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19 - 105 iGEN TOP 50

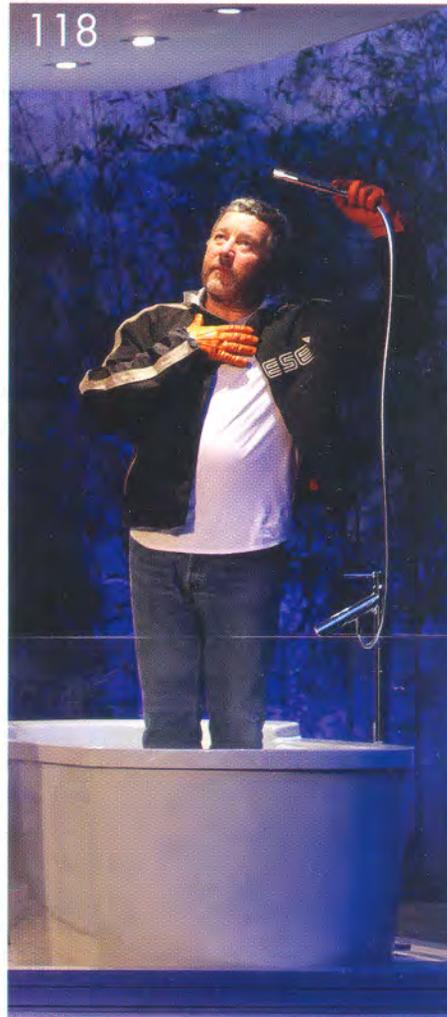
Our third anniversary special features India's most prominent architects and interior designers. Their visions and missions, we believe, can give the country's built spaces a makeover for the better.

- Abhishek Ray
- Aftab Bandukwala
- Alan Abraham
- Ankur Khosla
- Anupama Achar
- Arjun Malik
- Arnab Banerji ✓
- Ashiesh Shah
- Ashutosh Wad
- Ayaz Basrai
- Bharathi Prem
- Bijoy Ramachandran
- Brijesh Shaijal
- Chirag Jain
- Dipen Gada
- Eranna Yekbote
- Gunjan Gupta
- Kalhan Mattoo
- Kartik Punjabi
- Khushnu Panthaki Hoof
- Komal Porecha
- Krupa Zubin
- Kumpal Mittal
- Mahesh Naik
- Manisha Agarwal
- Mansi Mehta
- Martand Khosla
- Mona Pingel-Doctor
- Ninad Tipnis
- Noel Jerald V
- Nuru Karim
- Pronit Nath
- Rahul Gore
- Rajiv Saini
- Ravi Sarangan
- Riyaz Himany
- Rohit Raj Mehndiratta
- Sameep Padora
- Santha Gour Mattoo
- Seema Puri Mullan
- Shabnam Gupta
- Shantanu Poredi
- Shibanee Sagar
- Shweta Kaushik
- Smaran Mallesh
- Sonal Sancheti
- Soumitro Ghosh
- Sumesh Menon
- Tanmay Tathagat
- Varun Kohli

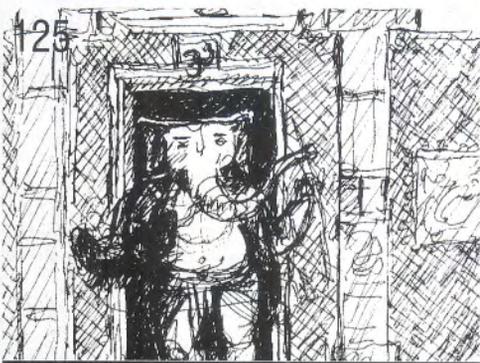
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Cover: designed by Gunjan Gupta of Wrap.

18 SPECIAL REPORT: APSDA
An international conference on Design for Changing Lifestyles was organised by IIID as part of the Asia Pacific Space Designers Alliance in Goa this year.

118 INTERVIEW: PHILIPPE STARCK
On the occasion of his 20th anniversary with Duravit kitchen and bathroom sanitaryware, French designer Philippe Starck speaks about his inspirations.



