

SPACES THAT SPEAK

Shruti Jaipuria believes in creating spaces that tell a story. For the young Interior/Spatial Designer, delivering a memorable experience is what counts.



From Business Administration to Interior Design, how has your journey been so far?

SJ: I was always been drawn to both the creative and the logical. Growing up, my favorite subjects were maths, computers and art. For the longest time I was very confused as to what I wanted to do. I studied Finance and Marketing at the undergraduate level and minored in Art History. I then had a brief stint at a strategic consulting firm. Somehow, a 9-5 desk job never cut it for me. I wanted to explore the design field. One day I decided if I didn't go to school then, I never would. So I did, and there was no looking back. I went on to major in Interior Design at Parsons



Bar at Pebble Bay Penthouse

School of Design, New York. The journey has been incredible so far. I've met some fabulous people, been to some incredible places, and have been exposed to amazing creative processes and techniques that really excite me. My favorite part about this field is that it's continuously evolving and is always full of discovery.

Tell us about maia, your design studio.

SJ: It is an interior/spatial design studio based in Bangalore. Since maia was founded three

years ago, we've been lucky to be able to work on many diverse projects ranging from F&B, retail, residential, spas and offices to the design of a talk show set. All our projects are visually very different from one another. We do not have any particular style, we believe in looking at each project in its entirety and providing design solutions that are most suited to it.

I am a strong believer in the collaborative design process. I wanted to create a platform where like-minded people come together

and work together to create projects that are meaningful and sensitive. That is what maia is all about. It has a very studio environment where everyone is involved with everything. There are many brainstorming sessions. We like to get our hands dirty and spend time with the artisans, craftsman and laborers working on our projects.

How big is your team?

SJ: At our studio, we are now a young team of three; Ekta is an architect and Akshita an



Door at Pebble Bay Penthouse

interior designer. Our studio has a very easy environment. We have a very 'work hard play hard' culture. I like to ensure that everyone is wholly involved with the projects they work on, and feel like it is theirs. We thrive on constructive criticism and push each other to grow. There is never a dull day! It's hard to explain. We're happy, passionate, hard working people and feed off each other's energy. We're friends before colleagues. You'll find us napping, singing and even practicing belly dance class moves if we're not slaving at our good-for-construction drawings!

From concept to client presentations to construction drawings, we actually follow a very logical process.

Where do your inspirations come from?

SI: At maia we draw inspiration from the world around us, constantly questioning what we see and how it can be applied to the world of contemporary design. Nature, spirituality, mathematics, geometry, materials, people behavior, and color all provide us with an endless source of inspiration. We have a lot of tools at our office – blocks, magnets, play dough, different materials that we just

How do you begin conceptualizing a new project?

SI: The first thing we do is sit back, and question what the function of the space is, and what we've been asked to design. We try and understand its context and what our client's vision is. The process of space curation then begins, where we design layouts, ideate how spaces will unfold into one another, envision how we think people will interact with the space, and consume the space, and finally what visual language the space should assume. We try to visualize and orchestrate what the entire experience should be from the moment someone walks into the space.



Set design for a talk show for the urban Indian woman

like to play with. It's like being a child again. Curiosity, fun and wonderment are at the core of the creative process for us.

Do you have a design mantra?

SI: We really aspire to design experiences. Over and above how a space looks, it is really quite important to us how it feels.

Which has been your most special project so far?

SI: I think all projects have been very unique and intriguing in their own way. We just completed a workspace for a large corporate client whose name we cannot disclose yet. We've designed an 'Incubation Lab' for them, which is a space where teams will develop new business/product ideas for their lifestyle division. It's a house that has been converted into a very experimental space. It's fun, playful, modular, and inspires out of the box thinking. There are writable surfaces, Lego walls, stereogram graphics, the conference table is formed of eight smaller tables that

can be split up, all team rooms are modular and there are many ways in which we've used the architecture of the existing home to create corners for teams to unwind and think.

The microbrewery we designed was also very interesting because there the story revolved around beer, beer tasting and community drinking. The tanks where the beers are brewed form a central installation and all the materials used are found in industry – cement, metal mesh, metal wires, crate wood packing boxes, jute and so on.

With the penthouse and in the case of any residential design we really get to understand our client's lifestyle. This particular home was designed for a young couple who travel extensively and like to entertain.

Any dream project on the list?

SI: We have a few projects finishing up. One is a restaurant space where we have collaborated with multiple artists to create

INTERIOR DESIGN



Beer tasting cellar at
Arbor Brewing Company



Community Bench Seating
at Arbor Brewing Company

a very fun installation in polycarbonate that forms the main drama point in the space. We're also working on a textile exporter's office where we have created multiple explorations using thread art. We look forward to these completing soon. A dream has always been to design a boutique hotel. Hopefully one will come our way!

What kind of design trends will we see in India in the coming five years?

SI: I definitely think we are developing our own identity that is rooted to the skill sets we have in our country and reflects our strengths. We are becoming country proud and this is across all industries. I think a very unique language is going to emerge from this country that



At the Incubation Lab (Top) 1. Modular conference table (Left-Right) 2. Terrace | 3. Titan Ignitor Lab

is visually, culturally and environmentally conscious. I am very excited to see it evolve, and hopefully be a part of the process.

Any advice for young designers?

SI: I don't think I am in a position to advise anyone as I have so much to learn myself, but at maia we really try to do everything we do with integrity, passion, and honesty, and have a lot of fun while we are at it.

shruti@maiaesign.in