

CREATIVE CORNER

When a wall reflects an artist's mind

Interior designer Joya Nandurdikar on the importance of designing with environmentally friendly materials

Nandurdikar@Prabhakar1
matalashmi.prabhakar@gmail.com

During college days, Joya Nandurdikar, 39, interior designer and founder of part-time multidisciplinary design practice United Design Consultants, was inspired by eminent architects like Laurie Baker, Charles Correa and BV Doshi.

"I was always drawn to those with a sustainable approach to designing spaces. I admired Laurie Baker and Charles Correa for their composition of materials. And, of course, B.V. Doshi is the star—his work is very subtle, sustainable and materially rich, yet with wonderful compositions," says Nandurdikar.

Today, Nandurdikar, who has won a clutch of awards including the ID Hon-

ours Award (2019), The D>List Award (2022) and IIDC Award (2023), advocates for a sustainable approach to design through her own work.

In almost every project that she designs, Nandurdikar aims to use indigenous, environmentally friendly materials. What's more, she infuses Indian arts and craftsmanship in her interior designs. "These days, I'm in love with rammed earth and constantly looking for opportunities to use it in my projects. I also like lime-based products, many corner of a space, clay and paper mache are other materials that often take over in my work," she says.

As for her attempts to promote Indian arts and crafts in interior design, she stresses that the idea is not merely about cele-

brating one's roots.

"It's about recognising the immense value and beauty inherent in our rich artistic legacy. Indian craftsmanship and art are about ornamentation, refined skills, and colours, unlike the minimalist beige and grey aesthetic;



Interiors of a residential project designed by Joya Nandurdikar

designed globally. Each piece tells a story of our history, values, and collective identity."

In an interview, Nandurdikar talks about her workspace and her working process. Edited excerpts:

ideas come to life. It's where we work with artisans to shape products, focus on the details, and create tangible outputs.

How would you define your daily relationship with this space?

It's my comfort space, my temple. When I am in my comfort zone here, I can create anything. It's truly where I feel most inspired and productive.

What are some things that will always be found at your workspace?

Scale is important in our work, so you'll always find measuring tapes around. You'll also see various stationery. I've also placed a couple of my favourite pictures around—they help me inspired.

What does the wall of your workspace look like?

The wall is actually made of cork. It's where I pin up my ideas and scribbles. I ensure that the walls get lost, and don't force any ideas; they really become an extension of my mind.

Current trends in interior design architecture that fascinate you?

The integration of AI and automation in homes is fascinating. It's making homes more user-friendly in today's world. The one concept that I am always conscious of is that, as designers, we can enhance Earth's resources through our material choices. So, designing with environmentally friendly materials and finding alternatives to exhaustible materials is key. In my view,

aesthetics should follow these principles. It's about creating sensible designs. When stuck for an idea, where do you look for inspiration?

I get ideas from installations and art galleries across the world. I also find inspiration in old design books and buildings. When I'm starting a new project, I might look at a graphic composition or any such piece of work to spark ideas.

What are some installations that you're commissioned that you loved?

Last year, for the Serendipity Arts Festival, we designed a composition of different Indian crafts. The concept was wall frescoes and we created totems incorporating natural lime wash, Keralamalan, Shekhawati art, *Tarkashi* work, inlays, and marquetry.

When it comes to doing up your own place, what do you splurge on?

I splurge on antiques. For me, a day and weeks I'm not saving any self-in taught marques across India. The vibrant markets of Bali, and enchanting stores in Budapest, Paris and Portugal have been a treasure trove for me. Besides antiques, I also love splurging on art and plants. They really bring a space to life and reflect my personal taste.

Creative Corner is a series about creative individuals and their relationships with their workspace



Yoga poses for those stuck to the office chair

A guide to help include exercise seamlessly into a busy worklife

Varun Verma

With demanding schedules, adding yoga to your routine might feel like just another task. But there are ways you can incorporate yoga into a busy workday. All you need is a chair, a mat and some determination.

Here's a list of yoga poses you can do at your desk, before and after a meal. Engaging in intense activity sooner rather than later can lead to discomfort, so wait at least two hours after a meal.

SEATED SPINAL TWIST (*reeth sanchalan asana*): Sit upright on your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Inhale and lengthen your spine. Exhale and twist your torso to the left, placing your right hand on the back of the chair and your left hand on your right knee for support. Hold the twist for a few breaths, then slowly return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. This pose aids digestion and enhances circulation, alleviating post-meal sluggishness.

STANDING BACK BEND (*ardha chakrasana*): Stand with your feet hip-width apart and place hands on the lower back for support. Inhale and arch your back, lifting the chest towards the ceiling. Keep the knees slightly bent. Hold this pose for a few breaths, then return to a neutral standing position. This pose improves spinal flexibility.

TRIANGLE POSE (*trikonasana*): Stand with your feet about a foot apart, with hands extended to the sides. Turn the right foot out 90 degrees and the left foot slightly in. Exhale and lean your right hand towards the right foot, while extending your left arm upwards. Keep your body in a straight line and draw up at your left hand. Hold for a few breaths, then switch sides. This pose improves body balance and focus.

SEATED FORWARD BEND (*paschimottanasana*): Sit on the floor with your legs extended straight in front of you. Inhale and lengthen your spine. Exhale and bend forward from the hips, reaching for your feet or shins. Hold the stretch for a few breaths, then slowly return to the starting position. This pose helps calm the mind.

COBRA POSE (*bhujangasana*): Lie face down on the floor with your legs extended and the tops of your feet pressing into the floor. Place the hands under the shoulders, elbows close to the body. Inhale and lift your chest off the floor, using your back muscles and arms. Keep the elbows slightly bent and shoulders away from the ears. Hold for a few breaths, then lower back down. This pose provides relief from the physical strain of prolonged sitting.

Varun Verma is founder of Lifeyoga.

Write to us at businessoflife@livemint.com





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