

# DRAMA IN THE DETAILS

This 4,000-square-foot Chennai apartment by Chestnut Storeys is an exercise in optical illusions

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The living room is dominated by rectilinear forms that manifest differently across each surface. A sofa by Studio Ochre and single seaters by Gulmohar Lane compose the seating area. The carpet is by Jaipur Rugs, while the artefacts are from West Elm and Cottons and Satins. The black table lamp is a Harshita Jhamtani creation. The painting is by Chandra Bhattacharya

The living room features a tapestry of textures. The ceiling is embossed with square tessellations that echo the angularity of the furniture. The armchairs are by Gulmohar Lane



Designer Farah Agarwal is no stranger to abstract design briefs. Nor is she particularly ruffled by them. “Not at all—the more abstract, the better,” muses the founder and principal of Chennai-based interior design studio Chestnut Storeys, who had her philosophy put to the test a few years ago, when she was approached by a young couple, Vilok and Divya Parekh, to design their 4,000-square-foot apartment. “I remember their brief, at least initially, contained just three words: ‘Panels, Patterns and Purpose’,” adds Farah. “And while the first two were straightforward enough to action, the last one was left open to interpretation.”

For Farah, it was a loaded word, especially because it probably meant something different to each family member. “As a family of three generations, it was important to strike a balance between form and function, classic and contemporary—in a way that held a mirror to each member,” she explains. And so, with white as her point of departure, she muted the shell while dialling up the drama with patterns and textures.

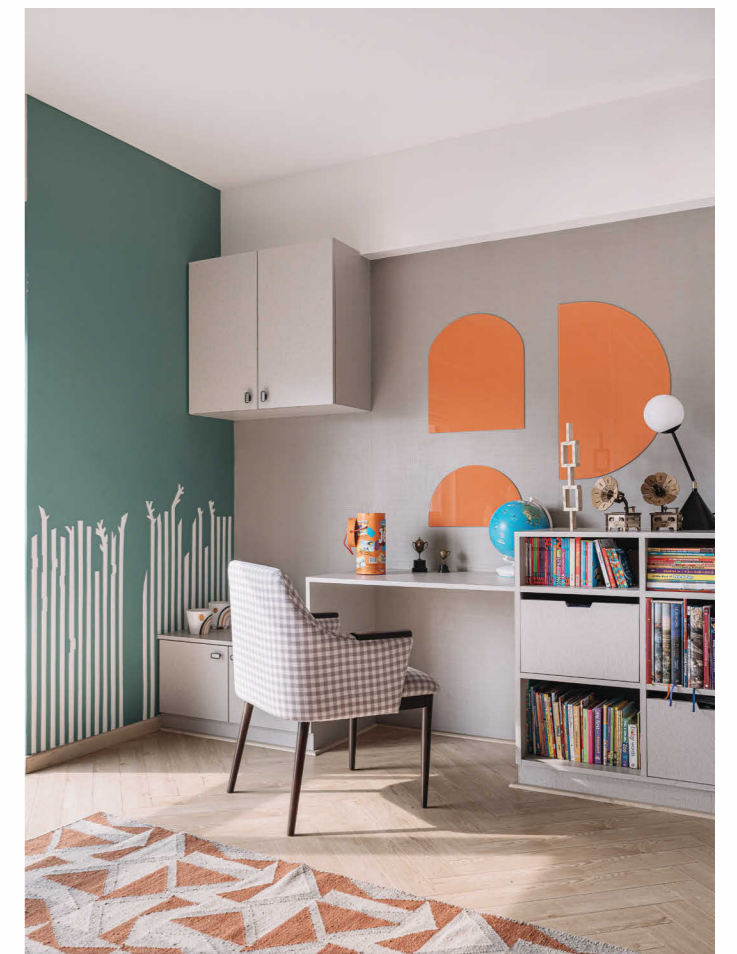
The home is a smorgasbord of optical illusions. In the living room, square tessellations deliver a dance of light and shadow across the ceiling, while a seafoam-toned velvet sofa appears to shapeshift at each angle. Much the same way, the accents and fixtures masquerade as objets d’art. A charcoal finial from HB The Studio takes pride of place on the coffee table, not far from a matte black sculptured lamp by Harshita Jhamtani and a Ming-dynasty-inspired lacquer-finished sideboard by Oriental Living. And yet, the pièce de résistance, Farah insists, is the lifelike hand-painted tropical wall mural by local artist Gautam that looks poised to spring to life in this blink or the next.

As for the bedrooms, Farah elected to give each one an identity of its own. For the primary suites, she ordained a marriage of arches and lines, offsetting the

Bright colour, delightful patterns and curious textures characterise the kids’ bedroom. The orange glass notice board above the study table makes an ideal display surface for doodles and daydreams. The carpet is from Jaipur Rugs

linear headboards and straight-lined panels with spherical light fixtures and curvilinear wall embossing. The kids’ bedroom was given a kaleidoscopic makeover—complete with a chalkboard, a colour-blocked notice board, geometric walls and a patterned headboard—to match the energy of its pint-sized inhabitants.

Today, the home is filled with panels, patterns and plenty of purpose. “It’s homey, yet sophisticated and we love the outcome,” says Divya, adding that the dining table is a firm family favourite. “We’ve had so many moments of laughter and great conversation around that table.” For a brief that was once left open to interpretation, it’s safe to say that Farah understood the assignment. ♦ [chestnutstoreys.com](http://chestnutstoreys.com)



The tour de force of the dining room is the hand-painted mural by local artist Gautam that backdrops the six-seater dining table. The credenza is by Oriental Living, while the dining chairs are from Alankaram. Clearte was the store of choice for the sculptural pendants





Slants and curves weave a leitmotif across this bedroom. The tapered headboard acts as an antithesis to the fluted wall panels beyond



A black-and-white bathroom with sable tiles and whimsical imagery serves as a playful counterpoint to the common areas