come in really handy down the line.



'The Sound of Creation', poster for Sofar Bombay

What are your current freelance projects?

VS: I'm currently working on a couple of posters and a motion artwork for a filmmaker, a logo for a luxury brand, a graphic novel collaboration with a writer and fellow sci-fi enthusiast, and a couple of personal artworks.

What, in your opinion, are the pros and cons of freelancing?

VS: For me the pros outweigh the cons. The pros: you get to choose who you want to work with, and what sort of work you



'Achint & the Khan Brothers', album artwork

a small client versus a big brand. More and more brands are taking a more hands on, personal approach with the people they work with. Regardless of who the client is, I think professionalism goes a long way - being prompt with sending in your ideas and invoices, along with delivering on time. To an extent it's a much cleaner process with big brands, since a lot of times the brief itself is very clear and straightforward.

want to do. You can choose to not work if you don't feel like it, and decide your own holidays and breaks. Since a freelancer is constantly juggling multiple projects, and the projects themselves mostly come in short bursts, it's much easier to keep yourself excited and motivated. If you're tired of working on one thing, you switch and work on the other. If both suck, you still know there is an end to it (unlike a full-time job).

The cons: some months might be better than others. You won't always have a constant inflow of work, and hence, money. You face irregular income, low financial security, with almost no benefits.

What does it take to work with brands? How do you handle it?

VS: I think in today's world there isn't too big a difference between working with

Which have been your most exciting projects so far?

VS: 'From the Jukebox' was a personal project I started in 2017 as a way to expand my personal playlist, create fresh art and build an Instagram following. The project worked like this - I asked my Instagram followers for song suggestions, and then I would create artwork based on a select few. I was new to Instagram back then and the project helped on multiple fronts - it gave me a set brief to work with, and got me a healthy amount of validation for that work. I think it was one of those milestone projects that really convinced me to pursue illustration.

My pre-thesis project culminated in a short, silent graphic novel. Those final few weeks of figuring out how to compress an entire semester of insights and research into a tangible output, and then storyboarding,



sketching, inking, coloring - basically taking a graphic novel from start to finish - were really exciting for me.

A few months ago I got to work with a screenwriter on the early visual development for a sci-fi live-action show being pitched to Netflix. It was something I had never done before, and I utterly enjoyed it.

Describe your style.

VS: Stylized realism with splashes of impressionistic colors and surrealistic elements.

What inspires you?

VS: I consume a lot of film, literature, music, video games, and of course, art, and because of that sooner or later I come across something that urges me to explore an idea, an emotion,



'Leap of faith'
Left: 'Invaders'

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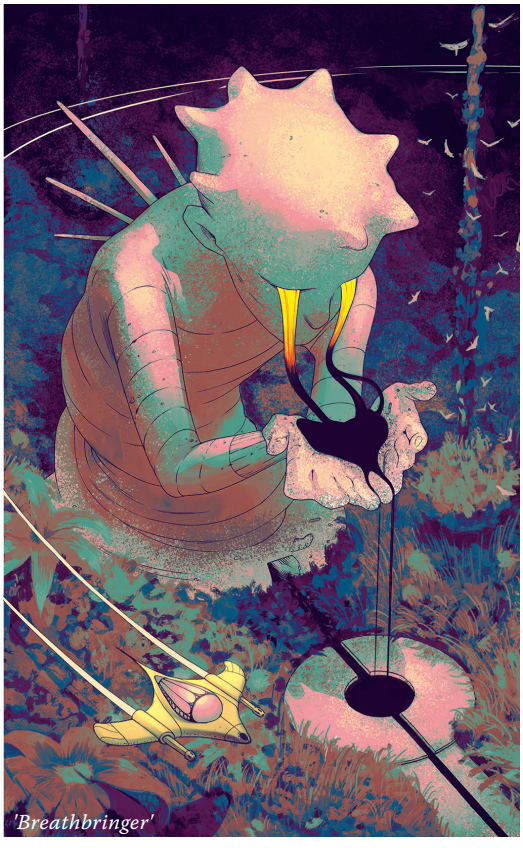
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EXPERIENCE



'Breathbringer'

a feeling, a story. Although these influences manifest in my art as science fiction and fantasy, they might as well have originated from something as mundane as a walk to the shop to buy a packet of milk.

I also look up to a bunch of artists whose works I admire, like James Jean, Anand Radhakrishnan, Sajid Wajid Shaikh, Alberto Mielgo, Jean Giraud, among others.

How do you overcome a creative block?

VS: If I'm on a deadline, I try to push through the block by brainstorming, sketching, filling pages with random but relevant stuff until something clicks. If I'm not pressed for time, I like to step away from what I'm doing and either work on something else, or do something completely different for a while. I then come back to the problem a day or so later to try and take a fresh approach with it. It works a lot of times, but when it doesn't I end up in the former situation with a looming deadline on my head. Jokes aside, I think stepping away from something if you're stuck on it (be it writing, drawing, editing) is a good way to refresh your perspective. I also think creative blocks are the best things to happen to an artist, because they force you to think outside of your comfort zone.

Share your aspirations.

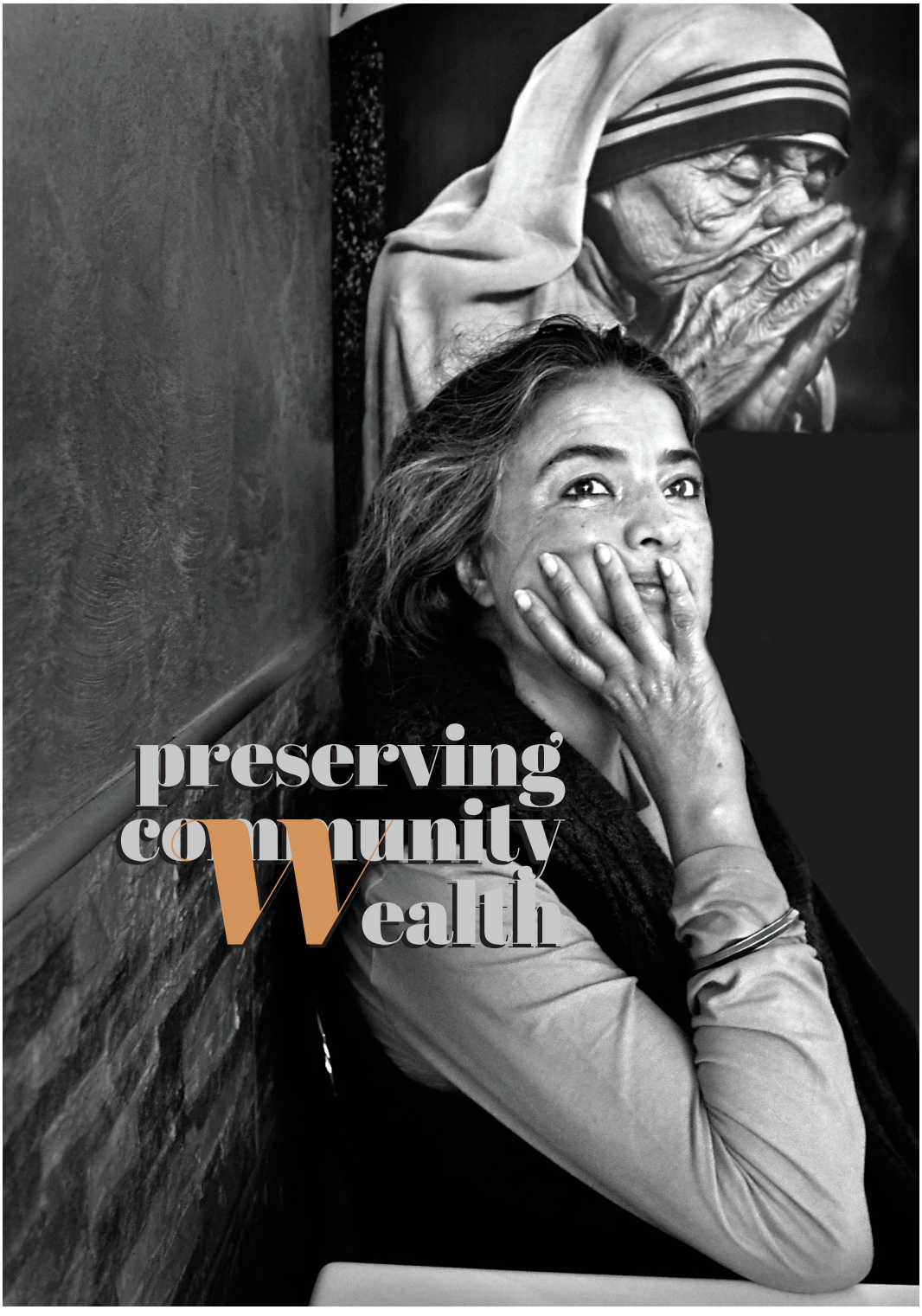
VS: It's been less than a year since I graduated from college, but it's already been so full of surprises and exciting opportunities. Honestly, the most I could hope for is more of the same. Beyond that I hope to establish myself as an independent, freelancing artist somewhere down the line. For now, I'm going to keep drawing.

vibhav.eob@gmail.com



'Land of a Thousand Toothy Smiles'

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


preserving
community
Wealth



Summer palace Rambagh under conservation

*For **Gurmeet Sangha Rai,** conserving heritage goes much beyond restoring the material fabric of a monument – what is equally important is keeping alive the intangibles associated with it. Her vision has continuously pushed the frontiers of heritage conservation towards becoming a more inclusive, developmentally oriented and interdisciplinary practice.*

How were you drawn to conservation architecture?

