



FOLIO 3

THE WALLS WE MOUNT

inscape

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS
POWERED BY NIPPON PAINT



Perched on one foot, heart frail and true,
Eyes fixed on a clock that drips through time's view =
Against the walls, her gaze lingers, shadows entwined,
As she steps away, lost in the whispers of time.

There are walls and walls..... Each different,
not just in the way they are built or shaped or they
take or what we see; but how they are interpreted
and felt! Multiplied are these infinite occurrences yet
again to infinity, as they frame our experiences and
emotions, depending on each who beholds.

The Blue Folio of the Rainbow Series of **Walls** on
The Walls We Frame brings a signature artwork.
The 1966, Doodling with hot wax - Batic on fabric
by Padmasree Rajeev Sethi was part of a textile
installation at college. The maze and message are
strongly figurative of the walls we build or break,
mount or move, decorate or dodge. They do frame our
spaces, our understanding and thus our behaviours
and feelings. The gallery section from Rajeev Sethi
continues on Pages 20 to 29 as a detachable wall art
for readers. Enjoy!

The Walls We Mount

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

As we turn the pages of "The Walls We Mount," the latest instalment in the IITD Golden-Jubilee Folio Series of monographs, I am reminded of the words of the motivational speaker Jim Rohn: "Whatever good things we build, end up building us." Within this folio lies not merely a collection of essays and visuals but a reservoir of inspiration, challenging us to rethink the very surfaces that define our spaces.

Walls, in their silent strength, are more than mere boundaries; they are canvases for our creativity, guardians of our memories, and witnesses to the unfolding narratives of our lives. "The Walls We Mount" invites us to look beyond their structural role, urging us to explore the stories they tell, the art they hold, and the ambience they create. In this journey, we are encouraged to see walls not just as functional elements, but as pivotal players in the symphony of design, each one offering a unique opportunity for expression and transformation.

This publication continues the IITD tradition of excellence, bringing together the brightest minds in design to explore the evolving relationship between form, function, and aesthetics. Contributors like Rajeev Sethi (Inspire Series), Bidisha Sinha from Zina Hood Architects (Insight Series), Prof. Shubhrajit Das (Academic Series), Farah Ahmed (Innovative Series), Anand Bomecha (Project Feature), and Vinu Daniel (Design Philosophy) infuse this edition with a wealth of expertise and unique perspectives, making it truly remarkable.

In an era where the lines between art, architecture, and interior design are increasingly blurred, "The Walls We Mount" stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation. It reminds us to look beyond the physical or philosophical walls that divide, separate, or isolate sections of society—whether based on class, creed, gender, culture, financial, or educational backgrounds, or, worse still, due to anger, hatred, or ego. This edition reminds us that as architects and interior designers, we are catalysts for change, capable of transforming walls from sterile elements into ones that offer security, warmth, protection, and a harbour for our dearest memories.

As we embark on this exploration, let us treasure this series as a collection that enriches our professional lives and nurtures our creative souls. My heartfelt thanks go out to the dedicated editorial board for their unwavering commitment to quality and to all the members and readers whose enthusiasm and support continue to drive this remarkable journey forward. Together, brick by brick, let us continue to craft legacies.



Ar. Sarosh Wadia

AR. SAROSH WADIA
PRESIDENT - IITD



JABEEN ZACHARIAS
EDITOR, **INSCAPE**

Of Corners and Cobwebs...

What is that moment of truth for you as a Designer?

Is it that first enquiry, the call to engage you for a project? Or that first meeting with the client, their dreams, and briefs? Perhaps the first site visit, where you step onto the bedrock of your project and look around? Well, these are all moments when the project takes wings in our imagination. Yet, isn't that true moment of truth when we finally sit down alone with those sheets of plain paper, stubs of soft pencils, and maybe a DND sign on the door? We go into 'labour' to bring forth a space where dreams and realities can live happily ever after. As we put pencil to paper, our hearts skip a beat, knowing, 'we cannot draw a line without changing the universe.' (Act Sankaraj). And often, that first line shaping the heartbeat of the space we hold, is a wall.

After two issues on 'Spaces' and 'Yards', this third folio on 'Walls' marks our first step into the deeper realms of Design Conversation—a moment of truth for Inscape.

Drawing a wall laden with all the listed data and requirements of the project to stand tall as a spine is a toll in itself. But nothing compared to addressing the unlisted insinuations of the physical and psychic quotient walls hold with no direct answers. Taught that a circle encloses the largest space within the least perimeter, many students did round walls for the low-cost housing challenge in our first year. 'Poor utility, precious space wasted; curved wall and the straight lines of furniture don't align', said the reviews. Lessons learnt. Third year, keen on doing something really different: I did round rooms for a prison project. Prison cells don't have any furniture to align, right? Review: A circular wall can loom heavy on the inmates often with deep trauma and higher suicide rates! A wall can even be a choice we offer between life and death; blood on our hands?

Then there are the even more complex cases of the living dead! The lingering fragrance and unique thumbprints clients leave at our tables which refuse to go long after they depart; Memories and stories which define them. A Silicon Valley client is frustrated that his mother does not want to live in the brand-new contemporary house he just built her. What was missing from the brief was her little girl orphaned at two, with no memories of an own room let alone a home. She needed corners; nooks to huddle, curl up and cry. Walls are about silent shadows, dusty corners and cobwebs too. For they need to bear loads, not just of the structure but the shifting swaying winds of life. Walls can be strong allies showing the way, versatile storyboards we mount to offer unique sanctuaries where clients can live safe and happy with their truths.



"I'ms, which made a fine cobweb on her cheeks, -
Voice a fine scarf from them that blew in the wind"
-To the Light House by Virginia Wolf.

Walls are about silent shadows, dusty corners and cobwebs too. For they need to bear loads, not just of the structure but the shifting swaying winds of life.

Inscape has been very fortunate to get some of the most brilliant minds to bring you their collective insight about the walls in this third Folio. We have maestro Rajeav Sethi, the ambassador who romanticises walls, opening up a whole new vista of 'story=walling' via arts, tradition, and culture which adapt and flow with time. We have Zahra Hadid Architects sharing the legacy of a small-town girl from Iraq who broke many walls and barriers of convention, to redefine them as pointers to freedom and fluidity. Prof Shubhrajit talks about how walls shed light to make us see, while Farah argues on how walls can listen and talk too! For Anand Sonecha, walls are as central as the inner eye for us to trust blindly, and for Vinu Daniel, a 'Wall Maker' he has a whole new philosophy to share. With 100 special moments and instances on walls brought to you by the Inscape Research Team and Design Tips from our power partner Nippon Paint, we hope Folio 3 on Walls will kindle your thoughts and imagination. From Stonehenge of 3000 BC, for times immemorial, walls have always been a guide navigating us with a sense of hope and direction.

If there is A Wall, there is A Way.



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Walls of Wisdom

Life and Legends of Rajeev Sethi

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN RAJEEV SETHI (RS)
AND JABEEN ZACHARIAS (JZ), EDITOR
INSCAPE AT DELHI, 24 MAY 2024.

Rajeev Sethi, an iconic figure in design and cultural preservation, epitomises India's rich and diverse artistic heritage. Born in 1948, Sethi's illustrious career has spanned several decades, during which he has excelled as an artist, activist, scenographer, designer and most importantly a cultural ambassador. His work, deeply embedded in the traditional arts and crafts of India, seamlessly merges modernity with tradition, creating a unique equation and compelling blend, opening new avenues to explore. From curating the Festival of India to transforming the Mumbai International Airport into a cultural landmark, Sethi's contributions to our times have been both transformational and monumental. His initiatives, such as JIYO, have empowered numerous artisans while preserving India's heritage and fostering innovation. With his distinctive ability to romanticise walls by engaging them as canvases to paint and picture incredible stories of the past to inspire a beautiful future, —Rajeev Sethi is the most local voice to listen to while we discuss 'Walls' in this edition of Inscape.

In this tete-a-tete, Jabeen L. Zacharias, Editor of Inscape, delves into the creative universe of Rajeev Sethi, unravelling the essence of his transformative impact on art and design. Sethi reflects on the plurality of walls and his incredible journey, as well as reminisces about his formative years enriched by his parents' artistic and cultural legacy which sparked his enduring passion for melding traditional crafts with modern design.



All images and Drawings courtesy: Rajeev, Sethi

Rajeev Sethi is South Asia's leading designer and is noted internationally for his innovative contribution to preserving and celebrating the subcontinent's rich cultural heritage. For more than 50 years, through his work in design and architecture, performances and festivals, exhibitions and publications, policy and program, he has identified ways to bring contemporary relevance to the traditional skills of vulnerable artisan communities and creative professionals. With innovative positioning and proactive interventions, he has successfully championed the cause of caring and concern for time-honoured legacy industries in an era of industrial mass production and globalisation. Mr. Sethi has moved effortlessly from one discipline to another with his consistent vision for cross-cultural and intermedial curatorial and scenographic practices creating some of the most memorable artistic design endeavours setting world standards.

JZ: Rajeevji, as you know **W**D's Inscape Rainbow series of seven folios is a curated coffee table collection to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Indian Institute of Interior Designers. Each folio focuses on a select topic, and this Folio-3 is on 'Walls.' In this context, we are eager to know what comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Walls.'

RS: Maybe, 'excitement'? Walls hold immense power and are often laden with a variety of nuances. They can signify definitions, possibilities, perspectives, and even limitations. Each wall provides a canvas to tell a unique story. While acknowledging the barriers and boundaries they may present, I see them as opportunities for creativity to bring interesting innovative twists to the storyline. For me, walls have never been obstacles; but vantage points that offer an elevation or a direction to a different path allowing us to see further nooks and sides with new perspectives. Won't it be exciting to mount and walk on top of these walls, using their height to uncover fresh insights and ideas? Transcending their limitations, making the most of its structure and achieving our creative objectives to a better degree? For me, walls therefore are not boundaries but bridges to new possibilities.



Rajeev Sethi in his early years was exposed to a vivid array of art forms.

JZ: Can you tell us a little about your childhood and early beginnings? How did your initial experiences shape your passion for art and design and set you on this outstanding career and journey?

RS: My childhood was steeped in creativity and cultural richness, thanks to my parents and my alma mater, Modern School in Delhi. I was introduced to a world of music, dance and traditional crafts in my formative years. Attending melos and local fairs exposed me to the vibrant colours and intricate designs of traditional Indian crafts, which opened all six senses.

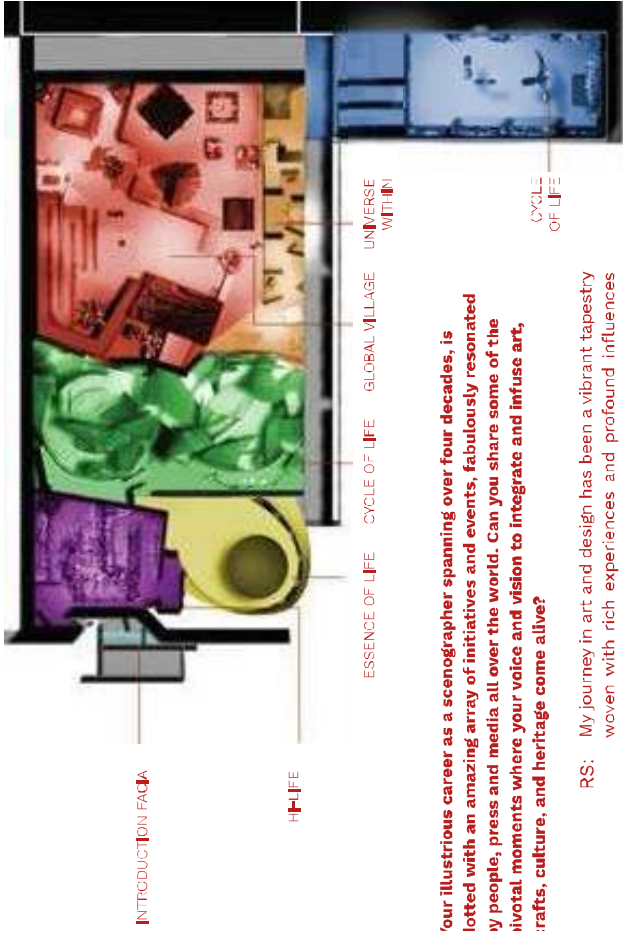
One vivid memory is also of how I loved playing with blocks and breaking them apart to create something new. Making toys during Janamashtmi and converting each staircase in the house into an exhibition. These early experiences and experimentations instilled a sense of curiosity and desire to explore the endless possibilities of form and function in unique ways. I believe this is what sparked my lifelong passion for integrating skilled art forms with contemporary design, ensuring that our rich cultural heritage is celebrated and repositioned in modern contexts.

JZ: You had the privilege of being mentored by design luminaries like Charles and Ray Eames, Pierre Cardin, Pupul Jayakar and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. How did their guidance influence your work, particularly in your efforts to advocate for traditional Indian crafts and culture?

RS: Charles and Ray Eames instilled in me the principles of layered narratives, functionality, and the importance of tactile design. Their work taught me that good design is not just about aesthetics but about enhancing the user experience. Charles explored cybernetics in his work on an aquarium as it unfolded underwater. On the other hand, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, was a champion of human-centric Indian handicrafts and a relentless advocate for the cultural and economic upliftment of artisans. Her philosophy resonated deeply with me. Working closely with her, and separately with the formidable Pupul Jayakar, I learned to see the craftspeople not just as producers of beautiful objects but as custodians of rich repositories of skills that needed to be promoted and enhanced. Working with Pierre Cardin was one of my first laboratories where I experimented and solidified my commitment to integrating the trans-disciplinary engagement of traditional forms into modern design, ensuring that they remain relevant in today's fast-paced world.



Rajeev Sethi had notable mentorship from renowned designers such as S. V. Hayter, Ray and Charles Eames, and Pierre Cardin during his endeavours in the West



JZ: Your illustrious career as a scenographer spanning over four decades, is dotted with an amazing array of initiatives and events, fabulously resonated by people, press and media all over the world. Can you share some of the pivotal moments where your voice and vision to integrate and infuse art, crafts, culture, and heritage come alive?

RS: My journey in art and design has been a vibrant tapestry woven with rich experiences and profound influences marked by many outstanding moments and memories. The 'Festival of India' in the 1980s, and later in the '90s, the Golden Eye Exhibition in New York, the Basic Need Pavilion, Earth Centre, Silk Road Universal Expo in Hanover, the Universal Cultural Expo in Barcelona and the Jaye He GVK New Museum at Mumbai Airport are quite a few of the monumental projects where thousands of artists, artisans and craftsmen, came together to create remarkable shows and installations celebrating our diverse past and plural beliefs. These events were more than just expos and exhibitions; they formed a cultural movement that redefined India's image globally. We portrayed Indian culture in a way that was both authentic and appealing to international audiences, which was a formidable task. The challenges were immense — from intensive research and coordinating logistics to ensuring that each artisan's work was presented in the best possible light. The outcomes were also equally and very profoundly rewarding. The collaboration resulted in a stunning array of artworks that captivated audiences and demonstrated the timeless relevance and muscle of traditional vocabularies.



