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# Architecture

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## Transformative Praxis

Canvassing rational approaches

**Cover Story:** Optimistic Future, HVAC

**Project:** Monsoon Ambience, Gurgaon  
Manifestation of Fluid Architecture (M:OFA)





Text courtesy: Nidhi Sharma and Zohra Khan & Photographs courtesy: Dev Singh

# Expressions of Identity

Monsoon Ambience, Gurgaon M:OFA

Retaining the identity of a brand through unique design parti that upholds the crux of its inception comes as a great challenge to the designers. **Monsoon Ambience in Gurgaon** designed by **M:OFA** exemplifies its character with rustic material palette, sober lines of expressions and with a hue of monsoons



Located in an urbane locality inside the premises of a high-end mall as a stand-alone set up across NCR, Monsoon Ambience creates a unique yet continuous identity of an established brand. The brief was to redevelop the module, abiding by a set of exclusive requirements and restrictions, by articulating its spaces for a unique design outlook. The industrial looking environment of the space, by the use of wood planks and exposed brick walls with controlled lighting relaxing the senses, connects the context of a busy city and contradictory nature of the services provided in the space.

The design intent was to establish a profound identity of the startup brand – Monsoon – and to impart it with a unique upbeat language synchronous with the label's work ethics, making it one of its kinds in an already overcrowded and thriving sector of salon and spas. Thus, segregation of seclusion and activity spaces was put in a manner that both of these would seamlessly mingle to attain the senses of 'Individual Escape' and 'Collective Pampering'.

## DESIGN

While designing a series of multiple salons of Monsoon across Delhi NCR, a subconscious design evolution is woven along the journey where every former project has been put forth with a pragmatic set of modifications to bring out a design vocabulary extensively distinct from the latter yet evocative of the brand's identity.





Along the way 'Red' – the predominantly exuberant hue of monsoon – is replaced with a grunge texture of exposed brickwork, timber made reclaimed shipping palettes, furniture and painted MS shelves that appears to a slight illusion of being rusted if viewed from a considerable distance. While the Monsoon Salons at Rajouri and Punjabi Bagh were designed in a way so as to exude a buzz through the use of vibrant colour 'Red', and design elements ideated about it to show the astounding drama that it creates – juxtaposition of various things one over the other exemplifying the culture and persona of the



**Manish Gulati**, Principal Architect for Manifestation of Fluid Architecture (M:OFA), has graduated from CEPT, Ahmedabad in 1999. After 3 years of work experience in Retail, Exhibition and Event Design, he set up his Architectural and Interior Design practice in 2002 in New Delhi along with his wife and partner, Tanushree Gulati, a civil engineer and alumnae of the same institution.

The name M:OFA was formalised in 2007 as the practice expanded to include Urbanism within its expertise. Starting from a pure architectural practice, today, the firm is dealing with projects of infrastructure, urban design, environmental planning, product design and even interaction design through multiple analyses, strategies and systems all designed to give the best design solution to every project.







clientele pertinent to the areas. For the salons at Gurgaon, a diligent scrutiny of the factors of respective context, clientele, spatial arrangement, material, textures and lighting to augment the salon quality and work atmosphere was carried out.

The immensely weathered look of the exposed bricks with the muted plaster intersticed between them appears to be yearning for the showers. The bricks which are etched with the term monsoon on them, particularly better than the others, a result of burnishing the text over them, makes it evident that only monsoon could yield them the freshness which they're longing for. The trumpets (Bhompoo) suspended from the ceiling lits the space with diffused red hue, an allegory which one could decipher as a danger, a desperate need of the showers to pour in and release the confines.

The idea of insatiability behooves with the salon services while infusing similar lines of thought in the designing of the interiors. The selection of material is kept to its purest tone and form. A neat, abstracted and rustically pronounced salon interior with a palette of bare essentials was introduced keeping the fuss at bay.

Extensive use of wooden planks and exposed brick walls with controlled lighting plunges to relax the senses that serves as a sanctuary to pamper you outright. It ideally connects the context of a busy city and contradictory nature of the services provided in the space.

One enters a modest reception arched by the signage of multiple Monsoon created in MS laser-cut at the entrance with use of different typefaces. This opens into semi-rejuvenation zones where the elements of light, clean epoxy floors with display shelf and in-lit mirrors, all mounted and suspended from the ceiling makes the whole space lighter visually. These suspended shelves also act as partitions between the semi-rejuvenation and rejuvenation which create the privacy but let light pass through making it aptly lit and airy.

The continuous open plan divided in 2 distinct sections – nail and hair styling as dry areas, pedicure stations as wet areas along with facilities

of 5 beauty rooms – resulted in an evitable visual linkage between the brand prompting connectivity at large. 25% cost of the project was reduced in comparison to other salons as the furniture was customised (be it fixed trolleys or internal wall).

To keep undisrupted connection of the brand with its customers, extensive use of monsoon stenciled logo was done across the wooden pallets and other signages in the salon. Back to back in-lit mirrors where artificial light is evenly washed to brighten up the atmosphere divides the space yet keeping it open and aglow.

The interiors of the salon has a pronounced recycled material vocabulary – Recycled shipping pallets, Railway sleeper wooden partitions and LED lights. ▲

**fact file:**

<i>project name</i>	: Monsoon Ambience
<i>location</i>	: Ambience Mall, Ambience Island, Gurgaon, Haryana
<i>client</i>	: Monsoon Salons and Spa
<i>principal architect</i>	: Manish Gulati
<i>design team</i>	: Neha Singhal, Nishant Rana
<i>commencement date</i>	: November 2014
<i>completion date</i>	: January 2015
<i>area</i>	: 1335 sq. ft
<i>photographer</i>	: Dev Singh

**Products/Vendors:**

<i>ACP/glass/concrete</i>	: Saint Gobain
<i>sanitaryware/fitings</i>	: Hindware
<i>flooring</i>	: concrete with top coat of Ardex
<i>furniture/furnishing</i>	: Customised and Zeenat Slimming system
<i>air conditioning</i>	: Carrier
<i>lighting</i>	: Kalindi Traders
<i>paint</i>	: Asian Paints
<i>arts/artifacts</i>	: Custom made