GR: I chose to be an architect as I idolized a cousin who was an architect – she was an independent thinker, bold, expressive, bright, and had clear articulation skills. As a young girl I understood architecture as a craft that gave you a voice for free thinking. Since childhood I was extremely fond of working with my hands. I used to play with clay, creating things of utility, though of miniature scale. I found it extremely enriching - the touch, the utility and the freedom to express.

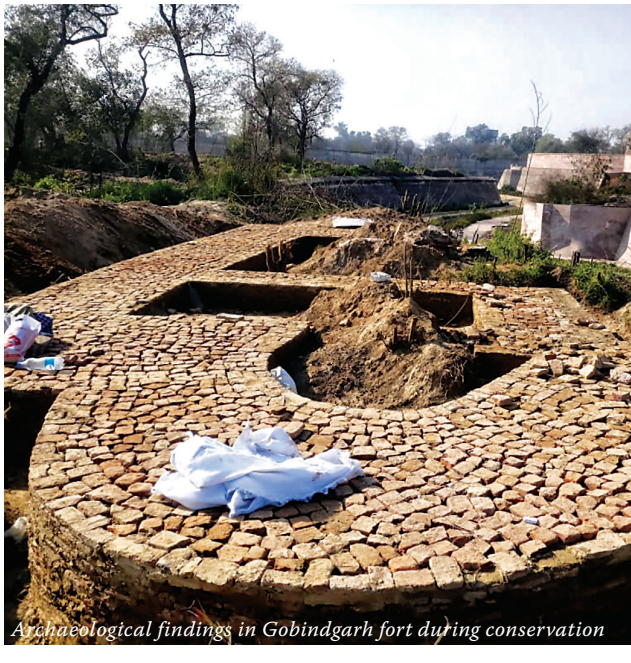
When I joined the Chandigarh College of Architecture, History of Architecture was one of my favorite subjects. I was intrigued by the sense of design, detailing and materials. At that point of time there wasn't an opportunity for specialization



Bastion in Gobindgarh fort, after conservation

in conservation in India. In fact, little was known about the subject in our colleges. It all came together for me when I was looking for a topic for my under graduation thesis and chose a historic setting, the Ghat Ki Guni (outside Jaipur) to propose a school of craft inspired by the Bauhaus school of design. I also proposed the institutional structure wherein the artisans and craftsmen would be the teachers. I felt this was necessary to restore dignity to the craft.

When I was closer to completing my thesis I came across the possibility of undertaking a specialization course in conservation. In 1989 I joined the Masters' program in Architectural Conservation at the School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi.



Archaeological findings in Gobindgarh fort during conservation

How has formal training in architecture helped shape your career?

GR: My training was not only through the formal degree courses in architecture. While in college I enrolled in programs to do pottery - I trained at the Delhi Blue Pottery studio, under the great potter, Sardar Gurcharan Singh. After my Master's in Conservation I joined the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) where I was in charge of listing and documentation of unprotected heritage. I was mindful that the first step towards conservation of heritage is to undertake systematic mapping. It was during that period that I went for a training program to US-ICOMOS, where I was positioned in the office of the National Park Service in Washington D.C. It gave me an opportunity to discover that the 'significance of heritage is not the monumentality of a building or a site' and heritage must be recognized and deciphered in all its layers in terms of the people it belongs to.

In the course of my career, I continuously sought to travel and participate in training programs based on my explorations. For instance, I studied the use of lime and later wood at a time when I was seeking to equip myself with technical aspects related to conservation of buildings built with these materials. When I was seeking to understand the role of culture in contributing to peaceful societies, I went to UNITAR, where the theme for that year was culture and its role in peace building. In recent years I have been seeking to develop an integrated approach in heritage based development where nature and culture and communities are central to the planning processes. I went to the University of California, Berkeley where the Beahrs Environmental Leadership Program (ELP) offered a learning opportunity for mid-career practitioners to broaden their knowledge and perspectives on environmental and natural resource conservation and management.
I also trained in the use of earth as a building material at a program conducted by the Getty Conservation Institute.

Below: Gobindgarh fort cells and colonial building after conservation





How did CRCI come about?

GR: I worked as an architect with INTACH from 1992-1995. During that time I realized the need to understand the cultural context to be able to intervene sensitively in heritage matters. In one of his lectures, my mentor, Sir Bernard Fieldon, explained that he saw himself as a provincial architect; he said that we must understand global but act local. I came to understand that I should first work in a context wherein I understand the heritage and develop tools before working in a larger geographic context. On my return from the US, I decided to work in Punjab and established a conservation consultancy firm in 1996 - the Cultural Resource Conservation Initiative (CRCI).



Rambagh garden edge defining

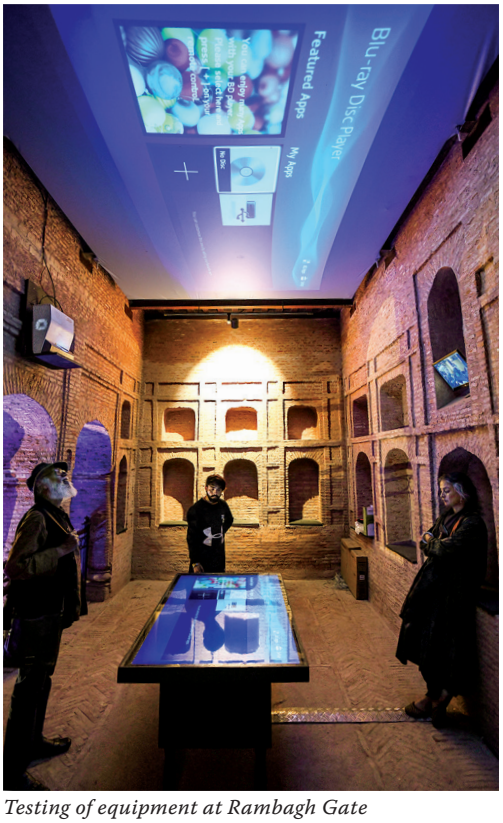
What is your approach to heritage conservation?

GR: I believe that heritage is wealth generated by communities and hence conservation practice must ensure that the values embedded in the heritage inform the cultural heritage practice. All steps in the process and the final outcome must be informed by the idea that 'heritage is a public good'. As a heritage practitioner, I may not have a mandate to actualize the ideal plan, an output or an outcome but the possibilities must continue to exist for the puzzle to be completed. At CRCI, we are extremely concerned about the technical competence of the project output. We engage in careful site supervision to achieve the desired outcome. I believe that the integrity and authenticity of heritage sites are defined by the embedded values, attributes of which can be intangible or tangible, and hence this understanding should inform the nature of interventions for material conservation, permissible types of uses, etc. Unfortunately this is where much compromise is seen to happen as decision makers have the approach of 'one size fits all'. Part of the eco system is that heritage practice is enabled by good governance, absence of which compromises the outcome. There are several steps I would like to include in practice as a cultural worker - more scientific research to inform conservation practice on one hand, and on the other a more rigorous community engagement plan.

How do cities with historic depth deal with modern planning policies?

GR: The question is really how modern planning policies address historic cities in India. Town planning acts in our country are enabling acts; some enable designation of areas rich in heritage for development of special plans. However, the local government





Testing of equipment at Rambagh Gate (Now: People's Museum)

acts under which the urban local bodies perform their duties do not have provisions for mapping of heritage buildings and according them with any special designations as buildings and sites of significance; they do not provide for regulatory mechanisms, deploy skills for conservation and integrated planning, provide for public engagement officers for community consultations for community centric design processes. Most historic cities, or historic cores of cities, house communities that are the bearers of creative skills. These skills and creative expressions give the city a unique character; for instance, the craft traditions of Jaipur and Srinagar, the weavers of Varanasi, the practices in the *mathas* of Puri, and 'mono' food outlets in Amritsar. These practices and skills require to be nurtured and their needs addressed for enhancement of these industries as they provide for livelihood opportunities. Very little is done in planning for these creative communities. Natural heritage too is seen to be ignored; rivers are depleted of water due to inappropriate planning interventions and have become waste water drains. Untreated sewage and solid waste is found to be dumped in the water bodies. Natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, are not appropriately addressed in the historic cities. We are beginning to pay a price for this type of development paradigm now.

What are some of the key projects taken up by CRCI?

