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Inside fashion designer Nimish Shah's bachelor pad in Mumbai

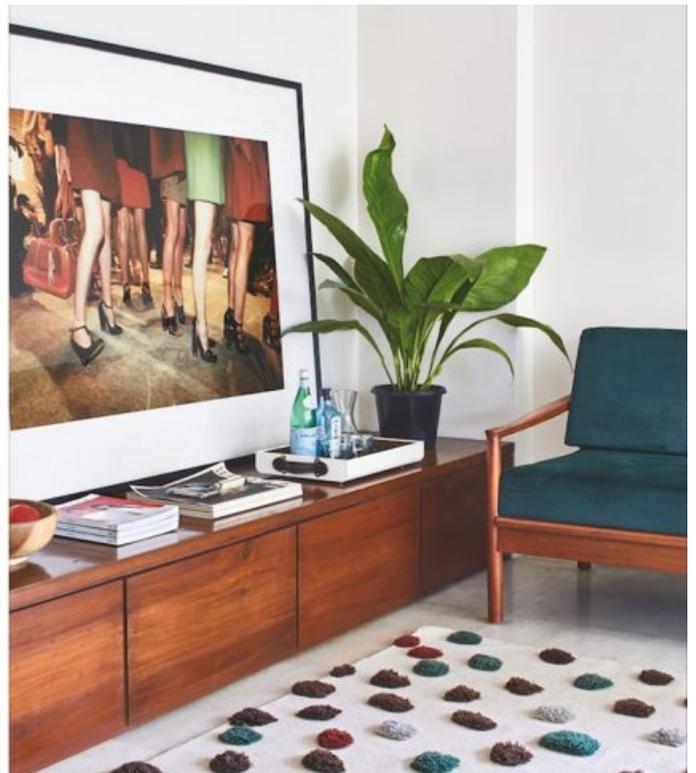
The biggest personalities in this one-bedroom Bandra apartment are the windows.

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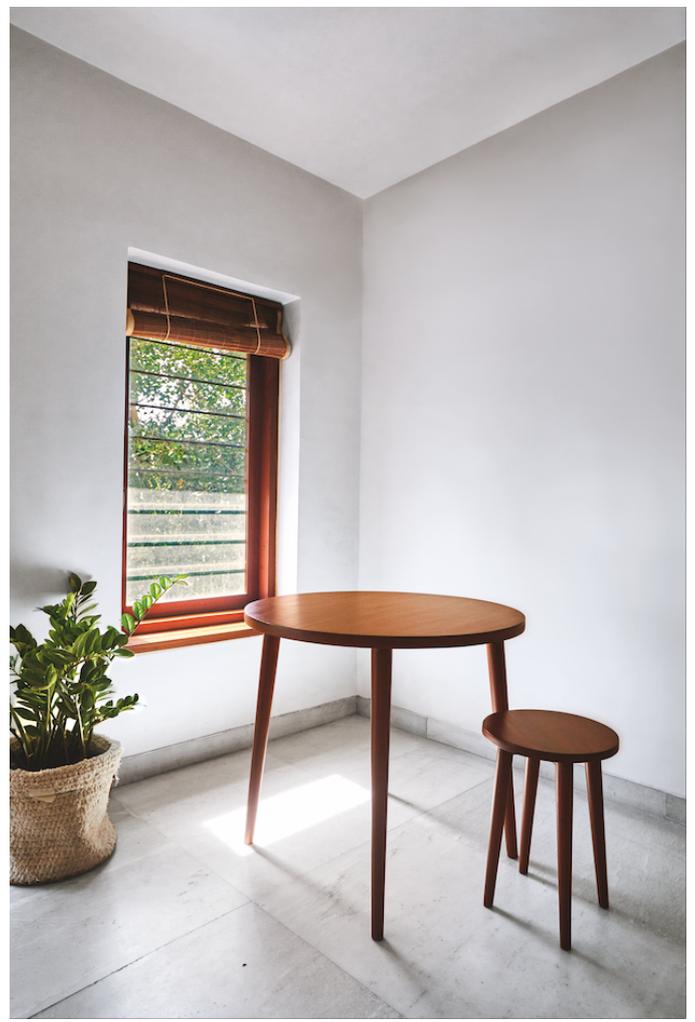
Mansi Poddar | January 7, 2018