ARNAB BANERJI

DESIGN AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT HEAD,
VERSION ABSOLUTE DESIGN STUDIO

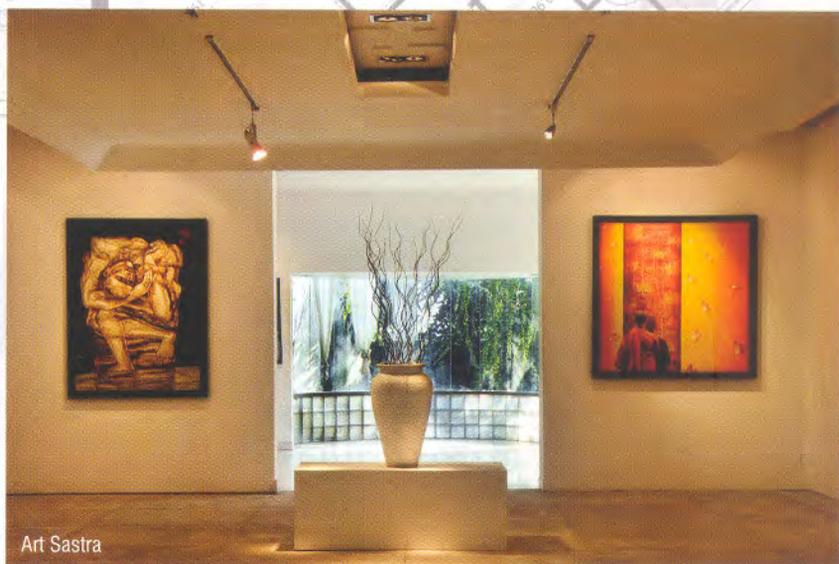
“OUR PHILOSOPHY IS TO NOT BE LIMITED BY OUR UNDERSTANDING OF A SOLUTION, BUT TO BE ABLE TO COLLABORATE ON OPINIONS AND EXPERIMENT”

Exposed to the world of advertising and graphic design through a close relative who was an art director, Arnab Banerji had access to a large library of design books and journals at a young age. While he was initially keen on graphic design and typography, the desire to build something that he had designed subconsciously guided his decision to become an architect. Throughout his student years and today, through his multidisciplinary firm, he has been able to indulge his interest in communication design and typography.

After acquiring a bachelor's degree in architecture from the Sushant School of Art and Architecture, Banerji worked at Oriole Design (1998-99) and Morphogenesis Architecture Studio (1999-2002). When the 35-year-old architect started his practice in Delhi 10 years ago, he was clear that he wanted to go beyond architecture design. "I was immensely inspired by Pentagram from London," he recalls. "It was very interesting for me to consider design being discussed, debated and practised by designers from varied disciplines."

Version Absolute Design Studio is a multidisciplinary design practice that consults in the fields of architecture and interior space design and sign design and wayfinding. Banerji, its principal and founder, is a registered member of the Indian Council of Architecture, as well as a member of the UK Sign Design Society.

An admirer of the work of Architect Hasmukh C. Patel's HCP Design and Project Management, Banerji is grateful that he is in a profession where inspiration abounds. "The Russian constructivism philosophy greatly captured my imagination with works of Ivan Leonidov and Vladimir Tatlin," he recalls. As with any



Art Sastra

journey, his references grew to include the futuristic work by Antonio Sant'Elia, the Bauhaus movement and the work of modernists such as Philip Johnson, Le Corbusier, Richard Neutra, Meis van der Rohe to the works of Tadao Ando, Fumihiko Maki, Rem Koolhaas (OMA), Frank Gehry and Calatrava, among others.

Banerji maintains that architecture has always been an expression of its times. "An architect is merely a vessel through which the users' needs are manifested," he declares, adding that the quality of the vessel also plays a huge part in that expression. Agreeing with Frank Lloyd Wright's statement that every architect must be an original interpreter of his time, day or age, he maintains that architecture has to be evolutionary. "My attempt has been to design open-ended expressions of the perceived requirement, allowing for the occurrence of the unknown within the con-

text in which the solution exists," he says.

The functional aspect of architecture is integral to Banerji's designs, for he believes that it should better one's quality of life in some manner. "On a personal front, I try not to pander to the lowest common denominator. I try and offer design solutions that will have a longer life than what is commonly accepted for such a solution," discloses the architect, who likes using locally-sourced stones such as Jaisalmer, kota, kadappa, slate and sandstone.

Of the current projects undertaken by Version Absolute, the design of an education institute, he feels, is beginning to take shape "as our best understanding of all our collective knowledge and experience so far." One of their completed projects, the design for an art gallery, was a successful collaboration between the client and the firm's expression. ■

• Maria Louis