Top and Right: Glimpses of Glimpses of Rajeev Sethi's works that garnered global attention.

JZ: The Mumbai International Airport is a testament to your ability to integrate art into public spaces on a grand scale. Can you elaborate a little more on it? What was your vision for this project, and how did you go about curating such a vast and diverse collection of art that would resonate with millions of travellers?

RS: Sanjay Reddy's vision for the Mumbai International Airport was to create a gateway to India that offered more than just a functional transit space. We wanted travellers to experience India's rich cultural heritage the moment they stepped into the Mumbai airport. The challenge was to curate a collection that was diverse enough to represent the vastness of Indian art while being cohesive and engaging to a global audience. We started by identifying key themes and regions of India that we wanted to showcase. Then, we collaborated with over 1500 artists and artisans from across the country, ensuring that the artworks were authentic and represented a wide range of sensibilities. The curation process was meticulous, involving the selection of pieces that not only highlighted the beauty of Indian art but also told a story. The result is a space where every wall, sculpture, and installation invites travellers to embark on a cultural journey. This project was about creating a sense of place and emotion, turning the airport into a cultural landmark that millions pass through and remember.

JZ: Rajeevji, projects in the realms of interior spaces and architecture from homes to hotels and beyond also blend traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design, creating unique spaces and experiences. What drives you, how do you manage to balance the complex idea of preserving cultural heritage while fostering innovation for modern times?

RS: It is indeed a delicate act, but one that I find immensely fulfilling. My approach involves a deep understanding of the traditional art forms and the contexts in which they evolved. They always come with a lot of inspiring elements which leaves me looking for ways to adapt them to contemporary needs and aesthetics. This constant quest is what translates into my projects be it the Adani residence, Grand



Hyatt, Louis Vuitton or any of my works like even the GVK New Museum. I integrate traditional Indian art forms with modern exhibition techniques to create a space that is both educational and visually stunning. The key is to respect the essence of the traditional crafts while being unafraid to experiment with new materials, technologies, and design methodologies. By doing so, we not only keep these crafts alive but also make them relevant and appealing to next generations. This approach ensures that our rich cultural heritage is not relegated to the past but continues to inspire and enrich our present and future.

Rajeev Sethi's works in Mumbai International Airport Terminal 2 that stands as a proud testament to Indian art and handicrafts.



Scenography for the Universal Forum of Cultures at Barcelona designed around the themes of Diversity, Sustainability and Peace.

JZ: We are very keen to know what unique challenges you encounter in scenography compared to what we do in architecture and interior design. How do you overcome these challenges to create such compelling narratives?

RS: Scenography is a unique discipline that goes beyond architecture and interior design, as it involves creating a dramaturgy of spaces that tell a story and evoke emotions. One of the main challenges in scenography is creating a sensorial narrative that resonates on multiple emotional levels. Unlike static buildings, scenographic spaces are dynamic and often need to transform or adapt to different uses and audiences. For the Universal Forum of Cultures, for example, we had to design spaces that could host a wide range of activities, from the magic of microcredit to the sky of aspiration with performances to exhibitions, all while conveying a coherent cultural message. This required meticulous planning and a deep understanding of the universal context. Additionally, scenography often involves temporary structures, which pose logistical and technical challenges in terms of construction and sustainability. Overcoming these challenges requires a collaborative approach, working closely with artists, engineers, and cultural experts to ensure that every element of the design contributes to the overall narrative. The goal is to create an environment where visitors don't just see the story, but feel it, making the experience truly immersive and memorable.

JZ: Rajeevji, you often describe your approach to walls as 'romantic and emotional.' Could you elaborate on how you choose the themes and elements to be portrayed on the walls especially considering your collaboration with artisans?

RS: Walls, to me, are silent storytellers that hold the history, emotions, and essence of a place. My connection with walls stems from my belief that it's my job to empower the tangible with the mysteries of the intangibles and engage with diverse audiences in an immersive way.

Choosing the themes and elements to be portrayed on walls is to remake surfaces in a meticulous process that involves extensive research and a deep understanding of the cultural context of where the project happens and for whom. The process is collaborative and iterative, with hundreds of artisans and craftsmen involved in multiple rounds of discussions and refinements. The goal is always to create a narrative that resonates with the audience and enhances their experience of the space. Romancing walls as

partners to give life to a soul and story, exploring their potential to evoke emotions and a sense of place, is central to all my projects and the spaces I create to be imbued with meaning and resonance.

JZ: Your initiatives at the Asian Heritage Foundation, JIYO etc. aim to improve the livelihoods of rural Indian artisans. Can you discuss the social impact of such projects and how they help in sustaining cultural heritage? What changes have you observed in the communities you've worked with?

RS: JIYO was born out of a deep commitment to preserving India's traditional crafts while providing sustainable livelihoods to artisans. The social impact of such projects is multifaceted. Economically, they provide artisans with a steady source of income, which is often a lifeline for entire communities. Culturally, they help preserve and promote traditional crafts that might otherwise be lost. I've seen firsthand how these projects transform lives. In communities where JIYO is active, there is a renewed sense of pride among artisans. They see their work valued not just locally but globally, which boosts their confidence and inspires them to innovate within their craft. Additionally, by connecting these artisans to broader markets, JIYO helps integrate their work into contemporary design and fashion, ensuring that traditional crafts remain relevant. This has a ripple effect, encouraging younger generations to take up these crafts, thus sustaining the cultural heritage. The changes are profound — from improved economic conditions to a strengthened cultural identity, these projects have a lasting positive impact.

JZ: In an increasingly automated world, how do you envision the future of traditional craftsmanship? What steps can be taken to ensure they remain integral to our cultural fabric?

RS: Traditional arts and crafts will always have a place in our cultural fabric. However, their survival depends on innovation and adaptation. We need to integrate technology in ways that enhance these crafts rather than replace them. This involves creating

The goal of scenography is always to create a narrative that resonates with the audience and enhances their experience of the space.



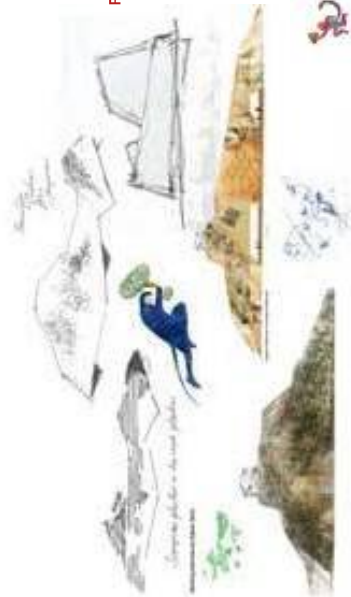
Indian folk art created on an unusual canvas that attracts the attention of a global audience. Rajeev Sethi believes that the survival of traditional art depends on innovation and adaptation of the craft befitting changing trends.



Below: A conceptual schematic developed for the Osaka Expo 2025

JZ: Reflecting on your journey and extensive career acknowledged with many awards and recognitions from across the world including India's Padma Bhushan, what personal philosophies or experiences have been most significant in your work and life? What message would you like to share with the next generation of designers, architects, and scenographers aspiring to make their mark?

RS: Philosophies have always been about breaking boundaries and exploring new horizons. I've always believed in the interconnectedness of all things — art, culture, design, and life itself. This holistic approach has guided me throughout my career. One of the most significant experiences I've had was working with rural artisans and seeing their immense potential to serve and support the imagination of the world. This taught me the value of humility, patience, and persistence. To the next generation of designers, I would say: stay curious and never stop learning. Embrace your cultural inheritance but don't be afraid to innovate and experiment. The world is changing rapidly, and your work should reflect that dynamism. Most importantly, remember that design is not just about aesthetics; it's about making a difference in people's lives. Whether you are designing a building, a piece of furniture, or an exhibition, always think about the impact it will have on the people's quality of life who interact with it. Your work has the power to inspire, educate, and transform — use that power wisely.



Rajeev Sethi's message for the next generation of designers: "Stay curious and never stop learning."

new markets, incorporating contemporary design elements, and ensuring that artisans have the skills to compete globally while maintaining the authenticity of their work. For example, digital platforms can be used to market and sell handmade products, reaching a broader audience. Training programs can help artisans learn new techniques and use modern tools to improve their efficiency without compromising on quality. Additionally, government and private sector support in terms of funding and resources can play a crucial role in sustaining these crafts. By embracing change and fostering innovation, we can ensure that traditional craftsmanship remains a vibrant and integral part of our cultural heritage.

JZ: Rajeevji, your much-anticipated India Pavilion at the upcoming Osaka Expo 2025 in Japan has already generated a lot of excitement. Representing India at a global event of this magnitude is both a dream and a significant responsibility. Can you give us a glimpse into what this pavilion is about? What is the secret code to meet and exceed expectations?

RS: How to present the real, evolving India before the world? How to blend the unique nourishing cultural heritage and the boundless innovative spirit that runs in our veins, showcasing India—the emerging world leader and a pivotal force of our times? It was tough, but we literally found our lifesaver from the ancient epic of Ramayana.

The pavilion will centre around the theme of "Mrithasanjeevani," where Hanuman lifts the Sanjeevani Mountain to save Laxman's life. This powerful narrative, apart from providing unique possibilities to work with amazing combinations of form, function, and aesthetics, also symbolises timeless values of courage, resilience, and the triumph of good over evil. In today's context, this concept resonates aptly and deeply with the global challenges we face. Hanuman's act of lifting the mountain is symbolic of humanity's collective efforts to overcome adversity and bring healing and hope to the world, with India at the epicentre, holding the key as a Vishwa Bandhu.

Visitors can expect an immersive experience that fuses Indian aesthetics with contemporary design and cutting-edge technology. The pavilion will feature meticulously curated exhibits, interactive installations and performances that create a dynamic narrative.

In this interview, walls emerge as profound symbols of possibility and storytelling, transcending their conventional role as barriers. Sethi perceives walls not as limitations but as platforms for creativity and connection, offering a canvas to narrate stories, preserve cultural heritage, and inspire new perspectives. His work, which integrates traditional craftsmanship with modern design, transforms walls into vibrant expressions of cultural identity and artistic vision. Through initiatives like JIVO and the Mumbai International Airport project, Sethi demonstrates how walls can become dynamic elements that foster dialogue between past and present, bridging the gap between tradition and innovation, and inviting viewers to engage with the rich tapestry of human experience and creativity.

Walls of Anthem: Jaya He!

TALES OF INDIA- TERMINAL 2,
MUMBAI AIRPORT.
SCENOGRAPHY BY RAJEEV SETHI

WALL ART AUTOGRAPHED BY
MAESTRO RAJEEV SETHI

COURTESY ASIA HERITAGE
FOUNDATION

The Jaya He GVK New Museum stands as a resplendent sanctuary for the timeless arts and craft traditions of India, housed within the bustling public thoroughfare of Mumbai's International Airport. Welcoming over 40 million travellers each year, it is undoubtedly the world's most visited museum, offering a profound immersion into the creative soul of India, a land rich in culture. Presided over by the esteemed scenographer Rajeev Sethi, the Jaya He GVK New Museum exhibits over a thousand artefacts, some dating back to the 11th century, showcasing the boundless talents of more than a hundred artists from across the diverse regions of India. In this Folio on Walls, Inscape captures one of the most celebrated walls in the world, curated by Rajeev Sethi and joined by hundreds of artists from across the nation. Inscape is proud to share a detachable Work-Art autographed by the legend himself. Enjoy!

The central curvilinear wall, spanning approximately 3.2 km and themed Thresholds of India, is the core of this artistic endeavour evolving into a grand sculptural tableau, showcasing India's diverse cultural heritage, living traditions, and contemporary art. The idea is presented under six thematically classified compositions: India Elemental, India Global, India Silent Sentinels, India Greet, India Seamless, and India Moves each reflecting unique aspects of the country's arts and crafts.

“Every wall tells a story, an eternal dialogue between the echoes of the past and the whispers of the future, inviting us to witness our cultural odyssey.”

- Rajeev Sethi

THRESHOLDS OF INDIA- WEST ELEVATION



THRESHOLDS OF INDIA- EAST ELEVATION



India Global: Convergence of Old and New

In a globalized world, India is no longer a country that is seen in isolation. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world.

India Silent Sentinels: Thresholds and Transitions

In a world of constant change, India is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world.

India Greet: Welcoming Interfaces

In a world of constant change, India is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world.

India Seamless: Eternal Stories

In a world of constant change, India is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world.

India Moves: Tools of Travel

In a world of constant change, India is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world. It is a country that is seen in the context of the world.



Choreography of Space

Zaha Hadid Architects' Transformative Influence on Spatial Experience

BIDISHA SINHA



Zaha Hadid — the visionary designer who dared to dream beyond boundaries

No compendium on walls can be deemed complete without acknowledging Zaha Hadid and her transformative influence on architecture and interior design. Her revolutionary approach, marked by fluid forms and audacious geometries, dismantled conventional design constraints. By harnessing cutting-edge technology and computational design, Hadid brought forth structural and spatial possibilities previously confined to imagination. Her integration of dynamic forms with avant-garde materials pushed the boundaries of architectural expression and invigorated a new generation of architects and designers to explore and expand the frontiers of their discipline. Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA) continue to redefine the essence of design, seamlessly merging form, function, and sophisticated computational techniques; breaking walls and redefining boundaries. Bidisha Sinha, Associate Director- ZHA, shares some of the defining works of the practice.

The design of space is a social contract that has guided us since humans first felt the need to create individual or communal fortifications. These spaces are realised through physical elements often categorised within basic Euclidean definitions—floors, walls, and ceilings—terms intrinsically linked to any transformative space within the built environment. At a primal level, they provide support, shelter, and security. Of these, walls hold the unique responsibility of defining how a space is perceived and occupied, either through their dominating presence or conspicuous absence.

When ZHA was invited to contribute a piece on one of these elements—Walls—it pondered how to articulate the essence of an architectural element: so personal to everyone who inhabits an environment.

A wall is a manifestation of boundaries within our lived spaces, symbolising both separation and connection. It delineates distinct realms within a unified whole, embodying the paradox of creating unity through division. This reflection led me to return to our work at Zaha Hadid Architects, examining how walls have played a crucial role in defining the intentions and character of our projects at different scales.

The dynamic interplay of light and shadow, lack of colour and right angles provide visitors with an unusual spatial experience.

The Vitra Fire Station is the very first building complex designed by Zaha Hadid. Photo by Christian Richters

Why play with only 90 degrees?