GR: Every project is unique and provides opportunities for negotiating a new path for an inclusive and integrated approach. Learnings from each feed into the subsequent project. Among the many projects we have been engaged in are:



Rambagh Gate inaugural ceremony

Conservation of shared sacred sites in Punjab under UNESCO's international year of Culture of Peace: This included conservation of a Krishna temple in Kishankot village and conservation of Guru Ki Maseet, a mosque built by the sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind. The project gave me insight into shared legacies, and that heritage is of a 'people' and needs to be central to determining the processes for heritage conservation.

Mapping of heritage sites along the Mughal Imperial Highway and the Grand Trunk Road: This included preparation of the conservation plans for several buildings of heritage significance, and preparation of the dossier for inclusion of the cultural route in the tentative list for world heritage inscription by the Government of India.

Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the Red Fort in Delhi: The CCMP was possibly the first management plan prepared for any monument in India. The Supreme Court of India directed the Archaeological Survey of India to initiate this activity. The plan was prepared as a collaboration between CRCI and the Archaeological Survey of India; ASI undertook all excavations and scientific studies, while CRCI undertook research, documentation, conservation planning and recommended the implementation strategy.

Establishment of Lime Centre: This was a not-for-profit technical agency to promote the use of lime as a building material. We trained artisans and architects in the use of the material on several sites. This was specifically required in Punjab as the region had completely lost the skills in the use of this material and it was the principal binding material in the heritage buildings.

Cultural heritage conservation and revitalization plan for the Gobindgarh fort in Amritsar: The conservation plan for the fort was special on various fronts - from the 'sighting' or discovery of the fort (in 1996) to the initiative of recovery and conservation. This is the first instance where the military has transferred the title of the fort to a civilian government, for civilian use.

Madhya Pradesh Monuments Project: The World Monuments Fund (WMF), an organization based out of New York, approached me to manage preparation of conservation plans for over 40 protected monuments in the state of Madhya Pradesh. CRCI developed a unique system of scoping the work by preparing a framework for assessment of the historic buildings. We undertook this assessment in collaboration with the engineers of the Department of Archaeology.



Patti interior courtyard



Inaugural function of Hriday project

HRIDAY – Amritsar and Puri: CRCI was appointed as the HRIDAY city anchor for two of the 12 historic cities earmarked by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; for the first time in the history of urban development initiatives in India, heritage was being considered as an important part of the urban planning process by the government. Our teams prepared infrastructure development plans responsive to the cultural heritage and community needs in both the cities. We were successful in recovering sites and spaces of cultural and material heritage significance through removal of debris, encroachment and general misuse, and further revitalized them into invaluable public spaces.

Consultancy for assessing the heritage value of buildings of the silk factory, Rajbagh, Srinagar: Research, community and stakeholder consultation gave us an insight into the significance of silk production as a heritage for the people in the valley. We recommended an integrated approach for the revival of the silk industry through enhancement of opportunities for the rearers and reelers.

Waters of Kashmir: A tourism project in the Kashmir valley, it gave us the opportunity to respond to both culture and nature's bounty. The waters of the Jhelum River are closely linked with built heritage, spaces and living culture of the people of the valley. We have developed a framework for intervention in a select number of precincts to address the heritage features based on principles of equitable development and ecological restoration. One of the important outcomes would be enhanced tourism so as to create livelihood opportunities for the local community.



Serai Lashkari Khan

What was the most challenging brief you've ever received? How did you go about it?

GR: Actually, I create my own brief! In heritage practice in India the 'output' is defined and not an 'outcome'. The outcome is determined by the practitioner. Each of my projects has a unique methodology defined by my vision for the project. My method and approach to work has always been determined by research and values; the scope of work is obviously defined by the client.

Share your experience of being a jury member for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

GR: Two of my projects received the Award of Distinction in 2002 and 2005, subsequent to which I was invited to be on the jury of the Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. I have been on the jury since then, for over a decade. The awards are to recognize private initiatives in heritage conservation.

It is very interesting to examine how different countries in the region approach heritage conservation; for instance, in the case of China, the projects are undertaken with active engagement of educational institutions, principally the universities where they provide technical skills. Jury members are from ten countries - this provides a unique opportunity to deliberate as each jury member carries a special point of view which is also contextual.

Tell us about your involvement with ICOMOS.

GR: ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a very unique platform for professionals engaged in cultural heritage. These professionals include landscape architects, archaeologists, art conservators, structural engineers, historians, lawyers, and material specialists. The mandate is to create knowledge by way of doctrinal texts like charters, guidelines and recommendations. National committees of all member states of UNESCO contribute to this pool of knowledge.

I serve as Vice President of ICOMOS India, which is engaged in several activities, aligned with international colleagues, which impact at both global and local levels. I have personally engaged with the initiative of Rights Based Approaches in heritage management, an initiative of ICOMOS Norway. The focus is on training and capacity building based on the work of practitioners and policy makers across the word. Another initiative of ICOMOS India is to expand the opportunities for young professionals for both practice and capacity building initiatives. The other area of focus is to continue generating a body of knowledge by heritage practitioners to inform policy and practice at the national level.

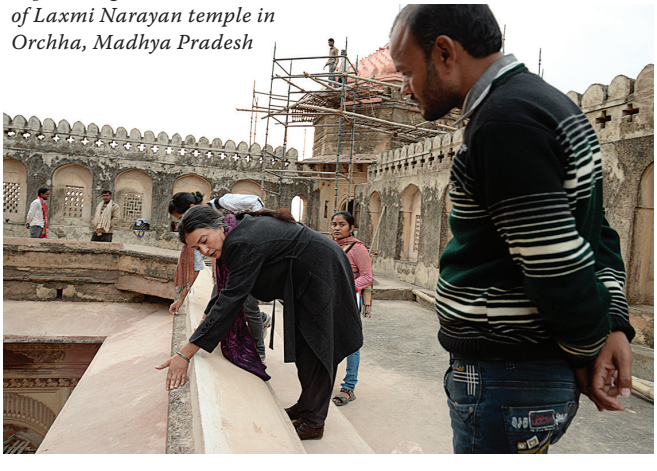
Tell us about your contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals ratified by the Government of India.

GR: The United Nations has recognized culture as one of the pillars of sustainable development fairly recently. I am currently involved in CITIIS, a program of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs of the Government of India; it is a unique program aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in an urban space as part of the Smart City program in 12 cities. The project framework ensures stakeholder engagement through the entire process of the program. It ensures technical competence through social and technological innovations based on comprehensive and accurate data collection, analysis and feasibility studies. Further tools for monitoring of the projects will be developed along with measurable indicators to measure both outputs and outcomes of the project. Capacity building workshops have been developed to update the skills of teams in charge of implementation of the project at the city level.

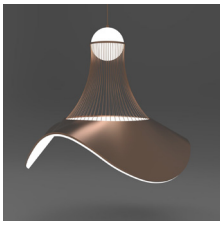
Where do you see conservation architecture in India heading in the next five years?

GR: The sector is growing steadily - the indicators are the number of institutions that offer projects in architectural conservation and urban regeneration. Young people with degrees in architecture have a growing interest in heritage and sustainable development. The gap is in the necessary eco system, and conditions for growth in the sector. Government policies are not undertaking the reforms necessary for equitable, ecologically inclusive and culturally responsive development models. Procurement processes in government

Supervising the conservation of Laxmi Narayan temple in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh



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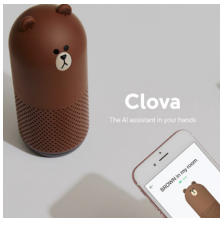













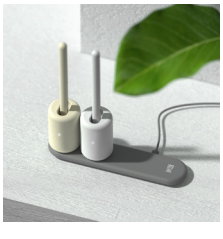











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Hathi Gate after conservation - chowk street furniture under construction

bodies are such that there are minimal opportunities for young professionals; little space exists for innovation. Projects in the heritage space are output driven rather than processes with long term outcomes, such as behavioral change in society towards heritage. While there are huge opportunities in the physical infrastructure development sector in the urban space, there are not enough in the development sector integrated within the urban development space. This integration is critical to achieve the SDGs at the local levels, towards which countries are obliged at the global level.

After decades in the field, what would you advise young architects?

GR: There are immense opportunities in today's world to engage and be creative in the urban and rural development sector, at the heart of which are culture, nature and communities. Tools are also immense given the technologies and knowledge that is accessible; innovation is the center piece. While technology gives new opportunities, it is fundamental to understand the embedded knowledge in tradition and cultural and ecological practices. The integration of the two would help develop a more resilient world for all creation. Endeavor to create partnerships and linkages early in life and nurture the possibilities that arise out of co-creation, sharing and collaborations, recognizing that the 'other' is critical for a resilient world.

