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AN INITIATIVE BY

STIR



Bijoy Jain
Immediate Landscapes, 2018



Pic: Shantanu Prakash

ART-ITORIAL

Just the other day I was having a rather animated and intense discussion with two fellow artists on how technology is changing the way the new-gen approaches how they learn and work. The observation of one of my friends, a teacher at a Mumbai based architecture college, is from close quarters. "I was aghast when one of my students replied in a very matter-of-fact way when I asked why they prefer watching a movie than reading a book," she shared. Any guesses? It is sad and simple - "One has to imagine too much while reading a book! Something that is easily provided in a film." This phenomenon is applicable to consuming just about anything, especially in the creative space. The biggest joy of seeing art, for instance, is its discovery and interpretation. And if this very thing about it is the pain-point, then little can be done. As an artist with clay as my medium of choice, I know that there is absolutely no escape to dirtying my hands! I cannot avoid babysitting a kiln over a twelve-hour long firing process, and if it is forty-five degrees in the peak of summer, then so be it.

The process of art production itself varies widely, most requiring tedious and meticulous renditioning. There are however art practices that utilize the ready-made as components for the work they create. Is the objective to simplify the very process of making art? While the use of the machine-made product to make hand-made work of art itself is not new neither uncommon, in this issue we delve into the overlapping spaces of art and product, in context of architectural spaces and design processes. Marcel Duchamp used the readymade, as did the Dada artists in as early as 1910. The idea was a mockery of art by teasing and rejecting logic and reasoning, and to critically question its value in a rapidly industrialized world. "The real point of the readymade was to deny the possibility of defining art," said Calvin Tomkins, the biographer of Duchamp. In the contemporary context, is it the functional associations of the mass-produced objects that are relevant to artists? Or is it the visual form and texture of these impersonally manufactured things? Further, we investigate the vice-versa - use of art in the mass-produced (or at-least mechanically produced, in multiples) functional products.

Johann Goethe called architecture frozen music. Dance, then, can be described as painting in motion. Sculpture, a section of prose.

Crafting (or creating) is the basis of all art. Architectural and design practices are paying more attention to aesthetics along with functionality than ever. Are the lines blurring between creative disciplines? Maybe, the lines never existed and were only a figment of our imagination.

Rahul Kumar

Consulting Editor, Art & Interactive Media
mondo*arc india|STIR

MATERIAL MATTERS

*Rahul Kumar of mondo*arc india|STIR handpicks six creative individuals who wear many hats and straddle two (or more) worlds at one time. They are artists. They also make products. They break conventions by using materials that normally associate with industrial mass-production. However, most importantly, they are creators of objects that symbolise and materialise the intersection of their interests.*

There are those who like to operate in water-tight compartments: Art practices, like folk, modern, contemporary, conceptual; Designers, for products, apparel, accessories, interfaces; Architects, of buildings, landscapes, environments, experiences...and so on. We handpicked six creative individuals who wear many hats and straddle two (or more) worlds at one time. They are artists. They also make products. They break conventions by using materials that normally associate with industrial mass-production. However, most importantly, they are creators of objects that symbolise and materialise the intersection of their interests.

C O N C R E T E



P A P E R



C L A Y



M E T A L



T E X T I L E



G L A S S





METAL ALEX DAVIS

STUDIO: Alex Davis Studio
ESTABLISHED: 2004
LOCATION: New Delhi

WHO

Alex Davis, a mechanical engineer who moved on to complete his Master's degree in Product Design from NID, Ahmedabad as well as Domus Academy, Milan. After a stint in Milan at the Stefano Giovannoni studio working with Italian companies like Alessi, Magis, and Cartel, Alex moved back to India and established his practice.

WHAT

We work with metals, especially stainless steel, black-steel and copper. The process involved in making our works varies from rough, initial form studies to a highly skilled handcrafting, as well as advanced machining and mechanical finishing. Most of our product-range is in limited edition and revolves around specific themes and concepts. We enjoy commissioned projects and the largest installation we have done is a site-specific 32 feet *Champa* tree.

WHY

Being an engineer and a designer, sheet metal always fascinated me. The art of turning a 2D sheet into a 3D form was the challenge I enjoyed. Hence followed my collection titled 'My Lazy Garden'. This collection comprised of archetypal flowers and trees that acted as beautiful accents for indoor and outdoor spaces. I call this 'jewellery for living spaces'. This was followed by coloured steel that created large floral forms; I named this collection 'Hyper Blooms'. And then the 'Moonlit Safari' after my trip to Africa - I made animal

heads out of steel sheets and tubes. A range of sculptural furniture also forms part of some of these collections.

