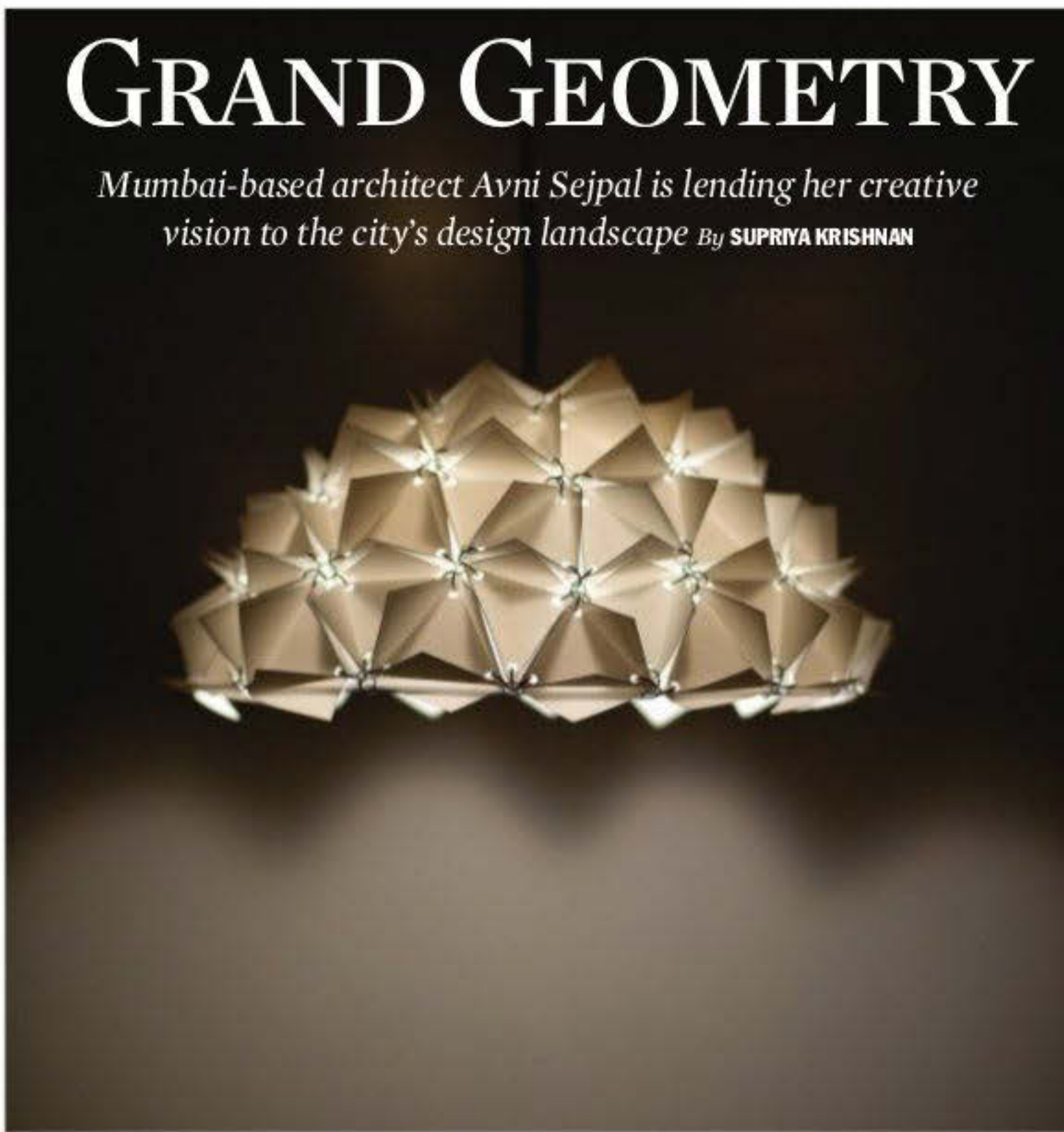


Raised in a textile-based family, architect Avni Sejpal, 36, had a very early exposure to design. "My childhood exposure to design led me to study architecture at Kamala Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute of Architecture (KRVA). Post that, I went to London for a masters in environmental design with focus on furniture design and public art at Chelsea College of Art and Design," says Mumbai-based Sejpal.

Growing up in a family with a background in textiles and crafts, she remembers visiting her father's factory during summer vacations and small artisanal villages which kindled a sense of curiosity. "I guess down the road, it gave me a better understanding of colours and textures. My early years were spent travelling with my family to various textile and design shows across Europe and the US, which further impacted my perception on design," she says. That created a desire in her to express her creativity through furniture, fashion and business cards. "My interests ranged from designing buildings to textiles/ fashion and sculptures. Eventually, I was drawn towards architecture—mother of all design streams—and finally it was at Chelsea College, where I fell in love with design all over again," says Sejpal.

The architect formally established her studio in Mumbai in 2011. "In eight years before opening my studio, I had the opportunity to work in different design disciplines in various roles. During this time, I gained experience in architecture, interiors, furniture design, textiles, fashion, and graphic design. I had the opportunity to work with Rajiv Saini (Mumbai), Paul Loebach (New York), and Xavier Lust among other designers in Belgium and the Netherlands," she says.

Given the fact that we live in a world of contradictions and paradoxes, Sejpal says, "I try to maintain a balance by existing somewhere in the grey area between the two. It's an optimum blend of parametric and handmade, soft and hard materials (textiles and metals), green approach to industrial products and weaving these together in a cultural context. Currently, I'm drawn to rhythmic patterns, randomness in organic forms and geometry, something



"Faceted Tactile Light series is inspired from origami and kirigami, from whereon I have tried to explore and build on this craft and experiment with materials like metal and PVC instead of traditional materials such as paper."



Avni Sejpal

that can be controlled by altering and modulating the algorithms, be it by parametric design or by hand. I love the mix of dynamic unpredictable complexity and sociological associations that a design can bring to a product."

Some of the designers who influence her work include Ettore Sottsass, Sou Fujimoto, Paul

Hennigson, Gareth Pugh, David LaChapelle, Xavier Lust, and Aldo Bakker. Apart from the ready in house collection of furniture, lights and products, Sejpal also designs wall claddings, acoustical claddings, illuminated screens, tensile screens, suspended screens and customised textile solutions.

"The Faceted Tactile Light se-

ries is inspired from origami and kirigami—a starting point from whereon I have tried to explore, adapt and build on this craft and experiment with materials like metal and PVC instead of using traditional materials such as paper. I have tried to apply a blend of these techniques on non-traditional origami materials such as metal



and PVC rather than paper. The results are fascinating," she says.

Some of the projects that Sejpal has worked for include the large sculptural lights for the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Terminal 2 (Mumbai), illuminated screens, acoustical sculptural wall claddings, custom furniture pieces, complete textile solutions and graphical modular screens for private clients among others.

"I'm currently working on a new collection of lights, furniture and textile collection. There are also a few commissioned projects in the pipeline, which are very exciting," she says. Based on the space, Sejpal conceptualises, designs and offers a completely customised design solution. Be it a sculptural lighting installation, furniture piece or a structural screen, the design approach is generally an intuitive response to the site.

Sejpal is also open to creative collaborations. "They bring out the most unexpected results. Whether it is commissioned lights for residential apartments or illuminated screens for commercial spaces, collaboration requires maintaining harmony, weaving together all the elements cohesively and balancing between a lot of different elements which could be challenging yet exciting," she says. So what's next? "Currently, I'm working on a new collection that will be showcased at the upcoming Salone del Mobile, Milan in April 2015 and a few creative collaborations on sculptural lights," says Sejpal.