

india

# mondo<sup>arc</sup>

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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





## PAPER ANKON MITRA

STUDIO: Hexagramm Design PL / Oritecture  
ESTABLISHED: 2007  
LOCATION: New Delhi

### WHO

Ankon Mitra is an architect, landscape designer, and origami artist. He has taught Origami Architectonics and its applications at IITs, NID, NIFT, SPA in India and a number of colleges abroad. Recipient of the All-India Gold Medal for Sculpture in 2018, he has shown his work at exhibitions, globally.

### WHAT

Our first love is paper such as elephant hide paper and banana fibre paper, but our preferred medium is any sheet material that can be folded. Secondary casting processes help take the folding technique to even those materials which cannot directly be folded. Beyond paper, the studio has worked with a diversity of materials like sheet aluminium, brass, steel, leather, polypropylene, fabric, wood veneer, clay, glass, brick, and even sedimentary stone. Each medium requires a nuanced way of working - metal is not folded like goat-hide, and goat-hide is never folded like paper. When the studio is commissioned to make bespoke products or sculptures, unique and one-off works are created. Otherwise, we aim to create small batches of limited edition works.

### WHY

As an architect, I am drawn to architectural materials and origami lends itself very beautifully to sheet metal. The natural flap, lock and friction of paper techniques do not work in metal and are replaced either by some kind of joinery or by simple prosaic nuts and bolts (or rivets). Folded paper highlights and creates a play of light and shadows, a paper of a single colour appears as though that sheet already had a large family of variations of that colour hidden within. Folded metal has all these qualities

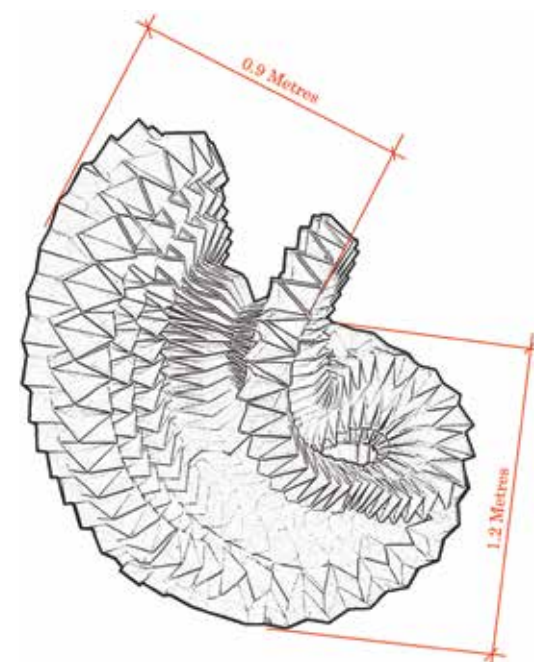
and also the additional beauty of refraction and reflection, a thousand variations of sheen and lustre, and for that reason, the transformation of a flat sheet of metal into a folded artefact proves to be a truly magical experience.

### HOW

As an artist, my strongest desire is to evoke in the viewer a sense of wonder at the connections between folding and the universe, and the beauty that mathematics and geometry encompass within themselves. These are not the dreary formulae of our schoolbooks. They are omnipresent underlying structures that order the natural and physical world. This obsession with a single technique and subsuming oneself in a near complete absorption of its multi-dimensional possibilities is not unique to me as an artist. Materials can be used additively or reductively. A sculptor of marble chips away at the stone revealing a masterpiece hidden within. His is a process of reduction. A ceramic artist builds up a sculpture by adding clay, tearing it away, adding more again, until he is satisfied with the form in culmination. This is a process of both addition and reduction. But Origami does not add or remove - it merely creases and folds the material. It is an act of transformation.

### WHERE

We do not retail our products at the moment but are working towards making it happen in the future. Works can currently be procured through art galleries in India or through direct requests to the studio to create commissioned works. We also sell through the Paper Artist Collective in Europe.  
[www.instagram.com/ankonmitra](http://www.instagram.com/ankonmitra)



Pics: Courtesy of Hexagramm Design PL / Oritecture



*"Origami does not add or remove - it merely creases and folds the material. It is an act of transformation."*