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AN INITIATIVE BY

STIR



Bijoy Jain
Immediate Landscapes, 2018



Pic: Shantanu Prakash

ART-ITORIAL

Just the other day I was having a rather animated and intense discussion with two fellow artists on how technology is changing the way the new-gen approaches how they learn and work. The observation of one of my friends, a teacher at a Mumbai based architecture college, is from close quarters. "I was aghast when one of my students replied in a very matter-of-fact way when I asked why they prefer watching a movie than reading a book," she shared. Any guesses? It is sad and simple - "One has to imagine too much while reading a book! Something that is easily provided in a film." This phenomenon is applicable to consuming just about anything, especially in the creative space. The biggest joy of seeing art, for instance, is its discovery and interpretation. And if this very thing about it is the pain-point, then little can be done. As an artist with clay as my medium of choice, I know that there is absolutely no escape to dirtying my hands! I cannot avoid babysitting a kiln over a twelve-hour long firing process, and if it is forty-five degrees in the peak of summer, then so be it.

The process of art production itself varies widely, most requiring tedious and meticulous renditioning. There are however art practices that utilize the ready-made as components for the work they create. Is the objective to simplify the very process of making art? While the use of the machine-made product to make hand-made work of art itself is not new neither uncommon, in this issue we delve into the overlapping spaces of art and product, in context of architectural spaces and design processes. Marcel Duchamp used the readymade, as did the Dada artists in as early as 1910. The idea was a mockery of art by teasing and rejecting logic and reasoning, and to critically question its value in a rapidly industrialized world. "The real point of the readymade was to deny the possibility of defining art," said Calvin Tomkins, the biographer of Duchamp. In the contemporary context, is it the functional associations of the mass-produced objects that are relevant to artists? Or is it the visual form and texture of these impersonally manufactured things? Further, we investigate the vice-versa - use of art in the mass-produced (or at-least mechanically produced, in multiples) functional products.

Johann Goethe called architecture frozen music. Dance, then, can be described as painting in motion. Sculpture, a section of prose.

Crafting (or creating) is the basis of all art. Architectural and design practices are paying more attention to aesthetics along with functionality than ever. Are the lines blurring between creative disciplines? Maybe, the lines never existed and were only a figment of our imagination.

Rahul Kumar

Consulting Editor, Art & Interactive Media
mondo*arc india|STIR

MATERIAL MATTERS

*Rahul Kumar of mondo*arc india|STIR handpicks six creative individuals who wear many hats and straddle two (or more) worlds at one time. They are artists. They also make products. They break conventions by using materials that normally associate with industrial mass-production. However, most importantly, they are creators of objects that symbolise and materialise the intersection of their interests.*

There are those who like to operate in water-tight compartments: Art practices, like folk, modern, contemporary, conceptual; Designers, for products, apparel, accessories, interfaces; Architects, of buildings, landscapes, environments, experiences...and so on. We handpicked six creative individuals who wear many hats and straddle two (or more) worlds at one time. They are artists. They also make products. They break conventions by using materials that normally associate with industrial mass-production. However, most importantly, they are creators of objects that symbolise and materialise the intersection of their interests.

C O N C R E T E



P A P E R



C L A Y



M E T A L



T E X T I L E



G L A S S





TEXTILE GUNJAN ARORA & RAHUL JAIN

STUDIO: Threadarte (as an extension of garment manufacturing unit)
ESTABLISHED: 2004
LOCATION: New Delhi

WHO

Duo Gunjan Arora and Rahul Jain established a studio that began as an experiment to deal with textile waste. It became Arora's unique language that evolved in forms and matured in its sensibility with time. They are educationists and speak at various design institutions like NIFT and Pearl Academy of Fashion. They have extensively exhibited their art with private art galleries and at design fairs.

WHAT

In the larger picture, our medium is textile or rather textile waste, which ranges from materials like silk, cotton, linen, jute and steel yarns, and occasionally textile shards. The use of steel has helped induce strength to large-scale works and also initiated a journey of sculpting textiles. Since we like to be true to the cause of upscaling rejected textiles and threads, our process starts with collecting these from handloom weavers across the country, spinning mills and ateliers of fellow designers. This is followed by the sorting of yarns based on colours and textures before they are washed and stored. Desired threads are then spread on a flat surface and hand knotted or sewn to create compositions. Owing to the nature of the technique involved and limited stock of the same threads, it is not possible to do multiples of the same, however, we do work in series. Most of the larger works are created on commission.

WHY

Being from the fashion and textile trade, the medium of threads came naturally to us. The technique we discovered and developed was an outcome of dealing with waste from our own atelier. What began as an experiment in 2004, evolved into a full-blown vocation and form of expression. The practice is unique and the works have been applied not only as wall art but also in the form of applied-art as space partitions, window art and more recently even as lighting solutions.

HOW

People are awestruck by the very technique of the artworks and the colour schemes. With time, we started getting a reaction on the forms and compositions. For commissioned requests, we absorb to an extent what the collector wants and also like to objectively review the intended site for the work to make it worth the space. Threads in various capacities have moved beyond the realm of textiles. Through our practice, we intend to speak of upscaling textile waste without screaming out the word 'recycle'. Our works blend-in and add a sense of calm and create a conversation.

WHERE

Both our 'art-to-wear' and framed works are available for purchase at our studio in Chattarpur, New Delhi. Works can also be procured through a few art galleries and agents besides being available online with select aggregator platforms.

www.facebook.com/threadarte.gunjanrahul

"Through our practice, we intend to speak of upscaling textile waste without screaming out the word 'recycle.'"



Pics: Courtesy of Threadarte (as an extension of garment manufacturing unit)