

An aerial photograph of two wooden boats on a body of water with varying shades of turquoise and blue. The larger boat, positioned in the upper left, has a bright red interior. The smaller boat is further down and towards the center. The water's texture is visible, with lighter and darker patches of color.

Meet The CITY

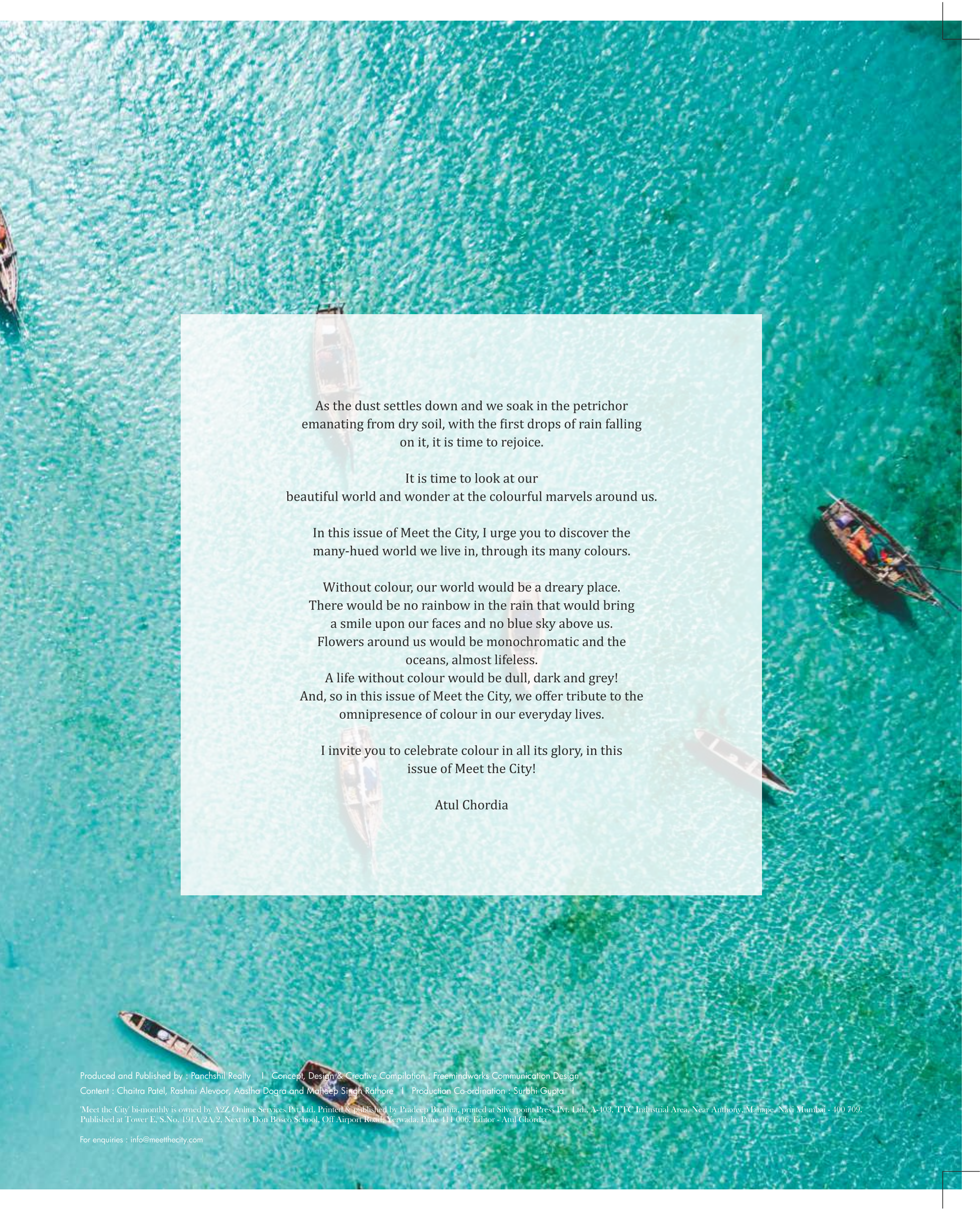
VOLUME IV
MAY - JUNE 2017

ΒΙΤΤΣΗ BY ΤΗΣ WANDERLUST

Inspired By
Blue Skies And Sunny Days

An aerial photograph of several small, traditional wooden boats floating on clear, turquoise water. The boats are scattered across the frame, with some containing people. The water's surface is textured with ripples and small waves, and the overall color palette is dominated by shades of blue and green.

FOREWORD



As the dust settles down and we soak in the petrichor
emanating from dry soil, with the first drops of rain falling
on it, it is time to rejoice.

It is time to look at our
beautiful world and wonder at the colourful marvels around us.

In this issue of Meet the City, I urge you to discover the
many-hued world we live in, through its many colours.

Without colour, our world would be a dreary place.
There would be no rainbow in the rain that would bring
a smile upon our faces and no blue sky above us.
Flowers around us would be monochromatic and the
oceans, almost lifeless.

A life without colour would be dull, dark and grey!
And, so in this issue of Meet the City, we offer tribute to the
omnipresence of colour in our everyday lives.

I invite you to celebrate colour in all its glory, in this
issue of Meet the City!

Atul Chordia

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REVIEW



Here, at MTC, we have found ourselves reinvigorated with the many hues of the world we live in! Inspired by blue skies, sunny days and now the impending grey clouds, we decided to drench this issue of Meet the City in colour!

Rashmi Alevoor invites you to revitalise your spirits and soak up the sun in this May-June issue of Meet the City.

When you think of colour, you think of a certain playfulness and carefreeness of attitude. And when we thought along the lines of colour + playful design, the first monosyllabic word that popped into our minds was YOO. Founded by the very colourful French designer Philippe Starck and property entrepreneur John Hitchcox, YOO is a “pioneering vision for living”. The company's design studio has worked with celebrity designers and international developers across Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa, North and South America, and the Middle East. Meet the City had the incredible opportunity to have a chat with YOO's Head of Design, Mark Davison, on his thoughts on the role of colour in interior design and what he believes are some of the hallmarks of great design.

In 'Travel', join us on a many-hued trip across the world with the enterprising husband-wife duo, Ankur Arora and Sonia Sahni, as they tick off one exotic location off their bucket list after the other.

In similar vein, in Fashion, we showcase the many traditional styles of the people of the world. We invite you to wonder at the striking beadwork of the Maasai in the Serengeti, the colossal turbans of the Nihang Sikhs in India, and the colourful feathers of the Native Americans.

In 'Art', we feature “Song of the City”, Pune-based artist Harshvardhan Kadam's largest mural to date. The artwork which beautifies the walls of the Yerwada prison, chronicles the evolution of Pune over 2000 years. Taking the Mula-Mutha river as a central theme, the narrative of Song of the City flows from one end of the wall to the other, spreading colour and beauty along the way.

For the 'In Store' section, we have featured a luxurious floral boutique, a first of its kind in India, Rise n' Shine Botanical Boutique. The store is filled with imported varieties of exotic flowering plants, succulents, and indoor plants.

It's not just nature around us that is vivid. Human stories too are many-hued. Join us, as we discover how the very commonplace taxis of Mumbai are getting a facelift with brand new, colourful upholstery that narrate every day human stories of a very kaleidoscopic city, courtesy Taxi Fabric.

We've featured a preciously told story in our 'Book Review' section – “This Truck Has Got to Be Special” is a richly imagined and illustrated book, involving a Pakistani writer, truck artists, and an Indian illustrator. It celebrates the energy and beauty of Pakistani truck art, imagination, artisanship, colour and design. Meet the City invites you to meet the world through its vividly colourful sights, people, traditions, and art!

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Bitten by the Wanderlust

Since the beginning of time, travel has been an inseparable part of all human activity. Pre-historic travel entailed trudging long miles in search of food and water and stemmed out of a need for survival. As time went by, people started travelling for reasons other than mere survival – they started travelling for religious reasons too. Over the years, as travel turned more leisurely and in search of a greater purpose, travellers gradually learnt to soak in the sounds, smells and colours that engulfed them en route.

From the vibrant hues of Rajasthan to the sun-kissed bougainvillea clinging onto the blue and white architecture in Santorini, Greece and the dazzling turquoise waters of Zanzibar's lesser known Stone Town, much modern-day travel comprises of destinations that instantly make it to an Instagram bucket list. And, it is through this kaleidoscope of colour that many new-age travellers seek

inspiration - inspiration that takes varied forms such as festivals, nature and wildlife, history and architecture, culture, food, and so much more. There is colour everywhere – from the spice sacks at Marrakesh's busy bazaar to Buenos Aires's kaleidoscopic street, Caminito.

In this edition of Meet the City, we would like to take you, our reader, on a holiday of a different kind – one where we see the many-hued world around us through the vivid tales of those who have travelled far and wide to lands of colour. Chaitra Patel spoke to Sonia Sahni, a full-time traveller, an avid blogger and foodie who along with her husband Ankur Arora is undoubtedly bitten by the wanderlust. And, for each travel destination they tick off their bucketlist, they end up adding two more, every time!



WE TRAVEL,
INITIALLY, TO
LOSE
OURSELVES; AND
WE TRAVEL, NEXT,
TO FIND
OURSELVES.



Still unexplored and undiscovered The
Stone Town of Zanzibar is alive with people
and colours. And nothing beats the
underwater colours...



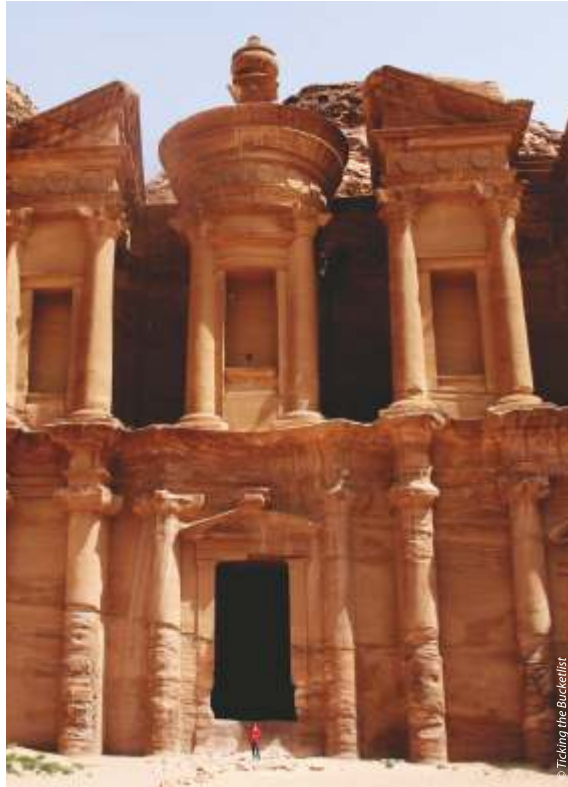
Kids walking on the beach in Zanzibar.



Milos Island, Sarakiniko Beach, Greece.

The dramatic colours of the Aurora Borealis, the thrill of a husky safari, diving the deep blue seas to earn a Scuba certification, swimming with dolphins, mantas and whale sharks, are just some of the "things to do" that feature on Sonia and Ankur's bucket list that have already been ticked. But, the list does not end here. The wandering duo have also traversed the bushlands of Kruger and Maasai Mara, floated on the aqua marine coloured Dead Sea in Jordan, clinked glasses at Germany's beer fests, watched kangaroos leap in Australia and visited the thick Amazon rainforest. And, if you thought their wish list ends here, think again! "We still want to do the Samba at the Rio Carnival, dive a blue hole, get sporty in scenic New Zealand, undertake a Trans-Siberian train journey and see a polar bear", says the very spirited Sonia.

Between the two of them, Sonia and Ankur have journeyed to almost an astounding 60 countries. "Travelling provides food to our curious mind", they explain. "It makes you tolerant and



The Majestic Monastery Building, Petra, Jordan.

accepting of other cultures and ways of life. Cross-cultural experiences have made us non-judgemental. We have developed the ability to adapt to evolving environmental conditions and communicate with people, regardless of language barriers".

Travelling is something that comes naturally to both Sonia and Ankur. What started off as family and religious trips during their respective growing years, soon blossomed into full-fledged travel, simply because that's what they love to do. "I remember the first trip I undertook was as a child, about 5 years old. And, I've been travelling ever since". "Just say 'travel', and we will be jumping off our seats and will be ready with a small back pack to set sail", says Sonia! "Festivals, nature, wildlife, architecture, history, culture, adventure, food, family, friends... all are our inspiration to travel", she adds.

It's hardly surprising then, that it is travel that brought them together and fall in love with each other.

TRAVEL

OUR HAPPIEST
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SOMETHING
ELSE.





Tree monks walking in the pagoda temple, Mandalay, Myanmar.



Grand Palace at Bangkok.

There was a time when the duo had conventional 9 to 5 corporate jobs that entailed climbing the career ladder amidst all the chaos of everyday life. But, travel was always on their mind, and they would try to sneak in time periodically through the year to get out of the city. Then, they changed jobs and they moved cities and that is when Sonia, a one-time corporate and investment banker, decided to give it all up for a more purposeful life that entailed travel. But, there is no denying the fact that you do after all need to fund your travels, however miniscule you aim to keep budgets! And, that is why Ankur continues to work in the corporate sector and joins Sonia on holidays as and when he is able to get away. That makes Sonia a solo traveller of sorts, for most part of the year. "I think solo travel lets you grow as a person. You learn to make decisions and fend for yourself. You learn to handle people and situations. Not only for women, solo trips are important to grow, for any individual", she says.