A visual representation of the form inclusion: illustrating the progression from its initial organic geometries to a more refined and fluid spatial arrangement. Courtesy Zaha Hadid Foundation

Bold and unapologetic, Zaha Hadid paved the way for us to question everything taken for granted, including the expression and role of 'The Wall' in defining a space. Her perspective-defying drawings were not mere abstractions but envisioned realities where the rigidity of a basic Euclidean grid dissolved and boundaries between inside and outside blurred. Through determination and meticulous attention to detail, we have had the opportunity to transcend these representations into tangible spaces, reshaping the built world and redefining architectural norms. Complemented by our research in computational design through advanced software we continue to conceive and shape spaces as we adapt to the socio-topographical shift in design paradigms. The following selection captures the value-led design conception which underlies all our projects.

Bold and unapologetic, Zaha Hadid paved the way for us to question everything taken for granted, including the role of 'The Wall' in defining a space

Penetrable Boundary

The boundary wall, or more precisely, the element of fortification, is the first to greet us before we step into most buildings. Often looming with an ominous air, it exudes an aura of impenetrability, casting a formidable presence that commands respect and caution. For the Evelyn Grace Academy, we questioned this approach to demarcating a boundary.

This school was a unique endeavour by the government for a community in South London, long beset by severe socio-economic challenges and bereft of local access to senior secondary education. As a newly founded establishment, it bore a responsibility that transcended the realm of

education; it had to become a beacon of regeneration. This institution promised not only to enrich the educational tapestry of this vibrant and historic quarter of London but also to enhance the built environment of a predominantly residential area. As an educator, Zaha believed that anyone could be taught; if they wanted to learn, and in the formative years of a student, the school was their first foray into the world outside of their familiar home setting. The fact that students coming to this school had already seen far more hardships than they deserved at a young age meant it was on us to create that sense of security for the duration they spent in the school.

Our vision was to present the Academy as an open, transparent, and welcoming addition to the community's urban regeneration. The strategic location of the site, nestled between two primary residential arteries, naturally called for a coherent and harmonious built form that would assume a strong urban character and identity, easily discernible to both local and neighbouring zones. This presented an opportunity to create a perimeter that, while physically secure from intruders, remained visually open and inviting. The formal landscaping was designed to extend beyond the site's boundaries, and both frontages were crafted as main elevations, ensuring that the community on all sides, particularly the students, would feel a sense of ownership and belonging.



The Evelyn Grace Academy's facade integrates security with transparency, blending seamlessly into its urban context while inviting the community into a space of educational and spatial regeneration. Photo by Luke Hayes



The explorational play of contrasts within the Mira -r- Station. Photo by Svetlana Guseva

View Within

The facade stands as the second line of fortification, defining the building's identity and offering the world a glimpse into its inner workings. At Zaha Hadid Architects, regardless of scale, it is paramount that each facade enhances the character of the built environment and expands the boundaries of possibility.

The design of the Mews house in London sprung from a desire to replace a building of modest architectural merit, with a new, high-quality contemporary structure. This new edifice aimed not only to elevate the areas character but also to provide significantly improved and more sustainable residential accommodation.

Extending the tectonic principles that Zaha had pre-empted through her early paintings, this facade explored fabrication supported by advanced software, paying homage to the context by using the conservation areas predominantly brick-fronted character. Departing from the traditional elevation of solid brick walls punctuated by selective fenestration, the proposal embraced contemporary aesthetics where the wall transforms into a free-standing visual screen. It is peeled back just enough to give a glimpse into a completely different world of sculptural objects forming the family residence. This effect is achieved by meticulously laying each brick course in a specific pattern, creating a dynamic interplay of open and closed spaces. The wall is self-supported with embedded



The facade reveals a dynamic interplay of open and closed spaces through a carefully patterned brick course. This self-supported wall, anchored to the glazing plane at critical points, exemplifies our commitment to pioneering future architectural language. Photo by Luke Hayes



The sculptural interplay of open and closed spaces, as the facade unpeels to unveil a dynamic and contemporary residential environment, blending advanced technology with the traditional brick. Photo by Luke Hayes

reinforcement and laterally restrained to the glazing plane only at critical points. Constructed by a robotic arm that plotted the design in 3D, this facade stands as a testament to the ongoing research within our practice, committed to shaping the heritage of tomorrow.

Walls that Shape and Segment

The significance of walls as active participants in defining internal spaces cannot be overstated. As tools for delineating functions and creating distinct areas, they offer endless possibilities beyond the mere creation of barriers. The Winton – Mathematics Gallery exemplifies this concept. Designed as a permanent exhibition space to celebrate one of the STEM disciplines, it showcases over 100 treasures

from the Museum's extensive collection. Carefully curated, these exhibits narrate compelling stories of how mathematics has shaped and been shaped by, some of humanity's most fundamental concerns—trade and travel, war and peace, life and death, form and beauty. Zaha Hadid herself studied maths at Beirut University before pursuing architecture. For a lot of us embedded in the ZHA computational research group led by Patrik Schumacher a profound understanding of how deeply intertwined our lives are with mathematics, is an innate instinct. Therefore, architecture became one of the stories being told within the gallery and also became the tool to tell the stories. To embody this concept, our design responded to the brief's key concerns: increasing visitor retention time and creating



The central wall, suspended to create intimate, story-rich enclaves, embodies the seamless integration of sculptural form and mathematical concepts, reflecting the gallery's dedication to immersive storytelling. Photo by Lois Gobb.



Design illustration of the turbulence fields surrounding the historic 1929 Hanley Page Aircraft that inspired the Wall Installation at the Mathematics Gallery. Courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects

cul-de-sacs within the expansive space to facilitate diverse storylines. This was achieved through the suspension of a pod, its geometry defined by the study of air displacement around one of the key exhibits—the Hanley Page aircraft. This floating wall allowed for stories requiring greater intimacy to be nestled within the pod's folds, while still maintaining a connection to the overarching narrative. The result is a space where mathematics is not only displayed but also experienced through the very fabric of its architectural design.

Playful Dividers

The concept of retail stores has evolved over the decades, becoming increasingly immersive and experiential. Yet, the 'Display Wall' remains a constant presence within physical stores. These walls are not merely shelves for stacking items; they actively participate in telling the story of the brand and its products.

Our design for the Neil Barrett flagship store in Tokyo draws inspiration from the minimalistic precision of the brand's fashion design, mirroring its use of fixed points, folding, pleating, and cutouts. Instead of defining a single room or space, the design creates a circular passage,

allowing customers to experience the space in varied and interpretive ways. Through two formal elements, the design seamlessly shifts between architecture and sculpture. A compact mass of surface layers unravels and folds to form shelving displays and seating. These emergent folds serve as display areas for the brand's accessory collection, merging functionality with aesthetic intrigue.

The fluid and dynamic walls of the Neil Barrett store evoke a sense of continuous ebb and flow. Their organic forms not only enhance the spatial experience but also seamlessly integrate display and seating functions into the architectural design.

In contrast to the display within a retail space, the design for the IL Makiage pavilion functions as an autonomous shop-in-shop entity. It reinterprets the distinctive motif that adorns the corners of all IL Makiage packaging: A sequence of folded black and white structural ribbons generates a striking rhythm of contrasts along the pavilion's length. Each ribbon is subtly rotated, creating a slightly different relationship with its neighbours. These ribbons feature integrated lighting, meticulously calibrated to reveal the true colour of makeup on one's skin.

The cascading and layered walls of the Neil Barrett flagship store create a sculptural play of surface textures and depths. These dynamic folds provide functional display areas while echoing the minimalistic elegance of the brand's fashion.



A visual representation of the display wall intended for the Neil Barrett store. Render Courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects.

The dynamism of these rotating elements captivates perception and invites exploration, crafting a uniquely personal space. Each visitor, as they traverse the pavilion, claims ownership of their path of discovery and investigation.

The IL Makiage pavilion features a series of folded black and white ribbons that dynamically rotate, creating a rhythm of contrasts and unique interactions.

Striated walls at the IL Makiage Pavilion. Photo by Paul Worchol





An undulating structure inspired by the graceful curves of the arum lily creates an immersive environment that blurs the line between design, sculpture, and nature, inviting deep reflection and exploration. Photo by Nico Saibh

Private Sanctuary

Sometimes we must draw a line around ourselves, crafting a private sanctuary within the broader social milieu—a personal wall. This often arises from the need to experience and process information without the intrusion of public interaction.

Designed as part of our ongoing research agenda, the following two structures are presented to explore and expand the conversation about the potential forms a personal space might assume.

Named after the Greek word for flora that lacks differentiation between stem and leaf, Thallus is an experimental structure that delves into the exploration of form and pattern through advanced manufacturing and computational methods. Utilising six-axis robotic 3D printing technology, a 7-kilometre extruded structural strip was crafted as a continuous line that loops repeatedly, intertwining with itself on a ruled surface. Ruled surfaces, a class of geometries generated by the motion of a straight line in space around an axis, were integral to the fabrication process of this piece. This innovative approach not only showcases the potential of cutting-edge technology but also redefines the boundaries of architectural and structural design.

The Arum, in stark visual contrast, presents as a more monolithic and introspective structure. Debuted at the Venice Biennale Exhibition in 2012, it comprises 488 interlocking, polished aluminium panels, each meticulously folded by robots to achieve a stable form. This structure exemplifies how the richness, organic coherence, and fluidity of desired forms and spaces can rationally emerge from an intricate balance of forces. Through Arum, Zaha Hadid Architects pay homage to the historical lineages of collective research that has led to the major works of today's contemporary architecture.

In Summary

My reflections allow me to summarise that there is no singular definition for the concept of a wall. It serves as a versatile tool, both dividing and uniting spaces to support the natural flow of functions and creating environments where individuals can thrive. As architects and designers, it is our duty to continually redefine what this element of design can become. As an agent of spatial definition, the wall choreographs the flow between privacy and community, solitude and interaction. It is both a literal and metaphorical structure that shapes our experiences, guiding the flow of movement and the allocation of functions while reflecting the evolving dynamics of human relationships and social constructs.



Bidisha Sinha

Bidisha Sinha joined ZHA in 2005 and has since amassed nearly two decades of experience delivering international projects from concept to completion. She has extensive experience liaising with public authorities and stakeholders on high-profile projects worldwide. At ZHA, Bidisha was the project architect for the Evelyn Grace Academy, which won the 2011 RIBA Stirling Prize, and a bespoke private Mews residence completed in 2017. She also led the design of 'The Winton - Mathematics Gallery' at the Science Museum in London, which won a RIBA award in 2016. As part of ZHA's senior leadership in the Interior Architecture Group, she oversees high-end interior design projects across the UK, Asia, and America.

WALLS OF EQUALITY

PROJECT FEATURE

Pre-design, Design and Other Explorations

The School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Children in Gandhinagar is designed to serve children from remote villages and towns in Gujarat and professors committed to providing them with better education and opportunities in society. The journey for this school began with a modest vision: to challenge conventional spatial norms, especially within educational facilities for the visually impaired.

All Images and Drawings courtesy, SEALAB

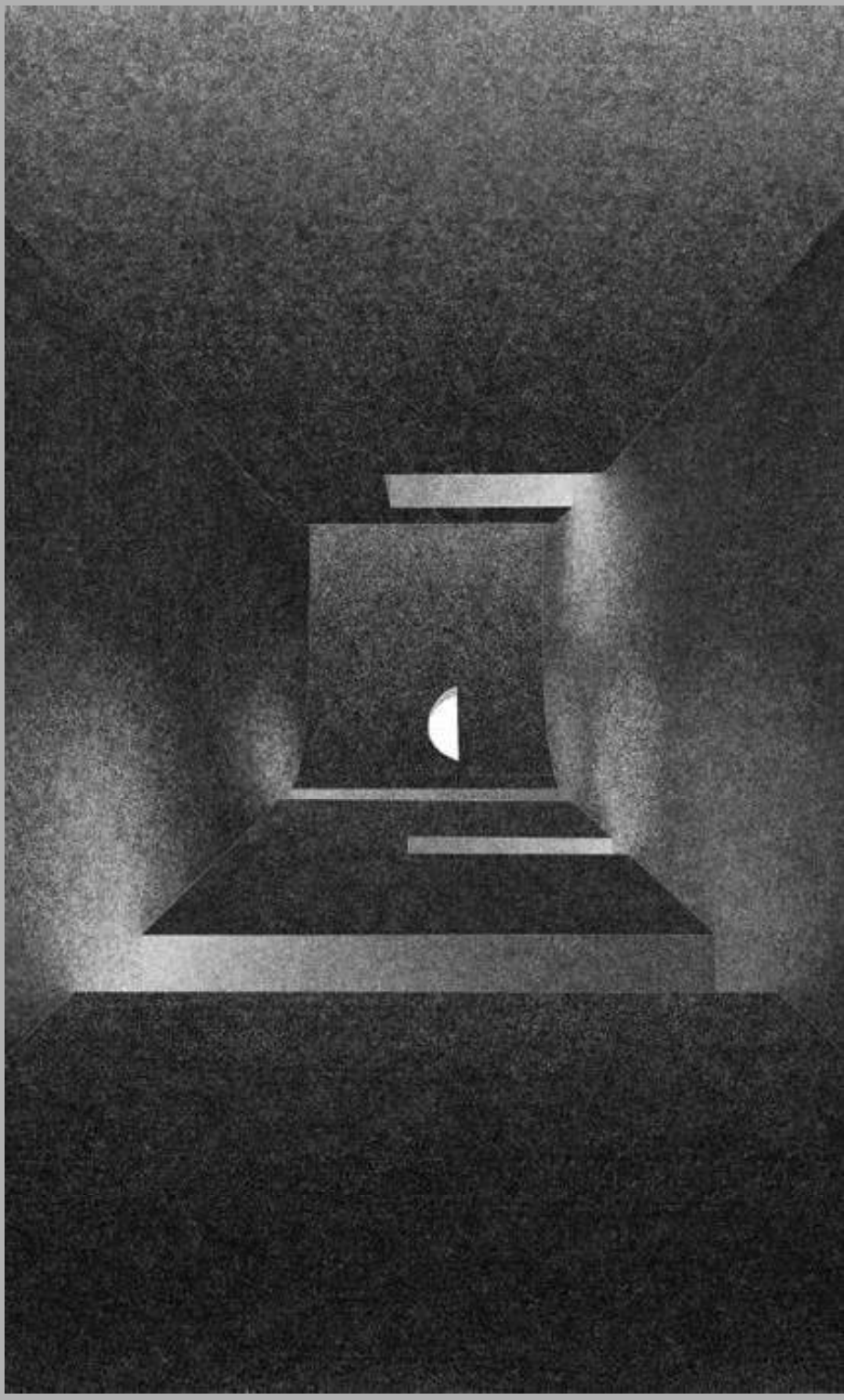
School for Blind and Visually Impaired Children

SEALAB

Design transcends aesthetics and functionality: it is a crucial aspect of civic life, subtly shaping our collective future. It can either reinforce inequalities or uplift and empower those who experience these spaces. In the world's largest democracy, the Constitution guarantees rights to freedom, justice, and education for all. However, designs that lack inclusivity can undermine these rights and create barriers. Therefore, design becomes an ethical responsibility, a commitment to inclusivity that respects the fundamental rights of every individual. By designing with empathy and foresight, designers create more than just structures; they build sanctuaries of equality. Walls, fundamental to architecture and design, are among the most political elements in design.

