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LIVING WITH COLOUR

Homes in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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



HUZEFA RANGWALA

DIRECTOR
MUSELAB

An “accidental architect” who originally planned to pursue chemical engineering. Coming from a creative family, Huzefa found his architectural path through circumstance. After specialising in Design of Digital Manufacturing at Georgia Tech, he worked with architect Hafeez Contractor in Mumbai before co-founding MuseLAB with Jasem Pirani in 2012.

A monsoon essential... Schitt’s Creek and hot pakoras

Life without colour is... Not having Rangwala for a surname

I’m currently reading... *Little People, Big Dreams: Rafa Nadal* by Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara and Rocío Ledesma

A table is incomplete without... Conversations, laughter and spilling tea (in no particular order)

In this issue, they bring to life an apartment in Mumbai with harmonious hues and a playful fresco, **Pg 186**



JASEM PIRANI

DIRECTOR
MUSELAB

Artistically inclined from childhood, Jasem discovered architecture at age 10 when observing architect Lalita Das renovating his family’s home. He pursued his education at the Savannah College of Art and Design, where influential professors shaped his creative vision. After returning to Mumbai from the United States of America, he worked with Pinakin Patel before co-founding MuseLAB with Huzefa Rangwala.

A fond monsoon memory... Sitting in the balcony and enjoying the downpour with a book and a hot cup of black coffee

Life without colour is... A world without wonder

The most underrated luxury is... Silence

A table is incomplete without... MuseMART coasters (shameless plug) and a candle or two for those slow Saturday evenings



VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR

DESIGN JOURNALIST
MANGOMONK

Vaishnavi grew up between New Delhi, London and Bengaluru before abandoning a perfectly respectable life of spreadsheets for architecture and design journalism. She now lives in Bengaluru with her family, where her responsibilities include deadlines, snacks and applauding risky jumps from furniture she specifically asked everyone not to climb on.

A monsoon essential... An extra set of children’s clothes. Or three

Life without colour is... Like a house without art

The most underrated luxury is... A morning with no notifications and no one asking, “Where did you keep my...?”

A table is incomplete without... A tiny vase of flowers and at least one thing that serves no practical purpose whatsoever

In this issue, they welcome us into Vaishnavi’s home in Bengaluru designed by Shweta, full of memories and heirlooms, **Pg 174**



SHWETA MALAVIYA

FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL DESIGNER
STUDIO PRIMROSE

An educator turned interior designer, Shweta is driven by a lifelong love for aesthetics, storytelling and enjoying thoughtful spaces. Years spent living in Italy and the United States of America shaped her design sensibilities. Through Studio Primrose, she brings together inspirations from travel, art, culture and everyday life to create spaces that feel personal, timeless and meaningful.

A fond monsoon memory... An UNO game and pakoras with my daughters in Wayanad, barely sheltered from the pouring rain

A monsoon essential... A cup of chai

Life without colour is... Like the Earth without flowers

A table is incomplete without... A bunch of limoniums

FLOCK IN FRESCO

In this Mumbai apartment by MuseLAB, ceiling frescoes turn the homeowners' memories, travels and love story into a living work of art

TEXT BY VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISHITA SITWALA

Most people count sheep when they're trying to fall asleep. Priyanka Thaker of House of Berserk counts them when she's trying not to. Not too many moons ago, while painting the ceiling of an apartment designed by Mumbai-based studio MuseLAB, the Ahmedabad-based multidisciplinary art practitioner began slipping tiny, secret sheep into the composition — her own woolly pressure valve. "Every time someone walked in and asked a question about this motif or that, she'd get really agitated," says Huzefa Rangwala, one half of the studio. "And out would come another sheep." To be fair, painting the underside of a structural slab while answering a running commentary from the room below is enough to make anyone see sheep — although Huzefa and the firm's other half, Jasem Pirani, evidently had their own flock of challenges to contend with. The apartment in question, situated in Mumbai and measuring 4,500 sq ft, began life rather differently. Originally a linear five-bedroom home, its elongated plan was heavy on corridors and light on delight. The brief was radical: pare it down to a generous two-bedroom residence — with a lounge, living and dining areas, a bar and a kitchen — while ensuring the space felt anything but pared back. "It was a long, stretched-out layout," recalls Huzefa. "The question was: how do you make the in-between spaces exciting rather than merely functional?"

