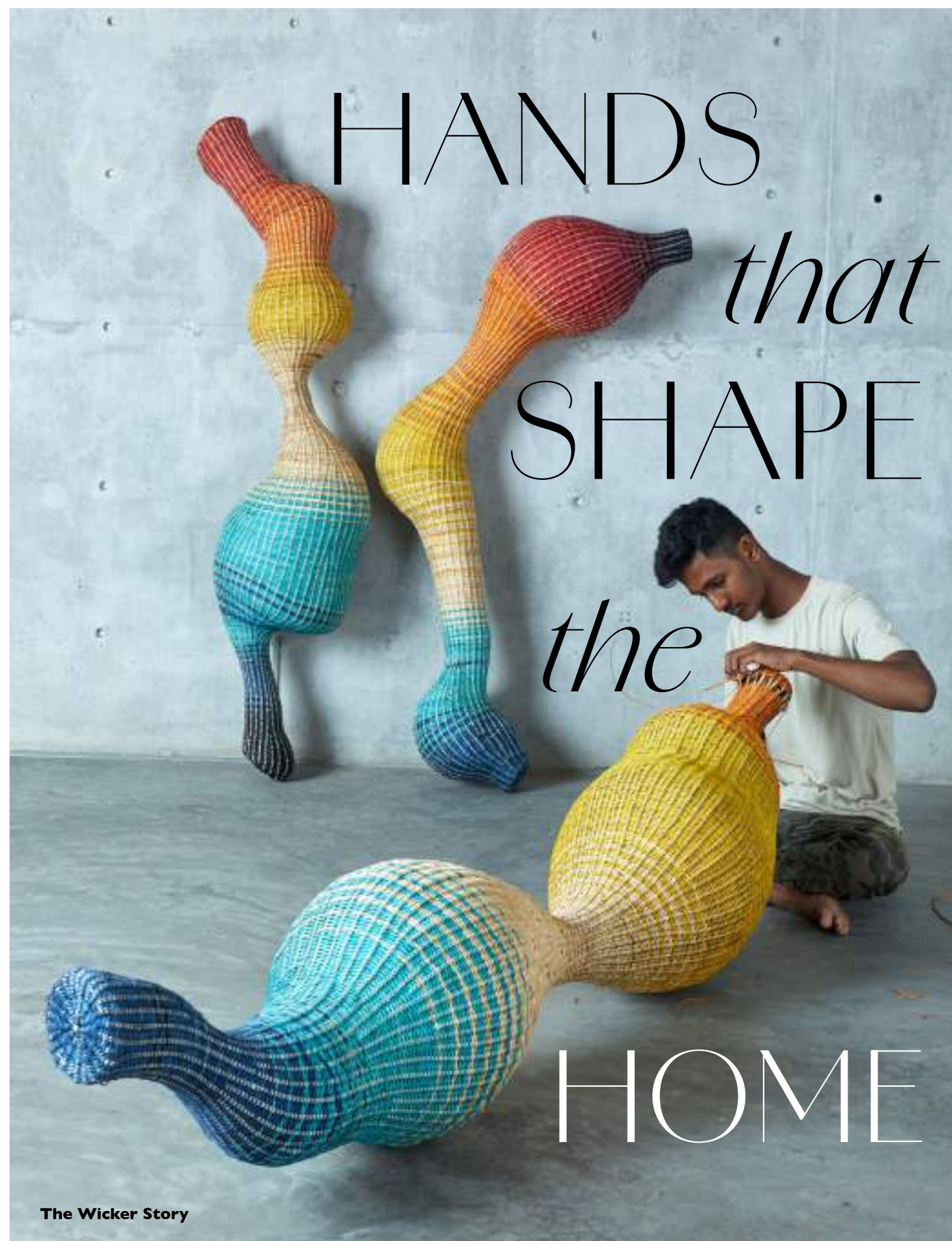




Artisans, materials and traditional techniques are finding a new place in modern Indian interiors

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Written by
 BINDU GOPAL RAO AND SAMA MEERZA

A truly contemporary Indian home is no longer defined by how closely it follows a particular design aesthetic. Increasingly, it is defined by something more personal: authenticity. For years, the formula was familiar. Clean-lined furniture, polished finishes and a global visual language formed the base, while Indian craft appeared as an accent—a brass diya, a carved wooden chest, handwoven cushions or a terracotta pot. Today, that relationship is changing. Craft is being considered much earlier in the design process, shaping materials, textures, proportions.