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Rambagh western deori after conservation



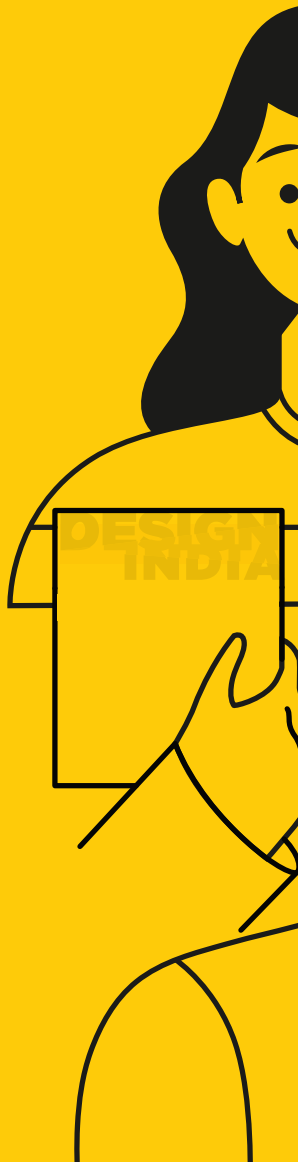
This story was coordinated and designed by Anshika Seth, student at NIFT Patna, interning at Designindia Magazine.

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Celebrating LIFE

Param Sahib's *often eccentric and colorful designs seem to reflect his own crazy and carefree personality*



Chilling with lions





What drew you to fashion?

PS: After my schooling, I joined Kirori Mal College in New Delhi, for English Hons, and that's where I formed my first fashion society. The faculty and I wanted to have a fashion society beyond art, theater and music. We organized weekly workshops on the basics of fashion - designers, trends, fabric. We also organized a model hunt followed by a fashion show for which I created all the costumes by myself for the very first time. A year later, realizing that I needed formal training to pursue a career in fashion, I dropped out of college and got into NIFT Bangalore; I graduated by topping the college with 10 points, winning three major awards. I immediately started working as a fashion assistant for Tollywood movies – for a daily wage of five hundred rupees! I also took up ad projects.

What was the turning point that led to starting your own label?

PS: Six months later I moved to Delhi to work as an assistant fashion designer and a graphic design freelancer for five years until I decided to start working on my label.



The day I figured that I didn't want to be working under someone and building their dreams led me to put things on a fast track and start my label.

Your celebrated capsule collection - Nineties Child - is a brilliant display of unisex shirts. What was the idea behind it?

PS: The Nineties Child shirts serve as a mirror to the bygone era of classic fashion, highlighted by baggy trousers, jazzy shirts, psychedelic tops and an overall laid-back esthetic. Each shirt carries a signature statement engineered to fit the tone, fancy and vibe of various individuals. Synonymous with the thrill of opening a tiffin box full of goodies as children, this capsule range of unisex shirts evokes the glee of unlocking a jar of treasured memories. This artsy collation of avant-garde designs is engineered to make millennials skip a beat in awe of the rich culture and environment amidst which most '90s kids grew up.

How is the Indian market different from the rest of the world when it comes to the acceptance of sustainability?

PS: It's pretty slow as the people are still running after fast fashion, without giving credit and supporting home artisans / home grown labels. But the scenario is changing for good.

How does your label fit into the definition of fashion in today's time?

PS: Apart from the clothes being bold and highly surfaced, the outfits are also wearable and



comfortable. Brides today want to be fuss free, experimental and unique in their own way.

Your clothing line is an extension of your bold and dynamic personality. What inspires you to create such eccentric styles?

PS: My idea about the brand comes from and extends into how I fundamentally want to live my life. It's about larger than life celebrations and love and colors and craziness. These emotions are then replicated into clothes, so that the wearer has an everlasting happy experience.

What is most crucial for you when it comes to designing clothes?

PS: A collection is always strong because of what it brings to the table. So, a good inspiration or theme is all that it takes. We try to translate the inspiration into garments through prints, shapes, silhouettes and surfaces!



Water baby

How do you position your line? Does the Indian fashion market give you space to experiment?

PS: Yes! Brides and bridesmaids are pretty experimental when it comes to playful colors, surfaces and cuts! With destination and theme based wedding ceremonies, people love to explore.

How do you strike a balance between creativity and the commercial side of it?

PS: That is where the commercial viability of a designer comes in! We try to divide a collection into art pieces and commercial pieces.

Tell us about your illustrations that challenge the gender norms of society.

PS: People/audiences today are increasingly moving to gender fluid ideologies. My illustrations have a 'surd' guy as a protagonist, experiencing a queer life, and the new challenges and experiences of each day! This offended a

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chunk of men from my community, who began threatening me three years back, and when that did not stop, they came to my office and broke it down!

What is your take on sustainability and the zero waste policy?

PS: A lesser known fact is that I run my office on an 80%-90% zero waste policy. It's just not an option for anyone in fashion, it has become a prerequisite to think and act around it. Our industry contributes significantly to the world's industrial waste, and as designers we should take it upon ourselves to mend ways going ahead.

How do you plan to expand your brand?

PS: We are currently in the process of opening two standalone stores – one in Delhi and the other in Mumbai.

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design with principles

The Lounge, Essex Farms



Poulomi Dhar and Jatin Gupta *established their architectural practice to fulfill a common desire to meaningfully impact people's lives*

Why were you drawn to architecture? How has formal education influenced your career?

PD: I have always had a keen interest in all things design. During my school days, I would be more interested in assignments related to sketching, graphics and mathematics. It was a very easy decision for me to take up architecture as my professional studies, because it could take forward my passion for design. The fact that you could have something that you've designed realized in real life gave me a pump. I thought this could be a meaningful way to impact people's lives.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Architecture. Architecture Design was my favorite subject as it involved logics, application of mind, problem solving capabilities and calculations. Healthy discussions with faculty members brought out new perspectives and helped me mold my sense of planning and esthetics. During my internship period under Ar. Navneet Malhotra and Ar. Ritu Malhotra, I understood the importance of detailing in any project, big or small. Handling BOQs at such an early stage in my career boosted my confidence in handling clients and contractors. For several years I worked as a team leader with Saheba Singh, where I handled a lot of hospitality projects before deciding to have my own studio.



Cafe Tesu, Essex Farms

JG: Geometry was always fascinating for me since school. I choose Engineering Drawing in the 11th Standard as the optional subject, and that's when I knew what career I would pursue. My brother, who had already enrolled for his Bachelor's in Architecture, also played an important part in my decision. His college assignments would always intrigue me – I wanted to know more about planning, facades, structural calculations, esthetics, etc. But mostly, the thought of influencing people's lives and the way they live made me choose architecture as my career.

In college I learnt about the concepts and the basic principles behind designing spaces effectively. During summer breaks, I did a few internships, which gave me practical experience of how things happen in the real world. After a few short stints with Ar. Navneet Malhotra and Ar. Revathy Kamath, I knew I was prepared to start my own establishment.



Savoyard House

How did Design Ethics Architecture Studio come about?

JG: Design Ethics came into being sometime around mid-2016. Both of us had worked in the same office and were already doing some small scale freelancing work collaboratively but we knew we wanted a big enough break to take the leap of leaving our jobs and start on our own, full throttle. Luckily, we got one very soon. The project was based in the heart of Delhi and it came out pretty well. The three months of designing and executing really gave us a confidence boost and we decided on a name which would project two important aspects of our work, i.e., design and ethics. We got the firm registered, found a place, and built a team.

What makes your partnership work?

PD: When we were colleagues in the same firm, we often found ourselves opting to collaborate and discuss design. We really respected each other's style of working and approach to project briefs. We enjoyed our deep friendship and shared enough design sensibilities to decide to start our maiden design firm. We are glad that we did. Being best friends and each other's worst critics makes it all work. We are constantly fighting for the betterment of the projects on our table, but we try and ensure that we work on designs together. Even when it is not feasible for us to manage this because of time and pressure, we always offer our opinions to each other to challenge and tweak the design lines and details. One of us is more courageous when it comes to designing and the other is more diligent, but it has worked out just fine for us.

How do you harmonize the esthetics of East and West?

JG: The concept of harmony is a complex topic since antiquity, and it gets further complicated when one talks about creating





BBQ Company

a balance between the esthetics of East and West. Tracing the cultural trajectory of both is the first step towards attaining it. Art and architecture tend to use different perspectives to represent the visual world, both in the geometric and metaphorical sense. The key is to find that one element that binds them or at least touches each other at the surface.

PD: For us, colors do the trick. They play an important role in attaining this harmony. This occurs on two levels: on the surface and in the depth. While the former is easier to achieve as it is superficial transformation of materials, it takes a lot of study into both the worlds to achieve the latter, as it tends to create an esthetic experience for the end user. Having said that, it is not necessary to achieve this balance in all our projects - every project has its own set of requirements and demands and should be dealt with accordingly.



C62 Residence



Left & right: Daler

What does it take to turn a space into an experience?

PD: Every space is by default an experience for the user - whether it is a good or a bad one is in the hands of the designer. We like to keep things simple, unless the project or the client demands otherwise. We intend to let the materials and finishes speak for themselves. This simplifies the communication and elevates the experience of being in a well-designed space. Our design mantra is not to add elaborate touches if they are not necessary. A good experience comes from the core planning, not from the superficial treatments.

