

# CASA

VOGUE

5 trails,  
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for the ultimate  
2016 home

PLUS  
ZAHA HADID  
TADAO ANDO  
FORNASETTI

AT HOME WITH  
HRITHIK ROSHAN



The Italian designer's saddle, first exhibited at Palazzo the Christian Louboutin Showroom

An Angelo Mangiarotti vase (left) and Hermès saddle in Shroff's living room



Shroff's apartment is a haven of his own design, with accents by designers he admires

SPOTLIGHT

# Stark beauty

Only five years into his architectural practice in India, **ROOSHAD SHROFF** seems to be on every commission and every shortlist. ANINDITA GHOSE visits the new home of Indian fashion's favourite architect

The apartment that Rooshad Shroff moved into a few months ago in a leafy lane in Bandra—most famous for Sachin Tendulkar's modern mansion—was also his first residential project in Mumbai. Shroff had just moved back to the city after his Masters in Architecture from Harvard and it was while working on the Christian Louboutin flagship store that he got the call from gallery owner Ranjana Steinrucke. "The brief was clear. Ranjana wanted to spice up the space and rent it out. I had to create an elegant shell," says Shroff. He did this by pulling down walls, lowering the windows to coax in more light, adding Italian marble floors, Burma teak windows and his signature touch—grey walls.

Incidentally, when Shroff was looking for a place recently, Steinrucke told him her tenant was moving out. And this is where I meet Shroff today—in a home he designed five years ago, now tastefully finished with his own furniture pieces and design collectibles, including an Hermès saddle, Nick Knight photographs, a Zaha Hadid nut bowl, and Ann Ray's intimate photos of Alexander McQueen.

### DESIGN INFLUENCE

The apartment is cool and gallery-like, with sharp-angled furniture and no clutter. >

ROOSHAD SHROFF: ANINDITA GHOSE; SUNFLOWERS: JAMES HILL; HERMÈS SADDLE: BOUTIQUE



A Bouroullec brothers carpet adds a pop of colour to the grey and wood tones of the living room



Design magazines and Shroff's award-winning 'Makrana' marble bulbs in the guest bedroom

The only pops of colour are a blue carpet by Bouroullec brothers and a rainbow-hued table he made in collaboration with Asian Paints. It is rather like an extended studio where Shroff's furniture pieces are displayed. "They keep moving in and out from my workshop. I like to test my furniture out," he explains. This is not a home one would bring a toddler or a pet, I note. Shroff doesn't mind the observation. Laughing good-naturedly, he shares that he is heavily influenced by the late Hadid's home, which he managed to visit as a young employee of her architectural firm in London. Her modestly sized apartment was exactly as he had imagined—"stark, sculptural, all white, and filled with her own designs."

It appears that Shroff systematically charted his way through college and internships to land up at Hadid's. A die-hard fan of her ability "to make concrete butter-like," her influence can be seen in all his work, most notably the cantilevered lines of his 'C-Series' furniture. "Right from my first summer at Cornell as an undergrad, I tried everything possible to secure an internship at her office. After sending numerous emails and couriering portfolios with no response, I decided to travel to London to apply in person," he says.

"I'd always wanted to start my own firm and the opportunity presented itself," says Shroff, marking an achievement in an industry where 40 is considered young

"In college, I was 'referencing' to the point that I was even called out by a jury for being 'too Zaha!'"

Shroff launched his studio in Mumbai in June 2011. It was a pit stop that turned permanent on the urging of Le Mill's Cecilia Morelli Parikh, who commissioned a wooden furniture series based on a bench of his that she'd seen and loved. At 30, after stints at Issey Miyake and Rem Koolhaas's OMA/REX in New York and Hadid's firm in London under his belt, he felt the time was right. "I'd always wanted to start my own firm and the opportunity presented itself," says Shroff, marking an achievement in an industry where 40 is considered young.

Like his idol, Shroff's links with fashion run deep. He's designed the Christian Louboutin stores in Mumbai and Bangkok, and he does the display windows for Hermès in India. Even back in college, he'd conceived two fashion shows as part of the Cornell Design League.

Shroff is now in the midst of producing his own design exhibition, possibly in Delhi during India Art Fair 2017. "Most of my buyers are French," he says, "But I would really like to exhibit in an Indian design gallery, except that there aren't any as yet."