“We chose to bring artisans into the process from its very inception, allowing techniques like hand-block printing, Channapatna woodwork, and traditional stone inlay to shape proportions, textures, and even the rhythm of the rooms themselves, rather than arriving as a final flourish,” says Uzma Irfan, Whole-Time Director, Prestige Group, and Founder, Sublime.

That distinction matters. The strongest use of craft today is not simply decorative; it is becoming part of the architecture itself. “What is particularly exciting is the evolving role of traditional craftsmanship,” says Chandhana Ramesh, Founder and Principal Architect, Empatio Architecture. “Rather than being introduced as decorative accents or nostalgic references, craft is now shaping the architecture itself.”

Empatio Architecture’s project Nayam, for instance, brought bespoke furniture, artisan-made lighting, natural stone detailing and custom joinery into the design from the start. The result reflects a wider shift towards homes where craft influences not just how a space looks, but how it feels through touch, light and material.

BRINGING THE HAND BACK HOME

Part of this renewed interest comes from a growing fatigue with sameness. In a world shaped by algorithms, fast-moving trends and interiors that can begin to look alike, homeowners are searching for spaces that feel personal. They want homes that say something about where they come from and how they live.

Handmade objects offer exactly that: a sense of time, skill and human involvement. For Shailesh Rajput Studio, this connection is central to the value of Indian craft. “Indian craftsmanship has always felt deeply connected to the people and places it comes from. Every craft has evolved over generations, carrying with it the stories, traditions and lived experiences of the communities that have shaped it. That is what makes it so distinct.”

That sense of provenance is also changing the meaning of luxury. “One of the biggest comebacks in recent years has been a love for handmade in India,” says Gaurav Jain, Founder and Creative Director of Orange Tree. Increasingly, luxury is less about excess and more about understanding

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**vVyom
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**Empatio
 Architecture**



**The Wicker
 Story Lifafa
 Chair**

ellementry
Frangipani Metal &
Marble Bowl



ellementry
Niraan Vase

Purru Modern
Indian Terrace



where something came from, how it was made and why it will continue to matter. “Earlier, luxury was often associated with excess or exclusivity. Today, it is increasingly about authenticity, craftsmanship and products that have a story behind them,” says Riddhima Khandelwal, Co- founder and Creative Head of ellementry, a handcrafted kitchenware and home decor brand.

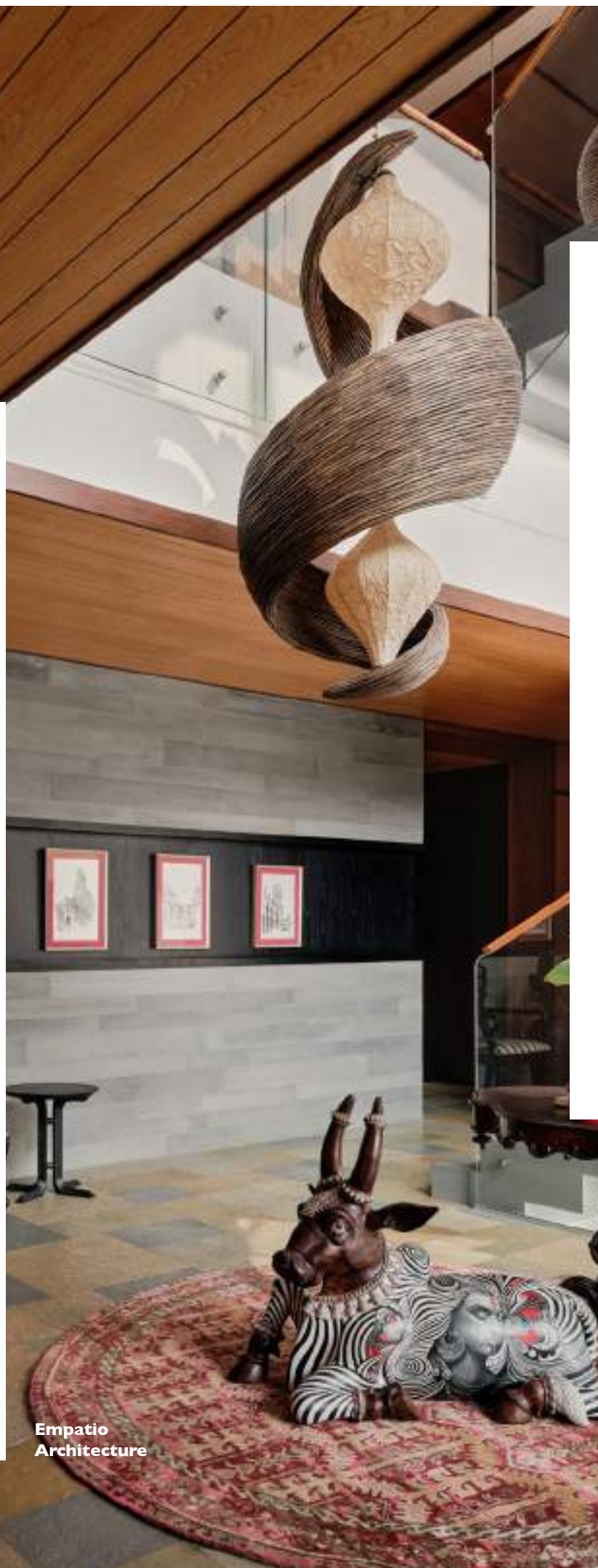
Consequently, handcrafted objects are also moving into everyday life. A ceramic cup, hand-finished plate or textured

