



Kalpavriksha represents the relationship between nature and man.

DESIGN IN HIS DNA

Vibhor Sogani draws his inspirations from the various forms in nature and the physical environment around him.



Installation from Sogani's
Beehive collection.



The stunning Cascade
installation.

Experimental and research oriented by nature, Vibhor Sogani's designs merge functionality with quality and urban aesthetics. He translates his ideas and expressions through art works and installations. A designer who works with various materials such as steel, brass, copper, bronze, stone and mixing media, he is a part of several commissioned projects and conceptual art assignments. In this one-on-one interview, he shares his take on the future of design.

Q Tell us about your journey as a designer.

My journey started at The National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. After spending more than five years there, my way of looking at life and art changed completely. Design became a part of my life. I worked for nearly two years, after which I started my independent practice in Delhi. As a consultant, I worked on various projects that ranged from graphic design to exhibition design, from retail design to industrial design. The experience, coupled with the initial days of struggle, opened my canvas of design practice. It has been a decade since and there's been no looking back.

Q What made you take up design?

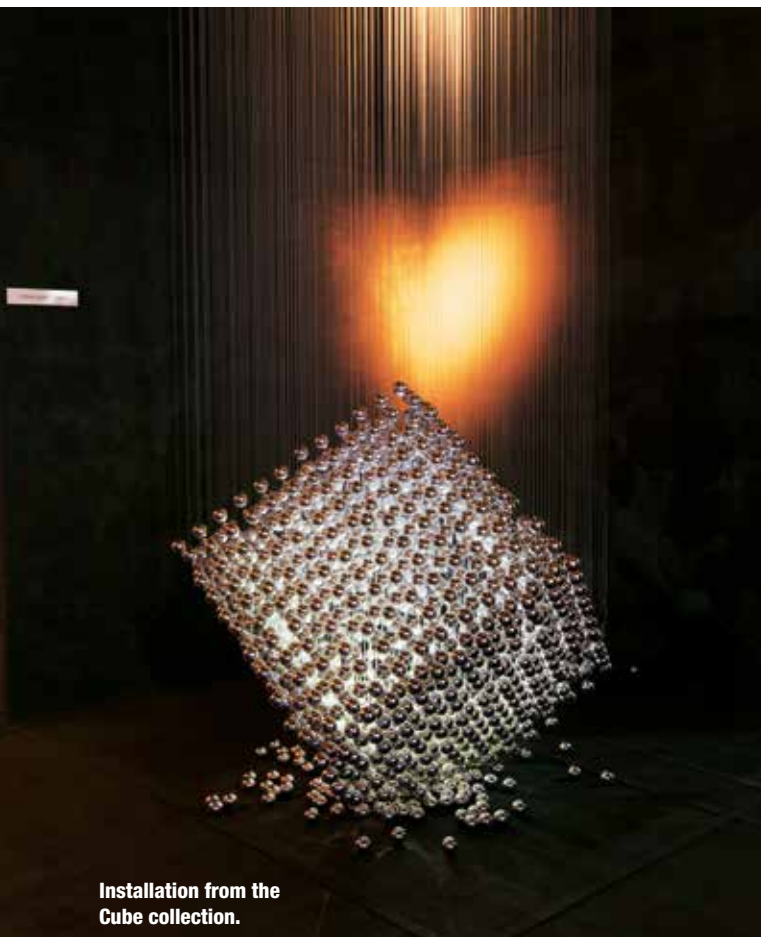
My father was a geophysicist. I used to travel with him as a child and spend a lot of time in camps. I witnessed diverse landscapes while growing up and thus, mainstream studies did not excite me. After my school in Jaipur, a career counsellor we consulted said I would do well in the field of design as my 3D visualisation was good. That marked the beginning of my design journey.

Q When was your first design collection launched? What was the thought process behind it?

The first range of products were table top accessories for the domestic Indian market. These were in steel and wood and were launched in the retail market in 2002 through very select stores. The idea was to introduce steel as an exotic material for accessories. At that time there were no brands in this category and steel was restricted to kitchen utensils. The products did very well in the market and opened doors for further expansion.

Q Where did you acquire your keen design sense from?

Design is never fixed or regimented. It is a process, a journey and a way of life. The learning process at NID was really



Installation from the Cube collection.



