

MY SPACE : SONALI RASTOGI

PLANET 3 STUDIO UNCOVERED

DESIGN DESTINATION : MARRAKESH

HOME REVIEW

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TO INDEPENDENCE

REINVENTING TRADITION
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PLANET 3 STUDIOS UNCOVERED



'Context' plays a key role in all that Mumbai-based Planet 3 Studios takes up. This has resulted in works that not just look spectacular, but are eminently futuristic.

Mumbai-based Planet 3 Studios Architecture has been much-feted and has enjoyed fawning runs at many international fora.

Indeed, the firm's mix of youthful eccentricity and traditional groundedness has set it apart from the de rigueur. Headed by the duo of Kalhan Mattoo and Santha Gour Mattoo, the organisation has built a repertoire that has taken on regular spaces and transformed them into temples of unconventionality.

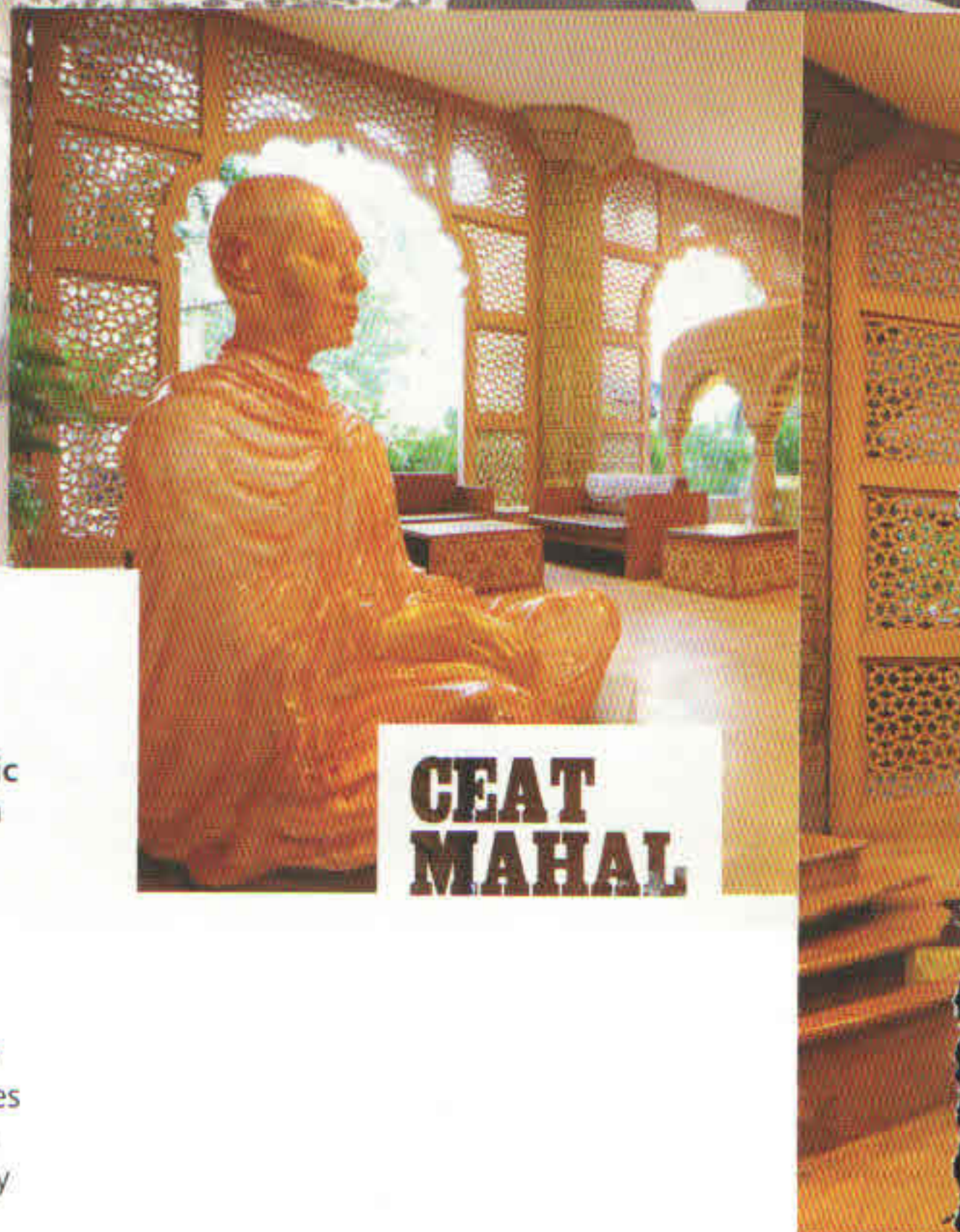
Planet 3's presence at galleries and museums in cities like New York and Barcelona hints at the firm's resolute artistic work ethic. While approaching a project, the team first chips away at the fundamentals, ultimately building up to a higher purpose for the assignment at hand. Architecture, interiors, product design and art are the core pre-occupations of this group, with Kalhan-founded NGO, Sabzaar, engaging in social activities.

