

# Ruchika Grover

Surface Designer

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The founder of design studio *Odyssey* and brand *Anoma*, Ruchika Grover is an artist who works primarily with natural materials. Her diverse oeuvre, spanning surfaces, sculptures, and installations, combines the complexity of digital fabrication with the humanism of traditional hand-craft. Even though she has gained critical acclaim for her work worldwide and was recently awarded a spot on the *Perspective 40 under 40 Art Award*, her journey as an artist has been an unexpected one.

Her father, a stone merchant, trained her to be an entrepreneur, taking her along for all his business pursuits throughout her teenage years. She was always a keen artist, particularly interested in charcoal sketches and sculptures, but was too much of a daddy's girl to disappoint him and not dream of a global business. Whilst travelling with her father to rock formations and quarries, she never realised that she was actually gaining an understanding of materiality and craftsmanship. After completing a Master's in Entrepreneurship from England, she dreamt of an MBA from *Harvard* but needed a few years of work experience for that. That's when she started *Odyssey* [a journey], an experimental lab to create things in stone. She worked tirelessly over the subsequent years, with an intent to explore the applications of natural stone in design and architecture and expanded her repertoire beyond hand-crafted products soon thereafter, launching a series of digitally-manufactured stone surface collections—the *Crosta* [2012], the *Kinetic* [2013], the *Breathing Surfaces* [2014], the *Ishi Kiri* [2015], the *Aqueous* [2016], and the *Foliage* [2017]. Furthermore, in 2017, an intention to bring the tactile nature of Indian craft to the forefront of the global discourse led her

to launch *Anoma*. The brand, directed at the contemporary international market, creates modular surfaces, sculptures, and installations that celebrate innovation in digital design while staying true to local Indian artisanship. Drawing inspiration from organic forms and textures, *Anoma* delivers minimal, artisanal results.

Naturally, Ruchika's work was not conceived overnight and has evolved slowly over several years with a vision to be able to deliver something innovative to the industry. She loves solitude and being amidst nature to keenly observe patterns, formations, compositions and draw inspiration from everything around her. 'My art represents a personal investigation into the wonders of the natural world and seeks to establish a critical commentary on man's relationship with the inner self,' says Ruchika, who has had no formal education in art or fabrication and thus follows no rules. Some of her early influences were M.C. Escher, Carlo Scarpa and Gaudi. Her creative process usually begins with rough illustrations on paper and then moving on to creating prototypes which involves translating dimensions into manufacturing directives and being fed into a Computer Numerical Controlled [CNC] milling machine, using diamond and carbide-tipped tools for performing cutting and drilling operations on the stone and finally using the handiwork of skilled stone artisans to carve intricate textures into the stone. 'This last step helps add a human touch to a largely digitally-fabricated product,' adds Ruchika.

Asked about her future goals, she says, 'I simply want to engage, involve, and inspire every individual who experiences my work.'