Travelling Solo

Recently back from a solo trip to Vietnam, a land that has fought wars and people have tilled lands, and Sonia is already yearning for more. "In the little time that I had, I got a small peek into the beliefs of the locals. What intrigued me the most was their belief in life after death and traditional practises that are carried out to appease the deceased", says she. In her pursuit to travel the world solo, Sonia has also journeyed to exotic locations such as Brazil, Galapagos, Ecuador, Bolivia including the amazing Amazon rain forest. Along the way, she has befriended countless locals and tried to blend in. "There is a friend in every country", she articulates. "You just need to blend in and adapt to their way of life". Through her travels to South America, Sonia met interesting people from over 30 nationalities in a span of only six weeks. And, most of them said that they had never met a solo woman traveller from India.

Smitten with the idea of travelling solo, she wants other women like herself to travel the world too. And, this has now led her to upgrade Ticking the Bucketlist into a wholesome travel company that is also a niche travel curator for female solo travel in India. "I want to give Indian women the same opportunity to travel that I have had", says Sonia. Through this venture, Sonia aims to create small groups of women travellers and escort them to wonderful locations around the world.



I HAVEN'T BEEN EVERYWHERE, BUT IT'S ON MY BUCKET LIST

Stumbling Roadblocks

When you are out on an adventure, you take life as it comes – along with the nasty elements too. Sonia's trip to Bolivia was one of those where everything seemed to go wrong, right from the moment she stepped on Bolivian soil. Bolivia issues a visa to Indian passport holders on arrival and she soon discovered just how nasty and rude the immigration officers were, worsened by the fact that they could not speak English. When she did finally manage to traverse the labyrinth of documentation and begin touring the scenic country, she discovered that Bolivia is fairly under developed and is famous for its strikes or *bandhs* as we know them in India. Stranded in the middle of nowhere when her bus got cancelled, she had to trek six kilometres with her bag before she met some good local folk who gave her a lift to the next town.



Amazing misty sunrise colors and balloons silhouettes over ancient Dhammayan Gyi Pagoda, Myanmar (Burma).



Flamingos at Lake Nakuru National Park, Kenya.



Aurora Borealis above snowy islands of Lofoten, Northern Lights in Iceland (South Shore).



Hallstatt Lake, Austria.



Damnoen Saduak floating market in Ratchaburi near Bangkok.



ngkok, Thailand.



Men on the white beach with kitesurf, Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Culinary Adventures

Another flipside of some of Sonia's (and Ankur's) travels has been finding vegetarian food. Bolivia was almost a nightmare in that respect. While on most travels they manage to sample local vegetarian food, there have been exceptions such as Jordan and Sweden. "We were camping in a desert and the locals didn't understand why we want vegetarian and what wrong had the little lamb done for us to not eat it. In the Arctic in Sweden, there were no vegetables, it was all reindeer meat! So, we ended up eating eggs and bread or some home tossed pasta for about a week". While on most occasions and travels, Sonia (and Ankur) have been lucky to find decent vegetarian food, there are times when they also stay in a hostel with a kitchen facility, to avoid complications of food. Despite these culinary road blocks, they make sure to never eat Indian food on their journeys, because the true joy of travelling is indeed to try locally sourced produce. She articulates, "the 'hunt' for vegetarian food in different countries has been an adventure of a different kind, which we have now started enjoying".

INTO

Of Sun & Sand

THE

If there was one destination that Sonia and Ankur could pick, to keep going back to, which would that be?

Seychelles, comes the immediate reply! "It is beautiful... and relaxing. Nature has bestowed it with blue waters and powdery sands. There is so much to do...hiking, snorkeling, scuba diving. It possibly has some of the best diving sites in the world. The weather is perfect...always.

BLUE





For the amount of times Sonia and Ankur travel, it's remarkable how they manage to strike a fine balance between comfortable budget holidays and few days of luxury thrown in. "On every vacation, we do a few things that I like and a few things that Ankur likes... that's what makes each vacation perfect!" On a parting note, Sonia sums up, "travel is a journey... enjoy the journey as much as the destination. Be culturally sensitive and respect people's space and traditions".

For More Details:
Visit: <http://www.tickingthebucketlist.com/>
Email: soniasahni@gmail.com



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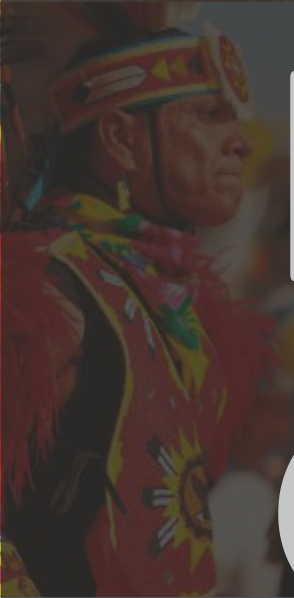
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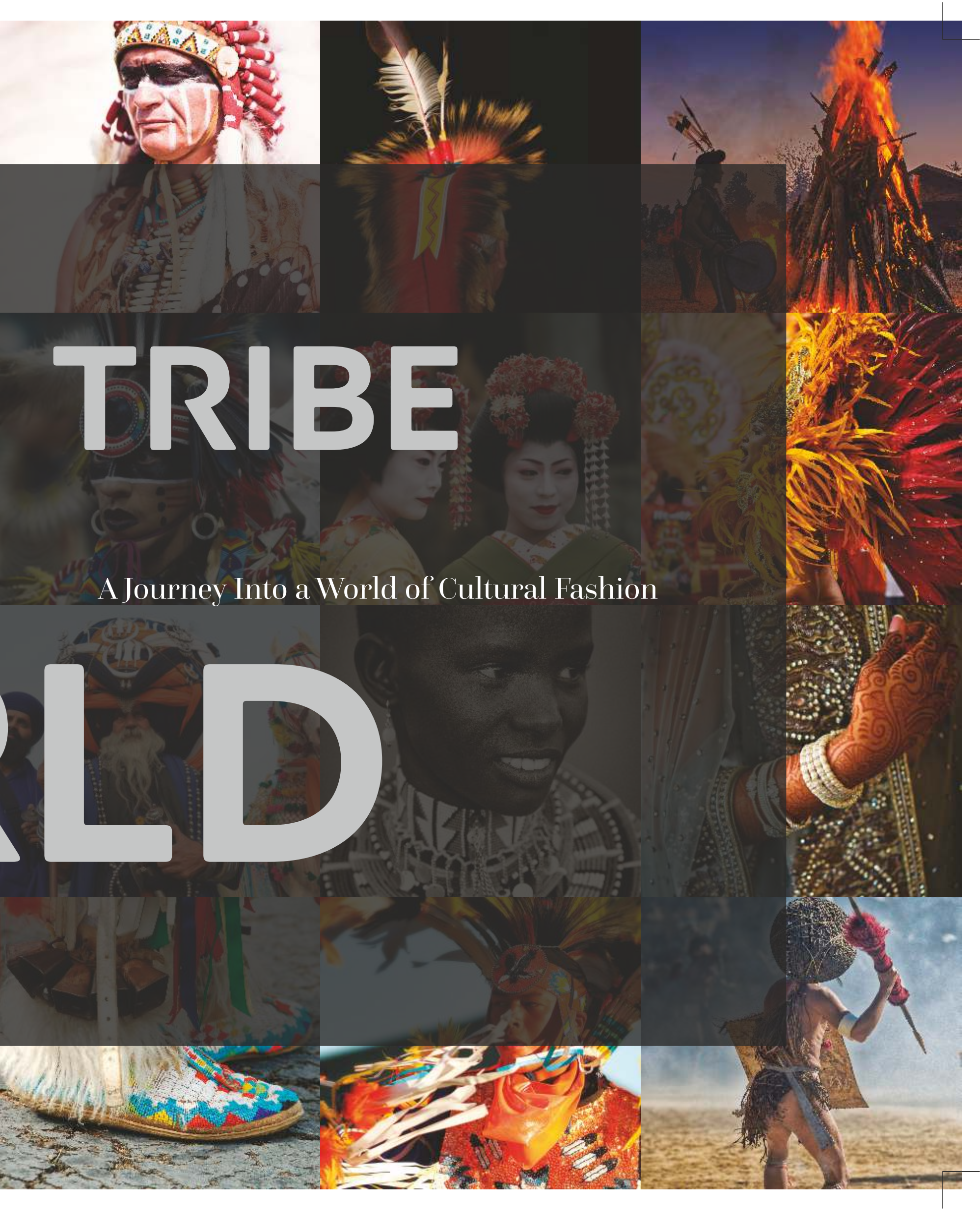
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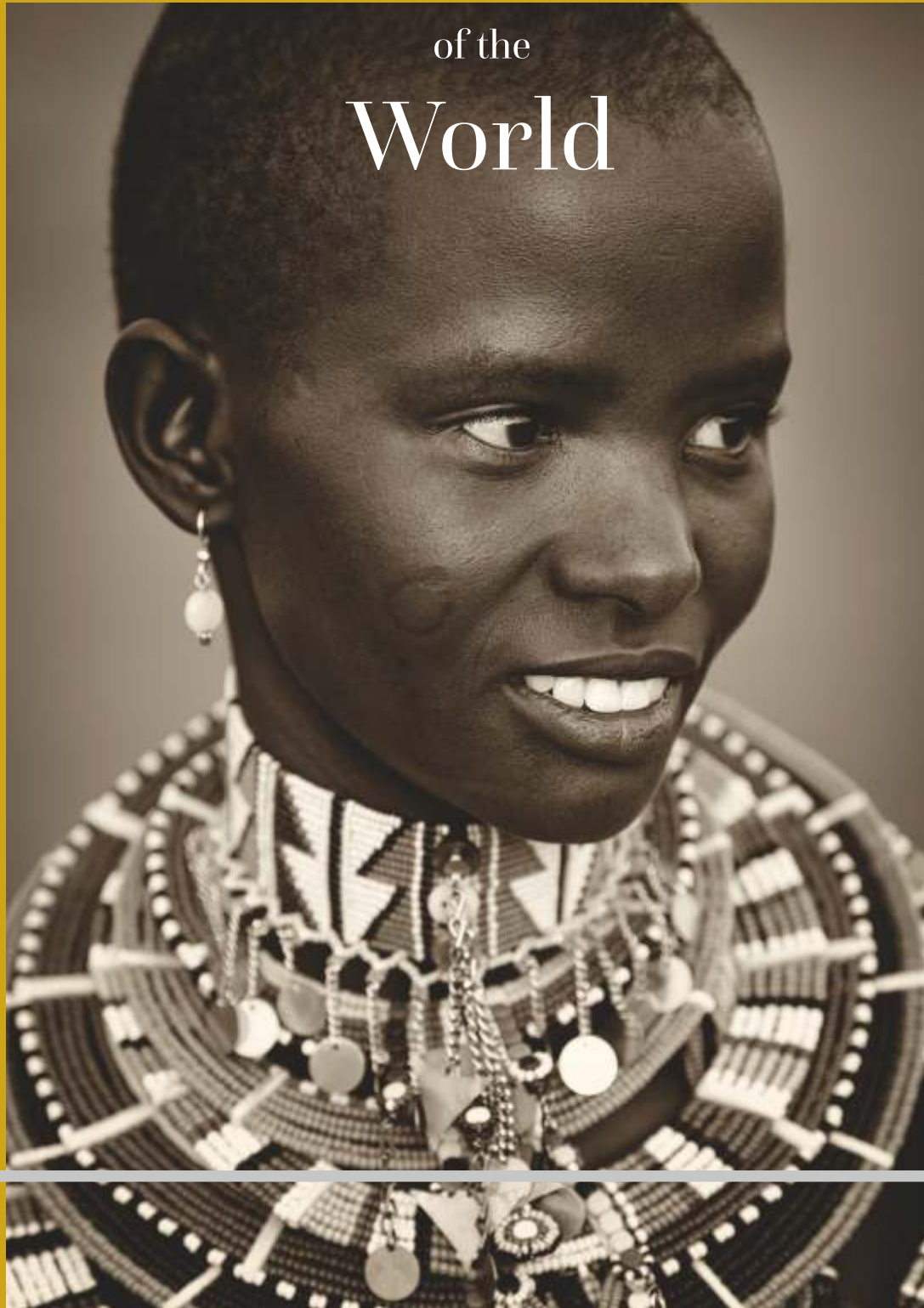
A Journey Into a World of Cultural Fashion

WORLD

Cultural Fashion

of the

World





Since the very beginning of time, men and women have long adorned their bodies with clothing and ornamentation. These body adornments have always been an integral part of non-verbal communication and aided in creating a sense of identity, for centuries. A sense of identity provides a sense of belonging, to a group or an ideology, thereby upping the worth of the kind of cloth one drapes or the kind of embellishments one chooses to accessorise with.

Types of clothing and body adornments have also been of particular significance and continue to be so, in indicating a person's status and standing in society.

However, despite the visible differences in dressing that crop up due to status, there is no denying that people tend to espouse a certain trend of clothing and accessories, which conforms to the culture of their land.

Chaitra Patel takes a look at three types of accessories that are rooted amidst the many mesmerising cultures and tribes of the world – beads, feathers and head wraps.



