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PHOTOGRAPHED BY TARUN VISHWA

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SHAPE SHIFTER



GQ PRO

MIND OVER MATTER

The lines between high fashion and home décor can be masterfully blurred, and built upon to create works of art that you don't just wear but also live in. No one knows this better than award-winning architect **Rooshad Shroff**, whose projects include spaces for Christian Louboutin, the Design Gallery at Raw Collaborative and, most recently, Kunal Rawal's spanking new store in South Mumbai. Here, Shroff talks about how to get yourself the best of both worlds

You have a strong connection with the fashion industry – which designers have inspired you?

My very first internship was at Issey Miyake's New York office. The way Miyake responded to material with his collection, *Pleats Please*, was so simple yet so effective at the time. It influenced the way I respond to furniture, and asked the question of how you push the boundaries of a material. Alexander McQueen in the earlier days was another strong influence. I've always been intrigued by fashion – even my undergrad thesis at Cornell was on fashion and architecture.

What excites you about collaborating with the fashion community?

There's a resonance between fashion designers and architects, thanks to a mutual interest in design and an appreciation of quality. Take Christian Louboutin, with whom I've collaborated on stores in Mumbai and Bangkok: The challenge there was to take ideas and incorporate them into shoes – in my case, into a space. Kunal [Rawal] was a different challenge. For his new flagship at Kala Ghoda in Mumbai, it was about understanding the brand, along with elements that were important to him. For instance, we made use of the space's height and created remote-controlled racks, which responded to the idea that men love gadgets. The store is masculine with leather and brass, but it's playful too, and meant to maximise the space and create a different environment every time someone walks in. In an age of online shopping, retail stores need to step it up and offer an experience, and that's what we've done.

Tell us about your projects with Anand Ahuja.

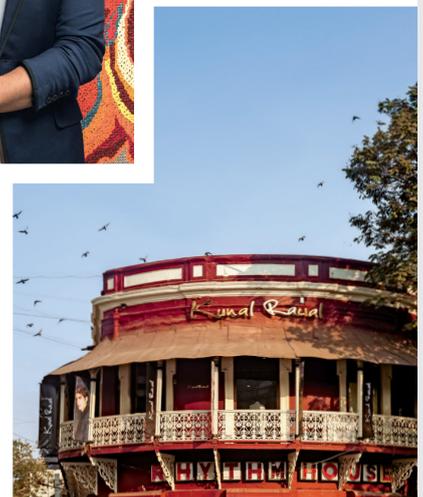
I'm working on their [Anand and Sonam's] house in London, which will be ready soon. Anand has also acquired a 6,000sqft space in Bengaluru for his label Bhane – I'm going to create a look that will speak to the "new" brand identity.

What's the best way to bring fashion into a home?

It's about personal choice, taste and what works for you, rather than something that's styled by an architect, because you're going to be the one living there. For example, I have a McQueen shoe at home that I've displayed under a glass dome, because I think it's a piece of art more than something wearable.



(Top) Kunal Rawal's flagship store at the iconic Rhythm House in South Mumbai; (Right) Christian Louboutin's Bangkok space; (Left) Rooshad Shroff



INTERVIEW: JEENA J. BILLIMORIA

"I PERSONALLY AVOID TRENDS. THE THING IS, YOU MAY END UP LIVING IN A HOME THAT IS TRENDY TODAY, BUT NOT TOMORROW. BE TRUE TO YOUR IDENTITY AND LET THAT SHINE THROUGH INSTEAD"



What fashion trends are being incorporated into interior design in 2019?

At the Ambiente trade fair I was recently at in Frankfurt, I saw a combination of greens, yellows and pinks that has been trending for some time now. Personally, though, I avoid trends. The thing is, you may end up living in a home that's trendy today, but not tomorrow. Be true to your identity and let that shine through instead. Play around with smaller, looser items that are easy to change over something bigger that would require a larger intervention.

The use of local crafts and a sense of "Indianness" are increasingly being highlighted in fashion – is this being extended to interiors as well?

Definitely! I'm very attached to the idea of celebrating and pushing the boundaries of craftsmanship. I only work with handmade and local crafts – they're unique to India, and the only way to sustain them is to elevate and give them new life. People are fed up of things that are mass-produced; luxury today means having something made exquisitely, via age-old techniques. There's also something wonderful about the idea of waiting for something to be made by hand. People are going back to their roots and being honest with the use of natural, indigenous materials – something I see happening around the world too.

Having individual style is important; it inspires confidence and makes a statement – how can one integrate one's individual style into a living space?

Sometimes, the role of an architect is to play shrink, and try to understand a customer: their wants and needs, their comfort zones. And then take that and mould a space for them that's unique. Some people are confident in their personal style and identity, but when it comes to a space, they can be clueless. It's true that a person's style can be defined by their clothing – and by their extended environment as well. My advice is to steer yourself in the right direction with items you feel would make sense for the kind of lifestyle you lead.

What's your personal aesthetic?

Minimalistic. Cold. Bare and sterile. But all that changes once I start working on projects.

Where are the best places to source home furniture?

Internationally, Alfies Antique Market in London and the flea market in Paris. Locally, Chor Bazaar, of course! You can get anything in stores across the world, but what's nice about going to these markets is that you never really know what you're going to find. ☺