Walls, fundamental to architecture and design, are among the most political elements in design.

Anand Sonecha founded SEALAB in Ahmedabad in 2015, starting with transformative projects at the historic Sabarmati Asram, including the Jai Jagat Theatre, featured in Casabella. SEALAB's portfolio includes a School for Blind Children in Gandhinagar, community housing in Vastrol, and a workshop space in Rajkot. Their research project, "The Wall and the City," was exhibited at the 2021 Seoul Biennale. SEALAB's work is featured in *Architecture of Transition: Emergent Practices of South Asia* by Harvard University and was recently showcased at the Summer Exhibition at The Royal Academy of Arts in London.



Initiated in 2016, this project emerged from a profound belief in the transformative power of design—a belief that buildings should not only fulfil practical functions but also inspire and empower their users.

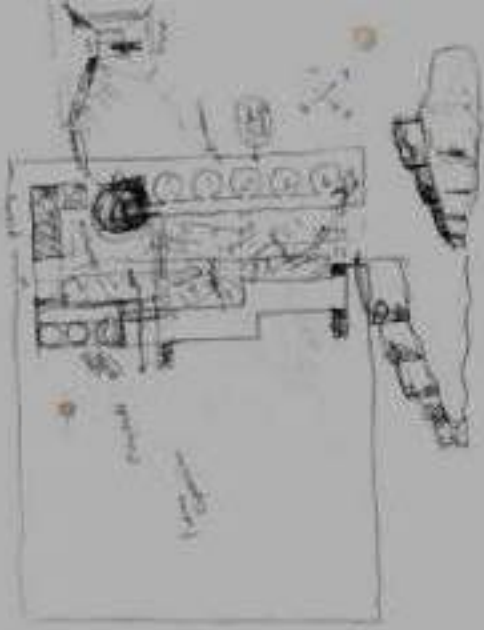
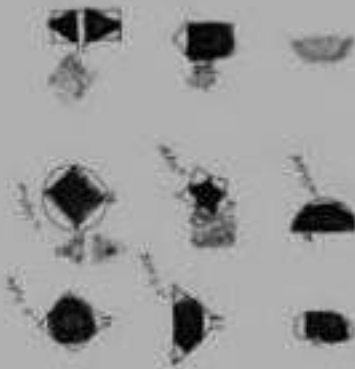
Navigating initial financial challenges, Sealab embraced an iterative design philosophy—a process marked by continuous refinement and adaptation in response to user feedback and evolving project requirements. Walls had to be shaped and curated for inclusivity. The design process was unveiled through collaborative workshops and consultations with stakeholders—educators, students, and accessibility experts alike. This participatory approach fostered a sense of ownership and empowerment among all—*and* it's.

Classrooms are designed as open cells with walls for horizontal flow.



One pivotal moment in the project's evolution was the exploration of circular layouts and modular attachments. Initially conceived as linear blocks, the design underwent transformative iterations to accommodate future expansions while maintaining spatial coherence and functionality. This iterative approach exemplified empathy and developed adaptable, user-centric spaces that grow with the community they serve.

Initial designs proposed unique classroom shapes to differentiate light and volume.



Intuitive ideas - Linear movement, no edges, or school in a contained garden which is safe and accessible.



The students experiencing and exploring the spatial organisation of the proposed design through models and live set-outs.



Initial discussions with the teachers. Experiential communication using cardboard models.

The new academic building, located west of the existing structure, features ten classrooms of five distinct types arranged around a central courtyard. This courtyard offers a safe, open space for children to play, perform, and celebrate festivals. The simple building layout helps students create a mental map of their surroundings. Corners are marked with strokes of light or articulated volumes, and the corridor encircling the central plaza varies in width and volume, aiding students in identifying their location within the building. Each classroom surrounding the plaza has unique features tailored for specific uses, such as music rooms, meeting spaces, and workshops. These "special" classrooms differ in form, volume, and light quality according to their functions. Other classrooms resemble verandahs, each opening to a private courtyard conducive to outdoor learning. This connection to exterior spaces enhances ventilation and light control. The building is designed for incremental construction and is adaptable to funding availability. Classrooms envisioned as smaller cells, are integrated into the main spaces—the plaza and corridor. Their geometry creates a dynamic interplay of light and shadow while efficiently responding to the hot climate.



The Plan for the School in Coimbatore

Walls as Pathways: Redefining Spatial Expression

In the vision, walls transcended their traditional role as structural elements; they became conduits of sensory experience and navigation. Each surface was meticulously crafted to facilitate wayfinding and enhance spatial orientation while maintaining aesthetic harmony. Colours were chosen not just for visual appeal but for their role in delineating different areas and guiding movement—an integration of accessibility and aesthetics embodying universal design principles. This school is designed to engage more than one of the five senses, ensuring students navigate their environment effectively and confidently.

Each surface was meticulously crafted to facilitate wayfinding and enhance spatial orientation while maintaining aesthetic harmony. Colours were chosen not just for visual appeal but for their role in delineating different areas and guiding movement—an integration of accessibility and aesthetics embodying universal design principles.



A study on reality and speculated perception by the users challenged by Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI), CVI, a brain-based visual impairment in children, varies: some see a swirling world of motion and colour, while others struggle with focus.

Sight



Many students have low vision and can distinguish spaces through light, shadow, and colour contrasts. Specific skylights and openings create areas with light and shade to aid navigation. For example, the entrance vestibule of special classrooms features a high ceiling with a skylight that casts a distinct flare of light. Contrasting colours are also used on doors, furniture, and switchboards, enabling students to differentiate elements easily. As students with low vision are sensitive to direct sunlight, classrooms receive indirect, filtered light from private courtyards and skylights, ensuring a comfortable visual environment.



A study on reality and speculated perception by the users challenged by blindness with light perception. Perception is limited to light or dark presence in a room. Details like shapes, shadows, or light intensity remain indistinguishable.

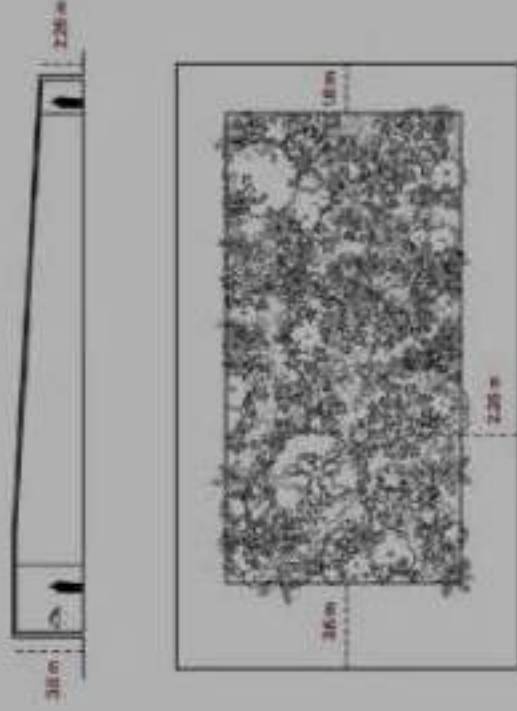


A study on reality and speculated perception by the users challenged by Low Vision. Natural sunlight can aid reading and writing for some with Low Vision but may cause glare or discomfort for others.



Sound

The sound of voices and footsteps changes with the echo produced in various spaces. By designing corridors and classrooms with different heights and widths, students can recognise their locations through sound. For instance, the entrance corridor starts with a high ceiling height of 3.66 metres, gradually reducing to 2.26 metres, creating identifiable sound qualities for each area.



Corridors of different sizes and volumes

Smell



Different aromatic plants are strategically placed within the spaces to assist in wayfinding.

The landscape plays a crucial role in navigation. Courtyards and classroom spill-outs are planted with various aromatic plants and trees, helping students identify their locations through scent.



Sensation and Touch

The materials and textures of walls and floors, featuring both smooth and rough surfaces, guide students throughout the school. Five different wall plaster textures are used in the building. The two longer sides of the corridor have horizontal textures, while the shorter sides have vertical textures, helping students identify their direction. The central courtyard features a semi-circular texture, and the building's external surface is finished with sand-faced plaster. Kota stone is the primary material used for flooring. Rough Kota stone marks the entrance to each classroom, while other spaces have smooth Kota stone. This change in texture helps students navigate by feeling the difference underfoot.

The 3D printed tactile model symbolises the various spaces of the building differentiated by textures.



The children understand the different wall finishes and navigate their way around.

(Top) Beams of light and colour pierce through corridors for wayfinding.

Lessons Learnt: Insights Beyond Design



The concept of universal design permeated every facet of the project, bridging the gap between accessibility and spatial excellence. Spaces were meticulously designed to accommodate diverse needs—from classrooms equipped for tactile exploration to open courtyards fostering communal interaction. This inclusive approach ensured physical accessibility and celebrated the diversity of the human experience, challenging traditional notions of design exclusivity and setting a precedent for future endeavours. Through this transformative journey, profound insights can be gained extending far beyond the realm of design. An inclusive ethos not only enhances usability but also nurtures a sense of belonging and dignity among users, reinforcing the project's broader societal impact.

This project exemplifies the transformative power of interior design when imbued with empathy and innovation. It stands as a testament to the potential of design to enrich lives, foster connections, and inspire a more inclusive future. Reflecting on this journey, we are reminded that the essence of architecture lies not in its physical form but in its ability to stimulate interactions and empower communities.

PROJECT TITLE:

School for Blind and Visually Impaired Children

LOCATION:

Gandhinagar

CONSTRUCTION TEAM: Rajubhai, Mani, Bhavna, Ramesh, Kallash, Pravin, Geeta, Mohanbhai, Vipul, Prakash, Kamlesh, Dhirsingh, Gulabhbhai, Vijay, Alpesh, Arvind, Jayanti, Jagrut, Kalsingh, and Praful.

PLASTER TEAM: Kavita, Kalidas, Anil, Komal, Mittal, Jaswan, Mitesh, Pashchur, Reva, Setudiya, and Jaswant.

ON SITE MANAGEMENT: Mitul, Pralapati

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANTS: Bhalalalibhai Gajjar

PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Kshidhi Gajjar

ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING CONSULTANT:

Rakesh Modi, Kamleshbhai

CONTRACTOR: Vasant Prajapati

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Lokendra Batasaria

PHOTOGRAPHS: Bhagat Odedara, Dhirupad

Shukla, Avush Gajja, Akash Dave, Anesh Devi,

Anand Sorecha

DESIGN TEAM: Avush Gajjar, Karan Verma, Akash Dave, Aneesh Devi, Mariana Paisana, Anand Sorecha

ARCHITECT: Anand Sorecha

ORGANISATION: Service Association for the Blind and Manav Sadhna, Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad

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Blind, Manav Sadhna along with the generous

local donors

PROJECT CORE SUPPORT: Viren Joshi, Bhaarat

Joshi, Jayantibhai Patel and Parnalal Patel

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USA: Prof. Susan Deetluwe, Mike Catarzolo, Prof.

Leah Kaplan, Linda Oleson, and Marianne Riggo



WALLS-LEADING LIGHT, SHAPING EXPERIENCES

SHUBHRAJIT DAS

Shubhrajit Das, an accomplished architect and academic, holds degrees from CEPT University, ETH Zurich, University of Cincinnati, and a PhD from CEPT/Jadavpur University. Currently a professor at Jadavpur University and an honorary associate with Architects NSDA, Das has taught at prestigious institutions like CEPT, NID, and SPA. His designs, including the Biswas House and Devesh Deepak House, have garnered recognition in architectural publications. Das's work on SIDBI Terrace Housing received an A+D/Spectrum Award, while his involvement in the Scottish Cemetery conservation project was featured at the London Design Biennale. A prolific writer, Das co-authored 'Eternal Stone: The Great Buildings of India' and contributes regularly to esteemed architectural journals.



All photos are courtesy of the author, unless mentioned otherwise.



La Tourlette by Corbusier

As an architect engaged in teaching and design practice, I strive to infuse theoretical subjects with a touch of design and drama to captivate students' attention. Some subjects, like Construction and History of Architecture, for instance, tend to get somewhat dragging, so I try to approach them creatively. In this exploration too, let us examine walls not just as structural or visual elements but as the most decisive factor which throws or thwarts light in interiors to cast the destiny of our spaces and shape our experiences.

Walls are often perceived as elements that divide or separate functions and spaces. Since both Architecture and Interior Design are involved with finding solutions to multiple functions, walls inevitably are on call to become an essential part of our vocabulary. Another purpose that both these disciplines strive for are, ideal spaces that can move people who experience them. While Interior Design primarily focuses on spaces within buildings, Architecture extends its reach both inward and outward, even to the streets and squares that form our urban fabric.

It is important to be aware that walls play a pivotal role in deciding the destiny of our spatial solutions and sculpting holding 'the key to light', its ingress and egress, which determines what one sees and experiences in space.

As designers, we've all faced moments of disappointment when a carefully planned space that was designed with such purpose and passion, falls flat in its experiential quality, losing depth and dimensionality devoid of certain lighting we had in mind. The figure and ground one perceived while designing, are no longer comprehensible as the place loses its depth with no shadows or any dark corners lighted delicately by the walls designed carefully to provide it.

One of the most crucial aspects of wall design is the artful manipulation of light and shadow. This involves providing the desired darkness by walls that eventually may be fractured or invaded by sunlight or introducing a way to ingeniously channel illumination in the most creative ways to cast crisp shadows and render contrasting dark backdrops for wholesome, brilliant experiences. These walls make interiors vibrant and charged, reminiscent of those remarkable places we have visited and that continue to resonate within us long after we've departed. As the day progresses and seasons shift, they transform our spatial experiences, capturing the changing positions of the sun to create a dynamic interplay of light and shadow beautifully.

The circle of bright light and the soft glow around inside the Pantheon in Rome, the beam of sunlight over Mother Mary and Jesus from the high windows at Notre Dame in Paris, and the colourful and charged interiors inside Le Corbusier's La Tourette, make us want to visit them year after year. In one of our recent study tours to a somewhat nondescript temple in Chettinad, the sunlight reflecting from a distant wall lighting a small shrine inside the dark Mandapa was mesmerising. Similarly, walls enclosing dark places with sunlight from unusual sources make some of the south Indian temples like Rameshwaram and Meenakshi, equally surreal. The ambulatories around the Garba Griha in Laxmi Narayan Temple at Khajuraho, the Sun Temple at Modhera, as well as the inside of houses in Banaras and Jodhpur, offer equally surreal experiences.