Samba School parade, Rio De Janeiro

“Fashion anticipates,
and elegance is a state of
mind...a mirror of the time in
which we live, a translation
of the future, and should
never be static”.

- Oleg Cassini

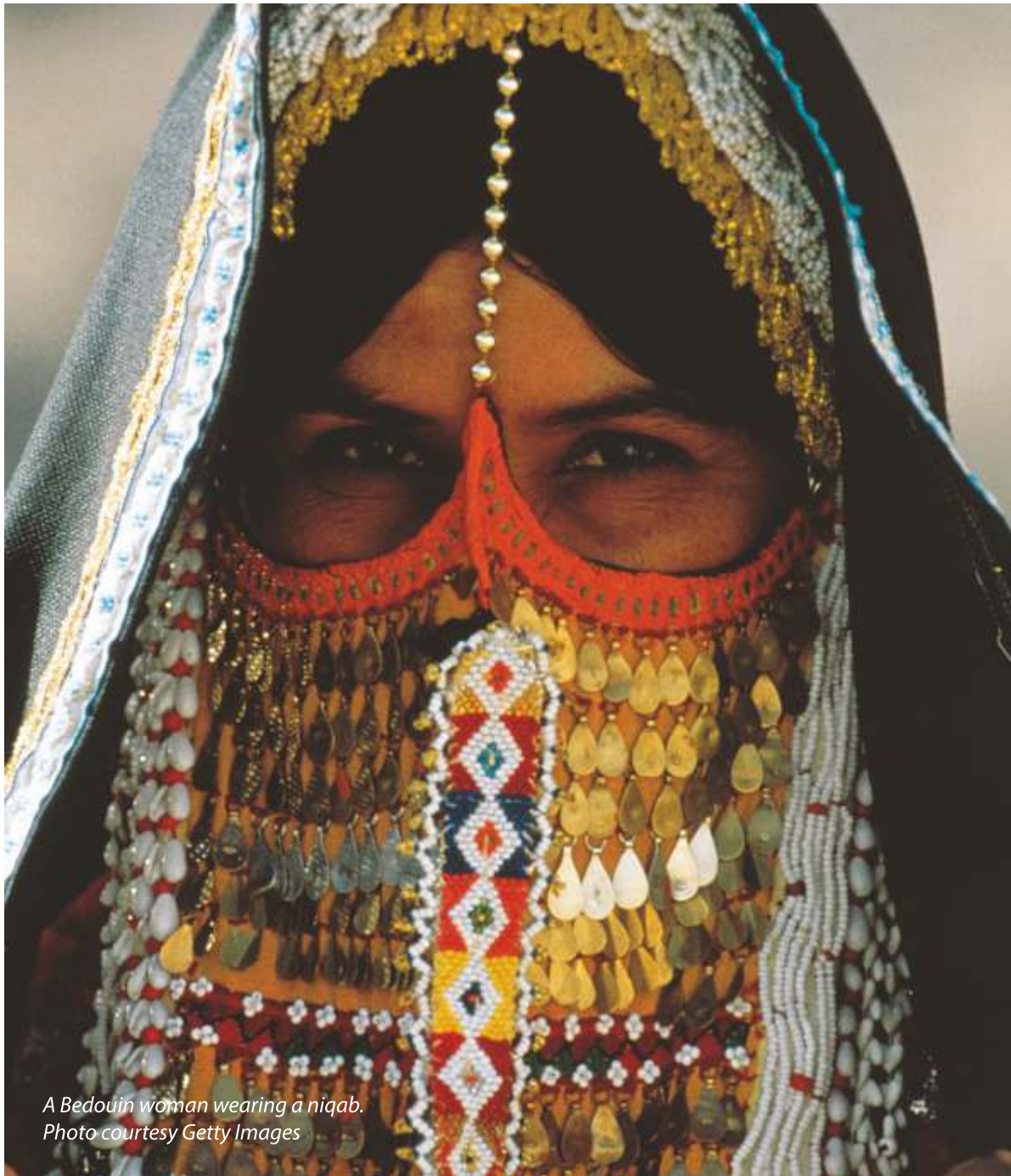
The world over, people are distinguished (by) or stand out from the crowd because of the clothes they wear and the adornments they use. Often inspired, sometimes borrowed, but most of the times completely innovative, bearing a signature style, fashion trends in society are typically a reflection of the local culture. While, western clothing may be taking the world of fashion by storm across the globe, there is little doubt about the influence that every culture exerts upon its people, by encouraging culturally relevant dressing and accessorising styles on an everyday basis or for ceremonial purposes.



Native American Feathered Headdress at Powwow

And, once these trends begin to dictate the manner in which people dress and conduct themselves in public, it is not very long before the winds of global fashion blow their way. For, what is global fashion really? It would be fair enough to state that global fashion often is a manifestation of centuries of tradition that never really goes out of fashion, even as runway seasons continue to change. The French-born, American fashion designer Oleg Cassini says of fashion, "Fashion anticipates, and elegance is a state of mind...a mirror of the time in which we live, a translation of the future, and should never be static".

The bead-work of the Maasai Mara and the Native Americans or the feathers used by Naga warriors, the colourful turbans of the Sikhs and Rajasthani men, in India, all make for some wonderful fashion accessories in our contemporary lives.



*A Bedouin woman wearing a niqab.
Photo courtesy Getty Images*



*A Naga warrior at Hornbill Festival
Photo courtesy Amit Rane*

Beadwork

For a pastoral tribe like the Maasai Mara that often traverses the warm and dry Serengeti grasslands, it is important that their drapes provide them light-weight clothing. Bead-work is an integral part of their attire, and their jewellery such as necklaces, bracelets and headgear provide a sense of identity as well as standing in society and indicate age. Bead-working is an art that has been practiced by the Maasai women since olden times, long before the Maasai people came in contact with Europeans. Previously, beads were created out of locally sourced raw material such as clay, shells, ivory and bone. It was somewhere around the late 19th century that the Europeans brought with them large quantities of vibrant glass beads to Southeast Africa. Worn by both men and women, these beads are available in a riot of colours.

There are however some colours that are symbolic and are selected for specific reasons. The colour red signifies blood, unity and bravery, white indicates purity, peace and health, blue represents God and the skies, yellow and orange are invitations to the world of Maasai hospitality, green symbolises their land and health and finally black represents 'skin' and therefore the struggles that the Maasai people must endure.

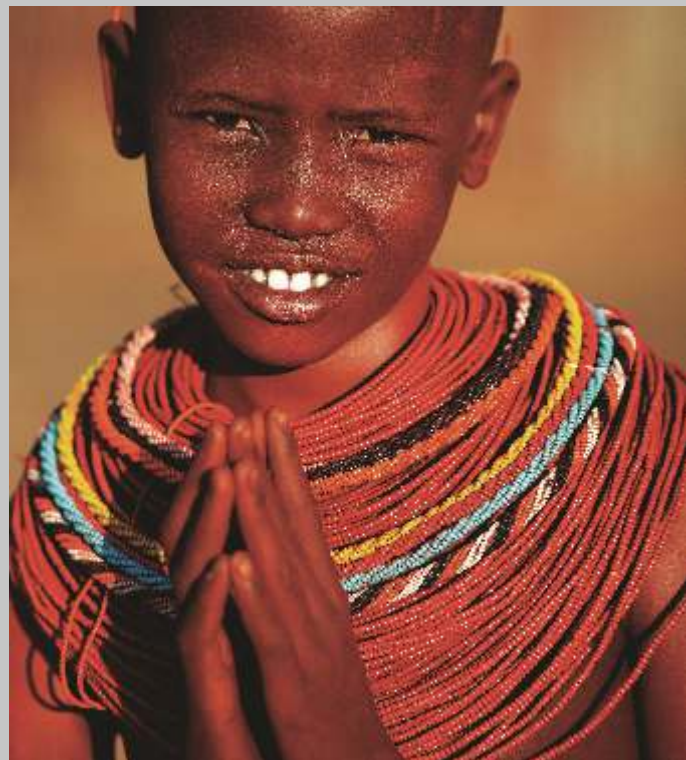
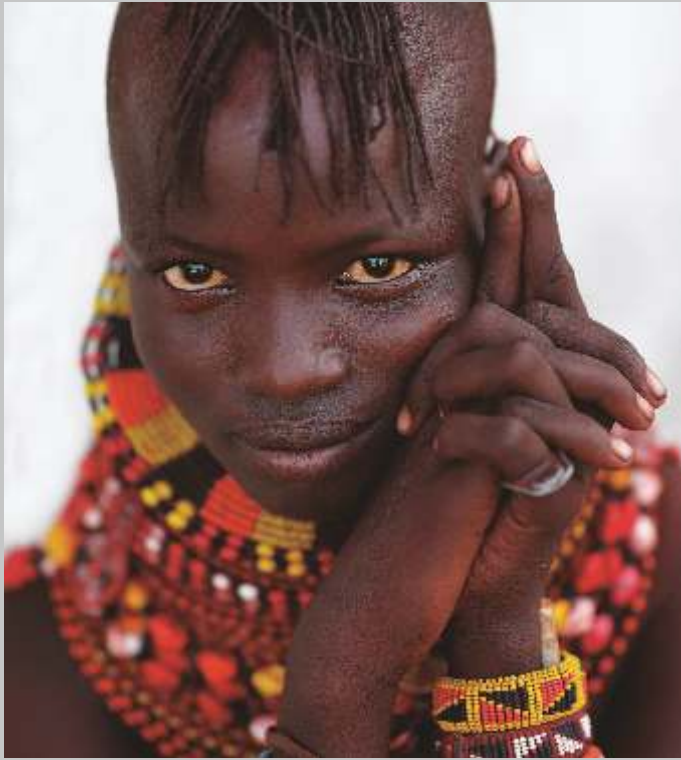
The bright beadwork has enthralled visitors and the fashion world from across the world, to the extent that over the last decade, the Maasai people have begun to trademark their artistry to wade off internationally renowned fashion houses from laying claim to their designs. There are many others like singer Demi Lovato though, who use their popularity to drive attention to the cause of the Maasai people. On her volunteer trip to the Maasai Mara National Reserve early this year, Demi was overjoyed as she posed for photographs dressed in Maasai attire, suitably accessorised with a beaded headband and matching earrings, all made by the Maasai women.

The Native Americans, like the Maasais too display a flair for colourful beadwork. The oldest bead in North America is believed to have been discovered in 11,000 BC, demonstrating that the art of beadwork is inherent to the tribes that inhabited the plains towards the west of the Mississippi River. With migration forced upon them as a result of drought, wars and the lack of bison, Native Americans were compelled to travel light, forcing them to carry items of artistry that were easily transportable.

Just like the Maasais, the Native Americans too created intricate beadwork, by using natural materials such as shells, coral, turquoise, stones, copper and silver, wood, amber, ivory, and animal bones, horns, and teeth. This was long before they came in contact with European settlers, who were quick to introduce them to glass beads, which today are an integral part of Native American culture.

Native American beading techniques are as varied as are their tribes – they differ on the grounds of tradition, design, style and stitch. The beadwork of the plains is the most renowned and comprises of elaborate peyote or gourd stitch beading and bone hairpipes. Beadwork can broadly be grouped under two categories, both equally time consuming and complicated, yet stunning – beaded leather (clothing, moccasins, containers, etc.) and beaded strands (necklaces and jewellery).

In the context of modern times, authentic Native American beads are best bought at an official powwow, a social and tribal spectacle that is witness to a gathering of many tribes and performers.



Head wraps of all sorts have served a multitude of purposes; people have covered their heads (and continue to do so) for religious reasons, to protect themselves in war as well as from the wrath of the elements of nature, for social and cultural reasons, along with demonstrating a certain sense of distinction and honour. From the Arab *Kufyah* to the turbans of the Nihang Sikhs and the Rajasthani *pagari*, to the head scarfs and *hijabs* worn by women across various Islamic countries, the flowing *odhanis* of Rajasthan, both equally serving as symbols of modesty and privacy for women, head wraps assume tremendous social and cultural significance across different parts of the world.

Often these social customs have set ablaze contemporary fashion trends that have inspired designers, models and celebrities to don a variety of headgear and make a striking

style statement each time. No one has quite worked a turban the way the very trend-setting and ravishing Elizabeth Taylor did in the 60s and 70s. The turban was her perfect accessory that highlighted her gorgeous face and the exquisite diamonds she possessed. Closer home, the armed warrior order of the Sikhs, called the Nihang are distinctly identified by their high turbans (*dastar bunga*) that are fitted with a *trishula* or trident, a common Indic religious symbol that is also used as a weapon for stabbing. Sometimes, a Nihang may also bear a *bagh naka* (iron claw) on his turban that may be used to slice an opponent's eye. The Nihang turbans have always served a specific purpose for centuries – that of protection. In modern times, Nihangs follow the law of the land and adorn their turbans with symbolic miniature versions of the five weapons that are prescribed through religious doctrine - *chakram*, the *khanda* (sword), the *karud* (dagger), the *kirpan* and the *tir* (arrow).



Elizabeth Taylor.
Photo courtesy Getty Images

No one has quite worked a turban the way the very trend-setting and ravishing Elizabeth Taylor did in the 60s and 70s. The turban was her perfect accessory that highlighted her gorgeous face and the exquisite diamonds she possessed.





