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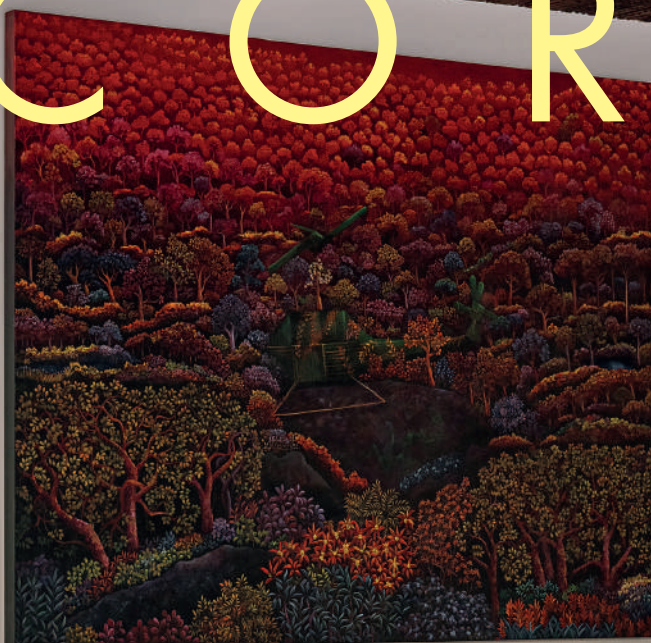
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*ELLE DECOR brings you in-depth articles and insights into design, architecture, decor and culture. Introducing our special contributors*



**KUNAL BHATIA**

PHOTOGRAPHER, WRITER & ARCHITECT  
STUDIO KUNAL BHATIA

A spatial photographer, travel and design writer, and architect based in Mumbai, Kunal finds inspiration in cities around the world, in the people that he meets and in encounters that are often fleeting. He is passionate about design, photography and travel; and strives to explore the many intersections between them with his practice. When not behind the camera or at his desk, he's likely to be flaneuring in some corner of the world.

**A fictional person I want to call for dinner...**

The Dowager Countess from Downton Abbey

**A meal I can eat on repeat...** Miso soup and sushi

**A hobby I'd like to pick up...** Tap dancing

**I'm currently reading...** I prefer podcasts. Currently listening to The Guardian's The Audio Long Read

**On my bucket list...** Going back to Japan for a few months, again

**In this issue,** he photographs and writes about a filmmaker's dream residence in Goa designed by Ini Chatterji and designVAN, **Pg 88**



**VRITIMA WADHWA**

FOUNDER  
PROJECT 810

A graduate of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, with a specialisation in furniture design, Vritima's practice spans retail, hospitality and residential sectors, with a focus on interior architecture. She has served as visiting faculty at NID and CEPT, Ahmedabad. Her studio has been recognised on national and international platforms.

**A meal I can eat on repeat...** Vietnamese pho

**A hobby I'd like to pick up...** Pottery and pickleball

**I'm currently reading...** Peter Zumthor's Atmospheres

**A movie that changed my perspective...** Jojo Rabbit

**On my bucket list...** A trip to Peru

**In this issue,** she takes us through this New Delhi bungalow designed alongside Abhimanyu Dalal that hinges on two helixes and distinct cinematic experiences, **Pg 188**



**ABHIMANYU DALAL**

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT  
ABHIMANYU DALAL ARCHITECTS

One of India's leading architects and urban designers, his expertise spans various domains, including residential, institutional and commercial projects. Abhimanyu also specialises in restoration and repurposing of historic buildings, comprehensive street-scaping, conservation and urban design. With a strong educational foundation, academic practice and extensive experience, he brings a unique blend of skills to his architectural explorations.

**A fictional person I want to call for dinner...** Hercule Poirot

**I'm currently reading...** At Home by Bill Bryson

**On my bucket list...** Follow the Silk Route

**A piece of technology I couldn't live without...** mobile phone

**A contemporary I look up to...** Medha Patkar

**In this issue,** he takes us through this New Delhi bungalow designed alongside Vritima Wadhwa of Project 810 that hinges on two helixes and distinct cinematic experiences, **Pg 188**



**SHONAN TREHAN**

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT AND FOUNDER  
LANGUAGE.ARCHITECTURE.BODY

Her work focuses on the construction of relationships between narrative, environment and habitation. Shonan's studio has worked extensively on healthcare, education and residential projects. In addition to her practice, Shonan has also been an academician and published in numerous books.

