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TIFFANY & CO. TEMPORARY STORE
by OMA Partner Ellen van Loon

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SS JEWELLERS

AT SS JEWELLERS, **groupDCA** HAS INITIATED A DIALOGUE AMIDST THE PAST AND PRESENT TO CHRISTEN THE VENUE WITH AN IDENTITY THAT HOLDS UP A MIRROR TO THEIR ROOTS WHILE WELCOMING A RENEWED BRAND SENSIBILITY

The role of Architecture oftentimes is deftly entwined with the need of amalgamating the function of hand and the context it dwells in.

This process is layered with facets of understanding the impact the space has on its users, the site, and the history that comes in tow with the context. **groupDCA** undertakes a similar design trajectory with the new branch of SS Jewellers in Ambala, India, creating an immersive jewellery boutique as a part of a prime retail complex off Grand Trunk Road. A military garrison and cantonment city since the time of pre-independence India, the city till date is a coveted treve of Colonial and Pre-Colonial Architecture. This conceived design has been woven together with the city's architectural demerit that has now lost some of its former lustre despite being a pivotal force in shaping Ambala's ethos. Reaping inspiration from this sentiment, **groupDCA** closely studied and interpreted the architectural history of Ambala while designing the store.

The team extrapolated their learnings by putting a modern spin on the traditional influences prevalent in the city, engaging local artists and craftsmen to create a handcrafted medley of details at SS Jewellers. As a heritage brand associated with the legacy of Ambala, the store shines a light on the stated yet palpant architectural roots of the quaint city while reimaging the spaces to adeptly inhabit a contemporary context.

The venue is a part of a larger open-air mall concept, an urban renewal exercise that allows the inhabitants of the city to become an active part of the intervention while indulging in retail services. The levels constituting the store, encompass the primary display and shopping areas, back-end operations, storage, and kaarigar (craftsman) workshops.

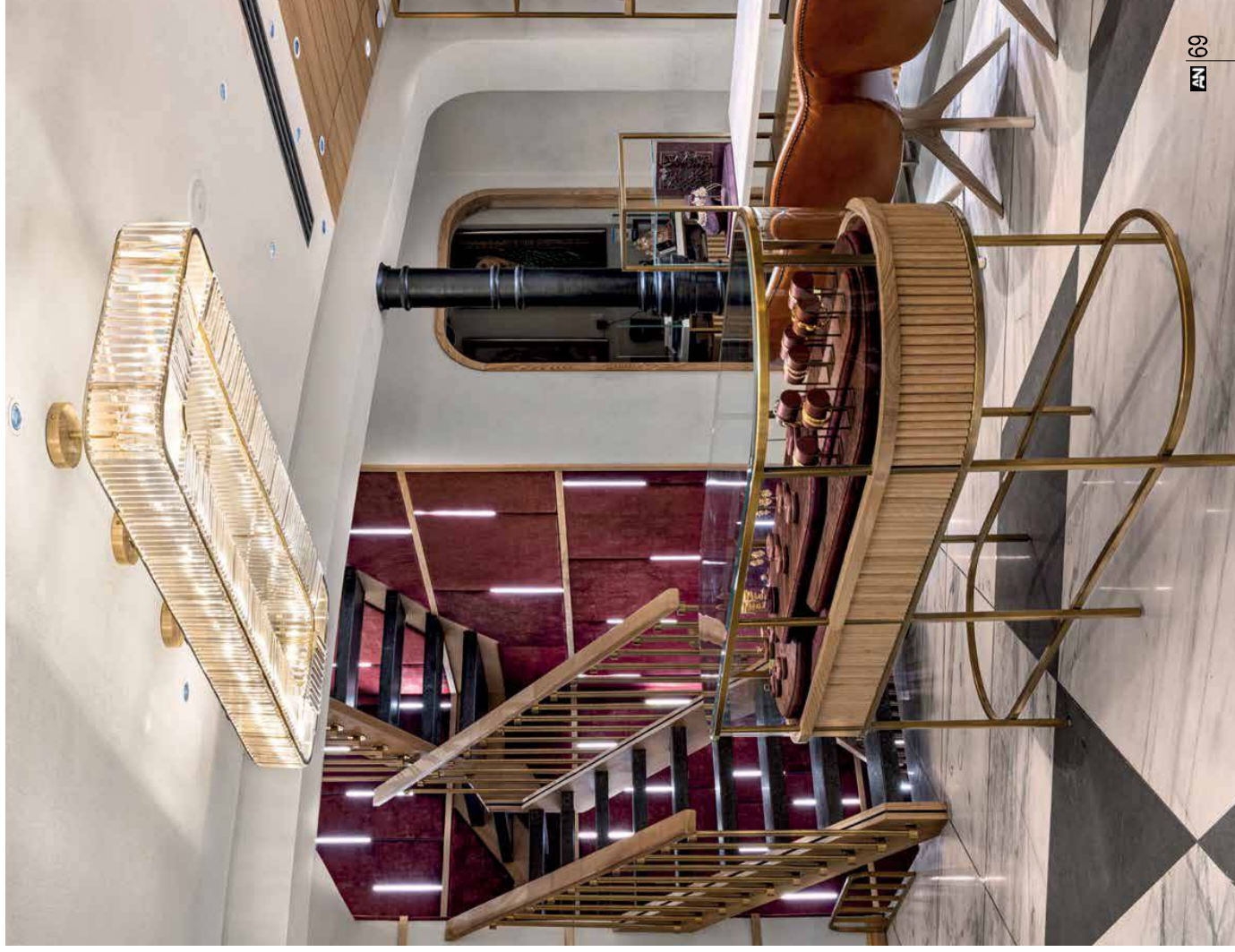
The lower floor houses the contemporary jewellery collections while the upper makes room for boutique jewellery in tandem with exclusive lounge sections for patrons to be hosted. The basement functions as an operational centre, housing the activities of the workshops and inventory storage. At the onset, the storefront dons a minimalist facade expressed through an overarching timeless combination of black and gold.