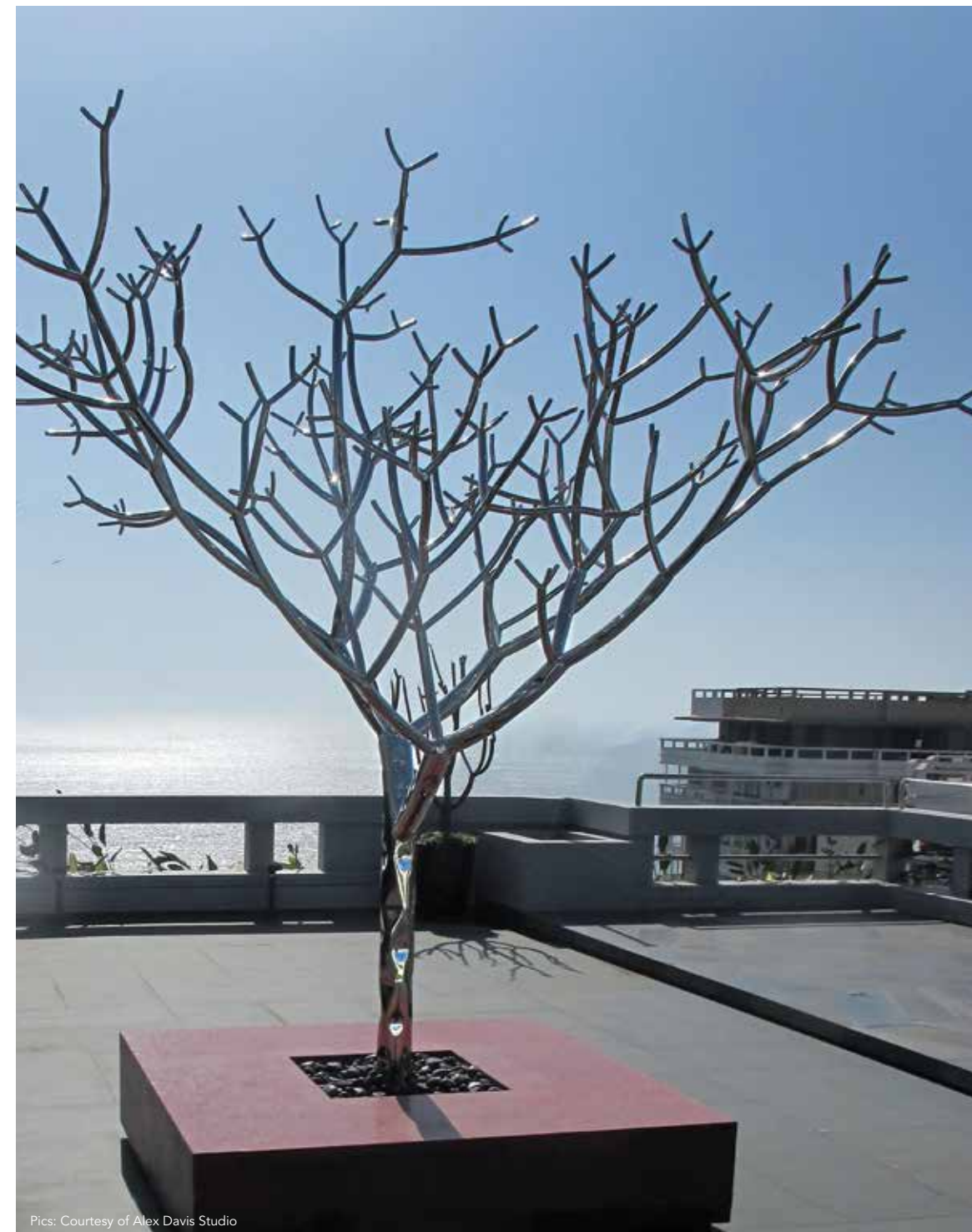
HOW

Our work is inspired by nature. And people, especially in urban context, react very well to these pieces because nature plays a role in everyone's life and therefore everyone can relate to it. When I amplify nature and make it large and use steel to create these pieces, they become objects of desire. I believe art is an expression of one's thoughts and each one of us is unique. I was possibly one of the first to convert industrial steel sheets and tubes into objects of art. The material has an association with domestic utensils and for highly sensitive areas of medical practice since it offers durability and hygiene. I found this connotation interesting but wanted to take it to the next level, that of beauty. Stainless steel works well being similar to mirror with no colour of its own, unlike other metals such as brass and bronze.

WHERE

We retail exclusively through the Indi Store, which is on the same premise as my studio in New Delhi. Some of the product range is available off-the-shelf, while others are made to order. I also showcase and sell works through art galleries and at international design fairs like Maison et Objet in Paris, Salone Del Mobile in Milano and Abitare Il Tempo in Verona.

www.alexdavistudio.com



Pics: Courtesy of Alex Davis Studio



"When I amplify nature and make it large and use steel to create these pieces, they become objects of desire."

