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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



CONCRETE NITIN BARCHHA & DISNEY DAVIS

STUDIO: Material Immaterial
ESTABLISHED: 2016
LOCATION: Mumbai

WHO

Partners Nitin Barchha and Disney Davis are architects by qualification with 15 years of experience in the field of architecture and design. Their studio is established on the principles of exploring the bare beauty of materials. As designers, we are essentially minimalists and our design approach has always been of 'what to leave out' rather than 'what to put in'. This reduction process is what takes one through a mirror, emerging out on the other side to discover richness, like in the subtle differences between five shades of grey or in different textures of concrete. Through our work, the studio strives to challenge the purpose of material and lets design be at the helm of things.

WHAT

We love working with concrete. We also experiment with papier-mâché, wood, brass, and occasionally with marble. In the initial stages of design development, a lot of time is put in detailing the product. Then comes the next stage of prototyping. Usually, after multiple iterations, a final prototype is arrived at, which is then used to make a mould and then final concrete products come out of these moulds. At each stage a continuous to-and-fro process is followed until a satisfactory result is achieved. This helps us achieve a fine product at the end of the process. We usually work with multiples or in limited editions since we aspire to make our products more accessible. We also customize products for client specific requirements. These could be in the form of installations or limited-edition custom designed pieces. The product range includes curios, doorknobs and handles, and wearable art-like jewellery.

WHY

Many of the best and most influential buildings of the last century are constructed with concrete, from Le-Corbusier's quintessentially modernist Villa Savoye to Frank Lloyd Wright's spell-binding Falling Water, and from Oscar Niemeyer's defining Brasilia, to Tadao Ando's exhilarating Church of the Light. Hence, concrete became the material of choice to express our ideas. Also, we have always been working with concrete as a material in some way or the other and were very conversant with the processing and handling of it. Besides, concrete is a very versatile material and can take different forms, finishes, and tints with great ease.

HOW

The intent has always been to captivate the viewer by the sheer possibilities and beauty of a humble material such as concrete. To get the necessary effect we intentionally keep the bare concrete finish and the original grey colour as the final look of our products. The desired reactions are visible when people see our products for the first time and they are truly captivated by seeing concrete put to the most unexpected use. Our practice focuses on design and thus to ensure that the importance of this principle is maintained at all times we truly believe that *Material 'is' Immaterial.*

WHERE

We retail our work through select physical stores across the country and online through our website.

www.materialimmaterial.com



Pics: Courtesy of Material Immaterial

"To get the necessary effect we intentionally keep the bare concrete finish and the original grey colour as the final look of our products."

