

Neelsutra

Retail

The Oberoi, Gurugram



ARCHITECTURE DISCIPLINE



LOCATION: Gurugram

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT: Akshat Bhatt

DESIGN TEAM: Aditya Tognatta, Nikhil Auluck

BUILT AREA: 2200 sq. ft

COMPLETION OF PROJECT: October 2013

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS: Lirio Lopez

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Isha Consultants Pvt. Ltd.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Jeetin Sharma

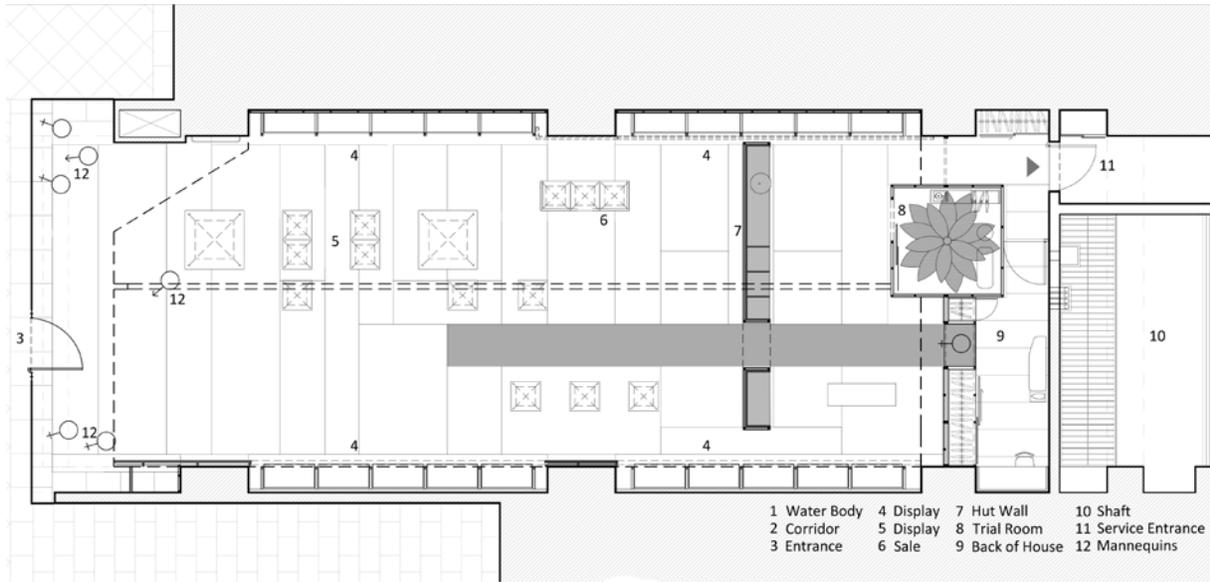
Designed as a first in a series of multi-designer pret stores, where the collections are themed and curated, Neel Sutra- the India Fashion store is emblematic of Indian Design ethos. Sited at The New Oberoi Hotel in the suburban abode of NCR- Gurgaon, the hotel spawns a high-end luxury international experience.

The brief was to create a unique and distinct design ambience that would be conspicuous within the context of other established global hi-design brands at the hotel and elsewhere in the vicinity.

The customized and curated store is conceived within this international collective construct as a step ahead of conventional high street retail to showcase a motley bunch of Indian fashion designers. Contemporary design in India usually expresses the complexity in Indian Design discourse with kitsch.

The India Fashion Store is a cognizant attempt to stay away from Indian Kitsch, and instead craft a sacred space. The need for a resilient identity and a compelling space was impending-one that could mark





a presence regardless of the ever-changing exhibits.

It was important to create depth within the spatial volume, and induct a sacred sense of vastness. The India Fashion Store is envisioned as an austere House of Indian Fashion employing the hut as a rudimentary notion of shelter, with facets of the Indian design ethos as architectural interventions. A candid reference is made to the Single Line hut diagram; planned in the form of the veritable architectural notion of the Plan, section and the Walls, a hut-like section with a pitched

roof allows for the generation of a strong axis that facilitates the demarcation of the space into the two key components of a retail store- display and movement.

The Section exaggerates the linearity of the space, the entrance, and finally, its visual termination with a blue niche at the end to emphasize depth and the axis of the store through dissonance. Given the evolutionary nature of the space with its changing collections, a perception of order and Indian tenet is endowed through a play of scale, materiality and technique.



The aperture at the entrance transforms itself into the main door, its solidity becoming characteristic of its physical identity. It also aids in announcing the store to casual observers, rendering its formidable presence, making it larger than life. The niche at the rear converges into an altar-like entity, bestowing the House with a profound solace that only a visitor can encounter.

The central space is left vacant for topical display, generating a scale that encourages people to look up towards the pitched roof upon entering, a relic of the hut. This allusion to the pitched roof insinuates the home for Indian Fashion. The Hut Wall mimics

the elevation of a house with a window (where the attendant sits) and is clad in distressed zinc simulating the Indian fabrication experience.

Upon entering, one is taken in by the rendering of the surfaces with the multiple shades of often forgotten eleven timbers of Indian origin (Padauk, Neem, Babool, Rosewood, Teak, Sheesham, Deodar, Spruce/Pine, Mango, Hollock, Eucalyptus). As homage to traditional craft and local materials in India, and as a hat tip to the craft styles of the country and the designers being showcased at the store, the multifarious 11-timber collection from various regions is used in a lattice to highlight the altar-like niche at the termination of the





section and the Display System.

An overall muted color palette is used to offset the curated content at the store. All the incidental, residual elements intended as a backdrop, are hence rendered black with a no-sheen, black paint (called Blackboard) that is typically used in public schools to refresh the chalkboards. The timber lattice defines the volume, with Distressed Zinc, aluminum inserts and Blue Accents. Originally envisaged as a series of the traditional Indian 'duhrrie', representational of the Indian weaves, the floor is a hand tufted carpet in Ecru and Blue with nine different tones of grey and knots.



Lighting is premeditated in a simplistic and flexible manner to accentuate the elements of the design process and the blackness of the residual elements. At Neelsutra, the intent is to have a minimum intervention in a defined manner while creating a focus with color at the far end of the store. This also aids in the definition of the intersection of the church wall and the ceiling with an "imprint" of light from the top of the church wall.