Top: Depth of enclosed space measured by sunlight in a Chettinad Temple.

Bottom: Light percolating through small openings on the wall in a house in Jodhpur.

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Sunlight reflecting from a resin-coated temple walls.



Walls and columns of Sun Temple, Kosliera

Essentially, walls enclose and divide interiors. Besides making enclosures, they also guide movement from one place to another, pause, and reveal surprising views. This is how we experience a place. This is particularly evident in Indian architecture, where the traditional movement is never straight, but of twists and turns, towards and away from the view. When in school, our teachers like Doshi and Rajé, would often talk about this Indian movement. And so would Correa plan the movement in projects at the office where I worked. Though I once dismissed this concept in my youth, favouring Western architectural ideals, I now find myself advocating for these very principles.

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From the time we started to build, walls would usually support the roof, at times alongside columns, as in large halls or verandahs. As they supported the roof, making openings in these walls was usually very difficult. It needed extra effort and care to pierce holes in them to bring in the much-needed sunlight. No wonder Le Corbusier considered "the history of architecture as the history of the struggle for light."

As they were usually small, these carefully crafted walls brought in just enough sunlight for the people inside and to provide a drama of light and dark, changing with the time of day and season. This also made the inside charged and vibrant with a play of shadow within sunlight and sunlight within darkness. Further, when the walls were used alongside columns for the structure, the columns produced a parallax with sunlit or dark openings in the walls behind as one moved through spaces creating dramatic progressions.



Top and Bottom: Dramatic play of light and shadow on walls in Koshino House by Tadao Ando

Along with the oversimplifications of the Modernist works of Wright, Gropius, Corbusier, and Mies, the International Style Exhibition of 1932 at MOMA, New York, turned this mass of wall into a volume of glass. With a framework of steel or concrete supporting the roof, the masonry wall was no longer needed. The extra effort needed to make openings in them, hence, did not arise. Light flowed in from all sides irrespective of the time of the day and seasons. Only the intensity of light changed with time. Light flooded in from all sides, creating a uniform, homogeneous space. Besides, we in India also failed to realise that the intensity of light in Dusseldorf or Dublin was not the same as the intensity of light in Delhi. Nor was the temperature the same.

In pursuit of the free plan concept, Le Corbusier pioneered the separation of space-defining walls from load-bearing columns about a century ago. Louis Kahn further championed this architectural liberation of walls from columns. He is credited with the profound observation: "Consider the momentous event in architecture when the wall parted, and the column became." This statement eloquently captures the significance of walls gaining independence from structural elements. In contemporary framed structures, walls have shed their load-bearing responsibilities, serving primarily to define spaces and guide movement. By fully embracing this independence from structural columns, we unlock the potential to recreate those energetic, vibrant interiors of the past. Liberated from their supporting role, these walls become more versatile. Not only does this make their construction simpler, but it also allows for larger, more dramatic openings to be incorporated with greater ease. This would help make parallax possible again as one moved, as in Ajanta and Ellora.

Unlike the Europeans, we Indians usually like shaded areas and dark interiors most times of the year. These independent walls may now be used to create dark interiors as and when needed. One may let streaks of sunlight fall on these walls to invade or fracture into the darkness to make the interior feel surreal. After all, as Kahn said, "Even a room which must be dark needs at least a crack of light to know how dark it is." Similarly, the walls may be used to reflect the sunlight that falls on them from the side or above to make interiors bright and cheerful. If shadows happen to fall on these sunlit walls, they change with the hour of the day and season, making the interior engaging all the time.



"Consider the momentous event in architecture when the wall parted, and the column became." - Louis Kahn



Translucent light in Dewesh, Deepak House by Architects NSDA. Photo by Ishita Das Alam

Likewise, these walls may be placed outside to reflect sunlight inside rooms to give a soft glow of translucent light into the interiors. Direct sunlight from dark interiors often gives glare. While the sunlight reflecting from these walls, not only limits glare but also gives a frame of dark silhouette against a bright wall. The possibilities for reimagining walls to visually transform and energise interiors are endless. By consciously using walls

as a secret code to shape what we see and experience, designers can bring about a revolutionary shift in architectural and interior design. These enlivened spaces, sculpted by walls that masterfully control light, have the power to move and inspire, creating lasting memories for those who inhabit them.

Left: Dark silhouette against a bright, reflecting wall in Harmani Arora House by Architects AISHA.

Walls - All ears, and more



All photos are courtesy of the author, unless mentioned otherwise.

FARAH AHMED

A unique blend of creativity and analytical precision marks Farah's design journey. With a degree in Photography and Political Science from Northwestern University, she refined her eye for detail in advertising at Ogilvy and Mather and later explored fine art photography. Her experience at Khosla Associates and a Master's in Interior Design from Istituto Marangoni deepened her expertise. As co-founder of FADD Studio, Farah seamlessly merges business acumen with design innovation. Her profound insights and diverse background, coupled with her keen understanding of design dynamics, position her perfectly to forecast and articulate the future of interior design trends. As an ideal millennial representative for the Innovate Series, Farah's unique perspective continues to influence and inspire the latest FADD in the industry.

दीवारों के भी कान होते हैं।

They say walls have ears, but I say that walls speak and express volumes.

Walls express so much! By their existence or lack thereof and their treatment or lack thereof, walls shed light on the nature of clients' and designers' philosophies. In a single stroke, walls express their preferences, needs, and desires. The desire to express or to not. The desire to be seen or the desire to disappear. The desire to be dramatically opulent or the desire to be subtle. The desire

to be motley and colourful or the desire to be uniform and monochromatic. The need for warmth or the need for starkness. The desire to be exotic or the desire to be local. Within families, the placement of walls expresses the desire to insulate and be apart; the desire to be open and free; the desire and need for proximity or the desire for privacy. Walls show a boss's desire to create a hierarchy by their existence or eliminate it by their absence.

They say walls have ears, but I say that walls speak and express volumes.



Walls deserve more credit than we attribute. Photo by FADD Studio



The language on the walls is also a standing testament (no pun intended) to the designer's vision and thought process for the space. The choice to make the walls a hero or have them fade into the background to play a more supporting role. The vision for an earthy approach or the vision for a more luxurious one. The philosophy of less is more, or the philosophy of more is more. The idea to preserve, reuse, and be home-grown or the idea to spread the wings further to bring unusual and unique materials from across the globe. The vision to create a cozy, slow, and ambient mood or to create a chic, discerning, and upbeat tempo. The vision to create thematic spaces — whether modern, classic, neo-classic, Spanish-revival, contemporary. In just a glance, so much is said and so much is understood about the creator, the inhabitant, and the visitor.

In my mind, in addition to addressing these expressions, walls are also huge influencers, a word we are oh-so-familiar with. Wall placement moulds familial relationships — how physically close or far are families within their given home or space. It affects availability, privacy, intimacy, feelings of nearness and other emotions. Wall materiality can have a powerful impact on mood and perspective — from the most basic to the most complex layers of the human mind.

The fluidity and materiality of these walls, crafted by Shayan Tehran of L-tewerk, express a deep connection to localness and craftiness. Their fluidity resonates with themes of novelty and the openness/ambiguity of both the designer and the homeowner.



Firengjahan 14 at Hesur by FADD Studio

Walls affect availability, privacy, intimacy, feelings of nearness and other emotions.



The CCI Library, crafted by Studio Hinge, transcends traditional boundaries, through the use of gracefully curved, low-height walls. These walls are not merely physical structures; they are sculpted by the books they house, transforming the space into a dynamic, living narrative that speaks eloquently of the intersection between architecture and literature.



The Wiro Gena Dining Room exemplifies spatial fluidity, seemingly expanding and contracting as its walls ebb and flow. This adaptive space reshapes itself, offering a dynamic experience that evolves with its changing configurations.

Research consistently shows that colours significantly affect mood. At the most fundamental level, walls often serve as the carriers or canvases for these colours, influencing the atmosphere and emotional tone of a space. Brighter or lighter coloured walls have a different rhythm than more intense ones and the moods associated are more elevated and cheerier versus more controlled and thoughtful. Volumes are also created by walls and play a similar role in the temperament of the space and how it affects every changing mind. By their long length, volumes are created and a sense of space that in turn could lighten either a feeling of liberty or detachment and the opposite could cause a feeling of claustrophobia or intimacy, depending on the perspective of the person inhabiting the space. Rounded softer walls and movable walls speak of a more fluid state of mind and function. Materials on walls like rammed earth, stone or cement

create a different atmosphere than polished materials like marble, metals, and semiprecious elements, which in turn sway an outside observer about the person inhabiting the space. Similarly, porosity and transparency weigh in on mood and perspective. Walls with operable windows and glass combinations (coloured or not) enhance experiences and feelings with the addition of light, air, and ventilation. In commercial spaces, glass walls or even the absence of walls is a big departure from the philosophy and outlook of walls creating hierarchy. With the advent of young startups wall-less office spaces are suggestive of a more approachable and casual atmosphere and thus the approachability in the mindset of the people; thus completely transforming the attitude and relationship between boss and employee. A simple wall can shape our perceptions so much.

Right: In the Japur Rugs showroom, designed by Vaishali Kamdar Associates, carpets create a captivating tapestry of texture and colour as walls.



In this space by Vaisali Kamdar Associates, the eye is immediately drawn to the unusual sight of walls replaced by carpets. This choice underscores the point that the wall's material represents hours and hours of labour by the weaver. Another wall quite literally invites you to consider the number of hands that have touched it, emphasising the human effort and craftsmanship embedded in the design.

On a slightly more metaphysical level, I feel there are subliminal messages that radiate if you take a moment to sit and ponder on the matter of walls. Just a moment to look at a blank wall with nothing on it, and think of its journey into your space, and think of how many people it took to bring those bricks and assemble them. Go one step back and think of how many people it took to make the bricks or the cement that binds it. Then a step deeper and see where the material for that brick was found. Where do these people live? How do they live? Pause. Then look at a more complex wall; think of Italian marble walls in India or Indian laterite walls in the UK. Think of the pink stones of Jaipur and the wonderful works like Thirkiri or Inlay that so often adorn homes, airports, and public spaces. Think of the number of people who have found, touched, processed, carved, polished, carried, and assembled the materials to make that wall. In simple words, think how many hands have embraced your wall before it was yours. In my mind, this notion should stir a basic type of humanity in anyone, to see this simple 2-dimensional wall in a multidimensional way; to understand the hard work, the sweat, the passion, the talent, the perspective, and the plight and politics of the people who have handled it. It is truly a symbol of the globe not becoming but being a melting pot. Then it will be seen — the unseen connection between the makers and the owners — unseen but the very present link that is felt if you let it, by the sheer existence of this wall. It amalgamates the energies that have brought it into being. And so, a moment to reflect on this can and should

cause a shift in the way we see the world, our perspective on the origin of what we want, how we get it, and how it travels to us; and the predicaments of the people that could have had a role in that voyage. We ought to question — Who and What is behind the wall? And what can come from it?

Empathy. Appreciation. Gratefulness. Kindness.

Since we talked about feelings, let's now anthropomorphise any space. If a space was a human being, then the walls would take on the role of the skeleton and the skin. In the same way that the skeleton provides the supportive structure that gives the body its shape, allows movement, and protects the body, the walls give structure to a home or an apartment, they create a specific movement between rooms and protect it from the outside.

And in the way the skin protects the body since it is the first barrier to entry, the walls too are the first barrier to entry and the first line of protection of an individual's home. In my mind, the skin plays an additional role. The aesthetic one — in which humans, from the day we are born, embellish our naked skin with clothing — one for its protection (as any sensation of pain, touch, and pressure also starts with the skin) and the second for what has evolved into fashion! To make a statement. Likewise, from the moment you enter a space, the walls are the first visual impression, the visual sensation, that you experience. And so, as humans, we tend to cover up what is naked, for modesty and aesthetic sensibility. Some not so much. Some like to be naked. And just like humans, walls (reflecting their owners) become sexy walls, or awkward walls, confused walls, or confident walls, minimal walls or flashy walls, 'uncle/auntie walls or immature walls, shy walls, confused walls or experimental walls, safe walls or risqué walls; or simply just naked walls.



At the Humming Tree, designed by FAD Studio, subtle barriers as metal links craft a nuanced physical boundary, defining areas with a refined sense of openness and connectivity.

Just as every human being dresses differently, chooses to cover their skin in various degrees, and reflects their own personal and unique style, the walls we design, which we often refer to as “the skin of the home”, are no different. Each is unique and expresses individuality, which circles us back to how the skin of the home, that stands strong, not just hears us but also influences us; speaks volumes about us, our choices, and how they came to be. While telling us the stories, they giggle, they scream, they drawl, they cry and they whisper. Let's listen. Let's use our ears.

An Upbeat Future Built off an Abandoned Past

The Design Philosophy of Wallmakers

VINU DANIEL

The Chronicles of Wallmakers started in 2007 inspired by a vision to reshape the design industry. Along the path, countless revelations steered the practice towards the embrace of sustainable and cost-effective design. This odyssey has beckoned to integrate the most unorthodox of materials—abandoned toys, weathered tyres, discarded scraps, and the very sands of the desert. Wallmakers has witnessed the alchemy of these elements, as they breathe new life into their creations and leave a gentle footprint on the environment. Each metamorphosis has fortified their resolve to persist in this extraordinary and unconventional pursuit.

Throughout history, walls have mostly transcended their role as mere physical barriers. They have marked territories for defence, provided shelter, and even restricted movement. Walls have symbolised power, strength, and resilience, shaping civilisations. The onset of architectural exploration has been marked by the presence of walls from the beginning. From early settlements built to encluse and protect, to grander walls that assert sovereignty, walls have embodied a multitude of dynamic and symbolic notions. For the Wallmakers, however, walls are elements that transcend the conventional. They articulate ideas by forming spaces, each possessing a unique characteristic

Wallmakers, founded by Vinu Daniel in 2007, is dedicated to sustainable and cost-effective design. A 2005 B. Arch graduate from The College of Engineering, Trivandrum, Daniel honed his skills at the Auroville Earth Institute. He launched Wallmakers to revive traditional building methods, blending them with modern practices. The firm innovates with techniques like the Debris Wall and Shattered Debris Wall, using waste materials and local resources to combat the climate crisis. With a team of 100-150 craftsmen, Wallmakers manages nearly 20 projects across India, creating site-specific, sustainable spaces that balance innovation and utility while questioning the necessity of construction today. The practice inspires designers globally to think outside the box, embrace experimentation, and reimagine fundamentals to create spaces that defy norms while remaining functionally rooted.