The two show windows flanking the entryway make a striking statement attributed to the intricate floral wallpaper that lines these nooks, hinting at a luxe character. This design texture further creates an intentional pre-emptive space by recessing the main entrance to the store, allowing the patron's palette to be acquainted subtly with the design vocabulary that unfolds indoors. Structurally, the challenge at hand was to establish a sense of connection between the volumes of the ground and the first floor.

The diving notion focussed on retrofitting the expanse of the store while establishing a unified design scheme. To address this aspect, two identical circular openings were created between the floors, introducing a visual connection amidst them. The lift and the staircase were additionally incorporated, tying in with the overriding aesthetic, creating a sense of coherence between the levels.

The stairwell has been lined with burgundy-hued fabric cladding panels against which the brass and black marble staircase contrast fittingly. The burgundy colour further travels to the upper floor, bathing the walls and vaulted ceilings in wallpapered sections as a differentiator amidst the two levels.

A set of three vaults sweep overhead on both levels of the store, dividing the area visually and inculcating a geometric identity. Under the vaults are stark black aluminium columns that were assembled at site, consisting of a three-partion framework. The trims and rings are strategically placed at the junction of these segments — a modern-day homage to the classic order of columns.





The two circular cut-outs further build on the sense of symmetry and have been lined by glazed wooden framed Victorian style mirrors that traverse the double-height space, allowing one a glimpse of the higher floor and thus connecting the spaces visually. Candelabra-style glass-cut chandeliers made by a Pantalla-based artist cascade through these newly created apertures, imbuing the space with grandeur.

The design scheme unveils itself as a contiguous space upon entry, leading the eye towards the far end of the blueprint with each zone defined by an over-arching palette of design. The central portion of the layout is dominated by an array of fluted oak and glass display vitrines while the perimeter is lined by display counters and plush seating for patrons as they engage with the offerings of the store. Traditional monochrome marble flooring has been conceptualised as sleek geometric patterns interspersed with brass inlay. White and grey marble varieties come together to create the flooring which exudes visual dynamism across the length of the floor plan.

Bespoke furniture and surface treatments took centre stage while designing the interiors, staying true to groupDCA's principle of creating custom pieces that adhere to the space's vision. The ambience of the store oozes an elevated and sumptuous identity that is further illustrated by the engagement of decadent hues of tan brown, maroon, and deep blue that dot the furniture ubiquitously.

The design approach applied at this Ambalabased jewellery store is groupDCA's take on viewing classical and ornate design from a refreshed vantage point while keeping the opulence alive. Quintessential features like those of traditional colonnades, sculptural columns, arches, and rich metallic finishes are inducted into the designed space, albeit with a neoteric persona. Symbolic of a wave of urban renewal in the city, the store celebrates the bygone grandiosity of Ambalabased architecture while adopting a suave design DNA.





Project Name SS Jewellers
Location Ambala City - Haryana, India
Architecture Design Firm groupDCA
Principal Architect Ar. Amit Aurora
Text Credit Lavanya Chopra
Photos courtesy Purnesh Dev Nikhanj

SS JEWELLERS

UN PROGETTO CHE DIALOGA TRA PASSATO E PRESENTE

Prima di progettare, bisogna capire lo spirito e le caratteristiche di un ambiente. L'architetto deve considerare il contesto. Il contesto deve influenzare il suo lavoro: un'opera non è isolabile dal luogo.

*Per il progetto della boutique dei gioiellieri SS di Ambala, in India, **groupDCA** ha studiato e interpretato la storia architettonica coloniale e pre-coloniale della città. Il team, coinvolgendo artisti e artigiani locali, ha creato un medley artigianale di dettagli che mettono in luce le affermate ma opulente radici architettoniche della pittoresca città, inserendosi adeguatamente in un contesto contemporaneo.*

La boutique è strutturata su tre livelli: il piano terra è dedicato alle collezioni di gioielli contemporanei, il primo piano alle collezioni luxury e relative aree lounge, mentre il piano interrato funge da centro operativo e di deposito scorte.

Per stabilire un senso di connessione tra i volumi del piano terra e il primo piano, i progettisti hanno creato due aperture circolari collegate da una scala in ottone e marmo che contrasta opportunamente con i pannelli di rivestimento in velluto bordeaux che si estendono fino alle pareti e al soffitto a volta del piano superiore.

Grandi specchi in stile Vittoriano con cornici in legno dorato e un lampadario in stile candelabro, realizzato da un artista locale, attraversano lo spazio a doppia altezza consentendo di intravedere e quindi collegare visivamente i due piani.

Una serie di tre volte, sostenute da colonne in alluminio nero, si estende sopra entrambi i livelli del negozio, dividendo visivamente l'area e imprimendo un'identità geometrica.

La parte centrale del layout è dominata da una serie di vetrine in legno di rovere e vetro scanalato, mentre il perimetro è dedicato ai banchi espositivi e alle lussuose sedute.

I tradizionali pavimenti in marmo monocromatico sono stati concepiti come eleganti motivi geometrici intervallati da intarsi in ottone. Le varietà di marmo bianco e grigio si uniscono creando una pavimentazione dinamica che copre tutta la boutique.

Gli arredi su misura, i trattamenti delle superfici, le finiture metalliche personalizzate, conferiscono alla gioielleria un'identità sontuosa enfatizzata dall'utilizzo di una palette colori nei toni del marrone e blu intenso. •