Portrait of a Maiko geisha in Gion Kyoto.
Photo courtesy Getty Images

Almost all the headgear worn around the world, represents the wearer's social status, religion, class, etc. The very vibrant Rajasthani *pagari* too varies in style, colour and size, depending on the wearer's caste, social class, profession and the region he comes from. In the dry and arid desert regions of Rajasthan, it is vital that *pagaris* offer protection from the dust and sun. The *pagari* serves multiple purposes too – it can be rolled up to serve as a pillow under a weary head, a blanket and sometimes a towel too. In the desert, where water is scarce, the *pagari* can be used to strain muddy water for drinking and sometimes when opened up can be used as a rope to draw water from a well through a bucket.

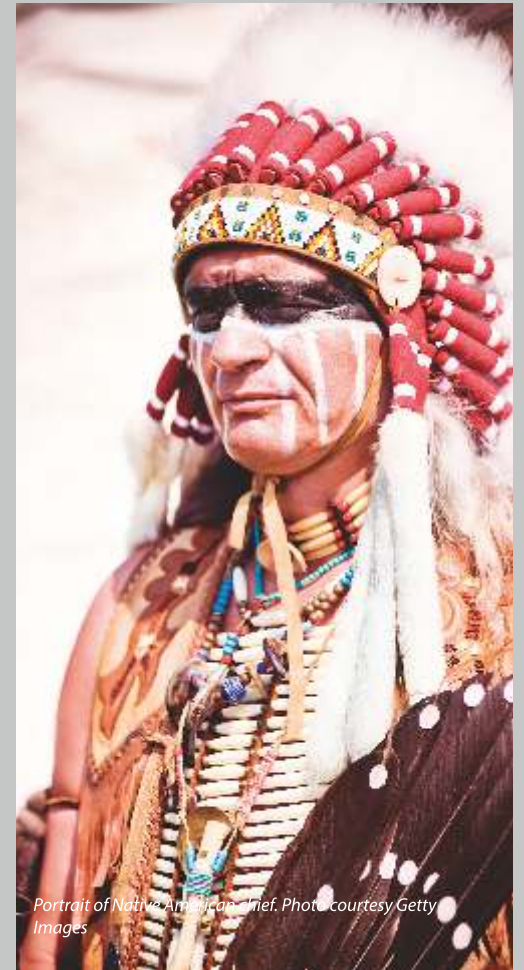
West Asia is a many-hued land when it comes to headgear for both men and women. The striking amongst these are the Bedouin – the desert dwellers or the nomadic Arabs. While the Bedouin women dress in enormous thobes, it is their headgear and veils that are particularly interesting. These veils are a sign of wealth, identity and social status and also serve the purpose of protecting the Bedouin women from the harsh climatic conditions of West Asia. From a socio-cultural point of view, these veils are relevant since they are said to protect women against evil. Bedouin veils may comprise of amulets made of coins, embroidery, beadwork, stones and more and together these represent an identity of the tribe the Bedouin women belong to.



A Chief of the Ogalala Lakota from Pine Ridge Reservation wears his Wa Pah Ha bonnet, made from eagle feathers and rabbit skins. Photo courtesy Getty Images



Portrait of a Native American at the Denver March Powwow. Photo courtesy Getty Images



Portrait of Native American Chief. Photo courtesy Getty Images

Feathers

Feathers have long been considered fashion accessories and were introduced to the world of fashion sometime around the Middle Ages (1066-1482). Used as an accessory to indicate a high social standing, men and women decorated their hats and other headgear with plumes and jewellery. In contemporary times, fashion houses such as Prada, Fendi and Burberry have all used feathers in their collections, to create vintage style statements.

Feathers are stylish fashion accessories that lend an air of vintage charm in these modern times. And yet, they continue to remain culturally relevant, especially amongst a large number of tribes in the world. Over centuries, tribes and warriors have accessorised their costumes with feathers for various occasions – in battle, for ceremonial purposes and at most other times for the very purpose they are meant for, that is ornamentation. Native Americans use feathers of crows and hawks, thought the eagle feather is the most valued and is the highest mark of respect. While feathers were primarily worn by male leaders of various Native American tribes in battle, today these are mainly used for ceremonial occasions. War bonnets for example, are highly regarded as they bear political and spiritual significance and can rightfully only be worn by those who have earned the honour of their people.

In far east India, the annual Hornbill Festival in Nagaland is a sight to behold. This festival that encourages the interaction between the various tribes of the state to promote their cultural heritage, encourages

I love when clothes make cultural statements. -Anne Hathaway

the Naga people put up an elaborate display of dances, food, culture and ceremonies. Amidst this cultural mélange, it's a sight to watch the headgear and feathers they adorn themselves with! Naga men have a distinct style of covering their heads – conical red headgear decorated with wild-boar canine teeth and white-black hornbill feathers. And, as in the case of almost every other tribe or community around the world, for the Naga people too, feathers symbolise power and status.

From tribal chieftains to contemporary movie stars, corporate mavericks and the person on the street, everyone adopts a certain style of dressing and presenting oneself. What makes this style stand out in the crowd is the manner in which they carry along a vibrant culture, either their own or adopted. Cultural fashion has never been out of vogue and has been influencing fashion, long before the runway was invented!



Shaadi
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KB Dining, Zhongshen, China, YOO Studio



All About

yoo

Described as a design visionary, and a genius, the colourful French designer Philippe Starck describes his vision for design as such – the purpose of design is to enhance life for the greatest possible number of people, regardless of its specific form. Design therefore, is primordially about the user. It's all about you, as the consumer.

Therein lies the difference between design houses and great design houses.



KB Dining, Zhongshen, China, YOO Studio

The YOO Studio is a unique design house with experience of cutting edge design in over 24 countries. Serving the YOO tribe internationally, the studio has completed individual residences and hotels as well as bringing to fruition the visions of Creative Directors Philippe Starck, Marcel Wanders, Jade Jagger and Kelly Hoppen. This gives YOO Studio a unique design DNA that could only come from working with the world's best.

Headed by Mark Davison, the studio's experience is enhanced by its diversity of over 20 architects, interior and product designers with big imaginations, providing a choice of looks and styles to suit the lifestyles of today's modern dwellers.

They only source the best quality fittings and furniture from around the world to create interiors that are imaginative, rare and individual - just like you. The YOO Studio's global design expertise has developed a unique understanding of designing in different cultures, to create projects that respect and enliven the cultures in which they live. The YOO Design Studio was originally established to service the ideas of its star designers (first Philippe Starck, then Marcel Wanders, Jade Jagger, Kelly Hoppen and Anouska Hempel) providing what its head of design Mark Davison calls "the glue between the designers and the developers."

Over time, however, this extremely talented and thoughtful group of product and interior designers and architects has inevitably developed its own unique intelligence and identity. Now the YOO Design Studio happily functions as a creative force in its own right, taking on residential and hotel interiors, restaurants and larger architectural projects.

The team prides itself on taking on board the local context: "we're not here to export European design around the world. We do a lot of research on the local context and weave that back in to the project," says Mark Davison. "We know how to deliver unique spaces, and at different cost points."



lobby reception AMP, YOO Studio

The leading lifestyle group is driven by an ethos of Conscious Living and have added sustainable energy into their bouquet of offerings through their company, YOO Energy. Their global presence has helped them gain unique insight into designing for different cultures.

The company's design arm, YOO Studio was originally conceived to service the visions of its star designers, Philippe Starck, Marcel Wanders, Jade Jagger, and Kelly Hoppen. The group is now made up of over 20 architects, product and interior designers, and is known the world over for their original, imaginative, and individualistic designs.

A Modern Village of Shared Consciousness

The YOO way of design has always been about creating happier communities. Founder John Hitchcox says that homes are a matter of great importance, "To take some of the old words, it's our nest, our cocoon. We set out from it each day and come back to it each night. It's where we rest from the day, a place of comfort and security. It has all these qualities that allow us to be able to create, to rest and to quieten our minds, therefore it is vital that the home we choose caters to the individual and their lifestyle." YOO environments are much more than buildings; they instead create communities of like-minded people, where people can live harmoniously with those who share similar ideals and aspirations.



Lounge Amp, YOO Studio



La Veranda, Sans Souci, Vienna, Austria, YOO Studio



Apartment, Aqua Boracay, Boracay, Philippines, YOO Studio







Rashmi Alevoor has a chat with Mark Davison about designing, the YOO way.

The YOO Design team has always aimed to create projects that respect and enliven the cultures in which they live. Why has the studio taken this stance?

We don't want to be frozen in our own design ideas, it would be very boring for us and our clients. With an open mind and collaborative ambition, we achieve a greater result.

What are your thoughts on the Indian market? What insights have you gained here to better design for this market?

Personally, I love everything about India, I have been travelling here from my earliest backpacking days, visiting all the architectural sites from ancient, colonial to modern. I think there are too many things to really do this question justice but I try to adapt all the best ideas for dealing with the climate and weather and find a way of using these in even our most modern and cutting edge projects.



What is the purpose of design?

Another question that could take a book to answer, but from the YOO perspective we believe our role is to help clients and purchasers realise their dreams for the project or their home, that it should not ever be an excuse to show off our design ego. (Unless specifically asked to, in which case we thoroughly enjoy that too).

What is the contribution of colour in the work of the YOO Design Studio?

Colour is just one of many important elements of our design and is often the simplest and cheapest way to really create a mood. We believe the actual space we design should be beautiful/elegant before any finishes or colour is applied.

What are some of the core principles of the YOO design philosophy?

Mr. Starck will always say "freedom".

What is your take on technology in design?

We like it to be as invisible as possible and simple enough for a 10-year-old to use.

Where does your team derive inspiration from? What is the YOO creative process?

We are lucky to have constant inspiration from our travels and with the interaction of great clients. We are only as good as the vision of our clients and the incredible hard work of the local teams who actually put our concepts together.

And lastly, any resolutions for 2017? What do you hope to achieve in this year?

I'm not superstitious, don't make resolutions, avoid any extremist attitudes, remember how flawed even the greatest of us are and to applaud anyone who tries to improve the human condition without judgement.



The Atria, Dubai, UAE, YOO Studio



Red Suite, J Plus, Hong Kong, HK, YOO Studio

The Lakes Solarium House, YOO Studio





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ART

THE SONG OF THE CITY

Most aesthetes will agree that no city is complete without art. The finest arts, though, often hide in plain sights in our neighbourhood. But there's a plethora of art in public places, if you know where to look for it. The city's walls have got much more excitement for you to see. In the midst of the city bustle, you can't help getting distracted by art snarling out of flat walls. With everything from watercolour florals and nature scenes to abstract designs and colour palettes, murals are a product of the art world's movement in public spaces. Street art is one of those art forms that has emerged from underground, to claim its place amidst the city's mainstream art circle. It is both a metaphor and a manifestation, creating a rewarding city in the present, and promising a better future.

Pune's professional street artist, Harshvardhan Kadam demonstrates to Maheep Singh Rathore, how a wall just doesn't have to merely be a wall, and can be art!







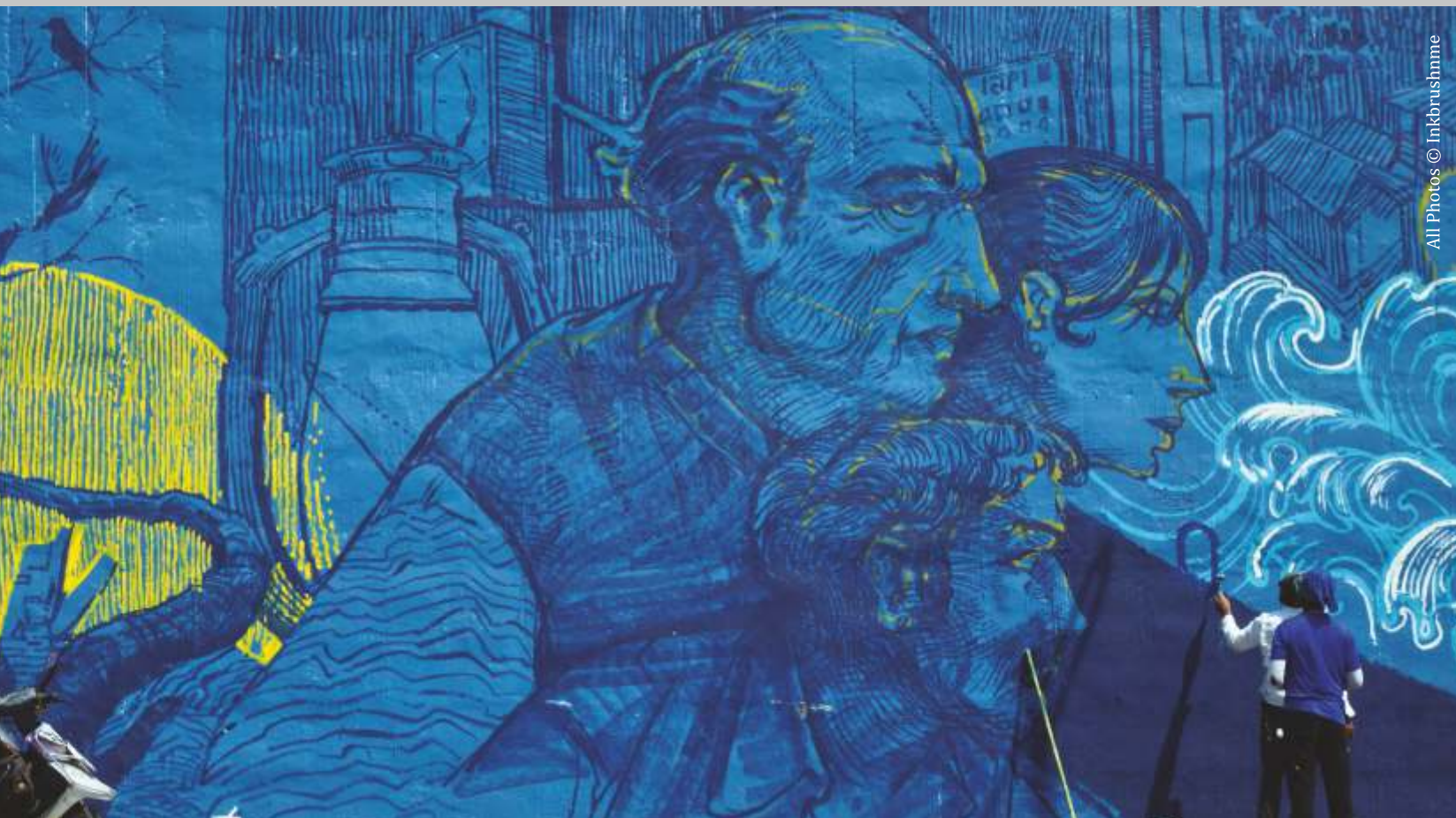
One of the most exciting aspects of mural art is the opportunity to use the environment. Harshvardhan Kadam fuses elements of mythology with his art and his murals bring a modern edge to the aesthetics of our bygone culture. Walk down the stretch of the historical Kasba Peth and his awe-inspiring murals will let your creative thoughts flow. With a web presence by the name 'inkbrushnme', Harshvardhan allows his work to speak for himself. The talented IITian artist just doesn't use a wall, he believes in giving a space its meaning. His murals have covered a wide range of canvases, from surf boards and cars to long walls, and make an apt artistic impression. Harshvardhan believes that most of the murals are 'reaction to the context'. That's the most effective way of telling stories. Context can be a wide range - from political to scientific. Unless and until the context is understood in public art, it's just a shallow texture. In his latest and favourite project, Harshvardhan opens door to the creative use of the Yerwada Central Jail wall in Pune, to produce the most captivating art installation of the city.

