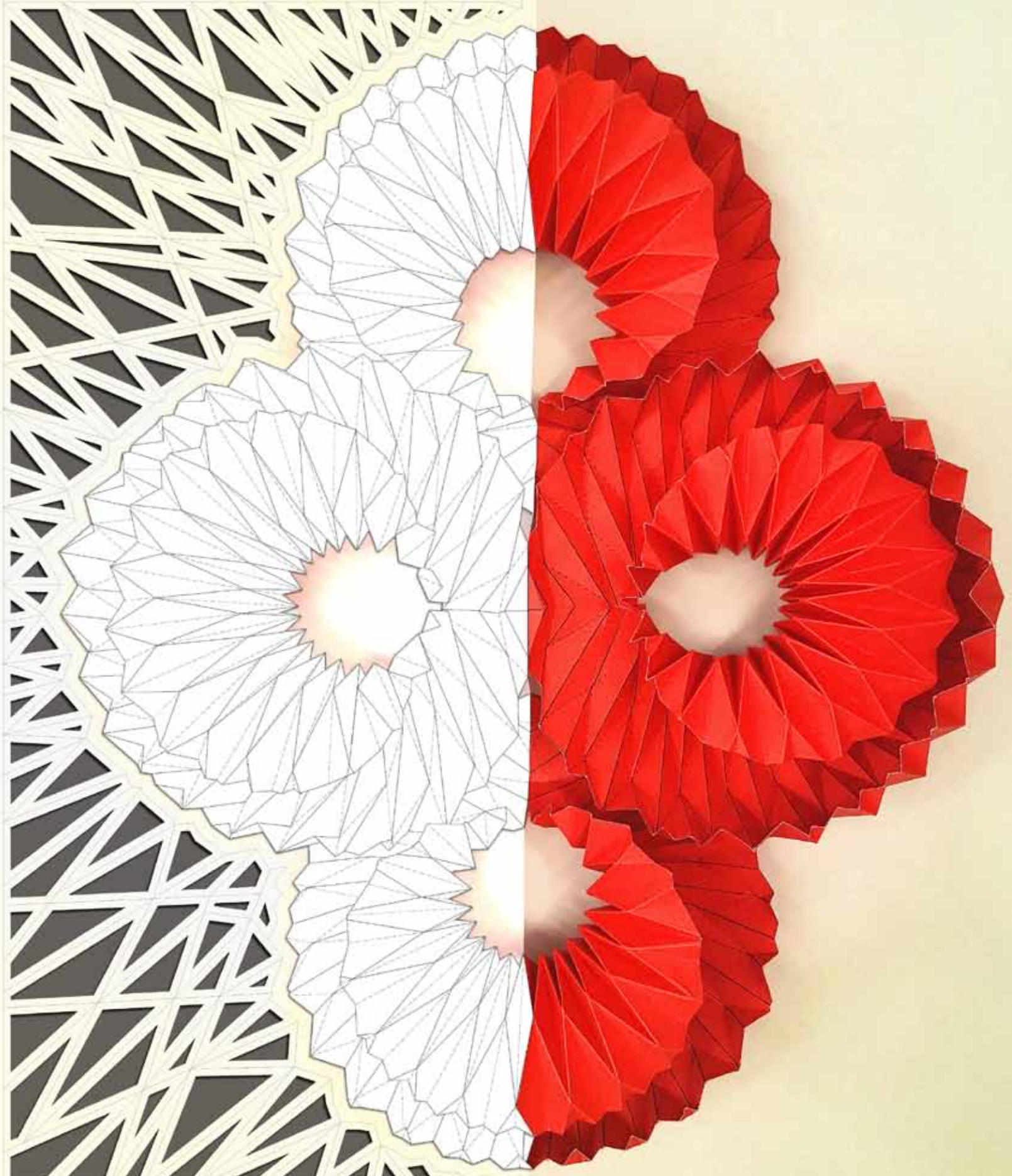




ARTS ILLUSTRATED



Editor's note

In middle school, most of us with access to education have dabbled with the intricacies of that thing called a science project. And, most of us, invariably, have succumbed to its sheer mind-boggling impossibility and outsourced it to our parents or older siblings or, sometimes, even neighbours. Mine was a recreation of the moon's surface to understand gravity, and my artistically inclined sister used cardboard, tin foil, match box and sticks and created the moon's uneven surface with craters, an astronaut half up in the air, and even a little rocket ship. At 12, I thought it was the best science project in the world. Actually, I still think it is. The fact that the school (irresponsibly) thought otherwise is beside the point. The point is that, even without our realising it, art and design have always been a part of our lives, and they have always co-existed – where art is the free spirit, design is the boundary and to think of one without the other is like thinking of a science project without mother-father-sister-brother-neighbour. We may have consciously put it aside for the cause of higher academics (inevitably, if you lived in Chennai), but it never leaves us – be it in the clothes we wear, the colours we use in our homes, the kind of furniture we like or the art we put up on our walls, the two have walked hand in hand like Hansel and Gretel.

As it is with the said fairy tale and with most words and definitions, the meaning of what art is and what design is segued into crumbs of disparity, the patterns becoming harder and harder to navigate. So this issue, on art and design, we decided that instead of trying to peel away the layers, we would instead climb to the top and look for spaces where they intersect. The stories we met were surprising, and resonated with Netflix's original documentary series, *The Art of Design's* trailer (I haven't watched it yet, so it isn't a recommendation, although on a side note, how our online spaces are designed are just as important or the fact that Facebook's notification icon changed from blue to the more eye-catching red, the colour of danger, just as telling of how much design and art play a role in our lives) that says: 'You're looking for a moment when you feel you are as close to the soul as possible. That's what good design is.'

This is also the month when, quite coincidentally and importantly, two events based on art and design take place in Delhi – the India Art Fair, now in its 10th edition with a brand new team, and the India Design Forum, now in its 4th edition co-founded by the mother-daughter duo, Rajshree Pathy and Aishwarya Pathy (we feature them in our Q&A section this issue). And if you are at the IAF, then do look for our specially curated booklet on this event. If you are not, that's fine – you know where to go for your art and design stories, right? (And this is a definite recommendation, for AI, of course).



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I am an architect by training and an artist by temperament, with a keen interest in the geometry and mathematics of trees, flowers, hills and coastlines. I am deeply interested in exploring the folds in nature. I studied the science and maths of flow and energy-travel through space and all energy waves (sound, light, heat) travel by folding through space. The empty space itself is crumbled, and therefore folded, due to the gravitational force. All life forms too start with the folds of DNA interlocking within strands of healthy cells. I realised that we are made of folding, work through folding and are surrounded by folding. This, coupled with the art of origami, became the basis for my art practice. It allowed me to make sense of the underlying geometry and structure of the chaos that surrounds us, at a physical and metaphorical level.

The work for the cover of this issue is titled *The Four Noble Truths*. I attempt to meditate on the philosophy that Gautama Buddha enunciates: Fact that suffering is the truth, reasoning the cause of suffering, possibility of the end of suffering, and the path that leads to the end of suffering. The work has four connected parts that resembles a large sea-shell. Metaphorically, the void within these contains the positive and negative energies, yin and yang. And the truth sits within each empty space where realisation delves, outwardly disconnected and also separated from the other three 'truths' by the very construct of the form. While the right-hand side of the image shows the emotion and 'reality' of the experience, soaked in rich red colour, the left-hand side lays bare the clinical, technical and physical construction of the work, where the cutwork-pattern reveals the context or framework from within which the work emerges.



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Cover design curated by Rahul Kumar

