

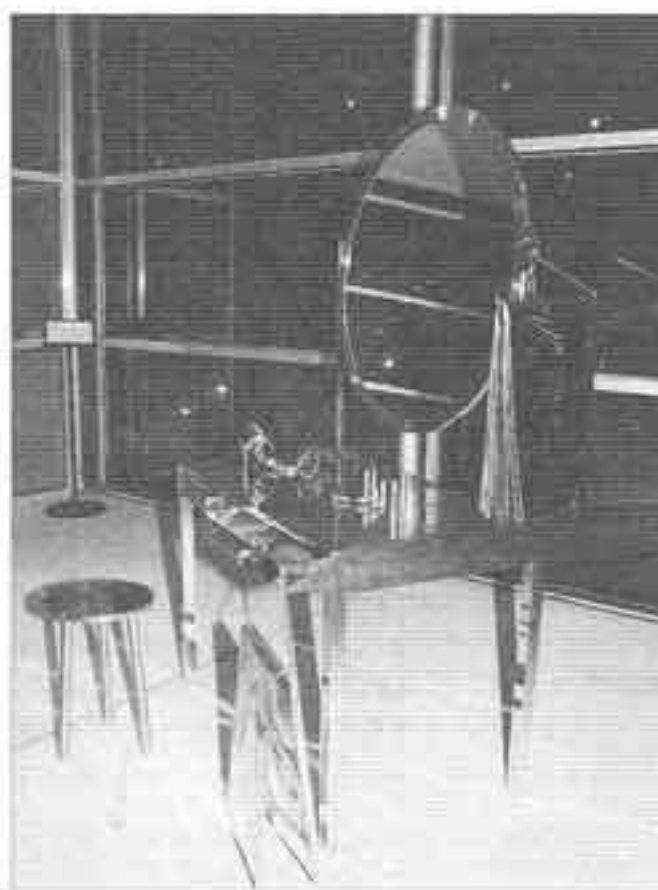
Unhappy with the segregation that has crept into the creative arts, Sharan Apparao decided to get like-minded thinkers from myriad disciplines to create works together. FC2 takes a look

# BLURRED LINES

**A**s a conscious effort to blur the broad demarcation between visual art, design, craft, performing art and literature, Apparao Galleries planned a series of cross disciplinary shows, the first being a crossover between fine artists and designers which, resulted in utilitarian sculptures. "In ancient Indian courts, you had a mathematician, a dancer, a sculptor, all co-existing and interacting in the same place; *life is multidisciplinary*", says Sharan. Sculptor-painter A Balasubramaniam and product and jewellery designer Nirmala Rudra combined their austere approach to create objects, with the idea of spaces within spaces. Nirmala explains that they brought a really modern philosophy and aesthetics to their products. "I did the design of the table thinking of the function and some of them are seating with lights," explains Nirmala, while Bala (as he is known) tells me that he worked on the table top. "It has a depth of three inches so instead of my canvas or space, I used that as my area, to start with. The idea was to create a space that has depth. It's about space and light." Artist Bharti Kher and furniture designer Priti Paul produced an entire installation in stainless steel. "Art can sometimes function as design and aesthetics and design could function as conceptual installation that is strongly artistic. Priti works with steel, but she's never made objects like shoes and combs so I said let's turn steel, which is such a hard and un-malleable material, into something soft and feminine," explains Bharti. Why a dressing table? Bharti turns almost nostalgic, "You have movies where a woman brushes her hair at the dressing table, before she goes to bed. It's inexplicably a woman's thing. The ritual of dressing is important to your current development, how you think about yourself, who do you do it for, are you doing it for someone else, for other women or are you doing it purely for yourself? We also wanted the design to be simple. As artists, we're not afraid of abstraction or simplicity, because we understand that the power of an object can function at many levels."

Textile designer Puja Nayyar and product designer Vibhor Sogani tell me their collection draws inspiration from

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the Japanese Tea Room. It was Puja's suggestion to do something Japanese and Vibhor is "comfortable with Zen". How is it that two designers, albeit from different disciplines, have worked in conjunction? Vibhor explains that the show is not about art and design, "It's about looking at things from different perspectives. She works with textiles and I work with harder materials, so we made a pact that we'd switch." Eventually, their collection culminated in an interactive range of functional light forms. Painter Subodh Gupta worked with Anupam Poddar on three distinct pieces that are displayed together. "It's close to art, but it's design. It depends on how you look at it," says Subodh, and sites cars as an example, "When you see a designer car, it's an art work and you drive that piece of art. Defining the boundary is difficult because there is a fine line. The only way to understand any art is through your own experience." One of the objects they have created has lights, which are there "to provide function, because it's design. If this was pure art, we may not have put lights". Anupam Poddar has also worked with artist Anita Dube on reinventing and reincarnating the use of fabric, deliberately using it in unusual sculptural ensembles.

Apparao Galleries' next show *The Vamp and the Villain* is a crossover between art, craft, cinema and performing arts. Artist Kriti Arora, art historian and jewellery designer Deeksha Nath and puppeteer Varun Narain have created a witty, whimsical collection of utilitarian art pieces set in a stage of evolving history.

*(The Vamp and the Villain will be on view at The Garden Theatre, Triveni Kala Sangam from February 5 to 10)* ■