Church's interior, St. George Orthodox Church, Kerala / 2019

of its own. In interior spaces, walls become multifaceted elements, embodying protection, individuality, and artistic expression. They transform areas into meaningful environments by defining boundaries, creating privacy, and ultimately elevating the quality of the space. Louis Kahn rightly said, "Architecture appears for the first time when the sunlight hits a wall".

When the practice began, they pursued a path that deviated from the conventional approach, inspired by Gandhi's statement about building with materials found within a five-mile radius of homes. This became one of the core ideologies. They primarily worked with Compressed Stabilised Earth Blocks (CSEB) using the soil from the site. However, at the start, securing projects proved to be quite challenging. So, when they were given the opportunity to build a compound wall, they were immensely grateful. For most architects, designing and constructing a compound wall may not seem particularly challenging or exciting, but for this team, it marked the beginning of their journey.

Naming themselves 'Wallmakers' symbolised the start of their research, challenges, and experiments, setting them on an unconventional path.

One of the firm's early projects is the St. George Orthodox Church in Kerala, constructed on the foundation of a historic monument. This project resurrected the original church, which had fallen into shambles after years of neglect and encroachment. A construction technique involving masonry with earth blocks and mud mortar was employed, eschewing shuttering to create an array of arches, domes, and vaults. Rammed earth and compressed earth blocks were the primary materials used. These structural elements also lend an earthy warm quality to the interior spaces. The masons received on-site training to build with compressed stabilised earth blocks, utilising the ancient Nubian technology of arch and vault construction without extensive shuttering—a technique revitalised in the early 20th century by architect Hassan Fathy.



“Architecture appears for the first time when the sunlight hits a wall” - Louis Kahn

St. George Orthodox Church, Kerala | 2016
The Walls, arches, vaults and domes, carry symbols of Christianity, eloquently convey the sanctity and reverence of the Church's interior.



Building with soil and materials within a 5-mile radius of the project site posed challenges, particularly due to the lack of good-quality soil, especially in urban contexts. However, debris and discarded materials are abundant in such areas, prompting their exploration.

For Wallmakers, walls have always been a conceptual element of architecture, incredibly valuable in conveying the philosophy in their built narrative. Perhaps the project that truly diverted their path was Biju Mathew's Residence (also known as the Debris House). This project gained considerable attention for its use of scrap, recycled materials, and debris from the site, which became integral to the residence's identity. It marked the inception of one of their distinctive traits—using debris in construction—and could be seen as the precursor to the breakthrough of the Shattered Debris Wall technique.

Meter boxes from a local scrapyard form a mural on the rammed earth walls, evolving with the passing day. Coconut shells, used as fillers in the concrete roof, impart a contemporary touch to the structure.



Debris House, Kerala | 2015
A sustainable translation of scraps, recycled materials and debris into walls and roofs.



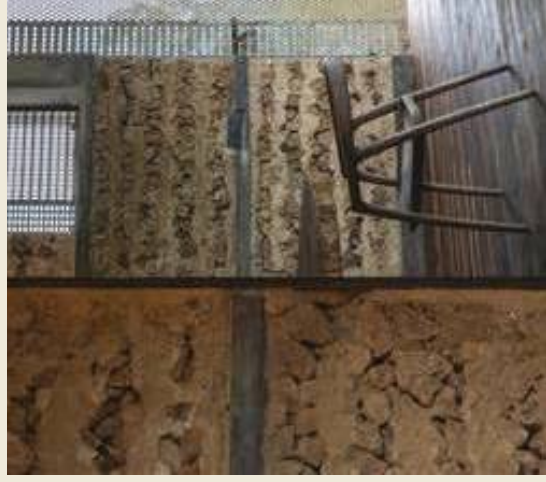
Meter boxes from a local scrapyard form a mural on the rammed earth walls, evolving with the passing day. Coconut shells, used as fillers in the concrete roof, impart a contemporary touch to the structure.



Chirath, Kerala | 2018
Remnants of pit and scrap materials seamlessly integrate into the walls of this project, defining spaces & facilitating ventilation and enhancing natural lighting.

Chirath, completed in 2018, emerged as a project that broke free from the conventional design language of Kerala houses while still retaining certain traditional characteristics. It showcased the Shuttered Debris Wall, a technique patented by the Wallmakers. This method involves skillfully mixing cement, soil, and waste materials of various sizes (coarse aggregate) ranging from 10mm to 70mm to create a robust wall (with a compressive strength of 5.2 MPa). This innovative wall construction requires only 1/5th of the embodied energy compared to materials like concrete blocks, leading to significantly lower carbon emissions.

The successful realisation of the Shuttered Debris Wall technique presented numerous possibilities. In the case of The Lodge, a residential project nestled on the edge of a hill in Kerala, large quantities of small loose stones unearthed during the foundation excavation process were repurposed in the construction of the Shuttered Debris Wall. This technique was adapted ingeniously, with the stones inserted into the debris mix in alternating bands within the shutters. The shuttered debris wall exemplifies how a wall can be more than just an interior partition or barrier. It serves a greater purpose by addressing the challenge of construction waste while mitigating the unsustainable exploitation of resources. It inspires keys and clues to optimistically look at life. If one limits oneself to the basic function and aesthetics of any element, true innovation and improvisation will always remain out of reach.



The Lodge, Kerala | 2021
Stones from the site as the key element of the walls.

In today's design landscape, a profound shift is unfolding. As architects and designers craft new structures, the focus has increasingly gravitated toward aesthetics and adherence to a prevailing "ideal theme." Yet, this preoccupation often comes at the expense of a deeper understanding of the fundamental elements and methods that truly define and shape spaces—elements that are the very essence of architectural responsibility. While designing Chuzhi, Wallmakers' primary concern was building on a site characterised by rocky terrain, towering trees, and dense vegetation. However, these very characteristics inspired an unconventional, yet remarkable approach. The project prompted them to challenge the traditional perception of walls and to "deconstruct" their concept to better resonate with the surrounding environment, shaping interior spaces with a strong umbilical cord to nature. The swirled precast poured debris earth composite bottle beams, crafted from 4000 discarded plastic bottles, encircle the three large Tamarind trees on site. This design seamlessly translates the natural context into the built spaces. In Chuzhi, the swirls begin as walls and spiral upwards to form the roof. Instead of imposing clear boundaries as barriers, they blur the distinction between the steep rocky topography and the built environment.

The project prompted them to challenge the traditional perception of walls and to "deconstruct" their concept to better resonate with the surrounding environment, shaping interior spaces with a strong umbilical cord to nature.



*Chuzhi, Tamil Nadu / 2022
An attempt to deconstruct the traditional concept of walls, camouflaging the environment.*

*3-minute Pavilion, Sharjah / 2023
Tyre walls shape the space.*



"—this doesn't necessarily mean they must be linear elements that block out the exterior or act as obstacles; they can be permeable or dynamic membranes."

The definition of walls greatly depend on the perspective. In interior environments, walls dictate spatial characteristics, shaping how we experience the space. However, this doesn't necessarily mean they must be linear elements that block out the exterior or act as obstacles; they can be permeable or dynamic membranes. The 3-minute pavilion designed for the Sharjah Architectural Triennial 2023 embodies this idea. The entire pavilion was constructed using tyres collected from various waste facilities in Sharjah. Approximately 1425 tyres, along with desert sand—commonly deemed unsuitable for construction—were used, creating a thermally insulated and cooler space for the interiors. This pavilion showcases the potential of utilising discarded materials.



*Toj Storey Kerala | 2021
Toj waste integrated into wall construction.*

When a project arose in Vadakara, North Kerala, where toy consumption is high, a similar philosophy of integrating waste was enforced. The Toy Storey Residence incorporates 6200 discarded and donated old toys into the composite CSEB Jali wall, functioning as a perforated external skin.

The concept of walls have long symbolised closure and safety to people, yet they represent more than just their physical attributes. Throughout their journey, Wallmakers has continuously strived to redefine the concept of a wall—the idea, and the materials themselves. This has enabled them to break free from the monotony often associated with walls by incorporating techniques such as CSEB, Shuttered Debris Wall, and intriguing materials like stone quarry waste, toys, tyres, and thatch. Walls are fundamental elements that shape the experience of a space. For those of us who look beyond traditional perspectives, walls are invaluable elements for expressing and framing thoughts in reality.

for Wallmakers, Walls are more than mere barriers; they embody the aspirations, reflect the dreams, and signify a future where design and architecture harmonise with nature and humanity.

Wallmakers in retrospect, has been able to identify, acknowledge and address that walls transcend their traditional roles, evolving into canvases for creativity, emblems of sustainability, and connectors between natural and built spaces, between inside and outside. From modest beginnings to innovative techniques, they have embraced unconventional materials, shaping spaces with purpose and deep dedication.

They drive the thought into us that our walls serve not only as physical structures but as reminders of immense potential—that every obstacle holds the seed of innovation. Let us continue to build, not just with bricks and mortar, but with vision, humility, and a profound respect for our environment.



In the end, for Wallmakers, walls are more than mere barriers; they embody the aspirations, reflect the dreams, and signify a future where design and architecture harmonise with nature and humanity. This is their humble tribute to walls—symbols of shelter, creativity, and the enduring quest for exploration.

UNIQUE COLORS FOR UNIQUE SPACES

MASTER CLASS



Images courtesy of Nippon Paints

DEEPU S PRAKASH
Managing Director, Aedlum Design

2023 has been the year to go bold or go home, and as designers, we couldn't be more excited. For many years spaces were designed safely, with balanced elements, practical detailing, and sensible interiors to suit customer needs. In the past few years, however, designers began boldly embracing exaggerations, strong detailing, highlighting richness, and quirky combinations. Creating a one-of-a-kind design value for homes, spaces, surfaces, and products took prominence. The concept of 'vintage', 'collectables', and the like entered the residential interior world and people wanted to own anything that had a distinctive personality, standing out like art in a gallery. This means to reaffirm that every wall or space is a designer's canvas and that they mean to get messy with their art.

Unique colors to experiment in homes. Homes are a safe haven, generally providing comfort and calm to one's senses. The usual strategy has been to use a lot of neutrals, with 1 or 2 accent elements as a pop of contrast, balanced safely without being too visually overwhelming creating an overall cozy-looking space that lends a sense of familiarity. Recent trends of strong colors and bold choices have opened a new world of interpretation of what a typical home needs to look like.

Tones of fiery red, nostalgic blue, dramatic purple, soothing green, and the like, even a simple elegant white, envelope at least 50% of the room to really mark their presence and influence the energy around. Strong colors can add drama

to a space. Contrasting lighting, furniture, and furnishings can further enhance the effect. This can create a play of texture and color, or simply accentuate the color itself. Monochromatic blacks and whites paired with strong wooden accents are used in combination with these powerful color tones to create a strong visual symphony in any room. Every hue brings with it a fresh wave of emotions and brings the interiors to life. Nippon Paint is one of the best choices to bring home kaleidoscopic color choices with world-class technology and innovation. Their unique range of products not only caters to your aesthetic needs but also to your functional needs. Besides having a wide range of colors, Nippon Paint offers speciality products such as anti-bacterial paint and low-odour paint.

Unconventional color choices or palettes

Any combination of 2 or more strong colors used together in the same setting while allowing it to be appreciated individually as well as together is an unconventional design move. To give a specific example of how this could be achieved is by using non-invasive neutral tones with large portions of a strong color like rich, deep red for the walls and furniture, adding a strongly accented décor like a wall tapestry or a large painting in a color that sits opposite on the color wheel eg. an aquamarine blue or deep green and then tying it all up with a soft-toned pink or orange floor rug. Browns & gray neutrals paired with jewel tones, primary colors with secondary color underlines, and soft tones of base colors like dusty pinks and blues all do exceptionally well in any space today provided the colors are allowed to shine in their own skin.

Color choices and architectural styles

Art Deco is a style that has made a comeback to a majority of lifestyle spaces today and is here to stay. People love the fine details and daring color palettes brought into play, especially with the heavy influence of social media. Everyone wants picture-worthy, memorably striking spaces to capture and remember. People are drawn to neo-classical, and vintage facades and interior spaces because they evoke a sense of nostalgia and old-world charm. The finely detailed exteriors are also appreciated and found to be fascinating. Consumers can choose from a myriad of options to create their unique statement wall. Some opt for striking and vibrant colors, while others play with bold patterns, wallpapers, or textured finishes. This freedom of expression enables them to transform their living spaces into personalized works of art, making their homes truly one-of-a-kind. Overall, the year 2023 has pushed designers to forge unabashed relationships with colors, encouraging them to embrace experimentation and transform living spaces into captivating works of art.

Also, Nippon Paint India's Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025, developed in collaboration with color expert Dr. Kaustav Sengupta from the National Institute of Fashion Technology and the Color Consultant for Nippon Paint India, introduces groundbreaking color schemes specifically designed for the youth demographic, incorporating regional forecasts for the first time. In essence, Nippon Paint's Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025 presents an energetic exploration of colors, offering a distinctive perspective on the evolving culture and society of India, although primarily aimed at home décor.



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Beyond the Walls

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Are you ready to break free from the ordinary and let your creativity soar?

Design a wall or an interior space that speaks to your soul and breaks all boundaries.

Write a brief description explaining how your design captures your unique personality.







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Exploring Sustainability by Nippon

SURFACE COATINGS AND MATERIALITY

Building a sustainable home is not just a trendy choice but a responsible and essential step towards a greener and more eco-conscious future. Here's how to build a sustainable home.



Images courtesy of Nippon Paints

substantially less of these harmful chemicals. By using the low-VOC paint options from Nippon Paint, homeowners can improve the quality of the air within their homes, reduce health risks for inhabitants, and reduce the release of dangerous substances into the environment.

Insulation solutions

Here are some eco-friendly insulation options for your home that will help you keep it well-insulated to keep out the heat in the summer and keep the heat in during the winter. High thermal performance is offered by cellulose insulation created from recycled paper, which also reduces waste by reusing materials. Wool insulation is manufactured from natural sheep's wool, which is renewable, biodegradable, and requires less energy to produce than synthetic alternatives. Recycled denim insulation provides effective thermal and acoustic insulation while preventing waste from ending up in landfills. You can also opt for the PU Foam by Nippon Paint; that applies like foam but hardens into a thermocol-like substance that can be cut with a knife.

Water-Based Adhesives and Sealants
Traditional adhesives and sealants frequently have high solvent concentrations and hazardous substances. Water-based substitutes are a better choice for the environment. These adhesives and sealants have a low VOC level and barely any environmental impact. While reducing installation-related

Bamboo
Bamboo is a versatile material that may be used for structural components, wall panels, flooring, and more. Known for its strength and endurance, bamboo is an ideal replacement for traditional hardwood, which contributes to deforestation. Bamboo has become a popular sustainable building material because of its quick growth and adaptability.