### MAKING CRAFT COUTURE

Alongside the chic contoured furniture that has emerged out of Shroff's multidisciplinary studio in the last few years—he's been the winner of consecutive editions of the Godrej Design Lab—



The bedroom features his new 'Frozen' chair



Paul Matzer's candlestands add glow to the rainbow-hued dining table created in collaboration with Asian Paints

his leanings towards the handmade is evident in the Louboutin showrooms, where embroidered wooden tiles make an arresting backdrop. Shroff has patented this technique, also visible in the sofa and chairs of his home. He is keenly interested in the idea of Indian craftsmanship: all of his pieces are made with recycled wood using traditional joinery and devoid of metal fasteners and screws. "The idea of handmade should not become apologetic," he says. "In the end, the piece should stand by itself. Of course, there's another layer of pleasure in understanding the workmanship when you realise it's made by artisans," he says. Cajoling artisans to work out of their comfort zone has been his principal challenge in India. "A lot of craftsmen are worried that if things go wrong,

## SEAT OF HIS OWN

Charting Shroff's design journey through his chairs



**C-SERIES, 2012**  
Made with recycled Burma teak, the C-Series chair pushes the boundaries of wood by taking on a cantilevered form.



**ORIGAMI CHAIR, 2015**  
This stainless steel stunner was the winner of the inaugural edition of the Gubraj Design Lab.



**FROZEN, 2016**  
UV injected in resin creates an impressionistic canvas in Shroff's latest design, a winner of the Gubraj Design Lab 2016.

designers will abandon the project. I find the E&D and that, for me, is fundamental in terms of engaging Indian crafts," he says.

Despite the number of retail and residential projects coming his way—many in the UAE lately—product design is what continues to excite him the most. "Furniture is my main avenue of research. It's the truest expression of myself as a designer. Quite often, nothing sells and they remain as prototypes in my house, but it's about investigating technique and material," says Shroff, adding that he often shoots himself in the foot by setting off to design everything for his residential projects (he once even got the fabric he needed for a set of cushion covers woven). "I don't have the patience to buy and source. It's easier to just make it." ■

*For the underdog cheerleader*

Jaipur Rugs aims to popularise art from India's villages. "We work with 40,000 artisans from more than 600 villages," says design director Kavita Chaudhary. The brand uses natural materials like wool, jute, hemp and bamboo silk to create rugs. G-250, Mansarovar Industrial area, Jaipur. Call: 0141-7103400; Jaipurrugsc.com



PICK

*For the luxe buyer*

Fancy carpets designed by ace international designers like Corinne Hellein, Victor Boëda or Elizabeth Leriche? Beautiful hand-tufted and hand-knotted pieces can be found at Roche Bobois. "Our carpets suit luxurious homes that are attentive to stylistic details and are contemporary in terms of design," says managing director Samvit Tara. Senapati Bapat Marg, Tower 1, Indiabulls Financial Centre, Mumbai. Call: 022-61062233; Roche-bobois.com



# MAGIC CARPET RIDE

*For a finesse lover*

From intricate hexagons of a honeycomb to the glistening blue of a lapis lazuli, at Cocoon Fine Rugs the carpets are meant to inspire. "We play with a variety of natural textures like different wools, silks, jute and even hide, which helps us innovate," says Ayush Choudhary, creative and managing director. A-Block Basement, Shiv Sagar Estate, Dr. A. B. Road, Worli, Mumbai. Call: 022-24928647; Cocooncarpets.com



The one home accessory that brings any room together is the carpet. These rug makers tell SONAL VED more about the right finishing touch

*For the shopper who cares*

The Rug Republic believes in recycling and reinventing, but being creative while doing so. Founder Aditya Gupta says, "We reuse everything from denim, leather, fabric cuttings, sweaters to water bottles. This is our way of saving the planet," he adds. A-228, Sector 83, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Call: 0120-4222544; Therugrepublic.in



*For your tasteful tween*

If you're looking to redecorate your child's room, log on to Rugberry. "Whether you want a wool and polyester blend to line your teenager's study or if you're looking for an alphabet-printed rug for your toddler's bedside—we have it all," says founder Abdul Ansari. Call: 09839090784; Rugberry.in.



*For the history buff*

Our pick from The Carpet Cellar is the 16th century 'jail carpet' made by prisoners during emperor Akbar's reign. "He was a huge patron of the arts who got weavers from Iran to teach prisoners the art of carpet weaving. We have replicas as well as originals of these," says Dhruv Chandra, curator and director. 1, AnandLok, August Kranti Marg, Delhi. Call: 011-41641777; Carpetcellar.com

