

METRO MUSES: SUMESSH MENON

Text by Faye Remedios

These interior designers tell us about the cities that spark their imagination. Here, we talk to Sumesh Menon

In his book *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino wrote, 'With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears.....' Whether they provide sensory stimulation or are spaces you go to, to soak in art and culture or even where you can give rein to your creative energies, there are some cities that stay with you long after you leave. These interior designers certainly found this to be true. They talk about that one place that has drawn them in with a set of memories and sentiments that make it impossible to forget and difficult to not return to.



Sumesh Menon

Sumesh Menon Associates

New York's uniquely nuanced landscape has been the source of inspiration for millions of creatives — artists, designers, musicians, writers. The Big Apple has lured innumerable visionaries with the dream of making it in the big city. It is this infectious and inescapable vibe that managed to snare Sumesh Menon too. "The cultural energy that permeates the city is irresistible to a designer like me," he says.



Menon talks about his first break — a project in Manhattan — that is a part of his most cherished memory of the city. “It was a Spanish tapas bar called Plan B. Working on the project alongside talented local artisans and finally experiencing the extremely positive and encouraging response of the city are perhaps what stays with me most about New York,” he says. “The experience of working on a foreign land on designs entirely customised and produced in India was a brilliant experience. The city has encouraged me to understand the importance of subtlety when it comes to design and has been a major influence in the development of many of my projects within Mumbai. The super casual yet trendy vibe of the city is its most alluring quality. A very prominent result of these impromptu visits to this city can be seen in my project, KoKo in Kamala Mills Mumbai where the overall look and feel of the space is very laid-back and yet international,” he explains.



Interiors of the Plan B Spanish Tapas Bar. Designed by Sumesh Menon

With every visit, he discovers a new facet of the city's cultural fabric, he says. "It's the charm of New York that makes it what it is — a chaotic yet uniquely exquisite experience in itself," he says. To relish a slice of the Big Apple, he heads to the Museum of Modern Arts (MoMA) or simply wanders along the intriguing streets of SoHo. When he wants to unwind, he goes to Buddakan, an Asian restaurant on 9th Avenue. "The overall ambience combined with the flawless cuisine is what makes this an ideal space to relax in and stir up my creative juices. I somehow always leave with a fresh design inspiration." What would he pick as the best part of New York? "The city's energy reminds me of Mumbai. That is another factor that makes it a favourite of mine," he signs off.

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