Outside one of the country's historically significant jails, the Yerwada Jail, across the roads with restless traffic, there's a fully realised mural on a concrete wall that will stop you in your path. A mural that brings an inspired jolt of innovation and creativity, mythology, urban life, aesthetic beauty, civic and ethnic identity, and neighbourhood revitalisation to Pune - 'Song of the City'.

With many art projects adorning the walls of the city, the Yerwada Jail wall has experienced a subtle redesign with 'Song of the City'. Taking historical and cultural influences and the River Mutha as the central character of the mural, it is elaborate poetry in terms of matter, life, and colour.

'Song of the City' has been promoted by the Pune Biennale Foundation, under the vertical of 'Pune Speaking Walls'. The initiative has also been supported by the Pune Municipal Corporation, under the Smart City Initiative.





In conversation with
Harshvardhan Kadam :

Every artist has an inspiration. What inspires you the most?
Nature inspires me the most. Anything that comes close to nature is my biggest source of inspiration. My ideologies are all nature-centric.

Love for mythology and art. How do you connect both of them?
For me, my love for mythology and art, both have been interdependent. Art is a form of canvas. I see mythology as stories to be conveyed. And of course, it requires a canvas. What can be a better canvas than art? Colourful, descriptive, and free.

How do you think modern wall art traces back to man-made ornamentations in the form of rock cut paintings, back to a time of human inception?

The cave paintings or rock cut paintings are the oldest evidences of any form of art by the humans. Past, for any art, has been truthful and pure. So, there is a lot to withdraw from it as a part of learning and inspiration. It is an improbable part of my learning. If we actually observe, the terms 'rock painting' or 'cave painting' didn't even exist when the art was actually produced back in time. There was no documentation happening around. In the present scenario, we have grown into complex beings. That's the purity of this kind of art. So now we see how things are different.

Humans and artists. Both are rare. How does an artist inside you contribute to humanity?

As an artist I contribute to the society by inspiring people around and making the environment pleasant and beautiful. We have forgotten aesthetics and as someone who understands a bit of it, I contribute and make a little difference.

How does 'Song of the City' decipher Pune?

'Song of the City' is an artistic ode to the city where I have lived. I have known, read and researched about how the place has evolved. The research defines a timeline regarding geographical and political changes, natural calamities and everything the city has gone through. After many ups and down, we as a city have grown up as one of the brightest cities globally. 300 meters of wall and 6-7 minutes is all it takes to see every small thing which constituted the city. Be it freedom struggle, invention of badminton or River Mutha. I have chosen River Mutha as the central figure to show how the city has evolved. As it has seen everything from history to present. It is an ode to River Mutha as well. We have completely forgotten the importance of River Mutha and that's a sad thing. Through this mural, I have also tried to bring out the character of the river.

GOING DOWN TO THE CITY

A street art project closest to your heart?
'Mythopolis' in Goa is the work that is closest to my heart. It was a month-long Art Residency program. It connected all murals as a street art excursion. Local communities and tourists were keen to know the concepts behind the mural and they were quite interactive.

This is a public space and one needs to be extremely aware of what to put out.

For most artists, it is their personal experience which is put in galleries. In public Art, one has to be cautious of the context of the mural. Ultimately, public art should be something people can relate to, because it is them who have to nurture it every day and live with it.

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KAALI PEELI

TAXI FABRIC

STORIES



KAALI PEELI
TAXI FABRIC
STORIES



Any story on Mumbai is almost incomplete without a mention of the city's iconic black and yellow taxicabs. Nothing quite captures the spirit of this kaleidoscopic city like the ubiquitous Kaali Peeli. Mumbai's taxis have been an integral part of the city's public transport system for as long as one can remember and have been immortalised by their presence on the silver screen; sometimes to be part of a thrilling mystery plot or chase, at other times used by the hero to serenade his lady love.

Taxi owners in Mumbai have always doted on their Kaali Peelis; seldom would you come across a cab minus the garish paraphernalia, strong jasmine flowers, miniature edifices of faith and worship, disco lights and sometimes even music set to *jhankar* beats – the late 90s' version of desi remixes. But, there is one important aspect of the taxi that owners hardly give any thought to – the fabric used for the seats. More often than not, the fabric used is dull and almost mediocre.

Fans of the British rock band Coldplay would recall the 2016 chart-buster 'Hymn for the Weekend'. In India, the video created quite a lot of buzz, with the Twitteratis embroiling themselves in needless debates. But, those with an aesthetic eye surely did not miss getting a good look at the taxi that Chris Martin uses through the music video.

This is where the story of the Kaali Peelis takes a quirky twist! Closely linked to that of Mumbai's taxis, is the story of Taxi Fabric, a start-up by designer Sanket Avlani that has been upholstering (Mumbai's) taxis since April 2015, and converting them into vibrant canvases. Chaitra Patel narrates a mesmerising tale of contemporary design against a backdrop of mundane everyday life that unfolds on the streets of Mumbai.

While the importance of art in public spaces is an aspect of social life in India that is sadly undervalued by many civic bodies, intriguingly enough, people cutting across sections of society are in fact immensely fascinated by the very idea. Taxi Fabric was one such endeavour that was fuelled on a whim that Sanket Avlani wanted to create designs for public spaces. The other aspect that troubled Sanket was the fact that the concept of design has a very limited scope and impact in India, never acknowledged as a medium of communication to bring about a social good. This was the perfect opportunity for Sanket - a chance to bring design into the public space, into the very commonplace Kaali Peeli. And, his initiative paid off!

Mumbai taxi drivers have always been the conversational sorts that engage their customers. Through his interactions with the drivers, Sanket learnt that customers often discussed various aspects of the design and décor of the taxis with them, once upholstered. This opened up avenues for conversations, human stories and blossoming relationships. Sanket believes that news travels fast, amongst taxi drivers. Many approach Taxi Fabric because they are promoted by reactions they get from their passengers. Some passengers tip them well while others choose to spend time looking at the designs. "There's a lot of power in giving someone's livelihood a new lease of life", says he.







Design Stories

Taxi Fabric is essentially centred around designers and their inspirations. Turning taxis into canvases has enabled Sanket to collaborate with many young designers and provide a platform for them to exhibit their talent, all the while enhancing the everyday travel experiences of thousands who use this mode of transportation. Every taxi is fitted with an identity label that informs passengers about the designer responsible for the fabric, the story behind the design and contact details that people can use, to connect or collaborate with Taxi Fabric.

Taxi Fabric is not about generating revenue; at least not as of today. The love for design and the urge to showcase design on a platform that gets people from all strata of life together is the impetus here. There are also instances of established designers collaborating with Taxi Fabric and even paying for their own fabric and designs.

Stories of Everyday People

Taxi Fabric is doing much good to society. Designers have been working on projects that have undoubtedly brought a smile to hundreds of faces – faces of children, the blind, the hearing impaired, people with special needs and the ailing. How, you ask? By, drawing inspiration from human stories that touch our lives every day.





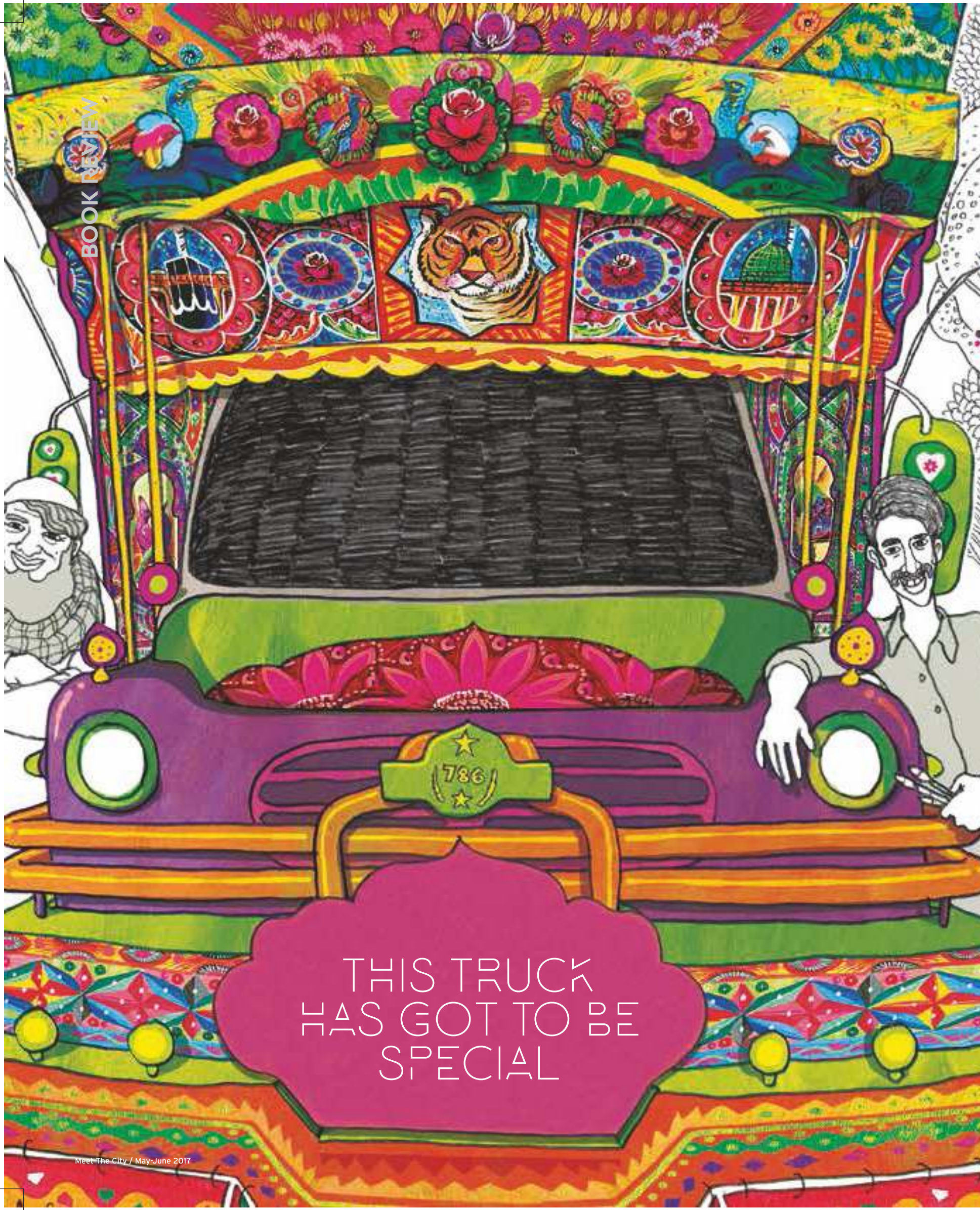
India has one of the largest populations of hearing impaired people in the world. The irony of this fact is that almost all of us grow up without being sensitised towards the needs of the hearing impaired, which also makes us completely oblivious towards the necessity to learn sign language. Sign language is in fact visual communication; just like design is. Naturally, this was reason enough for Taxi Fabric to collaborate with designer Harshit Vishwakarma who unveiled a taxi that was dressed up with a guide to learning the fundamentals of sign language. And, when young students from a school for the hearing impaired were introduced to this taxi, they were over the moon as they discovered their language given its rightful place in a public space.