The following three projects stand testimony to this firm's unique language of design, and its superb grip at newer and funkier ideas.



At the Ceat Mahal, RPG Headquarters in Prabhadevi, Mumbai, Planet 3 Studios was summoned to design three specific sections - the reception, the recreation room, and the training room.

The team actively dug into its unconventional inspirations; concurred with the art aficionado chairman of the group, Harsh Goenka; and even relied on an internal employee poll to design spaces that offer the people of the organisation escape, informality and some wonderfully designed corners to relax in.

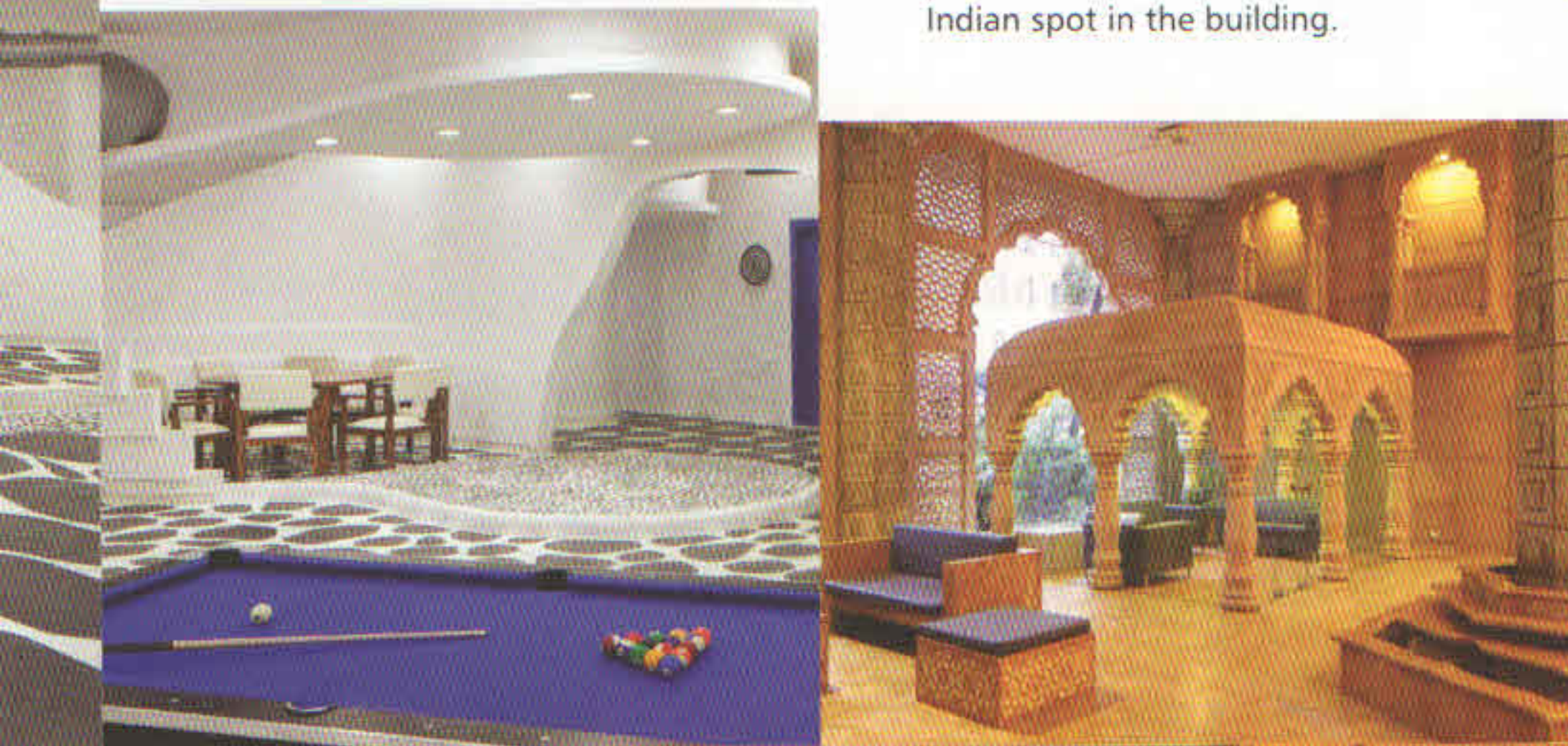


CEAT MAHAL

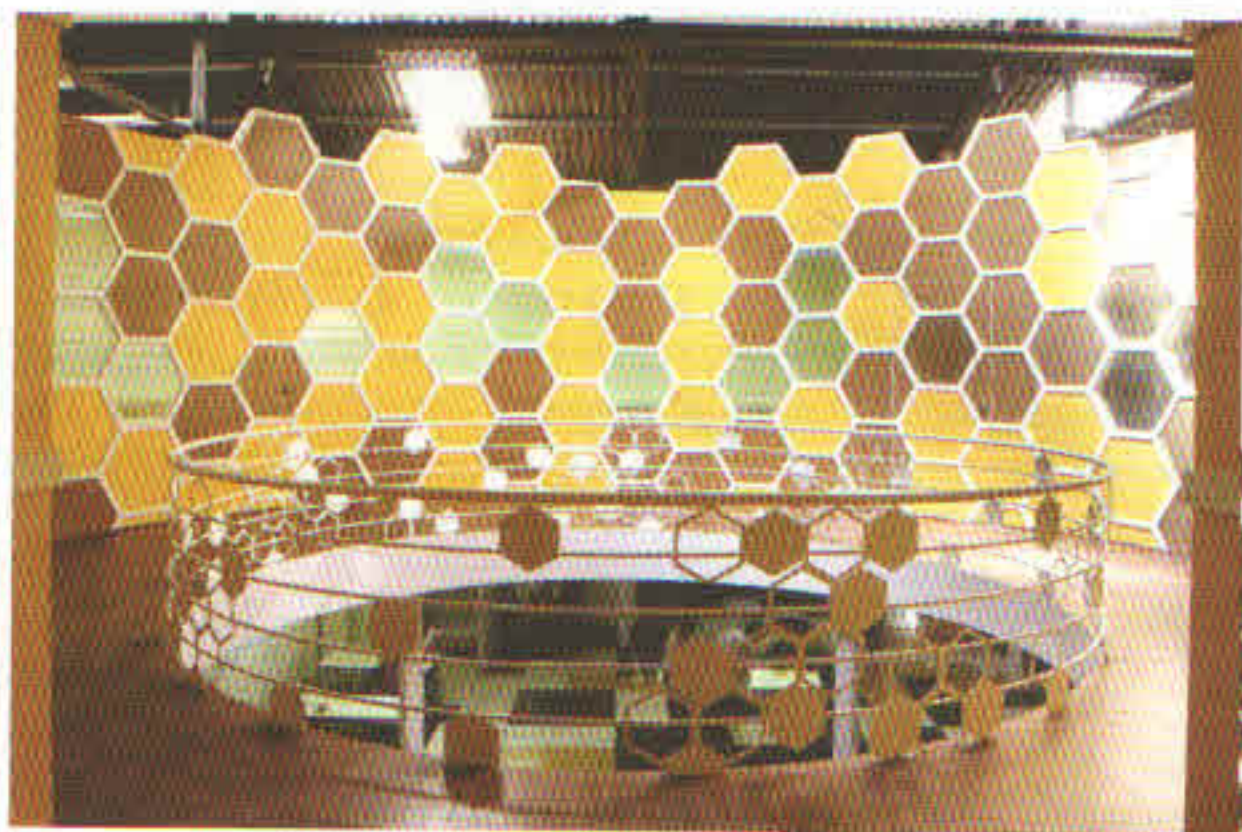
The reception area cuts loose from expected drabness and instead unleashes a golden sheath of Rajasthani palace inspired totems. There are jalis and jharokas here, pillars and columns galore, and floral motifs peep out of everywhere. The surrounding greenery provides a beautiful contrast to this deeply Indian spot in the building.