**I'm currently reading...** The Overstory by Richard Powers

**A movie that changed my perspective...** The Automat: a documentary on Horn & Hardart

**A piece of technology I couldn't live without...** The Blackwing 602 Pencil

**A place I feel most at peace...** At my drawing desk

**In this issue,** she crafts a home out of the earth in Vadodara that appears one with the landscape, **Pg 202**



The foyer in this New Delhi home is a smorgasbord of levitating forms, courtesy of a sinewy metal installation by Ayesha Singh over the warm grey stone flooring from Stonex India. Sculptural tables by Ayush Kasliwal add Stygian touches to the muted shell

**FACING PAGE** An ethereal luminaire by Shweta Mansingka and Lightbox serves as the tour de force of the formal living room. The rug and furniture are from Kaati Carpets and Alsorg respectively

Styling by Samir Wadekar



## HOUSE OF TWO SPIRALS

*Designed as a series of visual experiences, each far removed from the last, this bungalow in New Delhi by Abhimanyu Dalal in collaboration with EDIDA winner Vritima Wadhwa of Project 810 is an object lesson in elevations*

TEXT BY **VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **REUBEN SINGH**





The den is a subterranean hideaway perfect for both large gatherings and intimate soirées. The B lit light above the bar and a bespoke metal screen add sheen to the setting. Wriever armchairs and a rug from Kaati Carpets complete the look  
FACING PAGE The terrestrial meets the celestial in the dining room, where a painting by Baaraan Ijlal, sourced through Shrine Empire and a lighting installation by Shweta Mansingka and Lightbox serve chromatic-achromatic antidotes to each other. The furniture is from Alsorg

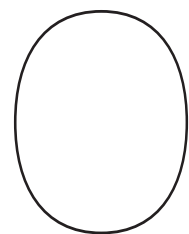




FROM TOP The upstairs living room is an oasis of mellow hues. An ensemble of Bengal School works from the owners' private collection takes centre stage, flanked by timber cabinets. Alsorg was the brand of choice for the furniture; the powder room could be an art gallery with Kalighat paintings dominating one wall. The mirror and vanity, both custom, are by The Designers Home. Grey flooring from Stonex India holds a mirror to the walls  
FACING PAGE An elliptical staircase by Sharp Interiors rises to the terrace. A Dori bench by Project 810 Furniture sits to the right







ne site. Two halves. Three important considerations. That was how Abhimanyu Dalal approached a farmhouse project in New Delhi. “We decided right away to divide the property down the middle to place the house at one end,” says the veteran architect and founder of his eponymous New Delhi-based practice Abhimanyu Dalal Architects. He collaborated with former EDIDA winner Vritima Wadhwa of Project 810 for the interior design of the strikingly contemporary home with its roofs silhouetted against the sky. “We imagined a house on one end and landscape on the other. Nothing in between,” he adds. The composition of the various architectural elements took into account not only the owners’ art collection but more importantly, the light, greenery and the surrounding vistas. Floor-to-ceiling windows, some double height, are a defining feature that extend the architecture outwards. Given that one of the owners, a renowned gallerist, had a penchant for art and already had an enviable collection, the second consideration was designing a setting that created a dialogue with the spaces. And the third was ensuring that the place felt natural to the family, as if they’d known and loved it all along.

The seeds were thus sown for a home filled with natural light – complete with indoor courtyards, artful corners, theatrical volumes, pocket gardens and picture-postcard vistas – which blurs the line between witnessing art and living within it. The layout was spread over three floors. The formal living room, library, dining room, study and three bedrooms are on the ground floor, while another four bedrooms are on the first. As for the basement and terrace? The former boasts a bar, salon, massage room and fully equipped gym, along with an outdoor swimming pool with a dining space. The terrace was transformed into a mini Eden by well-known landscape architect Madhup Mazumder, who created sloping gardens and characterful planters; also a well-designed kitchen garden that provides fresh, organic produce to the family. Through the glass railing, the surrounding treetops complete the verdant experience.

Evidently, when it came to designating things as art, that included the grand central spiral staircase with its skylight that forms the heart of this stunning home. In Vritima’s eyes, a focus on art meant minimising everything else, including the floors, walls and furniture, which she restrained to a uniform of clean lines, crisp compositions and minimal ornamentation. The discreet design grammar finds particular expression on the ground floor, where full-height solid oak doors punctuate white and textured walls and grey marble flooring serves as a calming counterpoint to the kaleidoscopic art.

Though there’s a sense of abiding order, a sense that perhaps the home was indeed designed around art, Mr Dalal is quick to point out otherwise. “We knew the home would grow with the art. After all, collections grow and change and the house is designed to accommodate that,” he avers, emphasising that the intent was for the home to unfold in layers. As he explains, the elevations are part of the experience of discovery, of uncovering new things as you move around.