Taxi Fabric, Sanket and a host of other designers continue to play Santa, not just to children but to a whole lot of Mumbaikars that negotiate the drudgery of the city each day. On Christmas Day, Taxi Fabric rode around Mumbai in a special taxi that was designed by children, and collected donations. The highlight was to watch the children gleefully ride in Santa's Taxi that they had created. Or take the time when Taxi Fabric and designer Jezreel Sarah Nathan highlighted the need for corrective visual surgery that would build awareness and help the cause of visually impaired children. In yet another endeavour to sensitise citizens, Taxi Fabric along with designer Shruti Thakkar came up with 'Special Dost' (special friend), to produce visual pieces that would spread awareness for the need to include children with special needs into mainstream society.

There is another story that recently went viral, thanks to popular Facebook page Humans of Bombay – the story of septuagenarian Vijay Thakur. Once a successful engineer and employee with Larsen & Toubro, Vijay Thakur gave it all up to drive a taxi on the streets of Mumbai, transporting people in dire need of an ambulance service, to hospitals. It all started many years ago when his pregnant wife had to be rushed to hospital in the wee hours of the morning and there was not a single taxi that stopped for them. Eventually, his wife suffered a miscarriage, which became the turning point in Vijay Thakur's life. Today when the good Samaritan is not helping those in distress, he ferries his taxi around the city, earning a modest income that gives him great satisfaction. Vijay Thakur's story inspired Taxi Fabric and designer Poorva Shingre to bring his story to life. And, what better canvas than his own taxi! His taxi is fondly called Khushi's Ambulance, after his daughter who is an inspiration to him each day.

What Next?

From spreading smiles to restoring faith in humankind, Taxi Fabric has been greatly instrumental in changing lives. As Sanket explains, "With Taxi Fabric, we've brought design to people, instead of them having to go seek it out". And, in his quest to make Taxi Fabric accessible to everyone, (Taxi Fabric) will also be printing their iconic designs on different fabric, which people can use as they please – as home linen, clothing and much more. Other than that, Taxi Fabric has also launched its Delhi chapter – Taxi Fabric Delhi, and has begun upholstering autorickshaws in the country's capital city. Also on their radar next, are the autorickshaws of Pune, giving the city much to look forward too.



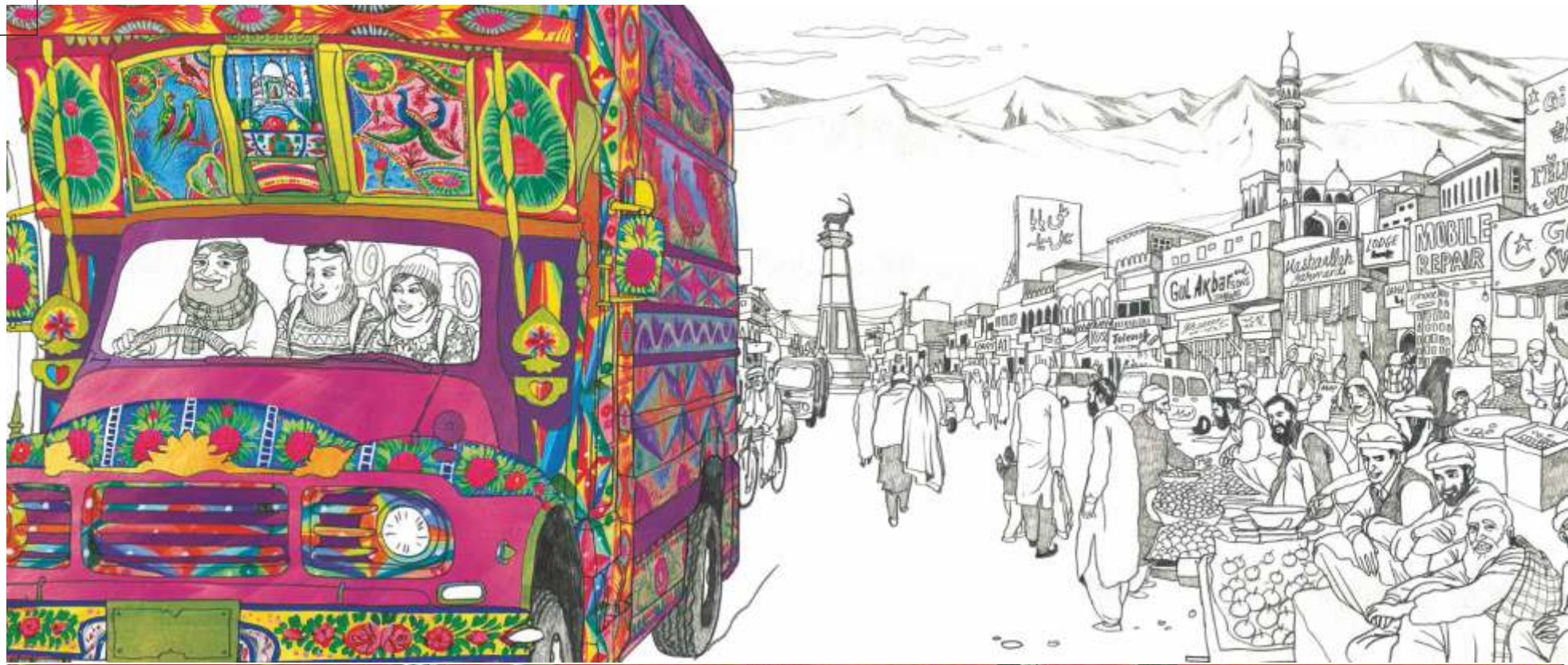
THIS TRUCK
HAS GOT TO BE
SPECIAL



THIS TRUCK HAS GOT TO BE SPECIAL

Rashmi Alevoor finds herself pouring over the pages of the wonderfully illustrated book that introduces readers to the stunning truck art of South Asia.







'This Truck Has Got to Be Special' is filled with pages of original motifs characteristic of truck art recreated by Pakistani truck artists, accompanied with life stories of drivers and artists. The story tells the life of Chinar Gul, a Pakistani truck driver who, after years of hard work and dedication to the trade, has finally acquired his own vehicle. He wants his new truck to reflect his pride, and asks his friend, Zarrar, an accomplished truck artist to paint it for him. The story is told from his perspective through images of beautiful landscapes of his journey through the mountain roads of Karakoram and the Hindu Kush. As Zarrar works on the truck, Gul waits, and reminisces about his life so far, the beauty of the rugged valley, and the vivid intricacies of truck art.

The author Anjum Rana is a Karachi-based art entrepreneur and interior designer who has set up an organization called Tribal Truck Art. Through this initiative, she helps develop opportunities for truck artists to practice their craft in sustainable ways. According to her organisation's website, she "has made it her goal to bring [truck] art into the mainstream, into our homes, and give it the recognition it so richly deserves." She employs truck artists to decorate lamps, mugs, kettles, buckets, and other household accessories. The complex floral patterns and poetic calligraphy that comprise of this vibrant folk art-form from Pakistan is telling of the vitality and unique culture and heritage of the country.

'This Truck Has Got To Be Special' is the first ever children's book to feature this art form of South Asia. The richly imagined story lends itself well for use in history, geography, and language classrooms and also teaches children about international trade, and how the world is a connected place.

The book is a result of a collaboration between the Pakistani author and artists, a Mumbai-based Indian artist, and Tara Publishing. The truck artists, Hakeem Nawaz and Amer Khan, like Zarrar from the story, were trained from an early age by elders in their family. Through their work with Anjum Rana they have learned to adapt their work to fit smaller surfaces, thereby contemporarising their art. The Indian illustrator and designer Sameer Kulavoor's work lies in the intersection of graphic design and contemporary illustration and art. His contribution to this book makes the story come alive, and buoyantly transports readers to the exotic world of truck drivers in Pakistan.





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HARMONY WITH NATURE



WWIP Circuit House, Pune

All Photos courtesy Sunil Patil & Associates

“Harmony with Nature - By instinct, man likes to be with the nature. His body, his mind responds better to the nature than manmade spaces. There is nothing better than nature that relaxes the man and keeps him healthier.”

Architect Sunil B. Patil



Ar. Sunil B. Patil

Inspired by the philosophy of “Architecture in harmony with nature”, Architect Sunil Patil has been designing impeccable spaces bearing an undeniable closeness to nature for the last twenty-five years. Architecture to him is a great responsibility as he feels that any development on the earth should be beneficial to it. Striking the right balance between human aspirations and the ecosystem, Sunil Patil has always strived to create spaces that cause minimum intervention with nature. The secret of his success lies in creating environment friendly, sustainable buildings that satisfy the functional needs of his clients and at the same time, become their companion in sharing the unforgettable moments of their life.

Right from childhood, Sunil Patil had a natural flair towards art and decided to become an architect when he was still in the seventh grade. After graduating from Kolhapur, the renowned architect started his practice in 1994 as Sunil Patil and Associates and since then has designed numerous versatile projects across India, including residential and

commercial complexes, industrial buildings, institutional blocks, residential and corporate interiors, and public utility spaces, amongst others. Intelligent planning and innovative use of indigenous materials are the hallmarks of buildings designed by Sunil Patil and Associates. His young and creative team of architects and designers is busy creating contemporary homes that are responsive to nature's bountiful resources.

Every space created by Sunil Patil and Associates has its own unique character, enhanced beautifully by world class designs and modern technology. Their projects demonstrate how much they value nature, people and the society at large, by taking into consideration the geographical condition, climate and the resources available around the site while working on the designs. Their work is well recognized today, making them the well-deserved recipients of prestigious regional and national Awards.

Speaking to Aastha Dogra from Meet the City, Architect Sunil Patil talks about his design philosophy, sustainable architecture as well as his vision of creating awareness about protecting planet Earth through his work.



Fusion House, Pune

SPAZIO SPACES



In conversation with Architect Sunil Patil

Since its inception in 1994, Sunil Patil and Associates has completed over 300 projects across India, ranging from residential, commercial, industrial buildings, and public utility spaces, to residential and corporate interiors. How has the journey of creating spaces that satisfy functional and aesthetic needs of such a diverse range of users been for you?

I enjoy doing any project that allows me to innovate, irrespective of its scale and typology.

In your words, "Architecture is a great responsibility to strike the right balance between human aspirations & our ecosystem." Please elaborate.

Any development on the earth has become a threat to the environment and ultimately to our planet. We are aspiring to build more and more, thus posing a threat to our ecosystem. It is the architects' responsibility as consultants to control this greed and to promote minimalism. And, also advocate green strategies to create sustainable architecture, which will help survive our ecosystem.

Do you have a signature style that you follow? Any incident, story or event that inspired the evolution of your architectural and design style?

We follow "Contemporary – Vernacular Architecture", which is not just a style but the need of today. One such building, if I have to mention, would be - "VVIP CIRCUIT HOUSE" in Pune. Our focus here is to design the climate responsive building, with passive strategies for thermal and visual comfort, along with innovative active strategies to achieve energy-efficient green building. The planning is derived from vernacular architecture – The shaded courtyard, transition spaces like passages and terraces, jalis in the form of louvers carry a vernacular ethos in the highly contemporary architectural style in this building. Hence, the climate, the site and time are basic parameters of design for this project, leading to the contemporary vernacular architectural style.

Please tell us about the contemporary-vernacular architecture and design philosophy that you follow.

I believe that the architecture shall belong to the geographical location, the culture, the climate and the era in which it is built. Our designs stress on using vernacular material and ethos in a contemporary style, which we call The Contemporary – Vernacular Architecture.

"Harmony with Nature - By instinct, man likes to be with nature. His body, his mind respond better to nature than man-made spaces. There is nothing better than nature that relaxes man and keeps him healthier. The architecture that we create shall be as sensitive to nature as our skin. We are trying to create spaces with minimum intervention with nature. The Architecture which is in Harmony with the nature." - I have always believed this and have been practicing for the last 25 years with this philosophy.

Sunil Patil and Associates is known for its innovative use of materials and has been a pioneer in introducing new materials. Can you throw some light on this?

We have always been experimenting with materials and used them unconventionally, not just for the aesthetic purpose but also to achieve cost effectiveness in construction. Sunil Patil and Associates has been a pioneer in introducing many materials in India like shingles, sidings, pneumatic elevators, to name a few.

Colour is an important aspect of the design of interior spaces. What kind of colour palettes do you use in your work? Any particular reason behind choosing these colours?

I believe, space is the soul of architecture and colours give it character! Sometimes colours make spaces happy, sometimes dull! They have so much power in them that they can change our emotions and moods. I love to bring colours in my work through nature and art. I strongly believe that architecture can influence people and society. Colours do play a very vital role in the same.

What according to you is luxury in 2017?

Automation, brought by technology, which reduces human efforts, is luxury today.

Your views on Spazio as a brand that now makes international luxury furniture available in Pune.

Spazio is a very good facility for Indian designers to source a variety of reputed global brands of furniture under one roof.

Any of your personal favourites (furniture/accessories, etc.) at Spazio?

Normally, my selection is project-specific. So, it differs from project to project, depending on the theme of the design. I particularly like Bice Armchair by Lema, Louise Chair by Poltrona Frau, Mr. Zheng Coffee Table by Lema and Yard Sofa by Lema.