Low VOC Paints
Traditional paints and varnishes emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can be dangerous to human health and contribute to indoor air pollution. Low VOC paints contain

A sustainable home, also known as a green or eco-friendly home, is a residential dwelling designed and built with a focus on minimising its environmental impact and promoting sustainable practices. These homes are constructed and operated in a way that conserves energy, reduces resource consumption, and minimises waste generation. Building a sustainable home involves more than just using sustainable materials and goods, it also involves sustainable maintenance techniques.

Here are a few options you can start with to create your sustainable home.



Natural Oils
Eco-friendly preservatives are alternatives to potentially hazardous chemical treatments for wood. Treatments based on borate efficiently protect wood against fungi and insects while being safe for both people and animals. They have minimal environmental impact and may be applied on both indoor and outdoor wood. Construction-related wood is susceptible to insect and microbial deterioration. Therefore, eco-friendly wood treatments are required.

In conclusion, building a sustainable home is not just a trendy choice but a responsible and essential step towards a greener and more eco-conscious future. By embracing eco-friendly materials and maintenance techniques, homeowners can significantly reduce their environmental footprint and contribute to a healthier planet. As we move towards a more sustainable future, let us strive to incorporate these eco-friendly practices into our homes, setting a positive example for others and collectively making a significant impact on the global effort to protect our environment.

Together, let's build a world where homes are not just shelters but harmonious coexistence with nature, creating a better, greener, and more sustainable tomorrow for all.



health concerns and air pollution, they provide dependable bonding and sealing capabilities.

Energy saving solutions

With the rise of a 'Global Boiling' era, it's no surprise that our summers are getting hotter year-by-year. The harsh summers always result in electricity bills that put a hole in your pocket with fans and air conditioners being constantly in use. Using a cool roof coating like the Nippon Paint Walltron Hydroshield Damproof on your roof can help reduce the temperature up to 10 degrees. This results in a cooler house thereby saving energy and that hefty bill.

25 MOMENTS THAT DEFINED WALLS



All through the complex evolution of human civilisation, walls have stood as silent sentinels, shaping our world in visible and intangible ways. From ancient fortifications to modern architectural marvels, walls have transcended their basic function, becoming symbols of division, protection, and artistic expression. Consider the Great Wall of China, a monumental feat of human determination and creativity, undulating across landscapes like a colossal stone dragon; or reflect on the ingenious castle garderobes of medieval Europe, where discreet toilet shafts concealed within thick stone walls seamlessly merged functionality with privacy.

As we journey through time, walls continue to evolve, challenging our perceptions and pushing the boundaries of design. The sinuous curves of Zaha Hadid's Heydar Aliyev Centre in Baku defy conventional notions of structure, transforming walls into fluid, organic forms that seem to disobey gravity. Looking to the future, visionary projects like NEOM's The Line reimagine walls on a colossal scale, proposing a linear city encased in mirrored walls that stretch across the Saudi desert.

From ancient ramparts to futuristic cityscapes, walls narrate our collective story; they stand as canvases for street art, backdrops for historical events, and foundations for technological innovation. As we ponder on a few 'defining moments', we unravel the composite collage of human existence, where walls serve not just as barriers, but as bridges too to our shared past and gateways to our imagined future.

01

18000 BCE

Rock Art at Altamira

Spain

Walls as canvases of history

The Altamira caves reveal humanity's timeless connection to walls as canvases. Discovered in 1868, these subterranean galleries showcase prehistoric wall art that revolutionised our understanding of interior aesthetics. Nature's first accent wall explodes with ochre and charcoal imagery of bison, horses, and enigmatic symbols. The ancient walls, whispering design wisdom across millennia, demonstrate how vertical surfaces can create immersive environments that transcend mere functionality. In modern interior design, we continue this legacy, using walls as a powerful storytelling medium.



Cave wall with the polychrome bison



Diorama of the Altamira caves. A work by the sculptor Josep Font

J. Font

02

1400 BCE

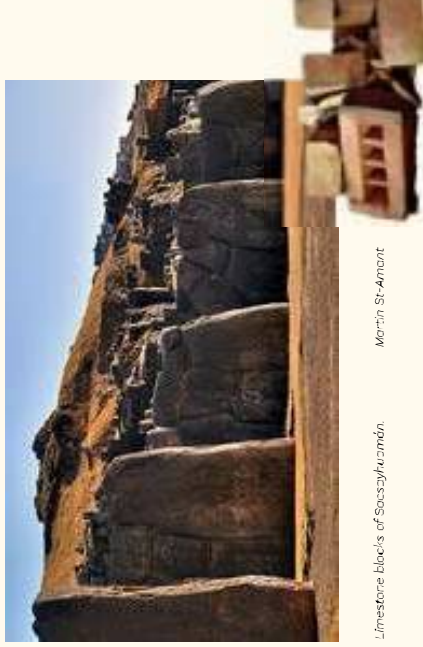
The Inca Walls of Sacsayhuamán

Peru

Walls of unparalleled precision

In Peru, the Inca civilisation's masterpiece at Sacsayhuamán showcases walls of unparalleled precision. Massive limestone blocks fit so tightly that not even a blade of grass can penetrate, demonstrating the Incas' mastery of stonework. The mortar-free marvel stands as a testament to walls as both functional and artistic triumphs.

The invention of fired bricks around 4000 BCE marked another milestone in wall construction. This innovation allowed for more durable, versatile structures across cultures.



Limestone blocks of Sacsayhuamán

Martin St-Amant

Fired Bricks:

Thegreenj

03

770 BCE

The Great Wall of China

China

Walls of monumental defence have long been humanity's shields, evolving from ancient fortifications to modern barriers. The Great Wall of China remains a symbol of defensive architecture, its stone structure deterring invaders for centuries. Today, barriers like the Israel-West Bank wall and the proposed US-Mexico border wall reflect modern efforts to enforce boundaries and address security concerns.

Likewise, The Green Wall of China, launched in 1978, combats desertification and deforestation in Northern China. Stretching thousands of kilometres, this

ecological barrier of trees and shrubs protects against sandstorms and erosion, representing a major environmental conservation effort.



Great Wall of China

Jaljub natan

Graphical representation of the scale of the Green Wall project

Wang et al., Wiley

04

200 CE

Chinese Hand Painted Wallpaper

China

Walls as storytellers

Ancient Chinese hand-painted wallpapers on silk or paper transformed interiors, adorning walls with intricate scenes of daily life, mythology, and nature. Symbols like dragons and peonies reflected cultural beliefs, transforming walls into active storytellers. Walls at eye level hold immense potential for beautification. Today, wallpapers have evolved from hand-painted masterpieces to mass-produced designs, ranging from traditional motifs to modern aesthetics. Digital printing allows for precise replication of historic patterns, making ancient Chinese themes accessible worldwide. Despite the shift to mechanisation, the elegance and storytelling of these early wallpapers continue to inspire contemporary interior design, blending cultural heritage with modern tastes in homes around the globe.



Chinese Wallpaper adorning the walls of a lounge

Exterior:



A modern printed Wallpaper

flex walltbaywan

05

467 CE

Castle Garderobes Rome

'Poo'werful walls

Medieval castle walls served multiple functions, including innovative sanitation solutions. Privy chambers, ingeniously integrated into the fortification's structure, jutted from castle walls. The clever wall design with masonry shafts, often buttressed or nestled within tower junctions, directed waste outside through strategically positioned openings. The integration of toilets into castle walls showcased the medieval master builders' brilliance in maximising limited space while maintaining hygiene.

Such innovations underscored medieval architects' dual mastery of engineering and defence, ensuring that even the necessities of daily life contributed

to the formidable resilience of their strongholds against potential invaders.



Garderobes of Faversham Castle



Deve Dunford Sketch of a Castle / scroll/lec.com Garderobe

06

1100 CE

Japanese Shoji Screens Japan

Walls of versatility

Shoji screens, with wood frames and translucent panels, diffuse light and connect interiors to nature. Paired with tatami storage walls (tana), which integrate shelving and cabinets, these elements optimize space while maintaining elegance. Together, they embody Japan's design ethos, where walls serve as multifunctional features, blending form, function, and cultural aesthetics with timeless simplicity.



A Japanese Tana



A drawing depicting a sliding Shoji Screen.

Suzuki Harunobu

07

1892 CE

Hanok Houses South Korea

Walls woven with wood

Hanok houses of Korea exemplify the artful use of wood walls in traditional architecture, harmoniously blending wooden frames with natural surroundings. The walls serve as both functional elements and cultural canvases. Intricately crafted wooden walls, often featuring exquisite joinery without nails showcase Korean artisans' mastery and reflect the region's deep-rooted cultural values.

The walls of Hanok houses are more than mere partitions. Composed of wooden frames filled with earth and straw, these walls regulate indoor humidity and temperature naturally. Sliding wooden doors and windows integrated into the walls allow for flexible space arrangement and seamless indoor-outdoor flow.



A Hanok house woven with wood

80/00



Intricacies of a modern Hanok structure.

Jeon Han

In modern architecture, wooden walls continue to evolve. The Tamedia Office Building in Switzerland built in 2013 uses engineered wood to create walls that are both structural marvels and sustainable design statements. These contemporary interpretations honour wood's timeless appeal while pushing architectural boundaries.

Z Tanuki

Tamedia Office Building

Silgera Ben Architects



Horyuji Temple



80

08

1475 CE

Historic Library Walls

Rome

Walls imparting human knowledge
In many venerable libraries, walls are guardians of knowledge. The Vatican and Angelica libraries cradle centuries-old manuscripts and rare books, becoming a labyrinth of intellectual treasures, sanctuaries of knowledge and cultural legacy. Each shelf whispers tales of scholarly pursuits and ancient wisdom, echoing Rome's profound scholarly heritage. These library walls encapsulate the essence of learning and the relentless pursuit of wisdom, bridging past and future. They stand as silent sentinels, guarding the past and inspiring generations to come with the boundless possibilities of human intellect and discovery.



Ablathecet Angelica, Rome's oldest open Public Library

Sharon Kaplan

10

1727 CE

City Walls of Rajasthan

India

Walls of colour and identity
Rajasthan's city walls vividly reflect its cultural heritage. Jaipur's pink walls evoke warmth and hospitality, Jodhpur's blue hues represent Brahmin heritage, Udaipur's white walls symbolize purity, and Jaisalmer's golden fortifications blend with the desert. These walls are more than boundaries—they tell stories of history, status, and environmental wisdom, making each city a visual and historical treasure.



The Golden Glow of Jaisalmer

Danica Menonach

The Blue City of Jodhpur

Danica Menonach



09

1506 CE

St. Peter's Basilica

Vatican City

Walls of scale and character

The walls of St. Peter's Basilica, a Baroque marvel, draw inspiration from the Roman Pantheon but with key modifications by Michelangelo. Massive piers rise from the ground, their robust forms concealing ingenious support systems. Flying buttresses, hidden within the walls' thickness, transfer the colossal dome's weight outward, allowing the walls to become both the backbone and the canvas of architectural brilliance.

The Sistine Chapel's walls, adorned with frescoes by Michelangelo and Renaissance masters, depict Biblical scenes, including the Last Judgement, enveloping visitors in a vivid narrative that showcases the grandeur of these historic buildings.



Interior view of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, from Vedute di Roma drawn by Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund

The frescoes adorning the walls of the Sistine Chapel.

Dennis Jarvis



11

1800 CE

Victorian Era influences

England

Walls celebrating an epoch

Victorian-era walls epitomised opulence and functionality through intricate design elements. Room dividers, adorned with elaborate carvings and luxurious textiles, transformed spaces into intimate settings while showcasing period grandeur. Wainscoting, featuring wooden panels and decorative dado rails, added texture and elegance to walls, marking a transition to upper sections with flair. The architectural elements not only defined spaces but also reflected the era's fascination with ornate details and functional beauty, making Victorian interiors iconic for their blend of practicality and aesthetic richness.



The RMS Olympic's smoking room style in Victorian Era interiors.

Robert Welch

Room glimpses of the Victorian Era

J. Paul Getty Museum

12

1809 CE

Catacomb Skull Walls Paris

Walls as ossuary memorials

Walls can become extraordinary repositories of human presence, as seen in the Paris Catacombs. Former limestone quarries were transformed into a vast ossuary for six million, creating a macabre yet respectful memorial that highlights walls' profound practical and symbolic roles.

In contrast, Seattle's Gum Wall in Post Alley, once a nuisance, evolved into a colourful tourist attraction. This unconventional wall shows how public interaction can transform ordinary surfaces into vibrant, participatory art.



The Skulls and Bones stacked artfully

Alberts, Invernizzi

The Gum Wall in Seattle / Microtopia



14

1900 CE

Reinvention of Wall Construction USA

Walls of Modernist Innovation

In the early 20th century, architects like Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe revolutionised wall construction by rejecting traditional methods. Embracing modernist principles, they introduced new materials and innovative techniques. The pioneers experimented with open floor plans, utilising curtain walls and advanced structural systems that reduced the need for load-bearing walls. This approach led to the creation of light-filled, flexible spaces, transforming the architectural landscape. Their work signified a departure from conventional architecture, allowing fluidity and transparency that enabled buildings to break free from the rigid constraints of the past.



Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier

Roly Hyde



Erlangen Pavilion by Mies Van Der Rohe.

Christian Gonsky

13

1837 CE

Modular Walls London

Walls of flexibility

Modular walls date back to 1837 when architect John Manning designed the first prefabricated home. Manning's design, shipped in units for easy on-site assembly, captivated the locals and sparked an interest in modular construction. In the 1940s, Jean Prouvé advanced the concept with the Maison Tropicale, featuring modular aluminium panels and partition walls, designed for easy assembly and adaptability in diverse environments. Today, modular walls continue to evolve, offering adaptable, eco-friendly solutions for various built spaces.



Modular Wall panels being erected on-site

Libson / Corcyss

The Modular Wall Panels of Maison Tropicale by Jean Prouvé.

Steve Cochran

15

1961 CE

The Berlin Wall Germany

Walls of revolution and peace

The Berlin Wall and Belfast's Peace Walls, though not traditional architectural marvels, are powerful symbols of historical conflict and reconciliation. Erected in 1961, the Berlin Wall divided East and West Berlin, representing the Cold War's ideological split until its fall in 1989, a global symbol of liberation. Similarly, Belfast's Peace Walls, built in the late 1960s during the Troubles, aimed to separate Catholic and Protestant communities to reduce sectarian violence. Today, these barriers, once symbols of division, are transforming into canvases for public art, reflecting hope and ongoing peace efforts in Northern Ireland.



Above: A artwork covering the Berlin Wall

Thier / Mei



Peace Walls in Belfast, separating a Protestant and Catholic neighbourhood.