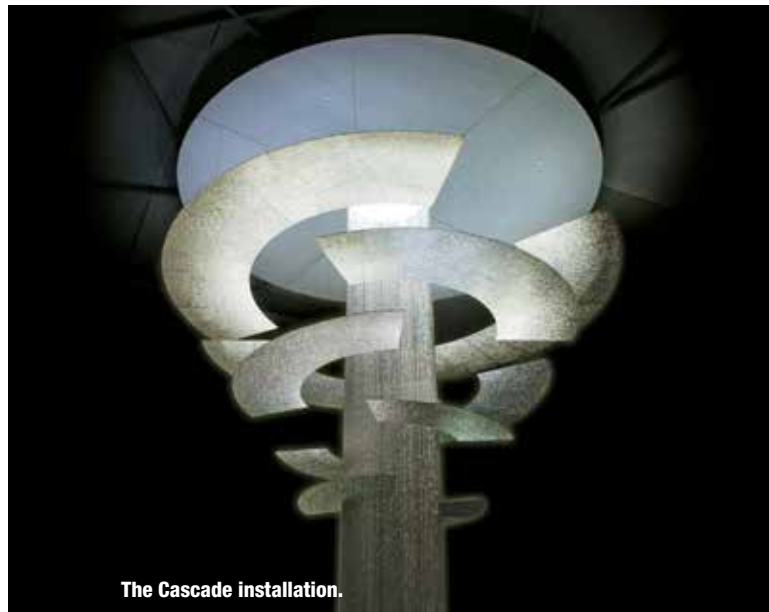
The Orion installation.



Vibhor Sogani,
Founder and Director of Sogani
by Vibhor Sogani



The Golden Dew collection.



The Cascade installation.



Chroma Gold installation.



The Sprouts installation.

robust, due to the cross-disciplinary, thinking approach that was inculcated in us. Observing and comprehending different art forms and production methods helped me.

Q What inspires you?

I come across innumerable sources of inspiration while travelling. I am a person who derives his observations from natural phenomena, forms in nature and the physical environment.

Q Tell us about your projects 'Sprouts', 'Kalpavriksha' and 'Mahatma in Me'.

'Sprouts' was one of the most ambiguous and challenging briefs that I have ever received. It was more than 10 years ago when the then Chief Minister of Delhi gave me six words to work on - 'From Walled City to World City'. We depicted India as a growing nation, with 40 ft high stainless steel installations spread across six acres, at the AIIMS Flyover in New Delhi. Stainless steel was used as a new-age material, representing contemporary thought.

Kalpavriksha is a sacred tree in Vedic, Jain and Buddhist beliefs. It is a mystic symbol that grants every wish and provides for all human needs. The installation is a modern interpretation of its form, reflective of the stunning landscape and myriad moods of the weather. It represents the harmonious relationship and memories between nature and man. Crafted in stainless steel balls that are mirror-finished, the installation is conceived as an abstraction of a tree.

'Mahatma in Me' is inspired from the life of Mahatma Gandhi. A quote by him—"Be the change you wish to see in the world"—was a trigger for the series. We all want to see big changes in the world. Every great journey, though, has to begin with a single step. That step, I believe, needs to come from within us—the Mahatma in us. Every individual carries a bit of Mahatma in him, waiting to be discovered. This project is my humble attempt towards that realisation. Subtle images of Gandhiji and some impressions of his thoughts are expressed in reflective steel.

Q What are your favourite creations?

Each project is special. The journey of creation can be like a roller coaster ride. There is always a phase of deliberation



The Cube collection creates a dreamlike ambiance.

and even frustration. But, this is what leads to creation. And the joy of creation is immense. However, projects that are more challenging are always more fulfilling. The installation series on 'Mahatma Gandhi' was perhaps the most challenging, as I needed to deviate from my natural pattern of thinking.

Q *What are your future plans?*

Currently, I am working on some ambitious installations. I do not want to delve into details; I want to keep the suspense alive. On the design front, I am constantly involved in enlarging my collection and exploring new avenues.

Q *Who are your favourite product designers?*

Anish Kapoor, Zaha Hadid, Achille Castiglioni, Jasper Morrison, Marcel Wanders, Ron Arad, Karim Rashid, Philippe Starck and Richard Serra to name a few. Their works represent powerful ideas in a simplistic manner.

Q *What are some product trends that you would like to incorporate in your designs?*

There are new developments every day, in terms of material and technology. For example, LED technology is still being further developed and explored. The interactive interface in products is something I'm fascinated with.

Q *What are your views on lighting as product design?*

Lighting is an interesting domain in product design and

also the fourth dimension of architecture. Light is the most crucial aspect that reveals the materiality, depth, expanse and warmth in a space. I find it extremely important to have good lighting within spaces in order to enhance their usability and reflect the personality of those inhabiting them.

Q *Where do you see the art and design space heading?*

We are witnessing a new genre of amalgamation of art and design, and this is only going to get bigger. International galleries have already been showcasing a mix of art and design. Traditionally, the education system would segregate the branches of art, design, or specific branches of design etc., but today, nothing is regimented. The same colleges are propagating experimentation.

Q *What is your advice for budding artists and product designers?*

It is a very exciting field, provided you understand the nuances. Be innovative and dream big. That said, every artist has to go through an arduous learning process, which is necessary for the cultivation of individual perception. One must realise the potential of this struggle and remain diligent throughout the journey. ■

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