serving bowl does not need to sit behind glass. Used every day, these pieces become part of the rituals of a home. The handmade is becoming less precious—and perhaps more valuable because of it.

CRAFT, RECONSIDERED

The revival of Indian craft does not mean preserving every traditional form exactly as it was. For it to remain relevant, it has to evolve. Designers are working with artisans to rethink scale, proportion, silhouette and application while retaining the techniques that give each craft its identity. “The technique stays authentic even as the object becomes contemporary,” say Nidhi Gupta and Ketan Gupta, founders of Kosh Furnishing Studio.

Across materials, this evolution is already visible. Cane is moving into cleaner, more sculptural furniture. Wood carving is becoming subtler, while metalwork is being used structurally rather than purely as ornament. Stone and ceramics, meanwhile, are finding new roles in furniture and architectural surfaces. The beauty lies in the contrast. A hand-carved piece can add warmth to a minimalist room, while a Dokra sculpture can hold its own against clean architecture. Terracotta, too, does not need a traditionally styled setting



Empatio
Architecture



Kosh MUKHDA

to feel at home.

Khandelwal believes the material deserves a fresh look. “It has been part of Indian homes for centuries, yet many people still view it as something traditional, something that is not in alignment with the tastes of the day.” The answer is not to make terracotta look more traditional, but to give it forms and functions that work for contemporary life. As Khandelwal puts it, India’s craft traditions “do not need to be reinvented; they need to be reintroduced in ways that feel relevant to today’s lifestyles.”

Similarly, Dokra brings the kind of imperfection that can make a contemporary space feel more human. “The textures, the imperfections and the marks left behind by the making process give every piece a character of its own,” says Rajput. That character is often enough. A home does not need an entire room built around craft. One carefully chosen object can introduce texture, history and a sense of place.

MAPPING A MODERN INDIA

As interest grows, designers are looking beyond the most familiar craft references. Kushagra Tyagi, Founder of Purru, points to Rajasthan’s stone carving, Channapatna wood turning from Karnataka, Kutch weaving and embroidery, Moradabad metalwork, and Jaipur’s blue pottery and ceramics. Their strength, lies in their ability to adapt through cleaner forms, restrained palettes and functional applications.

Priyanka Narula, Founder of The Wicker Story, suggests a similarly broad craft map, one that brings together traditions with strong materiality and storytelling. Terracotta offers an earthy, tactile quality; Jamdani and Nagaland textiles bring texture and cultural memory; Mysore wood inlay adds detail, while West Bengal’s Sitalpati mats can be translated into



Orange Tree
The Joust Coffee Table
Shailesh Rajput

screens, wall panels and furniture.

What connects these traditions is not a single aesthetic. A home does not need to look overtly “Indian” to incorporate Indian craft. Cane can soften an architectural space, handwoven textiles can add depth, carved stone can become part of a contemporary surface, and brass can move beyond ornament. The idea is to understand what each material can bring rather than follow a checklist of traditional objects. Restraint, therefore, becomes key. “The balance, I find, lies in restraint, allowing a handcrafted piece the space to breathe within a minimalist architectural language, rather than forcing it to compete for attention,” says Irfan.

Perhaps this is what defines the new relationship between Indian craft and contemporary design. The goal is not to recreate a heritage home, but to let old and new exist naturally together. A polished wood table can sit beside cane, contemporary ceramics can share space with terracotta, and an inherited textile can work with a modern sofa.

THE NEW-AGE HANDMADE

At the end, a home does not need to look overtly *Indian* to incorporate traditional craft. For today’s homeowner, the question is no longer whether a space looks traditionally Indian. It is whether it feels connected to something. The most interesting homes rarely look as though everything was bought together from one catalogue or one mood board. They have layers: something inherited, something discovered, something handmade and something distinctly new.



Shailesh
Rajput