The recreation room's geographical inspiration is spectacularly different. Done up in blinding white, with blue and grey accenting, this space evokes the simple visual pleasures of the Mykonos and Santorini islands of Greece.

The usual suspects are here - carrom board, foosball, et al - and so is a feeling of having escaped into a comfortable relaxation cave. **The training room's tenor, located in the basement, is professional and clean,** though the undulating lighting arrangement would hint at discussions of intergalactic importance. The team used back-painted glass and steel accenting to breathe life in to this cove with negligible natural light. The overall project is representative of Planet 3's wide-arching re-imagination powers. There is a lovely mix of traditional thinking and quirkiness in each space here, with a common thread really difficult to trace.



Text By Shruti Nambiar
Photos By Mrigank Sharma,
India Sutra and the designer



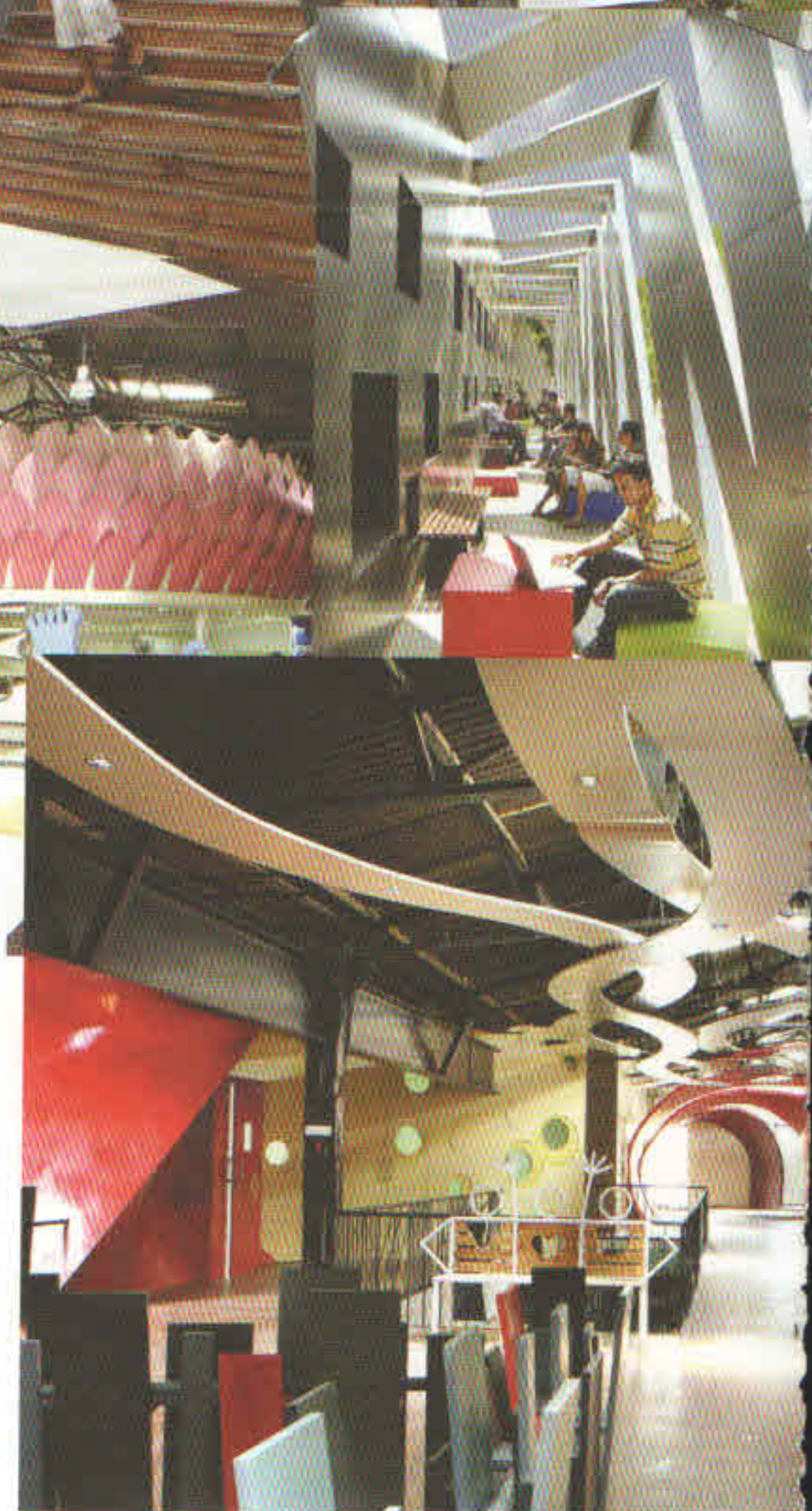
How should a life-sciences and bio-technology centre of a college look? Eccentrically colourful, splattered with avante garde shapes and with a gravity-mocking façade? You wouldn't think so. But that is the precise reason why the students and staff of Vidyalankar Institute of Technology, Wadala, picked Planet 3 Studios to do up a 35,000 sq ft area of pre-existing industrial plot within the campus.

