

ART OF THE MATTER

When art meets décor, there is a new design language that speaks of all things craft, tradition, and interiors with character.

By Bindu Gopal Rao

Art and craft are often the muse for architects and product designers. This is often manifested in products that celebrate the same in a practical and contemporary manner. This is also one of the ways these arts and crafts are being revived. We showcase a few such projects that are all about a nod to art.



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THE COLLECTOR'S EDIT BY SARITA HANDA

Drawing inspiration from the rich heritage of Indian, Southeast Asian, and African tribal traditions, the Collector's Edit is a curated assemblage of exceptional, timeless sculptures crafted in bronze, marble and wood. "For us at Sarita Handa, it celebrates our shared reverence for objects shaped by human hands, ancient ritual, and the quiet passage of time. Here, one can find a collection that pays homage to the sacred geometry of temple sanctuaries and the raw, expressive power of tribal traditions across India and Southeast Asia. It bridges the gap between historical artefacts and modern living," says Suparna Handa, Managing Director at Sarita Handa.

Cast using traditional bronze techniques or carved from marble and wood, every piece bears the distinctive marks of the artisan's hand. Rich patinas, naturally aged surfaces, expressive forms, and intricate ornamentation ensure that no two pieces are exactly alike. "For instance, the Shiva Mukhalingam and Bhairav evoke meditative devotion, while the Lion Yali embodies spiritual strength and protection. Inspired by the refined serenity of Southeast Asian temple art, the Cambodian Man II embodies devotion and regal poise with intricate crowns and layered jewellery. The Celestial Maiden and Temple Carving preserve architectural heritage with their marble panels and draw inspiration from the classic Indian carvings that once adorned sacred sanctuaries. This art form turns rock into tactile interior panels, turning architectural history into a living work of art," adds Suparna.



THE SIKKI LOUNGE CHAIR BY DESIGN NI DUKAAN



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The Sikki Lounge Chair by Design ni Dukaan reimagines the traditional Sikki craft of Bihar through the language of contemporary furniture. Traditionally practised by women artisans, Sikki involves weaving and coiling naturally golden Sikki grass around a munj grass core, using a slender needle-like tool called a takua. "Historically associated with baskets, toys, ritual objects and everyday containers, the craft inspired the exploration of how its tactile language could translate into a functional, inhabitable form. Developed in collaboration with a graduating design intern and a women-led artisan cluster headed by Radha Kumari, the chair brings Sikki to a furniture scale while retaining its handmade character. An ergonomically shaped, hand-bent mild steel frame forms the structural base, while artisans developed a new weaving and coiling methodology to work across its complex three-dimensional form," says Veeram Shah, Principal Architect, Design Ni Dukaan.

Natural Sikki grass, interwoven with custom-dyed red and black strands, creates flowing contours that accentuate the chair's sculptural silhouette. The piece reflects Design ni Dukaan's philosophy that "craft is generational, design is intentional," bringing inherited craft knowledge into a contemporary context while creating new possibilities for artisan-led design.





WHERE NATURE BECOMES ART AT ALAYA ARTISTRY

At Alaya Artistry, their Lotus Leaf artworks explore the interplay between nature, materials and craft. Created in collaboration with Himapan Studio of Bangkok, each artwork involves natural lotus leaves as the canvas, allowing their unique veins and structure to become parts of compositions. "Before transforming into an art piece, each lotus leaf goes through an intricate process. It is harvested, cleaned and skeletonised. Then colours are hand-painted, layer by layer, over the structure of the leaf. As a result, the procedure is completely manual and impossible to replicate. Therefore, all artwork created remains unique. The inspiration for the art pieces comes from the lotus, which is considered to be sacred and symbolic across cultures. According to Indian traditions, it represents purity, renewal and resurrection, and is associated with the goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswati in Hindu traditions and with awakening in Buddhism. The Southeast Asian culture associates the lotus with Buddhist traditions and images of Buddha, giving it a wider cultural and spiritual resonance," explains Daizy Lal Puri, Co-Founder, Alaya Artistry. The artworks can be commissioned in different sizes, colour palettes and leaf placements, allowing each piece to be developed specifically for its setting.