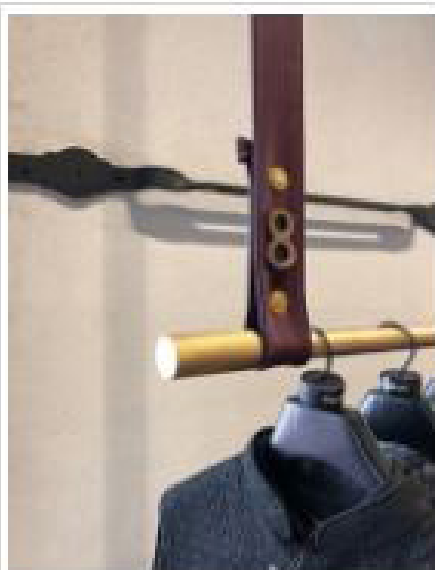


NEWS ** ARCHITECT ROOSHAD SHROFF ADDS A GRUNGE-LUXE SPIN TO MUMBAI'S ICONIC RHYTHM HOUSE



The Kunal Rawal Label at Mumbai's iconic Rhythm House



Unique element of a movable rack that retracts up as and when needed is added for enhanced retail experience

Architect Rooshad Shroff adds a grunge-luxe spin to Mumbai's iconic Rhythm House

by Nitija Shastri

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As we enter the quaint bylanes of Mumbai's popular art hub, we are reminded of the Art Deco-inspired structures and detailing. The Rhythm House, once an iconic address has now found a grungy Beppoke men's fashion brand, Kunal Rawal Label. Under the curatorial eye of Architect Rooshad Shroff, the sprawling 3000 sq ft space turned into a glamorous grunge fashion studio. The flagship store is a destination that embodies the finely honed design sensibility and philosophy of the menswear label. Resting on the brand's philosophy, Rooshad transforms the space into a wonderland. A walk through the store offers a veritable glimpse into the designer's world and his love for all things vintage amalgamated with a modern design aesthetic. We climbed into their creative cave..

What was the design process of the store?

Kunal Rawal: After several discussions for over a year, we got possession of the store space. When we started working on the store, I was very keen to feature several elements of the label to be represented as strongly as they are in the store to be transcribed onto the space, one of them being functionality, a huge aspect of the label. We are wanted the consumers to enjoy an immersive experience.

Rooshad Shroff: The brand has a very non-conformist and multi-functional approach towards design. It has the vintage feel with contemporary elements and the design details. I paired the design language without losing the essence of both the address and the brand. With god in details, we wanted to bring in a personalized touch to the space. The military detailing, for eg was an intriguing element as well as Kunal's personal favourite. And we incorporated that. It's the sync of ideas that makes a space truly come alive.

What was the design brief?

Kunal Rawal: I just wanted the space to go through a full business day and later transform into an installation space or double up as an activity centre.

Rooshad Shroff: We wanted to maximise the footprint; the 20 ft high ceiling, the 3000 sq ft space into a retail and entertainment experience. The idea of technology inspired spaces when it comes to designing the men's store. We have a movable rack that retracts up as and when needed, which is a unique sales experience for customers. An experience where the old and the new come together in sync.

How did you maintain the path of the iconic Rhythm House?

Kunal Rawal: The brand stands for neo-traditionalism. So we decided to have our own spin on it while retaining the space. Structurally we have done nothing to the place apart from a handy paintjob. The Rhythm House holds such strong nostalgic memories for me, it's almost surreal that we are here!

Rooshad Shroff: We just refurbished the earlier elements, opened up the windows to bring in the light. We get to see the panoramic views of the Kalaghoda which is spectacular.

Intriguing design elements that one must absolutely look at when you walk into the Kunal Rawal Store?

Kunal Rawal: The clothing racks - they are innovative and functional and represent the label Carousel on the first floor which moves at the press of a button. Certainly the Tactile Morse code brass indicators detailing on the floor.

Rooshad Shroff: The marble CCTV is quite intriguing. Keeping abreast with the military theme it is kind of being a play on the same. The cutting table has an arrow line embroidered metal, which is taken from the main silhouette which is taken from the branding. The wooden floor - simply because there is a strong sense of nostalgia attached to it.