They knew that the design team would make it a point to go all out and build a space that the students would associate with, but not be bogged down by. **Non-linearity rules the interiors, giving it a feel of a garage belonging to supremely free-thinking artists.** Some spots of detailing leans towards the true purpose of this place, like the brilliant façade apes the tilt of tall grass in the wind, but the rest is just glorious quaintness - there is a lotus-shaped crown, sitting places that are shaped like Neanderthal feet and stick-figure arms, and a staircase with 'Edward Scissorhands' railing. It is like walking into a craft project that is alive.



With the Out-of-the-Box Workstation project Planet 3 faced a unique challenge. The team had on its hands a near-perfect product that had resisted the need for innovation for 40 years.

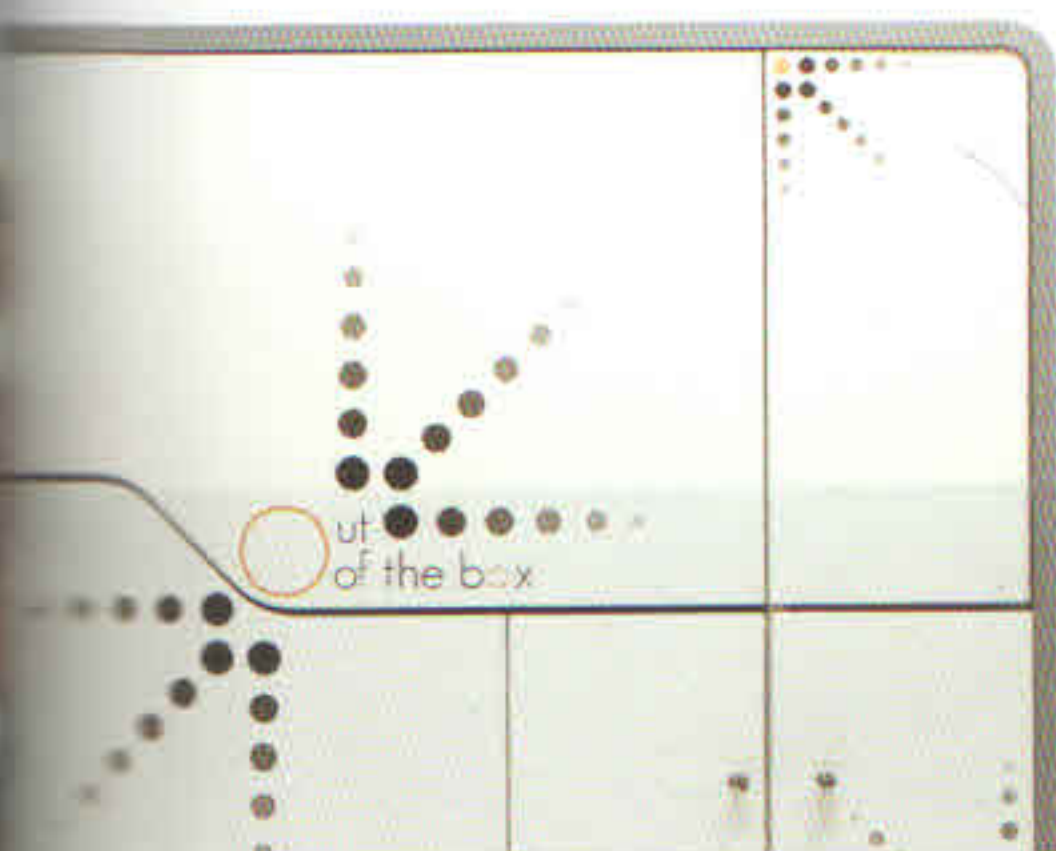
The initial discussions, therefore, bordered on the philosophical - what was driving Godrej's need for change now? Whatever the motivations might have been, Planet 3 decided to approach the project with a broader outlook than just the nitty-grittys of the design requirements.