Woven House, Ichalkaranji

SPAZIO SELECT



MR. ZHENG COFFEE TABLE BY LEMA

As the name suggests, Mr. Zheng Coffee Table, creating a symmetrical bamboo-effect interlocking puzzle, takes its inspiration from the Far East. Designed by Roberto Lazzeroni, Mr. Zheng coffee tables offer a mesmerizing contrast of materials. The base framework forms a weave made from steel rods, while the top is available in lacquered-wood, in over 40 matt colours of Lema's collection and in inlaid Canaletto walnut for some versions. The variety in colour and design make Mr. Zheng coffee tables suitable for living rooms with all kinds of interiors.



YARD SOFA BY LEMA

The Yard Sofa is much more than a sofa! It is a meeting point of counters, shelves, tables, containers and an elegant daybed. The Yard sofa system designed by Francesco Rota and inspired from the industrial design of the '60s, comes with countless multi-functional compositions. The structure of the sofa is made from resilient metal and upholstered with dynamic fabric or leather. The most striking feature of the Yard Sofa is the top supported by feet joined through hooks of rectangular section that provides support to the shelves and containers as well as to the cushions and armrests, laid without hiding it, giving the sofa a well-balanced look.



BICE ARMCHAIR BY LEMA

Designed by Roberto Lazzeroni for Lema, the Bice lounge chair is an epitome of timeless and refined design style. The vintage soul and inviting curves of the seat, make it perfect for any space in the house or office. The combination of a sturdy metal base structure and subtle Nube fabric or leather upholstery, lend it an unmistakable support and coziness.



LOUISE CHAIR BY POLTRONA FRAU

Designed by The Lievore Altherr Molina studio, Louise Chair comes with a clean design and structure crafted from solid ash and beech wood with polyurethane foam padding. The versatile chair is a tasteful addition to any space in the house, office or even public spaces. The Pelle Frau® upholstery with horizontal stitching all around the front and rear of the backrest, gives it an edgy, artistic look.



Nawaz Modi Singhanian
Photo courtesy of Body Art



Body Art

By

Nawaz Modi Singhanian

Nawaz Modi Singhanian dons many hats – a caring mother and wife, a businesswoman, a fitness enthusiast and an artist. And, she wears each of these hats with élan.

A fitness professional, certified by the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and the International Dance Exercise Association (IDEA), Nawaz has been responsible for changing the manner in which people exercise in India. She is regarded as one of India's foremost wellness and fitness professionals and has been mentoring many people and celebrities alike, through her fitness studio Body Art. Recently, she was also bestowed the 'Wellness Icon of the Year 2017' award, by the Asia Spa Group. And, when Nawaz is not coaching people on how to lead a better quality of life, she curates and creates wonderful pieces of art, for connoisseurs to admire. She is also a businesswoman and looks into matters of the family business – the very iconic Raymond Group.

Nawaz Modi Singhanian was in Pune recently, to conduct a workshop on fitness for the Pune chapter of Ficci FLO, the women's wing of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). On her visit to Pune, Meet the City had a chance to talk to her.

Chaitra Patel in conversation with Nawaz Modi Singhanian, as she talks about fitness, art, wellness and above all, living a fulfilled life.

In Conversation With Nawaz Modi Singhania

Body Art goes beyond being just another fitness centre...how would you describe this journey of 26 plus years, for Body Art and for you?

It's been such a special, precious journey. By the last year of college, which was St. Xavier's College in Mumbai, I had decided that I wanted to be in the Fitness industry. I was a member at an Aerobics class at Gamadia Road in Mumbai, and felt strongly that being in Fitness is what I wanted to do going forward. I wanted to have my own centre. Straight after my Bachelor exams I went to the U.S., where I trained, got certified and taught, to gain

a period of time I built that up. Today my Cardio Studios run about 25 different varieties of Cardio and Resistance Training classes, with each routine also having a wide variety to offer within itself. In 1998, I added a Gym, and a shortly thereafter I started the first full - fledged equipment - based Pilates Studio in India. Aside from the myriad of other benefits that Pilates has to offer, Rehabilitation is one of the greatest benefits. Many of our members come to us at Body Art to reverse health problems related to their knees, back, cervical problems, shoulder dislocation cases, balance and control related issues, correcting postural alignment, strengthening post surgery and so on. Pilates is also a fantastic workout regime for pregnant women.

Thereafter I opened another centre with these and still wider offerings than the first centre had, such as an Aqua Aerobics pool



Zumba workout

experience. I came back to India thereafter and started my foray into Fitness under the brand name of Body Art, initially with Cardio Group classes back in 1991.

However, I simultaneously joined Government Law College in Mumbai and completed my L.L.B examination. Though a law graduate, I never practised, and had truly never intended to. Coming from a family of lawyers, I just wanted to keep the door open anyway, should I ever change my mind. My training in the law has helped me in every single area of my life. Words would be inadequate to express just how much. It has helped me think straight, clear through the fog of situations, articulate well, applying both IQ and EQ, appropriateness, timing, skill and handling in every arena of my life.

Initially I started with a couple of varieties of cardio classes; over

and an Indoor Biking Studio. I recently launched an Aerial Arts Studio which has offerings such as TRX Training, Anti - Gravity Training, Suspension Fitness and Aerial Yoga. My staff force has always been hand picked by me, most often personally trained by me on an on-going basis.

You are an artist and a fitness expert too. Do you also feel fitness is a form of art and has that notion been an inspiration for the name Body Art?

Of course, it is. My first solo art exhibition was in fact titled 'Body Art'. Creativity comes out in various forms. It's all about the right side of the brain. I'm however one of those few people who seems to be well balanced in both the right and the left side of the brain though.

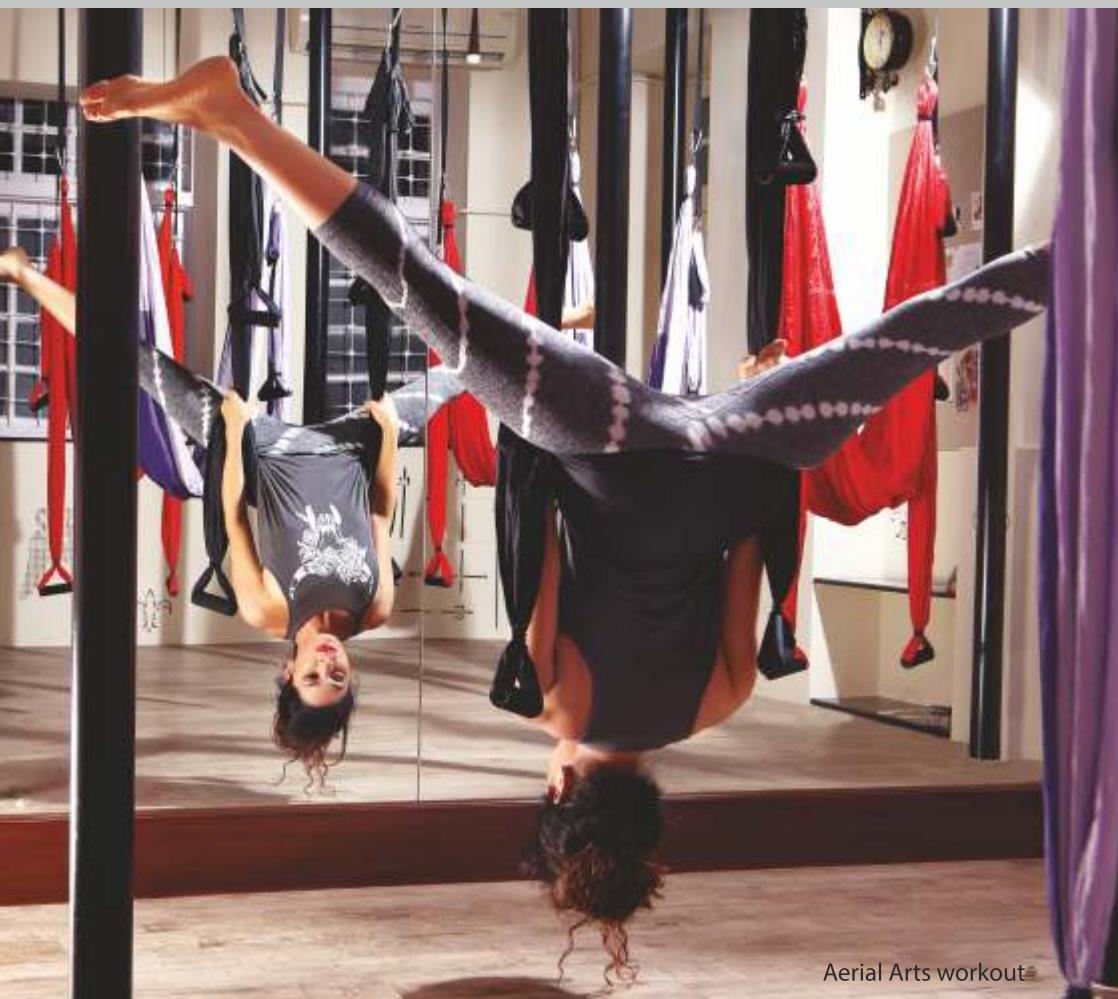
'You are known for your passion for promoting a healthy lifestyle for children. How vital do you think it is to encourage children and their parents to adopt a healthy way of life?

It all starts from early childhood conditioning. The patterns and habits we inculcate during our growing years, stay with us all through. This is our launch pad - for good or bad, for the rest of our lives. And, so parents need to be a lot more mindful of this and the sort of platform or foundation they want to leave their children with. Parents also need to contemplate that good health is about nutrition, lifestyle and exercise, but equally or more importantly, it is also about being positive in attitude, about being a good person, about the quality of our thoughts and emotions and about psychological well being. They say parents shouldn't worry that their children do not listen to them,

not discourage her, but instead would tell her she could eat them with me. I'd tell her to open the packet, have a chip, and say aloud, "This will make me fat". Then I'd tell her to have the next one and say, "This has no nutritional value and will make me stupid". Next, have another and say, "This will ruin my skin and give me pimples". So, on and so forth.... Very soon she would stop, she'd look really upset while her face would contort, and she'd say, "Mama, I don't want to eat these. I hate them". My point was to get my daughter to be clear on and honest about what junk food would do to her, and to then consciously decide for herself as to whether she wanted the worst or the best for herself. Empowering a child like this is amazing. It works like a charm!

How do you bring about a work-life balance in your routine, given that you are involved with many projects in addition to art, fitness and the family business?

That's a million-dollar question really. In truth, I'm happiest when I'm working, and therein lies a certain amount of in-built imbalance already. However, I diarize, juggle and prioritize, and thoroughly enjoy all that unfolds.



Aerial Arts workout



but instead they should worry that their children observe them very closely! Parents can only lead by example. Disease in the mind can only lead to disease in the body! Our mind is after all our computer - the motherboard really.

Given the abundance of international F&B brands in India today, any pointers for parents that will discourage them from giving their children junk food?

I'll answer that by my own example. When my daughter was about 7 years old, like any other young kid in school, what was in her classmates lunch boxes was always far more interesting than what was in her own! So, all my attempts at giving her healthy snacks failed, as she would trade the same in for unhealthy junk food with her class buddies. She loved eating chips and I would

How fitness conscious do you think Puneites are?

They're actually more fitness conscious and aware than I would've imagined, which is such a pleasant surprise. Your market is ripe and it's therefore a great pleasure for someone like me to come down and conduct workshops and presentations on fitness, health and nutrition related matters for audiences here, as I recently did for your FICCI Flo Event in May 2017.

Any tips you would like to share?

Above all, learn to be versatile and flexible in reference to achieving your goals. For times when you are travelling, are extra busy, caught up with weddings, times of illness, etc., all may not go on schedule in terms of exercise and nutrition. Be innovative and flexible in your approach so that you continue to meet the same goals. Once you keep your eye firmly on the target, you will always find a way!

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IN STORE



RISE N

When the legendary P. G. Wodehouse once stated, "Flowers are happy things", he was so right. Flowers and plants are indeed a sight for sore eyes – their colours are pleasing, their fragrances mesmerising and they are good for our mental health. And, this fact has been backed by consistent research. While nature around us offers plenty of opportunities to soak in its many bounties, research has indeed proven the benefits of indoor plants on human wellbeing. Flowers for the ailing brighten up a hospital bedside, just as a bunch of pretty ones radiate happy moods into our living rooms. Therefore, imagine the joyful emotions an entire shop-full of these floral beauties can stir up within us? A first-of-its-kind concept in India, the Rise n Shine floral boutique in Pune is doing just that – bringing smiles to its customers' faces. Chaitra Patel discovered the most recent happy place in town – the Rise n Shine Botanical Boutique.



SHINE

To many people, soil would merely imply dirt. Not for Bhagyashree Patil though; for her it has always represented immense potential. Bhagyashree Patil's innate passion for agriculture stemmed out of being born into one of Maharashtra's well reputed families, also known for their immense agrarian and educationist initiatives. As the daughter of the visionary educationist, Padmashree Dr. D. Y. Patil, Bhagyashree Patil always nursed a natural appetite for agriculture, eventually cultivating a mere 2 acres of land to produce the likes of tomatoes, okra and chillies as a hobby. Back then, her agrarian pursuits were not always supported by any technologically superior practices. But, that my no means implied that Mrs. Patil did not wish to take long strides in the field. She brought herself abreast each time with technological advancements in agriculture, and built a collection of reading and research material that inspired her to implement these in her modest agricultural and horticultural practice. Little did she know back then in 1999, that this was just the start of many firsts.