Ross

16

1962 CE

Beginnings of Digital Wall Dialogues USA

Walls of digital evolution

The evolution of digital walls began with Nick Holonyak Jr's invention of the first digital screen in 1962. However, it wasn't until U2's 1997 PopMart tour that large-scale digital video walls revolutionized stage design, despite their low resolution. By the 2000s, advancements in LED technology brought higher resolutions, lower power consumption, and flexible screen designs. Today, LED walls are integral to concerts, theaters, and corporate events, creating immersive experiences for audiences globally.



LED Video wall.

Doug Kline

17

1965 CE

Infinity Mirrored Room USA

Walls altering perception

Infinity mirrored walls originated with artist Yayoi Kusama, renowned for her immersive installations. Beginning in the 1960s, Kusama's mirrored rooms use endless reflections to create surreal, infinite spaces. These mirrored walls blend art and perception, offering mesmerising experiences that challenge conventional understandings of space.

Contemporary artists like Lucas Samaras and Iván Navarro have continued this exploration, utilising mirrored walls to manipulate light and space, and creating immersive art that engages and inspires modern audiences.



The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away

Lucas Samaras

Installation by Iván Navarro

18

1973 CE

Sydney Opera House Australia

Walls that sculpt and sail

Walls that sculpt iconic landmarks go beyond mere form: they carve out breathtaking interior experiences and define the essence of space through their unique acoustics and grand scales. The Sydney Opera House, a masterpiece by Jørn Utzon, features sail-like shells adorned with a million gleaming ceramic tiles, casting a dazzling silhouette against Sydney Harbour. These tiles not only enhance its visual allure but also contribute to its acoustic perfection, making every performance inside unforgettable.



Sydney Opera House concert hall interiors.

Nick W

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, completed in 1997, boasts titanium-clad walls that undulate like molten metal, reflecting the surrounding landscape with fluid grace. These dynamic forms not only captivate the eye but also transform the museum's interior spaces, creating an atmosphere of constant drama discovery and innovation.



In Los Angeles, the Disney Concert Hall stands as a beacon of modernity and functionality. Designed by Frank Gehry, its stainless steel panels not only shimmer in the California sun but also serve a dual purpose: optimising acoustics and weather protection. This synergy of aesthetics and functionality embodies the hall's dynamic elegance, where every surface plays a role in shaping an extraordinary auditory and visual experience for concert-goers.

Walls in buildings like the Louvre Pyramid in Paris and Burj Al Arab in Dubai blend innovative design, shaping exterior presence and interior ambience with enduring cultural significance.

(Above) Disney Concert Hall by Frank Gehry

Victor Székely

(Left) Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao

Zoranman

19

1982 CE

Vietnam Veterans Memorial USA

Walls reflecting poignance

Designed by Maya Lin and dedicated in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., is defined by its striking black granite walls that stand as a poignant tribute to those who served and died in the Vietnam War. Its walls inscribed with over 58,000 names, create a powerful narrative of sacrifice and loss. The reflective surface of the walls allows visitors to see their own reflections alongside the names, creating a deeply personal and introspective connection. The memorial wall is perhaps one of the most profound in recent times, serving as a living canvas that honours the fallen and invites contemplation. This makes the memorial a moving experience of remembrance and reflection.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Minchan



Reflections of Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Minchan

21

1900 CE

Dancing House Prague

Walls of unconventionality

Designers and engineers occasionally redefine the concept of structurally efficient walls. The Dancing House, or "Ginger and Fred," in Prague, designed by Vlado Milunić and Frank Gehry, features undulating curves that defy conventional design, transforming a vacant riverfront plot into a sculptural landmark. Similarly, Rotterdam's Cube Houses, designed by Piet Blom in 1973, feature angular walls that tilt and lean at unconventional angles, evoking playfulness. Both buildings inspire young designers to explore the versatility and creative potential of walls.



The Dancing House in Prague.

Diego Delso



The interiors of one of the Cube Houses in Rotterdam.

Zofra

20

1992 CE

Amdavad ni Gufa India

Walls commemorating artistic collaborations

Amdavad ni Gufa, an underground art gallery in Ahmedabad designed by architect Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi, transforms walls into vibrant canvases of artistic expression. Its undulating, cave-like walls and domes mimic natural forms, serving as dynamic surfaces for Maqbool Fida Husain's murals. These murals, interacting with light and shadow, create a constantly shifting visual experience. The space blurs the lines between architecture and art, offering an immersive sensory journey for visitors.



The subterranean gallery - Amdavad ni Gufa

Vedatbulca Consultants

M + H usains Art adorning the insides of the space

Pradyumn Thacker

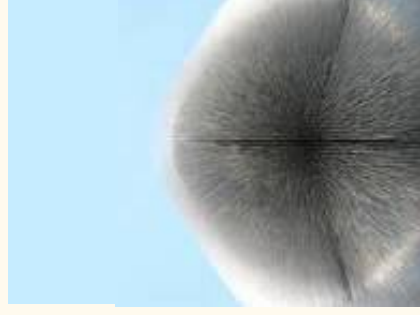
22

2010 CE

SEED Cathedral Shanghai

To wall or not to wall

Walls can transcend solidity, creating boundaries that intrigue and inspire deeper dialogue. At the 2010 Shanghai Expo, the UK Pavilion's Seed Cathedral featured 60,000 acrylic rods, each with a seed at its tip, forming a shimmering, dynamic surface. Similarly, Wolfgang Buttress' The Hive (2016) used thousands of hexagonal aluminium panels embedded with LED lights that responded to real-time beehive data, offering an immersive connection to nature. These walls act as messengers, conveying ideas in innovative, interactive ways.



SEED Cathedral.

Carsten Ulrich

The HIVE.

Jeff Eber, RBG New



The exterior Wall surfaces of the SEED Cathedral. John



23

2011 CE

Your Rainbow Panorama Denmark



The coloured glass panels of Your Rainbow Panorama.

Walls that stand out

Enclosed by gently curved glass panels, the translucent rainbow-themed walls atop the ARoS museum, 'Your Rainbow Panorama,' is a 150-metre circular walkway, standing 3 metres high. The installation invites visitors into an interactive experience, allowing them to stroll leisurely while interacting with the shifting colours of light along the rooftop perimeter.

Similarly, the Al Bahr Towers (2012) seamlessly integrate traditional Islamic design into modern functionality with a dynamic facade system. Thousands of kinetic modules adjust throughout the day, responding to the sun's angle to optimise energy efficiency. This innovative design not only reduces solar heat gain but also ensures ample daylight and unobstructed views for building occupants, blending cultural inspiration with cutting-edge technology.



The world's largest computerised facade / kinetic on the Al Bahr towers in Abu Dhabi.

Crifin

Ernst Giselbrecht + Partners' Kiefer Technic Showroom showcases architectural innovation with a dynamic facade that adapts to outdoor conditions, optimising the internal climate. The facade allows users to personalise their spaces through controls, presenting a new appearance as the day progresses. This innovation turns the building into a dynamic sculpture that regulates its internal environment by having walls that quite literally 'stand out'!



Kiefer Technic Showroom

Courtesy of Ernst Giselbrecht + Partner

24

2012 CE

Heydar Aliyev Centre Azerbaijan

Walls as a cultural interface
Designed by Zaha Hadid and completed in 2012, the Heydar Aliyev Centre showcases flowing, undulating walls that dissolve the distinction between inside and out. Hadid's parametric design ethos shines through in the building's seamless, white surfaces, creating a continuous and fluidic spatial experience.

Jean Nouvel's National Museum of Qatar (2019) mimics the organic form of a desert rose, with interconnected galleries featuring undulating, sand-coloured walls. These walls evoke the desert's fluidity, enhancing movement and serving as a striking backdrop to Qatar's cultural heritage.



National Museum of Qatar.
Akhir Vek



Heydar Aliyev Centre. Milos Marmirovic

Milos Marmirovic

25

2030 CE

The Line Project Saudi Arabia

Walls of future

The Line Project epitomises Saudi Arabia's pioneering vision for urban sustainability within the NEOM megacity. Designed as a linear city stretching hundreds of kilometres along a single, uninterrupted axis, The Line emphasises the strategic use of walls to delineate and define spaces. These walls not only facilitate efficient infrastructure and transportation but also enhance the city's integration with its natural environment. By prioritising innovative wall design, The Line sets a precedent for future cities, showcasing how architectural boundaries can shape sustainable, interconnected urban landscapes.



The proposed visualisation of The Line Project.

Courtesy of NEOM

75 More Moments That Defined Walls

Throughout history, walls have served as critical elements in architecture and cultural identity. From the ancient walls of Jericho (8000 BCE) and the Walls of Babylon (600 BCE) to the symbolic and artistic expressions seen in the Great Zimbabwe Wall (1000 CE) and the Jalli Wall- Mughal lattice screens (1500 CE), walls have transcended their functional roles. In modern times, examples like the Living Wall at the Atraneum Hotel in London (2009) and the innovative Wave Wall at Changi Airport in Singapore (2019) showcase walls as both sustainable solutions and artistic installations. These 75 defining moments highlight the multifaceted nature of walls, inviting us to explore their historical and contemporary significance.

01	1000 BCE Fencing, the first instance of making barriers.	11	500 CE Ellora Cave frescoes, ancient rock-cut murals, India.
02	8000 BCE Walls of Jericho, Neolithic settlement fortifications, West bank.	12	600 CE Indian temple walls, intricate details and carvings on walls and columns.
03	1750 BCE Walls of Troy, defensive limestone fortifications, Turkey.	13	600 CE Gwalior Fort, majestic carvings on fort wall, India.
04	600 BCE Walls of Babylon, massive fortified walls, Iraq.	14	700 CE Arabic Mural Wallpaper, ornate decorative wall art inspired by calligraphy.
05	400 BCE Petra, rock-cut walls, Jordan.	15	1000 Great Zimbabwe wall, stone masonry structure.
06	200 BCE The Walls of Sana'a, an old inhabited city, Yemen.	16	1100 The Gothic Cathedral Walls, vertical walls with clerestory windows.
07	128 CE The Pantheon, columned and domed structure, Rome.	17	1336 Musical columns in Hampi, resonant stone pillars, India.
08	263 CE The Roman Walls of Lugo, precise defensive walls, Spain.	18	1400 Walls of Florence, Renaissance walls with religious frescoes, Italy.
09	271 CE Aurelian walls, line of city walls, Rome.	19	1443 Wall of Kumbhalgarh, extensive mountain fortifications, Rajasthan, India.
10	400 CE The Walls of Constantinople, massive Byzantine fortifications, Turkey.	20	1500 Jalli wall- Mughal lattice screens.

21	1500 European Printed Wallpaper, mass production of wallpaper.	31	1885 Dingo Fence of south-east Australia, longest fence in the world.
22	1561 Saint Basil's Cathedral, colourful domes and intricate frescoes, Moscow.	32	1889 The 3D Textured Wall at Hotel de Rome, Berlin.
23	1600 Riad Niches, decorative wall alcoves, Morocco.	33	1900 Glass Partitions and Curtain Walls- Transparent, flexible space dividers
24	1638 Walls of Delhi, fortified by different rulers.	34	1926 Geodesic dome, geometrical structure without walls.
25	1675 Canal House, Amsterdam- attics and aesthetics.	35	1942 Auschwitz-Birkenau, concentration camp walls of agony, Poland.
26	1678 Hall of Mirrors, Palace of Versailles, France- reflective walls.	36	1952 Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse, innovative modernist housing complex, Marseille.
27	1700 French Rococo Wallpaper, ornate, elaborate floral patterns.	37	1958 The Atomium, iconic sculptural structure, Brussels.
28	1815 The Quilted Leather Wall at The Connaught Bar, textured walls of luxury.	38	1961 Le Corbusier's Capital Complex, modernist walls with primary colours, India.
29	1877 Casa Batlló, Barcelona, organic walls of Gaudí.	39	1965 Salk Institute for Biological Studies, minimalist design, California.
30	1882 Sagrada Família, Barcelona, nativity, passion and glory facades.	40	1970 Times Square Electronic Billboards, media wall, New York.

41	1972 The Nakagin Capsule Tower, modular, metabolic architecture, Tokyo.	51	2002 Microsoft Envisioning Center, interactive walls with augmented reality, Redmond	61	2011 The Mura, Wall at Facebook Headquarters, Menlo Park.	71	2016 Elbphilharmonie, walls of acoustics and materiality, Germany.
42	1973 Muralla Roja, labyrinthine design, Spain.	52	2003 The Mur Island, wall as a functional barrier and sculptural element, Austria.	62	2012 The Geometric Tile Wall at The NoMad Hotel, New York.	72	2017 The Wave, wave-like facade of handmade bricks.
43	1983 Kanchanjunga Apartments, walls with climatic openings, India.	53	2003 Dubai Marina, skyscrapers as walls defining space.	63	2012 The Shard, wall as a skyline defining element, London, UK.	73	2017 Photovoltaic wall of Copenhagen International School, Denmark.
44	1985 Hundertwasserhaus, structures with irregular form, Vienna, Austria.	54	2004 Seattle Central Library, porous surface for lighting, Washington, USA.	64	2012 The CCTV Headquarters, deconstructivist architecture, Beijing, China	74	2019 The Wave Wall at Changi Airport, dynamic installation, Singapore
45	1986 Lotus Temple, conceptual form and walls, New Delhi.	55	2007 The Oslo Opera House, interior cladding that reflects to exteriors, Norway.	65	2012 The ArcelorMittal Orbit, spiraling structure, London, UK.	75	2023 Gaurav Gupta, Flagship store, walls that reflect designer's style, Mumbai
46	1989 Vitra Campus, sculptural walls, Germany.	56	2007 BMW Brand Experience Center, touch-sensitive interactive screens, Munich	66	2014 Bosco Verticale, vertical green walls, Milan.		
47	1998 The Basket Building, mimicking walls, Ohio, USA.	57	2009 The Living Wall at the Athenaeum Hotel, London= vertical garden walls.	67	2015 The Harbin Opera House, sweeping walls and ceilings, China.		
48	2000 CE Sports Stadium Scoreboards, the first instance of live-action walls.	58	2009 Maunabwbe Interpretation centre, walls of craftsmanship, South Africa.	68	2015 The Broad, porous facade for lighting, California, USA.		
49	2000 CE Temporary Partition Walls in Disaster Relief.	59	2009 The High Line, urban half walls with seating, New York City, USA	69	2016 The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, contemporary art museum, USA.		
50	2001 The Eden Project, futuristic insulated biodomes, Cornwall, UK	60	2010 The MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts, walls of fluidity, Italy.	70	2016 The Oculus, futuristic, porous walls, New York City		

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KBooks Team: Dr. Rama S Kartha, Farhaan
Mohammed, Aliya Faisin M, Mary Jyia

Content Developer and Coordinator:

Sonam Ambe

Acknowledgments

Nilanjani Bhowal,
Hemant Sudh- Delhi

IIID Office Address

109, Surmer Tendra,
Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400018
Write to us at: connect@iidsinscape.com

Visit our website at www.iidsinscape.com

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