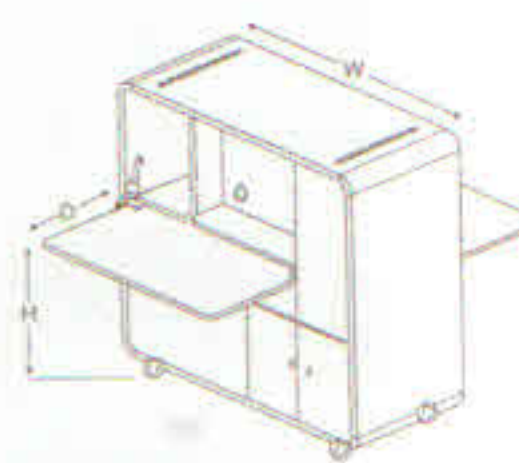
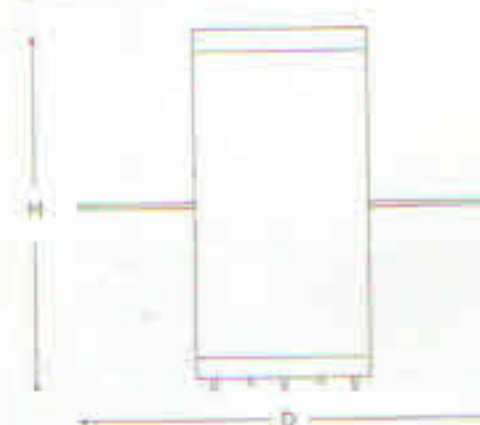
OUT OF THE BOX WORKSTATION

It saw the workstation as an extension of the dramatically changed professional spaces that exist today, and the demands of the person using these as work desks for countless hours of day or night.

Along with tweaking its look, the team set out to expand its utilitarian possibilities. So instead of building a multi-part, assembled product, **they built a single component station that can be wheeled into position, unravelled and installed in 5 minutes flat**; it has trolleys for the CPU and storage; offers pre-fixing of flat screen monitors at the factory; and to make things rosier, can also be shipped rather comfortably.



OPEN OUT OF THE BOX



CLOSED OUT OF THE BOX



DIMENSIONS

Size Code	Dimensions in (mm)		
	W	D	H
Closed OOB	1352.5	600	1299.5
Open OOB	1352.5	1543	1299.5
Worktop	990.5	530	730

The team kept the treatment firmly keyed into the use of the station, preferring to keep the look an efficient white with some modularity-friendly arrow motifs thrown in. **This revamped workstation is democratic, compatible as it is to all office spaces, regardless of size or function.**

Planet 3's biggest legacy will be its bold questioning of the reality of a project. The team is fearless in re-defining the look and pathos of a building, but retains an earnest core that is instantly endearing. Which other design team will think of sprinkling around cosy corners of privacy in lavish set-ups, be it at a college or a fancy office sprawl?

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