And so they are. For example, the points and curves of the Ayesha Singh metal sculpture at the entrance which navigates the floors, walls and ceiling in one continuous sweep that serve as a veiled overture for the works that come after it: The sculptural seating elements by Ayush Kasliwal in the foyer and the Bengal School paintings in the living room. Luxuriant green landscapes serve as tranquil interludes between manmade art, producing a gravitational pull that oscillates between the gardens and the interior, much like the ethereal porcelain-leaved luminaire by Shweta Mansingka overhead in the drawing room.

Where Vritima did introduce colour, she did so sparingly, as in the library, where she juxtaposed teal walls with warm timber panelling while giving pride of place to an ensemble of glorious Somnath Hore works; or as in the study, where she counterbalanced the wooden study table, soaring bookshelf and Pierre Jeanneret desk chair with a grey-blue handwoven carpet from Jaipur Rugs. The dining area was similarly enlivened, not so much with colour as with meditative basalt flooring, overlays of texture and light, and a Shweta Mansingka lighting installation that channels a Stygian galaxy. “Every corner is imbued with art, eclectic collectibles and elements that become an animated backdrop to life,” notes Vritima. >>

“We imagined  
a house on one end  
and landscape on  
the other. Nothing  
in between”  
– Abhimanyu Dalal

In the first-floor corridor, curved walls guide you inside with a wall-mounted bench by The Wicker Story taking pride of place. The artworks on the same wall are from Priyanka D’Souza’s Disabled Dictionary series sourced through Shrine Empire. The grey flooring is by Stonex India





The informal living room with dark terrazzo flooring, situated upstairs, serves as an overture to the terrace garden beyond. Art by Viraj Naik elevates the monochrome cocoon, while a bespoke Merak centre table by Project 810 and an armchair by Sarita Handa NOW lend a rustic edge

"Every corner is imbued with art, eclectic collectibles and elements that become an animated backdrop to life" – Vritima Wadhwa





A spiral staircase in the library leads to a mezzanine brimming with bookshelves. Rumi armchairs by Project 810, a Pottery Barn side table alongside a rug from Kaati Carpets complete the setting  
FACING PAGE The study is a lesson in tactful restraint. A custom pendant by B lit levitates over the space, which plays host to a bespoke desk by The Designers Home, a Phantom Hands chair and a carpet from Jaipur Rugs' Manchaha collection





Upstairs, stillness pervades the light-filled bedrooms, thanks to materials like terrazzo, Indian stone alongside lime-washed walls that inspire serenity. Lightly textured walls and contemporary furniture make way for such standout pieces as a bespoke four-poster bed by Ayush Kasliwal, an antique Naga bench, artwork by Tanmoy Samanta, a Dori chair by Project 810 Furniture and sumptuous carpets by Jaipur Rugs. The basement is a similar exercise in tactful restraint. Enveloped in a grey-greige shell of lime plaster, it is a treasure trove of bespoke furniture, brass accents and dazzling artworks that take turns taking the lead.

The landscape around the house is noteworthy for its numerous reflective pools and extensive lawns, providing an experiential setting for the house. The landscape architect has used wild grasses and luxuriant plants that enhance the silhouettes of the house and at the same time seamlessly integrate the indoors and outdoors.

Ask Mr Dalal and Vritima if everything went according to plan and there's a unanimous consensus: No. "I think the best things happen by chance," says Mr Dalal, "but that's the fun of an architectural project – reinvent as you go along." Perhaps if he and Vritima had not, there would be no 14-foot, chimney-like light installation in the library (it was originally meant to house a staircase to the roof but was eliminated for security reasons) or a garage with a sloping roof that remains invisible when viewed from indoors or even a sparkling swimming pool reflecting natural light outside the den. "These were not part of the original plan," he continues. "But they add to the experience of discovery and make this a luxurious and distinctive home." ♦



With sage lime plaster walls, a jute Jaipur Rugs carpet and soothing stone flooring from Stonex India, the second bedroom is springtime come to life. The bed, designed by AKFD Studio with Eris Home linen, is flanked by B lit lights and art by Tanmoy Samanta. The bench is a Naga novelty. FACING PAGE Part castle, part cavern, this bedroom revels in quietude. A light from Oorjaa enlivens one corner, while textured lime plaster walls and wooden cladding by Vadehra Builders echo each other in scale and signature. The rug is from Kaati Carpets. The furniture is from the owners' collection