Which have been your most memorable projects?

JG: We haven't done much yet as we are a very young firm, but each and every project has a memory to cherish. If I really had to pick a few, I would choose a village resort in Ranchi where we are being really cautious of the materials we use and the techniques we apply to bring down the cost. Apart from this, Café Tesu in Delhi is really close to my heart as it was our first project.

PD: Every project becomes a part of you the moment you get involved in it. And mere involvement in it becomes a memory to cherish. However, if I have to mention my favorites till now, there is this small project we did for Essex Farms Hospitality, which helped us understand that we could diversify towards PEB construction and conservation as well. Also, a residential project by the name of 'Residence 2by1' was our first major architectural project; it went on for two years and gave us a lot of insights about how things are done.

What has been the oddest brief you've received?

PD: Without a single doubt, that would be the re-development of Essex Farms. While it was not really odd, it was an oddly difficult one. The pre-independence property based in the heart of Delhi falls under a law that only allows one to build, or rather modify, the ground level structures. We could not add a basement or a floor above. The most difficult part was that all the activities were to remain active while we refurbished the whole complex. Anyway, we found our ways around it. We picked up structures one by one, started dismantling walls and retrofitting the metal structures. We realized that we actually had a lot of space available to play around with - they were just badly planned. It's been almost three years and the project is still running. Café Tesu and Yes Minister are a part of this project.



What inspires you?

PD: I seek inspiration from anyone or anything that addresses the higher emotions and values in us as human beings. New materials, events in the building/interior fraternity and socializing with fellow designers remain a constant booster to help think out of the box and widen my horizons.

JG: I get inspiration from my daily experiences - the things that I see around me and how they impact us in a larger perspective.

Have you faced many entrepreneurial challenges so far?

PD: Being a young and growing firm, the biggest challenge is to convince a new client that we can handle their project. We have to prove our worth over and over again, but we take it as a challenge and try to outdo ourselves with every project.

JG: Dealing with the unknown is a very big challenge when you are young as a firm. There are clients who will take undue advantage of you being a novice in terms of the design consultancy fee. We are trying to overcome this by drafting a tighter schedule of payments and contract pointers.

What's next?

PD: The studio plans to get bigger and better. Apart from the architectural and interior projects, we also have plans to diversify into artisanal furniture this year. We are already working with local artisans to develop products that are focused on local artistry from various parts of the country.

JG: On a larger scale, our aspiration is to get into the design-and-build module of working as we feel it is getting really difficult to maintain quality control with third party agencies. We cannot just rely on a good design - it needs good people to execute it well. This is in the pipeline but will take time. We are still trying to learn the essentials involved in it.

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As the wheel turns

The mountains she grew up in have left lasting impressions on studio potter and ceramicist ***Devyani Smith's*** *work*





How did your journey in ceramics begin?

DS: I have a Diploma in Advertising and PR, and worked in the Indian television industry in Delhi and Mumbai for eight years before I discovered pottery as a hobby. In 2008 I started learning pottery from Hanif Galwani in Mumbai and then later at Sandeep Manchekar's studio. I learnt without formal structure, from everyone who knew more and was willing to help. I practiced and worked out of Hanif's and Sandeep's studios till in 2014 I set up my own studio in Mumbai. Barring the occasional sculptural piece, most of my work is utilitarian in stoneware clay.

Why were you drawn to utilitarian pottery?

DS: I take this from my mother - everything she made was for a purpose. Nothing was simply for art, perhaps because we were a middle class family of three girls, surviving on her government teacher salary. My mother is 84 now and she's currently doing embroidery work on some curtains, after finishing a tatting bookmark for a friend of mine.

Why does your work tend towards monochrome?

DS: It takes a certain amount of silence to appreciate beauty, stillness to appreciate movement, darkness to appreciate light. I prefer the silence or stillness of monochrome to enable the user to discover form, texture and patterns in my work...a gradual and evolving depth of perception.



How do you come up with a collection?

DS: As an artist, evolution is a constant desire – one wishes not to repeat oneself but also to build on one's strengths or one's voice to express oneself in newer ways. The start of every new collection or cycle of work is always intimidating. I draw (on page), I visualize pieces for weeks. Then there's testing of glazes, sgraffito patterns and so on. I start with a few test pieces and only after it emerges to my satisfaction, does the 'collection' become apparent even to myself.

How do you distribute and market your products?

DS: I often wonder if I weren't operating in the time of social media, if anyone would ever have heard of me. Perhaps Facebook/Instagram are now the new definition of the 'village market'. Those are the two platforms where I put up latest works and updates. No 'marketing' besides that. Over the years, I've been at a bunch of galleries and potters' markets and there are open house sales from the studio itself - that's how word gets around. I have also been supplying to a few niche lifestyle stores across India, like Good Earth, Good Earth Paro, Bungalow Eight, and Options.

What does it take to prepare for a show?

DS: Working for a show is usually intense - hoping and praying for minimum rejects/accidents as possible, wanting the work to come out as one intended and within the committed time frame. It's a bit like holding your breath...time tends to blur. Subsequently, the show is like an exhale. It's the calm after the storm. And



it's happened more than once that I join a visitor to look at my work and it seems new to my own eyes.

What inspires you?

DS: Impressions in my subconscious. I grew up in the mountains and they have a way of leaving long lasting impressions. Similarly with flowers, trees, soil...all my work is simply an osmotic expression of these impressions.

What challenges have you faced so far?

DS: Being a studio potter in Mumbai poses its own set of existential challenges. Costs are intimidating; and the less we speak of revenues, the better. From dusty environments, to rat infestation, to a red wire/blue wire countdown race of whether



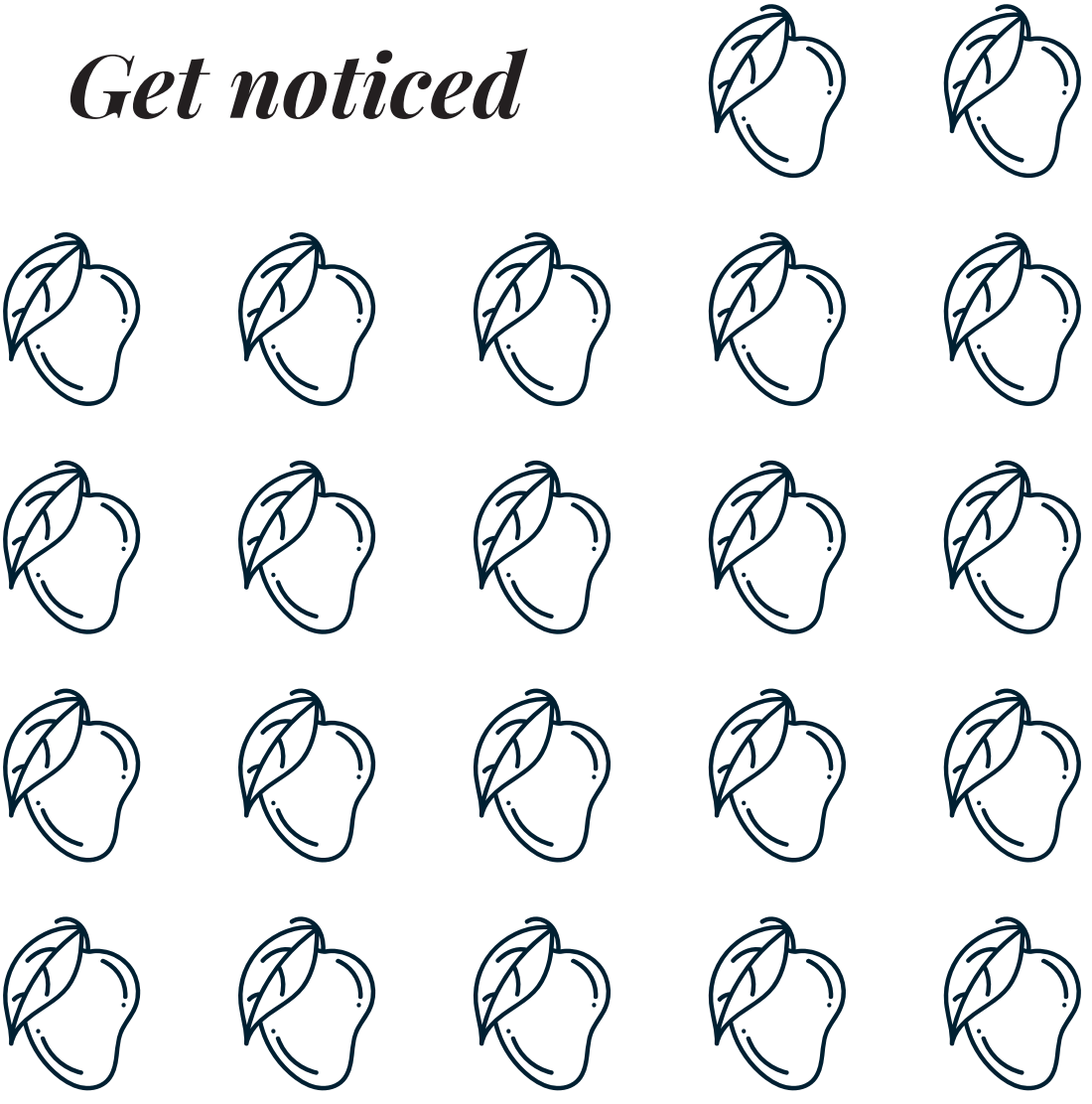


the gas man will deliver the replacement cylinder before the one deployed in firing runs out... these are real challenges for me. In their face, creative challenges are a welcome breather - a privilege, almost.

