

HD: Wall-e

Strap: Ravikumar Kashi's home brings together works by his family, reports **Pratima Chabbi.**

Artist Ravikumar Kashi's vision is to extend art into every space of his house. The terrace of the Kashi residence has a cosy corner with stone benches under a tree, a perfect place for a family dinner. Their roofed courtyard, too, is an eclectic space. Here, his daughter Manass's quirky abstract acrylic painting hangs proudly aside from his wife Anita's terracotta sculptures. One wall of his living room holds "Happily Ever After"; his painting shows brightly coloured boxes piled in the lower half, contrasting a silhouette of a warm and loving couple above, while another wall is like that of a gallery with a collection of paintings by Jyoti Bhat, Bhupen Kakkar, Rangnath Sharma and Paresh Maity.

In the late nineties, the Kashis' built a house at the back of their relatives' home in North Bangalore. They did not want any new-age construction to disfigure the existing plot. The artist had three requirements in mind, which he discussed with his architect friend Kailash Rao. "We need to create a light-filled, airy space using sustainable materials," was the idea. During their initial meetings, Kashi and Rao sketched many drawings, built numerous models and eventually decided on a design in which the living room opened to a courtyard. That space is now enclosed with a glazed Mangalore-tiled glass roof. The execution followed the brief: light, neutral and unfussy interiors. The cream uniformity and earthiness of the terracotta blocks on the walls create a perfect balance of light and natural colour.

The divisions across the ground floor seamlessly merge into each other, "the living, dining and kitchen were made contiguous, i.e. one large space with a stone ledge(s) that act as divisions.". Before anything was placed inside, an art hanging system (metal hooks) was built into the walls to easily change the art. Even the kitchen and washing area breathe works of art; the glass shelves are painted by Kashi (as a request from his wife in a bid to liven up the kitchen space), and the wall above the washing machine holds Shanthamani's son, Aditya's vivid digital work that acts as a metaphor to the space.

Kashis' evolution as an artist comes across through the plethora of mediums he has experimented with – paper pulp, printmaking, glass painting and paintings on canvas – each form identifying and deconstructing images and objects around him.

A two-foot-long cloth painting dominates the narrow staircase in the house; this is Kashi's reinterpretation of the five elements of the earth. The first floor is a mix of private quarters: the bedrooms, a library, a nook for the family to gather in, and Anita's workspace. The steep winding staircase leads to the terrace, which houses a room where Kashi stores some of his works. Kashi's home dutifully fulfils the role of an extended canvas for a personal and simple art collection.

1. **Think tank** “Contemplation”, is one of Kashi’s works from his series *Finding the Center*. Kashi considers this series integral to his earlier works, which deconstruct familiar images from the media, leaving the viewer to develop meaning from the layered images and disjunctions.
2. **Scrapbook:** What’s a house without memories? The Kashi’s memorabilia wall is an amalgamation of drawings and paintings on the first floor. Each piece is a gift or work that Kashi exchanged with other artists to symbolise appreciation. His favourite among the works is a surprise gift he received from fellow artist KG Subramanyan, which came with a little note at the back, where the artist thanked Ravi for accompanying him and his daughter for a day around the city.
3. **Top chef:** The kitchen walls are adorned by two photographs by artist KS Ranganath. Both are visuals of kitchen interiors that transport Kashi to the kitchens (the multiple kitchens he has been a part of, hence – kitchens) from his childhood.
4. **Magnetic pull** Bang in the centre of Anita’s workspace sits a board with many souvenir magnets. For the Kashis, the board’s magnets invoke some fond memories of travels, conjuring up images of their destinations.
5. **Frame up** Dadiba Pundole, who currently runs the Pundole Art Gallery, one of India’s earliest art galleries promoting modern and contemporary Indian art, has been a huge support and integral part of the artists’ life and Kashi continues to cherish his relationship and considers it a very special part of his life. A gold-framed MF Hussain painting (a screen-printed limited edition work) gifted by Pundole sits in the centre of his living room.