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Rusi N. Dinshaw meeting President Iskander Mirza at KPI in 1956.

1928-2014

Rusi N. Dinshaw

Only Parsi in Pakistan's Test Squad

Shirin Kumaana-Wadia in conversation

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Passion for Photography

My love for photography began quite accidentally two years ago in Mumbai, when I was visiting from New York. My beloved maternal grandfather was ailing, and as I held his tender and frail hand in my youthful and manicured one, I was overcome with emotion. I reached for my iPhone at hand to frame and capture that transitory, yet eternal moment. I consider this image as my first 'real' photograph, for I became deeply aware of the power of photography to tell a personal story. When I returned to New York, I started to see the world a little bit differently. My grandfather was everything to me. His illness and death made me realize the transience of life in a very real way. It made me realize the need to be present in the here and now and appreciate the gifts of life that surround us at every moment.

Being an architect and interior designer by profession, my visual sensibility was already very defined with relation to subject, color, design and composition when I started taking photographs. I started very simply with my iPhone since I always had it with me. I progressed to using other cameras and lenses and enjoy experimenting with new techniques all the time. I am mostly self-taught, so I don't have any hang-ups. I am as at ease with my iPhone as with any advanced camera. I am mainly interested in the image and capturing fleeting moments. The immediacy of photography allows me to do this, and there are so many possibilities that open up with any one image.

Most of my photographs are shot in New York City, and a few in Mumbai and some in other places around the world. I take every opportunity to shoot but I would admit, that I have a special place in my heart for New York City. I have lived there for close to a decade now and the city has given me so much. It has allowed me to pursue all my passions with the attitude of excellence be it design, dance or photography. (I am a trained semi-professional dancer in various styles primarily Latin Jazz, Afro-Cuban and salsa and perform regularly on the New York dance circuit).

Skies, Clouds, Sunsets

I am particularly drawn to the magnanimity of nature and the Universe, and while these pictures pertain to particular cities, they go beyond description. My titles are quite specific and they point toward the essence of what I want to draw the viewer's attention to. Photographs like *Gratitude* (2013), *Revelation* (2013) and *Illuminations* (2013) draw upon the spiritual nature of life, as reflected in nature's glories such as skies, clouds, sunsets, gardens, sea-sides and reflections, and dwell on the quality of transcendence within them. I would like to add that this is the way that I see the world everyday. I am eternally grateful for the gift of life.



Shirin Kumaana-Wadia

At this point in my life when I am spreading my wings in new directions and discovering new possibilities, the photograph *Release* (2013) of a bird in flight over the water with the Manhattan skyline in the backdrop signifies letting go and being free. That said, every image I develop has special significance

for me. My archive has over 9000 images and counting! After a successful debut exhibition in Mumbai "To Eternity and Back" in December 2013, I am working towards exhibitions in New York and Singapore. I am also planning another exhibition in Mumbai in the near future.

"Everything is Design! Everything!"

After earning a degree at Rizvi College in Mumbai and working at a few prestigious firms in Mumbai, I went to New York. There, I had the opportunity to meet a renowned interior designer named Pierre Court, known for his expertise in French Classical design. It was a serendipitous meeting and he hired an ingÈnue. After eight years together, I now manage our global operations out of the New York office.

As a project designer with Pierre Court Design, New York I would select the worldwide flagship Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski in Munich, Germany as my favourite project. With its origin as a court guest house, the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski provides a perfect abstract of the history of Munich, Bavaria, Germany, Europe and even the world in its 150 years of existence. Since January of 2007, we have fully re-designed and renovated 41 deluxe rooms and suites, and 188 standard rooms in the historically conserved part of the building towards the Maximilianstrasse. The design ideology followed is along contemporary modern lines, with classical elements that respect and pay homage to the hotel's rich history. Innovative architectural and interior design ideas guarantee, that the history and the modern age we live in, tastefully unite with each other. The premier Ludwig II suites are the poster child of the redesign. The suites admeasuring 300 sq.m. of opulence; represent the finest example of classical design furnished in a contemporary style with an eye for detail. A crossover between Louis XV pieces and modern designer furniture leads to an exciting mix of elegant, modern and beautiful.

Everything in the world is designed. Some consciously, most unconsciously. If design helps and enhances the use and purpose of the object or being, therein lies its success.

In day to day life, design is a very conscious action. In the words of the legendary American Modernist Paul Rand "Everything is design. Everything!" Although my becoming an architect happened by chance, the profession introduced me to my current practice in interior design. Design draws upon my own natural inclinations for tasteful, elegant and harmonious environments with a touch of luxury. The project closest to my heart at the moment is my new apartment in New York, which I am designing. Being a perfectionist has been much more challenging doing my own home – because I keep extending my deadline. I constantly want to change and upgrade the furniture and placements at the drop of a hat, but it's not feasible so I work with different arrangements and accent walls, and introduce new colors and fabrics. One's home is a living organism, like the owner: it's important to continually find creative, budget-friendly ways in which to bring about minor adjustments that reflect the changes in oneself.

The Future?

In my own design firm, Mazda Design, we try to educate the client on becoming design connoisseurs. A well-informed client allows for the best design freedom. A careful balance of opposing and complementary styles is sought to bring about an eclectic yet sophisticated look. No element is too small to design. It's the parts that make up the whole. I would have loved to work on The Taj Mahal Hotel in Colaba, Mumbai. After the terrorist attacks of 2008, in a haste to bring the hotel back to full functionality, the original state of design was replicated and rebuilt. An opportunity was lost to push the design boundary. Keeping the overall design ethos, there was a big opening to introduce contemporary design elements in the overall classical setting. However, in restoring the hotel to its past replica, the final result was a cover up of what had happened, instead of accepting it and evolving at all design levels. Currently I am working on a number of luxury residences in New York and New Jersey. Ultimately, everything I do – whether its photography, dance or design - is to make the world a better place!





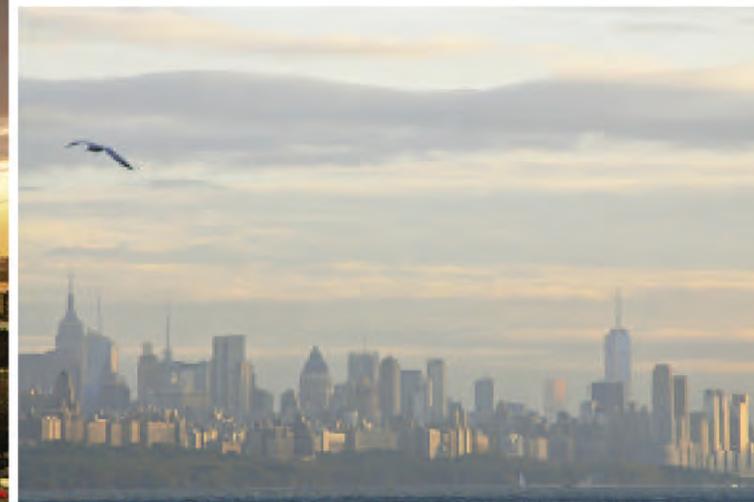
Gratitude - 24x50 Metallic



Revelation - 30x45 Metallic



Illuminations - 30x45 Metallic



Release - 24x36 C Print

Images from Shirin's Portfolio



Kempinski Munich