What has teaching ceramics taught you?

DS: The one constant thread I've found with every student is that everyone's looking to get in touch with/express themselves, and in this case, the medium is pottery. When one teaches, one chances upon articulations of embodied practices, which appear as revelations even to oneself. Life is like pottery. When you're struggling to pull a piece on the wheel, you have to calmly

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During a brief stint at Mantra Pottery, Auroville (2014)

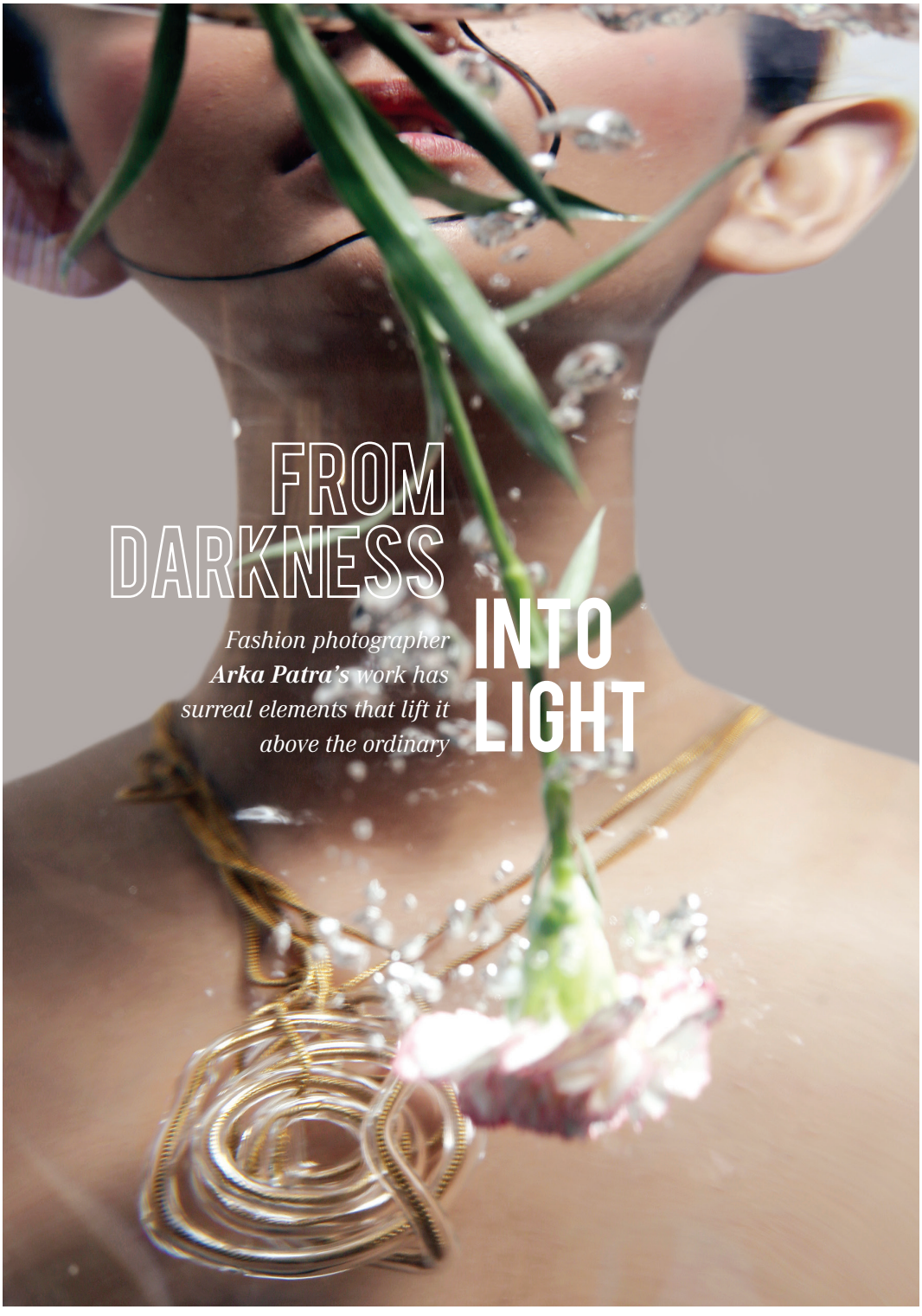


bring it to a stop, disengage, take a break, and come back later. One does best when one is fully involved, but also detached at the same time.

What's next?

DS: I'm part of a gallery show that opens mid-March in Mumbai. Then there's a solo show in Kochi that's scheduled later this year. In terms of aspirations, there's an idea of a community studio in my mind, but that turn in the road feels quite a way ahead, yet.

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FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

*Fashion photographer **Arka Patra's** work has surreal elements that lift it above the ordinary*





Left & above: Campaign for Vasundhara jewelry, 'An interaction'

Campaign for Divya Seth, 'Food for skin'



What inspired you to take up visual art and photography?

AP: I started out as a painter and images always appealed to me as a medium of communication, a medium for experiences and emotions. Photography was an organic transition. I studied engineering mainly because I didn't see a career in art at that point, and all good Indian children must either study engineering or medicine. While I was in college, I started assisting a couple of photographers/artists whose work I looked up to. Post college, I started working as a fashion photographer full time and never looked back.

Why do you think your photography is so influenced by art?

AP: I have been collecting art books and cheap prints of paintings and sculptures since I was a kid. I grew up in awe and fascination of the skill and enchantment of classical art from the West, as well as from the subcontinent. For example, the tenderness of fingers holding a lotus, and the dreamy expression of the Padmapani of Ajanta. These visuals shaped my idea of beauty and esthetics, sometimes consciously sometimes subconsciously.

Which subjects most appeal to you?

AP: Although my visual style is heavily inspired from pre-20th century art, I want my subjects to be relevant to contemporary culture and its issues. As an artist my intent is to voice the need for dialogue on topics like gender, sexuality,



From series 'Portraits of men'

and beauty; I try to normalize these through my images. I understand an image is a one-way communication but I encourage discussions and reflections induced by these images. The goal is to create images that provide you with an experience and not just something you flip through in a magazine or unmindfully scroll down your Instagram feed.

Your photography is a blend of fine arts and strong social messages. How do you balance both?

AP: Art is the product of interaction between the artist and the society or an environment they are enclosed in. It is the voice of that person expressed through images, objects or words. I don't think you can divorce the two. Since the subjects I work on are contemporary, the social relevance is ingrained in the images itself.

How is your work challenging the gender norms and taboos of society?

AP: At the very least the images spark conversations and that is very important. So, the series 'Portraits of Men' explores masculinity and subverts the societal norms of what it means to be a man. The images are intended to expand the horizons of societal understanding and unbox gender perception in subtle terms. These are not images that have shock value, because that has an effect of alienating a section of the audience; instead, these images slowly nudge us into having a dialogue and maybe accepting oneself beyond gender roles.

From series 'Like eggshells' (fragile masculinity)





Series 'Do not go to the garden of flowers'



What does it take to prepare for a photo shoot? How do you decide the palette?

AP: The subject guides the palette for a series, apart from my own mood at that point of time. For my personal work I do everything from pre-production to sourcing and post processing. That takes time since I have to create many of the props or objects. For example, for the series 'Melancholia' I was not able to source taxidermy birds, and decided to do it myself with a lot of guidance from YouTube videos. For collaborations, there are people to have things done, and the process is much simpler.

Take us through your process from conceptualization to post processing. Where does magic happen?

AP: It varies from project to project, but generally the germ of an idea comes from an image - it can be a painting or a photojournalistic image from a news article. It can also come from random conversations or books. Then I do a primary conceptualization with sketches, and let it sit for weeks, sometimes years, till I get the right people to shoot with. There is also some amount of pre-production that I have to take care of. But the magic is never in your control. I believe that images are going to be created when the time is ripe for it - you can only be prepared for it or not.

Which have been your most memorable projects?