By 2004, Mrs. Patil had founded Rise n' Shine Biotech, which today enjoys a significant presence in the fields of biotechnology, floriculture and horticulture. With a single-minded focus to make Rise n' Shine Biotech the world's most sophisticated facility in the production of tissue culture, Mrs. Patil has over the years used her agrarian background to her advantage. Today, Rise n' Shine Biotech is

a global producer and exporter of plants to 22 countries, with an enormous tissue culture laboratory area for research and development that produces close to 30 million plants annually.

It is almost unheard of for any passionate visionary and entrepreneur worth his or her salt, to rest contently on the laurels earned. The urge to accomplish more is what pushes every entrepreneur towards greater success. And, likewise in the case of Mrs. Patil too. Lured into achieving greater goals and higher standards, she went on to envision the first of its kind green mall or botanical boutique in India. And, that is how, the Rise n' Shine Botanical Boutique in Koregaon Park, Pune came into being and is now a natural extension of one of India's largest biotech organisations for plants and flora.

Since early February this year, the Rise n' Shine Botanical Boutique has been changing the manner in which Pune-kars are buying plants to decorate their homes and offices. A one-stop shop for everything related to indoor plants, Rise n' Shine is a luxurious botanical boutique that sprawls an amazing 3000 sq. ft. of prime property in Koregaon Park's lane number 5. As you walk into the boutique, it's almost impossible to miss the riot of colours that you are greeted by - a riot of floral colours that are soothing to the body and soul. The large and very inviting retail space is only befitting of the floral beauties that are on display here.

IN STORE





Bhagyashree Patil

A life without these radiant blooms would be almost monochromatic; Valentine's Day, a grand wedding day, a birthday party would never seem as joyful as they do when complemented with the presence of flowers. Different flowers and plants express and evoke different emotions and are capable of influencing our moods. If reports of an international study on the benefits of plants in our lives are to be believed, indoor plants when placed in our offices and homes are known to vastly improve cognitive performance. And, while plants have this extraordinary knack of brightening up our living environments, they also provide much needed fertiliser to our brain – oxygen. The vivid foliage at Rise n' Shine does exactly this – it is incredibly soothing to the eyes and has the potential to add a dash of colour into our living and work spaces. And, when potted in colourful containers or planters that adorn the shelves here, they are capable of brightening up any space.

A visit to Rise n' Shine instantly reveals to the uninitiated too, the gorgeous art of potting floral beauties. The boutique specialises in the art of potted plants over the more popular custom of cut flowers. The tropical Pink Guzmania is one such beauty that is hard to ignore at the boutique. This ornamental indoor plant is easy to care for since it thrives in humid conditions and hence is extremely popular with the customers visiting Rise n' Shine, prompting the boutique to enjoy an exclusive contract with the exporters and suppliers. The retail space also animatedly comes alive

“Just Living Is Not Enough....One Must Have Sunshine, Freedom, And A Little Flower.”

as the gerberas, orchids, spathiphyllum, alpinia, chrysanthemum and many others jostle for space, as they are lovingly nurtured and dressed up into pretty containers that eventually bring a smile on the faces of their special recipients.

While the Rise n' Shine Boutique offers visitors an incredible retail experience, the flowers are not the only reason happy customers keep returning to the place. Largely promoted by word-of-mouth, Rise n' Shine is immensely popular with expats and other residents who live in the vicinity. The warmth of the flowers radiates through the entire space, bringing alive a sense of positivity and liveliness. And, this positive vibe certainly exudes from the staff that works here too; friendly and helpful, ever ready to assist customers make the right choice and pick the right plant, knowing exactly what they would like to buy on a particular shopping trip. But, Rise n' Shine is a happy place for yet another reason; an important and socially relevant one too - women's empowerment. An ardent believer in the upliftment of women, Mrs. Patil has relentlessly worked towards making women a major part of the workforce at the factory as well as the boutique. Today, almost 90% of her employee strength constitutes of women from rural areas, to whom the company provides healthcare and education, with an opportunity to rise through the ranks. Well versed in handling production at the factory and attending to customers with a ready smile on their faces at the boutique, these women employees are indeed the real building blocks of Rise n' Shine.

It has indeed been a long journey for Bhagyashree Patil, since the inception of Rise n' Shine in 1999. A combination of hard work and a commitment to providing excellence and quality have never failed her in her path to success. Indeed, who would have guessed the wonders a gift of 2 acres of land (from her husband Mr. P. D. Patil) would create?



It's rare to get an experience that elevates hospitality and cuisines to an elevated art form. And if it's straight from the panel of elected cuisine influencers, your taste buds will never be tickled more. Pair it with an iconic location, trendy décor and buzzing energy- the happy vibes will make it a dining delight for you.

Welcome to
The Sassy Spoon!

All photos courtesy The Sassy Spoon

You never fall out of love with food. The newest sassy space in the city promises a stellar experience and a taste that you just can't miss. The relaxing resto bar is a brainchild of the dynamic duo- Rachel Goenka and Irfan Panabney. Located in Koregaon Park, the contemporary restaurant has carefully vetted selections from European and Mediterranean to South East Asian and Indian cuisines. The menu at The Sassy Spoon pampers you with



its cuisine list which is rare to be found even in the city's most delectable restaurants. Everything here is a little bit more-brighter, earthier, smokier, creamier. You might have tasted some of the dishes before. At Sassy Spoon they are sure to treat you in a different way. The difference is just like a faded photograph that has been restored, with textures and colors that you didn't know existed.



Start with the classics and order the bruschetta with smoked eggplants, crispy chickpeas and fried onion toppings as the sassy experience brings the food links from Italy in its most authentic way; never forget the twist though. Go halfway between a sauté and a stew and the Mushroom Fricassee served in scooped out brioche will exhilarate the foodie inside you. Relying on humble ingredients and a tinge of tomato basil sauce, the French food is a perfect creamy mushroom delight complementing the rich taste of brioche. The Cajun prawns and Tenderloin Jerky were the winners for the appetizers. Chef exploits prawn lovers to win plaudits for the flavor of Cajun spice lingering on the taste buds. With the uncompromising crisp and crackling with the first bite of Tenderloin Jerky, you can make it out that the focus is unmistakably on meat. Srilankan spiced chicken poi is a very pretty snack. Soft flat bun stuffed with some shredded chicken served with baby potatoes and slaw salad. Pair it with the Morning Brew, the espresso-vanilla flavored whiskey helps you cut the Srilankan spices with a tinge of orange zest.





As you reach your happy high, the food gets tastier. Go for the lip smacking pork ribs with smoked barbecue sauce. It is the kind of food that you pick with your fingers and eat off the bone. Spoon bait a Tamarind and Chili spiced Rawas, steamed in a banana leaf, served with coconut rice. And while it's not complex, it's one of the favorite for the mains. The charcoaled Barbecue Chicken teases your taste buds just by its presence. With each bite giving you different pleasure: crunch or chew, you will realize that someone here is cooking without rules, finding unmatched delicacy in simplicity and dishing out luxury.

All the mixes are not complex, as The Sassy Spoon believes in keeping it simple yet having an eclectic mix of fun, great food, amazing service, and a lot of SASS. But it's not always about the food. Ambience equally quells your hunger pangs. Mesmerizing array of flavors and textures are served along with eye catching interiors and creative wall treatments. The Sassy Spoon demonstrates as much innovation and flair in its ambience as they do in their kitchen. It takes the most pleasant of the vibes with its repurposed wood furnishings and deliver it with a cheerful lit atmosphere. The snazzy color palette and the Volkswagen bar that runs along the length of the restaurant forms the main attraction of the warm and chic bar centric ambience. High ceilings, repurposed wood furnishings and staircase leading to library gives the space a quirky feel. A meal seems much more appetizing when paired with the right drinks. At The Sassy Spoon you can get everything done right with a plethora of palette tempting drinks on the sassy menu.

Steeped in vodka and gin, and swirling with unfiltered frozen strawberry bits, a chilling mug of Strawberry and Basil Martini is your legitimate excuse to summers.

Awaken nostalgia with a smooth punch of your childhood favorite Kala Khatta. With fresh mulberries muddled with grapes and kala khatta flavor, Spiked Very Berry Kala Khatta is fresh on the taste that lasts throughout your meal.

While at The Sassy Spoon, expect a sweet ending to your perfect meal. Sticky Toffee is a date and caramel pudding served with caramel sauce; a haven for caramel lovers.

Savor chunks of vanilla ice cream on poached apricot with a tinge of sweet bitterness of coffee. Indulge your sweet tooth like never before with the Coffee Almond Fudge and experience desserts done just right. Walk in for quirky bar bites, innovative mains and drinks, scrumptious breakfasts and takeaways, and a sassy experience. Lunch time is particularly fine, but you will need to reserve a table at weekends.

From food and service to ambience and vibes, everything stands in distinctive ways, elevating the experience of dining-in this case, way out. Chances are you might go to The Sassy Spoon pre-disposed to like it. And it is clearly doing the right things to stay busy among overstuffed Pune dining scenes.

“Off the Cuff” with Sharad Pawar

Anchored by Shekhar Gupta



Shri Sharad Pawar with Shekhar Gupta

Founder and Editor-in-Chief of ThePrint, Shekhar Gupta, who hosts India's most thought provoking evenings 'Off The Cuff' on NDTV, came to the vibrant city of Pune to interview and have a conversation with the enigmatic Nationalist Congress Party Chief Sharad Pawar. JW Marriott Pune aptly became the venue for “Off the Cuff” event which saw Sharad Pawar, a parliamentarian for fifty long years and a Padma Vibhushan winner, speaking candidly on fellow politicians as well as current issues of national importance.

In conversation with Shekhar Gupta, the veteran leader who commands respect amongst the entire political class, praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his seriousness, hard work and command over his team of ministers. He advised Rahul Gandhi to be consistent and the Prime Minister to become a team player. He left the audience in splits when he compared both the leaders.

Mr. Pawar kept the audience engaged throughout the evening by speaking on burning topics like communal sensitivity in certain parts of the country, the unresolved Kashmir issue, cow vigilantism and the distress of the farmers. The event ended on a high note with a question and answer session with the distinguished audience, which included who's who of Maharashtra's politics and business world. On being asked about the 2019 elections, the accomplished leader, true to his propensity to survive, retorted that anyone can win, provided the opposition stands united.





Sabina Sanghvi, Varsha Chordia, Bhavna Mehta, Satish Mehta and guests at the Talk Show



Shri Sharad Pawar, flanked by Atul Chordia and Shekhar Gupta



Prakash Chhabria, Abhay Firodia



Dr. S.B.Mujumdar, Arun Firodia, Vithal Maniar, Vijay Shirke

FICCI FLO Awards Nite 2017

Celebrating Women Extraordinaire



Sumantai Kirloskar giving award to Shobhanatai Ranade



Varsha Chordia, General Madhuri Kanitkar and Sabina Sanghvi



FLO members walking the ramp for Meera and Muzaffar Ali



Atul Chordia and Sunanda Pawar

The most awaited night of the year, FICCI FLO Awards Nite 2017 was held at JW Marriott Pune on 18th April. The evening full of glitz and glamour, recognized and honoured women achievers in six categories – Entrepreneurship, Education, Health, Social Work, Sports and Arts & Culture. The award ceremony was followed by a unique fashion show where celebrity designers like Kavita Bhartia, Rahul Mishra, Preeti Jhavar, Meera and Muzaffar Ali showcased their exquisite designs.

Gorgeous women walked the ramp in innovative designer outfits displaying beautiful embroidery, timeless Zardozi and Chikankari from Awadh, contemporary styles and relevant themes like sustainability. The fun filled evening, attended by crème de la crème of the society, encouraged, appreciated and inspired women to succeed.



Rhea Gupta



Mamta Jain shasying on the ramp



Priyanka Rathi



Sheetal Ranka



Sujata Sabnis, Khushi with Nikita Kasat



Sharmila Bhingarwalla



Sheetal Ranka and Mamta Jain



Varsha Chordia



Seema Malhotra



Atul Chordia with Arundhati

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Supriya Mohite addressing the attendees.



Supriya Mohite, Sandra Bhansali and Mamta Jain



Nawaz Modi Singhania speaking at the event

Wellness Workshop

By Ms. Nawaz Modi Singhania

Date: 6th May, 2017

Women's health is often overlooked in our society. This makes it ever so important for every woman to have access to knowledge related to exercise and diet, which would help her maintain herself. With a vision of "Power to Empower", FICCI Flo's Pune Chapter organized an interactive session for the ladies with India's leading fitness and wellness icon - Nawaz Modi Singhania on 6th May. Ms. Nawaz, founder of Body Art Fitness Centers, is an internationally certified fitness and wellness mentor to many personalities in India and abroad.

At the health and fitness workshop, Ms. Nawaz shared utmost valuable information on super foods, alternative health foods as well as simple exercises to do every day. Her incredible passion for fitness caught up with the women attendees at the workshop, who very enthusiastically performed the exercises along with Nawaz. The entire session befitted FLO Pune's theme for this year: ICE - Impact | Commit | Enrich.



Sonali Mehta, Kamini Mehta, Jasni Singh



Neha Talera and Varsha Chordia



Kavita Mehta and Preeti Bora



Anita Agarwal, Supriya Mohite and Alpana Kirloskar



Seema Malhotra



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