It was a question he and Jasem would soon set out to answer. Convincing the homeowners to embrace that proposition, however, required its own measure of persuasion. The couple — finance professionals who discovered the studio via Instagram — approached the process with the analytical clarity one might expect from their line of work. "He took a very thoughtful approach, often stopping to weigh every possibility," Huzefa laughs. "She was naturally inclined towards fresh perspectives and unconventional approaches. It was a good balance." To help them picture the transformation, the architects produced a suite of detailed plans and 3D visuals. Yet even then, the idea of collapsing five bedrooms into two felt, understandably, a touch audacious. "They kept wondering how it would actually pan out," adds Jasem. "Helping them visualise that it would be disruptive yet functional — that was the real challenge." In the end, the couple took a leap of faith. >>



A layered living-dining space where art, craft and custom elements come together with ease. A ceiling fresco by House of Berserk sets the tone above a mustard sofa by MuseLAB, paired with a rug from Loops by LJ and flooring by Elegant Marbles. Overhead, a bespoke light by MuseLAB, executed by Blinkbox Studio, lends a sculptural presence, while an artwork by Sameer Kulavoor offers a quiet focal point

The dining area carries the palette forward with a custom table by MuseMART and rust-toned chairs from The August Company. Like the ceiling, the flooring is also by House of Berserk. FACING PAGE A custom bar and island by MuseLAB form the heart of the space. A bar light by The Blink Box Studio casts a soft, focused wash over the counter, drawing out the materiality of the surface.





In the lounge, the Moon light by Davide Groppi sets a soft, ambient tone for the space. Anchored by Agitato by Martand Khosla, the room balances art and atmosphere, with furniture by Mass Interiors tying it all together **FACING PAGE** In the living-dining area, the coffee tables are from Mass Interiors



In the den, Claymen sculptures strike a series of acrobatic poses, offering a playful counterpoint to the painting by Gond artist Chandrakali Pusham from the Gondwana Art Project. A sofa by The August Company, furniture by Mass Interiors and a custom rug by Loops by LJ complete the setting with an easy sense of balance FACING PAGE A muted, earth-toned ceiling softens the passage, where a built-in library runs along charcoal walls



That leap plays out above, below and everywhere in between. The ceiling fresco by House of Berserk chronicles the couple's travels, shared memories and milestones in a vibrant visual diary. Below, grey marble floors host delicate inlay motifs — objects that appear to have drifted down from the illustrated sky above. The entire composition reads as a love story rendered in colour, texture and the occasional sheep. And yet, it's not immediately obvious upon arrival. A reconfigured foyer in charcoal tones offers a quiet prelude to the colour-forward drama beyond, setting up what the architects describe as a slow reveal. Spaces appear gradually rather than all at once: the dining area centres this choreography with a sharply angled stone table for eight beneath a streetlamp-like floor lamp, while two chairs in an abstract textile quietly mark the couple's usual seats. Nearby, the den slips into a richer mood, its plum-toned walls enclosing Gond artwork, patterned rugs and accent furniture behind a hand-carved sliding wooden door — an inviting nook for unwinding, storytelling and the occasional glass of merlot.

The apartment's once-awkward corridor now doubles as a gallery of discoveries, an earth-toned passage lined with a built-in library against charcoal walls. Along the way, the Meiso sculpture by WANNAS stands sentinel near a glass-brick-wrapped study that softly draws daylight inward. >>



A pastel foyer leads into the primary bedroom. To the right, the walk-in wardrobe and bathroom reveal themselves FACING PAGE The primary bedroom leans into a soft, patterned calm, with Potato Print wallpaper from G P & J Baker's Kit Kemp range bringing a subtle sense of play. Furniture, custom-made on site, keeps the space thoughtfully tailored, while bed linen by AA Living adds a relaxed, lived-in softness



In the bathroom, scarlet walls set a bold tone, offset by fittings from Turquoise – The Bath Couture and lime plaster by Magalogue Ventures. **FACING PAGE** Resplendent in red, materiality leads the mood in the primary bathroom. Lime plaster by Magalogue softens the walls, paired with marble from Elegant Marbles and a terrazzo bathtub by Parman Designs. Bath fittings by Turquoise – The Bath Couture add understated elegance, while a chandelier by Olie Lighting above the bathtub gently haloes the space.

At the home's heart, the living area embraces colour with a lemon chiffon bench and salmon-hued chairs perched atop the looping geometry of a Loops by LJ rug. Nearby, a gradient-green bar conceals storage and audio systems while showcasing the couple's collection of global spirits, with an adjacent lounge anchored by low blush-striped seating, MuseMART tables, and a scarlet artwork by Martand Khosla offering a mellow evening retreat.

The bedrooms extend that narrative: a lively guest suite dressed in blues and tessellated pattern, and a calmer primary bedroom in blush and burl veneer with a nook reserved for the couple's beloved pooch, Zoe. Beyond it, a spa-like bathing suite parleys into his-and-hers chambers – one clad in white marble within a curved glass shell, the other a garnet-toned retreat beneath a softly glowing fabric ceiling. For anyone visiting, it's evident that the apartment reads as a kaleidoscope of stories – one that threads illustration, colour and personal history through every room. And somewhere overhead, tucked discreetly among frescoed memories, a small flock of sheep quietly keeps count. ♦



"It was a long, stretched-out layout. The question was: how do you make the in-between spaces exciting rather than merely functional?" — Huzefa Rangwala