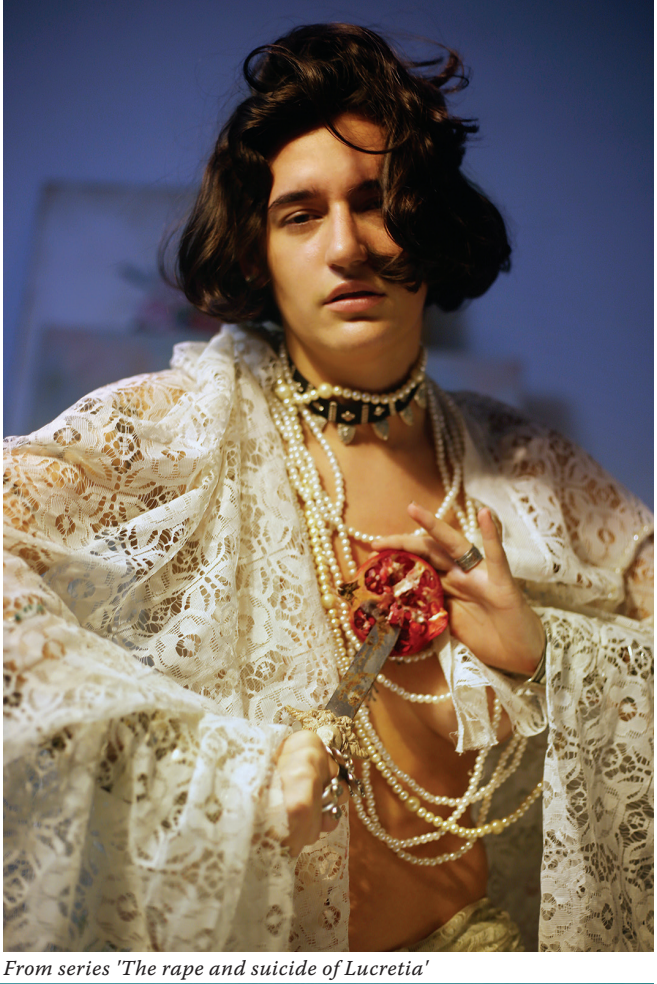
AP: My most memorable project would be 'Do Not Go to the Garden of Flowers', which is based on a poem by Kabir. I felt the images that I was able to create in the series were the closest to what I had envisioned in the mood board and that felt very pure and honest. Another series very close to my heart is 'Melancholia', a set of portraits with Deanna Dejanovic. The images explored a sense of fantasy that to me is still very relatable.

Who has been a constant source of inspiration?

AP: There are photographers like Tim Walker, Ulduss Bakhtiozina, and Nick Knight, whose phenomenal work has inspired and encouraged me to do the things I do in my images. The images they create and have created gave me the confidence to explore my fantasies through photographs.

What is your take on censorship when it comes to depicting art through photography?

AP: Censorship is absurd. It is a violation of my freedom to express or consume the content that I wish to. The state or any institution cannot have the right to impose their sense of morality on me or anyone unless it incites violence or can directly harm another individual.



From series 'The rape and suicide of Lucretia'



From series 'Himalayan honey'







Campaign for Bobo Calcutta, 'Love'

How do balance creativity and the commercial side of it?

AP: It depends on the purpose of the image. If it is to sell a product the creativity should serve that purpose and be limited to that. If it is to explore an idea or a commentary on the society then it should serve that purpose. There is no point wasting time in creating a bolt that does not fit the nut.

What's next for you? Share your goals and aspirations.

AP: I'm looking forward to creating better images that communicate my point of view. And maybe I'll bring out a book at some point.

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

eye–CATCHING IDEAS

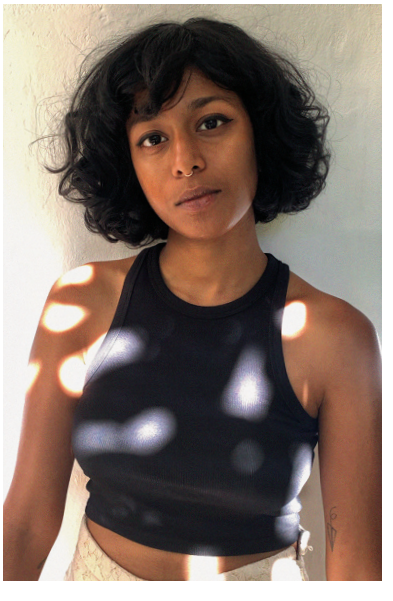
Illustrator, muralist and visual artist, ***Osheen Siva's*** *creative take on life is bold and uncompromising!*



Retro Futuristic Goddess



St+Art Chennai



How did growing up in a mixed environment influence your perception of art?

OS: Thanks to the nature of my dad's job, I was lucky enough to grow up and experience a number of cultures and countries at a young age. I did my kindergarten and childhood years in Taipei, Taiwan. In fact I was the only foreign kid in my entire school for the duration of the time we were there. From there I oscillated between hostels in India and spending my summers with my parents in China for a couple of years before finishing up part of my middle school and the entirety of my high school in China. I went on to work in Hong Kong for a bit after that. When I was growing up I hadn't fully realized or appreciated the unique nature of my upbringing; in fact I found myself quite alienated for the most part. However, looking back I'm so grateful for the wealth of knowledge and resources that I constantly refer to in my work now.

I actually graduated in Fashion Communication, which I steadily veered away from during the course of my study and ended up digging into something completely different. Years of personal project explorations and the fact that I started freelancing early on helped me enormously in figuring out where my interests lie and the direction I ultimately wanted to follow.

What made you decide to branch out on your own?

OS: I started as a graphic designer in an advertisement agency and worked with multiple design studios in different cities after graduation - all the while exploring illustration either through incorporating it with my design work or ideating some thoughts through after-work personal projects. It wasn't until a year ago that I had realized where the majority of my interests were and I wanted to give myself some time and space to work on my art practice full time. It took a good couple of years of mulling over and oscillating between design and personal practice to finally dive headfirst into where I am now. I recently moved to Goa in search of a change of pace and scenery.

For the New York Asian Film Festival





For Converse 1Like Campaign

Which are some of your most memorable projects?

OS: One of my favorite projects is a mural for the Museum Next Door (MND) art residency that I was invited to create in Jeju Island, South Korea. MND's Mural Project was created and initiated in collaboration with the locals and elders of the scenic matriarchal community of Jeju. The village is occupied by nine residential households located in the government designated Jeoji Artists Village. While the elders have great pride in their village, they also wanted changes that would not only respect the unique atmosphere of an old village, but also give them a sense of belonging to the new identity provided by the government. The artwork that was created for the residency was solely inspired by significant Jeju elements such as the traditional dance Buchaechum (classical fan dance predominantly performed by female dancers), Oyeo Meori (traditional headgear worn by the queens of the Joseon Dynasty) and rhino beetles (one of the most abundant insect species found on the island).

Some of my other cherished projects have been with the most supportive St-Art India Foundation based in Delhi. I've had the opportunity to participate in a number of their street art festivals, each of them memorable for their own unique experiences and the community with which we had the opportunity to collaborate and contribute to. It's always rewarding for me to create art that is public facing because of its ability to connect to the socio-cultural narrative present in the community in a transcendent and collective manner.



For the New Yorker Magazine



How do you strike a balance between digital and traditional media?

OS: I like exploring different mediums for their ability to provide unique means to analyze different dimensions in distinct depths. More often than not, the techniques and mediums tend to seep into and aid one another. For instance, a lot of my artworks are hand drawn first then rendered digitally and most of my murals are ideated and conceptualized through a digital sketch first.

Describe your style.

OS: My mum once called my works 'Puriyatha Pandangal', which translates to 'strange/bizarre art' in Tamil, which I quite liked. It's bold, uncompromising and futuristic.

What inspires you?

OS: I'm inspired by space, science, culture and my Tamilian heritage. Also, gender and its intersection with society and technology. The notion of surreal realms, dreams and nightmares play a major role in my works as well.



Overhead view paper mockup (A4)

What role has gender played in your works?

OS: Huge! Most of my works feature strong female characters. Art has not only been an outlet for expression but also a practice of self reflection and representation - exploring identity as an individual as well as a part of the larger community of women in society.

What's next? Please share your aspirations.

OS: In terms of mediums, I would love to further explore my current obsession with public art. I love the challenge of working on a large scale mural because of its process of trial and error and its integration into a particular society. I'm also perpetually wanting to try new things - from new software, new media and animation to installation design, sculptures, tattooing and so on. On a fundamental level I aim to strengthen my voice and collaborate/work with likeminded creatives.



Jeju, South Korea



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Materials as Muse

Arpan Patel and Aarushi Kumar *put their creative talents together to find a niche for themselves in the space between art and design*



How did it all begin?

AK: We met on facebook in 2011 due to mutual admiration for each other's art. At the time Arpan was doing a Master's at Camberwell College of Art in London and I was doing a Master's at Mudra Institute of Communication Ahmedabad. We realized then that we were a perfect fix with the same esthetics when it comes to creating art/design together and giving the design industry some wearable art/fashion. After we completed our Master's we went on to gain some professional experience before we got together to create Kassa (meaning 'house of two') five years ago.





Left & right: Fossil Collection





Hued bracelet

Tell us about Kassa.