 Samir Wadekar

Ashish Sahi



(Left) Nimish Shah in his bedroom, against a wall that he had covered with cement sheets; (right) The velvet-upholstered couch was designed by Shah and custom-made in Mumbai; the tufted carpet is from Jaipur Rugs. The bar tray on the sideboard is from Nappa Dori, and the decanter and glasses in it are from Nicobar; the wooden bowl is from Puducherry. The photograph in the frame is a backstage shot of Chloe's Spring-Summer 2017 show, where Shah worked for a while.



Nimish Shah in his living room next to Dayanita Singh's 'Kochi Box'

Every time I'm at fashion designer (of Shift fame) Nimish Shah's home, I secretly change the photo in his Dayanita Singh *Kochi Box* to match the one hanging in my apartment. He'll be off fixing frosty gin-and-tonics or ironing an Acne Studios T-shirt, and I will shuffle hurriedly through the waxy, moody shots, looking for one of the empty fragrance bottles, or spindly chairs, or our favourite— the deliciously suggestive “librarian” photo. It makes me laugh that, despite being completely obsessed with order, he never notices.

LIGHT-HEARTED

The passage leading to designer Nimish Shah's bedroom.

The biggest personalities in Nimish's one-bedroom apartment are the windows. They dominate two walls of his bedroom and a large swathe of the dining area, letting in what he calls “funny rays” in the day and a long, orange twilight. “I wake to find my whiteboard illuminated, and big streaks on the wardrobe,” he tells me while methodically working his way through a bowl of fries. “By the time I get home in the evenings, the grey wall is turning golden.”



The grey wall is the one behind his bed, the only major renovation Nimish undertook when he moved in last year. The wall needed waterproofing and he planned to paper it after adding cement sheets, but eventually decided against the paper. The cement lends a raw, rakish edge to otherwise tightly controlled interiors, but without the forced cliché of “industrial chic”. I attempt to compare these to a seam on a pale green dress from his latest collection, deliberately left undone, and also an ongoing personal drama. Is this a theme we need to explore? “Let’s just get another drink,” he says.

“The first thing I bought for this apartment is the living room carpet from Jaipur Rugs,” Nimish tells me. The rest he added slowly, selecting single pieces that fit together seamlessly to create a physical manifestation of the unique Gujarati-Scandinavian minimalism his fashion label is best known for. There are wrought iron dining chairs from Gulmohar Lane and a custom-made couch. There is a flash of ebullience from a huge backstage photograph of the Chloe Spring-Summer 2007 show in Paris, where Nimish apprenticed. And there are lots of textiles, understated and lovely, from the home line of Shift—curtains, and bed sheets, and a crocheted planter that give the home its handmade feel and make it a true extension of Nimish’s larger design narrative.

PARTY LINE

This apartment is designed to house one and host many. Impromptu parties often swell from three people to 13, with long-legged girls sharing the hunter-green suede couch, and a pretty, pretty boy smoking moodily out the window. A pair of Bandit Queen floor cushions by the living room window is a coveted spot, currently occupied by a popular ingénue in a floral Shift dress. She has her knees up to her chest and a glass that, through some alchemy of hosting that Nimish has perfected, is never empty. There is St Vincent on the speakers, Camy wafers in ceramic bowls, the fragrance of a wintery candle. The old-school kitchen is a study in controlled chaos with dishes stacked neatly in the sink and empty champagne bottles lining the counter; even the pile of discarded bottle tops is arranged artfully in a corner. I grab a beer and rummage around the fridge for eclairs, plating them on a dish because I know that bringing a cardboard box into Nimish’s living room is a sin our friendship would not recover from. It is finally time for dessert.