AK: Kassa is an amalgamation of design, art, magic, and dreams that come together to create a sustainable future. It is a brand that creates lifestyle products for the design-conscious. We are particularly fascinated by accessories, furniture, and installation art. It's given us an opportunity to explore various design possibilities in different Indian crafts on materials from all over the world. We deal in wood, metal, marble, leather, resin, and paper - our imaginative use of materials is intrinsic to India's traditional craft culture, pushing the boundaries of techniques and sensorial experiences. We use a variety of techniques, including brass inlay, hand carving, weaving, doodling and casting but tessellations are Kassa's trademark and unique signature style.

We believe Kassa designs are for daily life and we have something for everyone, ranging from sculptural jewelry, wallets and recyclable paper bags to toys, watches and clothing.

What are your individual roles in the business?

AP: We both design. I handle workshops and material explorations while Aarushi looks after retail, graphics, and e-commerce.

Aarushi, how has your formal education in Visual Arts influenced your career?

AK: Art is a way of life for me. It has been the same throughout and even with Kassa, I visualize each piece as an art/graphic or an installation and then design functionality and put use to it. You can also call it Functional Art. Art really helps



you see things in a different perspective - even when you are just designing a jewelry piece you are automatically thinking of it as a sculpture. Thus, my background has hugely influenced Kassa.

What goes into creating your minimal design language?

AP: We believe less is more and hence the language. Detail is what creates magic and plays a crucial part in the process.



Forest bags collection

Introduce us to your design process.

AP: We both dream like artists and think like entrepreneurs. After working with many materials and crafts we found that there is a lot of scope and design potential in this area. This led us to experiment with various possible design themes. We believed in creating something that is uniquely our own, something that we would see, fall in love with, buy and use. We follow both the design processes – form follows function, and vice versa. Reusing, recycling and re-interpretation of materials are major processes and the base of modern functionality and utility. Over the past few years and with more learning that's become the core of Kassa and contributes to our versatility.

Upcycling and recycling are key elements in our design process, and we bring the design community together through this 'functionality meets design' approach. We work with each and every material possible. Give us anything (also plastic) and we can upcycle or recycle it. Using waste and leftover material from industries, our pieces are limited editions, and each piece bears a unique number; once made, it can't be repeated in an exactly similar style or color combination. Be it metal or leather, we make sure that it's sustainable as a whole.

DESIGN AWARD 2021

IF DESIGN AWARD ACCEPTS ENTRIES

WHAT'S NEW?

A **digital judging process** — the Online Preselection — will take place beforehand, during which only the best 50 percent of all the entries made will be admitted to the Final Jury.

A **new evaluation system** based on optimised criteria and the use of a new scorecard will be introduced to make the jury results more individual and more transparent.

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DISCIPLINES

Product Design
Communication Design
Packaging Design
Architecture
Interior Architecture
Professional Concept
Service Design
User Experience (UX) -> NEW
User Interface (UI) -> NEW

DATES

26 June 2020	Early-bird registration deadline
30 October 2020	Regular registration deadline
1 December 2020	Last-chance registration deadline
18 - 22 January 2021	Jury Step 1: Online Preselection
29 -31 March 2021	Jury Step 2: Final Jury in Berlin
10 May 2021	Awards Ceremony in the Friedrichstadt-Palast, Berlin

EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATIONS WELCOME UNTIL 26 JUNE 2020!

www.ifworlddesignguide.com

How do you market your products?

AK: It's a digital age and Instagram is a great tool that we use constantly. Our website as an offline store and our physical stores in India are a great way to experience what Kassa wants to convey through graphical language, visual stories, and visual merchandise. It's more about targeting folks for a particular design we create.

What does it take to stay consistent in such a competitive industry?

AP: We never stop researching, exploring, creating new mediums, updating and learning from fellow contemporaries and upcoming or senior designers. We breathe art and design.

What are the challenges you have faced so far?

AP: Creating new designs a few times every year is challenging and might push you to fast fashion. Hence, it's very challenging to create something new each time keeping in mind the values one resonates with. It's a designer's responsibility to stay always



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



Above & below: Kassa Devanagari watch



updated about your surroundings in as many fields as possible. Spending maximum time in research and explorations is what will take you ahead. Understanding the material is a key factor and most important.

Share your aspirations.

AK: Our aspirations include taking Indian crafts/extinct crafts to an international level.

contact@studiokassa.com



REALITY RECREATED

*Sculptor **Dhruva Mistry** doesn't like the idea of a studio space. His creations are usually born on the computer in his bedroom before being brought to life elsewhere!*



How did your tryst with art begin?

DM: As a child, I spent much of my time playing with natural and man-made objects, apart from drawing and painting. For me studies in school were not that interesting. My father moved to semi-rural Kanjari from Bhavnagar (in Gujarat) for a better future. I studied in Vallabh Vidhyanagar, which was several kilometers from home. My family told me that I needed a job to make a decent living. However, after secondary school, I opted for art, even though it was not a sought after subject like engineering and medicine. In 1974, I finally went to Baroda and pursued a degree at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University. My tutors advised me to specialize in sculpture. In 1981, the British Council Scholarship allowed me to go to the Royal College of Art in London. Ideas of self development, the moral support of new friends, and interesting opportunities extended my stay in the UK. In 1997, I returned to resume my work in Baroda.



What is the primary role of an artist?

DM: As an artist I feel well equipped to explore and express available means and materials in my environment. The cultural history of various civilizations and the history of the 20th century offer inspiring insight into the flow of creative thought, be it art, craft, literature, science, architecture or technology. The arts provide opportunities for appreciation, dialogue, debate and necessary discernment in a world where human greed, suffering and pain continue to threaten us.



How do you deal with the conceptual difficulty and uncertainty of creating work?

DM: My mindfulness of my immediate and outer environment enhances self awareness. Conceptual individuation seems relative to my exposure, receptivity, state of being and the quality of experience. Learning about life is a day-to-day process that helps us verify the ideas of truth, where appearance may not match the core of reality. I look at things lit by reason and resonance to form shapes of intent. Then I work to ascertain nuances of dreams, desires and reality to make real



things. It is easy to encounter difficulties but I learn from my mistakes and work to overcome my shortcomings. Thus, I look to devise ways and find means to realize self goals with patience and commitment.

What inspires you?

DM: Over the years different things have interested me in sculpture. Some popular images, and other unexplored ideas of sculptural expression make me think of traditional and contemporary ideas through their formal, visual presence and conceptual and cultural reference. My work and practice broadens my understanding of visual, social and cultural values vis-à-vis my visual and conceptual comprehension of my work. I am inspired by the almost incomprehensible complexity of the invisible and moving world of creatures and the immense beauty and power of nature.

Are you more of a studio artist or naturally collaborative by nature? How do you feel about commissions?

DM: The studio idea wasn't that prevalent in my formative years. There were only a handful of big names working in big cities as professionals of their time. Like traditional craftsmen, tradesmen and designers, most artists worked from home. In London I didn't quite like idea of a studio away from home and going there religiously to spend time. I prefer to have a quite homely atmosphere with a kitchen, chair or settee, a clean restroom, materials and some books. Since 2008, much of my work is done in my bedroom where I draw, read, write, draft, and design shapes on a personal computer for works to be made locally where there are requisite facilities for welding, grinding and so on.

Commissions are an interesting way to learn about other people's interests, requirements, and resources. I haven't made any work that I didn't like. My works in public spaces are personal statements with a kind of visual altruism that engages people over a period of time.

A set of six monumental works in bronze and stone at the Victoria Square, Birmingham, commissioned by the city council reflect my visual interests in terms of scale, quality, materials and spatial relationship of forms meant to create a sense of the sublime in the middle of a busy city.

How does your audience interact and react to your work? What is that one thing you wished people would ask you but never do?

DM: If asked for an opinion, people seem to utter whatever they like. People also seek to conform to other people's opinion and align their views. Unlike most people, I don't confuse popularity with quality since I'm not sure of crowd sourced ideas and opinions about art which do not foster taste. It is good to have public empathy for art and culture as well as artists and their work.



Artists often experience contradicting motivations, commercial versus the creative. How do you strike a balance?

DM: To work for myself without expectation of material returns has motivated me from my early days. In my case, often the personal seems to have become public in terms of outdoor and sculptural exploration. My motives in life and work remain rather stoic, and commercial gain does not figure there. The curiosity to explore ideas of form and self-expression might not make you popular or rich, but it brings peace and stops the unsavory waste of time.

Let's get imaginative. What kind of a service or product in your opinion would alleviate artists' stress?

DM: Organized systems of alleviating artists' stress seem rather utopian and collectivist, and can affect individual freedoms. The best artists seem willing to learn and explore themselves so as to redefine their role within the ambit of available resources in different existential conditions. Public and private organizations can work to support the artistic autonomy of needy artists. Causes of stress in contemporary life remain complex, but the fear of pain and angst seem to be the new normal as news, views, and real as well as false propaganda are made viral by people in control of the media. In the new world artists need to study and question ideas of individual freedom and artistic autonomy.

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

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