

# Living

FRAME IT

## SHUTTERBUG @ HOME

Shuttered and nowhere to go? Click this opportunity, don't let this crisis pass, suggests

Hema Narayanan

**L**ockdown is a current reality, but we know this is temporary and soon, this too shall pass. In a recently published feature in a news daily, Dr Arthur C Brooks, a Harvard professor was asked about his view of whether the lockdown will make us re-examine the things that make us happy.

He had said, "The lockdown affects different people in different ways. Some are just trying to get through it, others are noticing that the lockdown while not what we had hoped for, provide opportunities for personal growth. Time has slowed down, but it is important not to let this opportunity pass..." So why not, use this time in stimulating ways — to try something afresh, to learn, to create or just do something for fun. Become a shutterbug at home? Photography is one such engrossing pastime to try during lockdown, irrespective of if you are into photography or not.

Photography, for one, gives an instant feel-good factor when you see the outcome, 'Your Photograph.' It is recreational and a great tool to keep your mind engaged, to kick in some creativity through your visualisations and importantly, a very effective stress-buster, which is much needed today. And what if it develops as your interest and into a hobby, if not already? Use any camera available (DSLR, semi-automatic or your mobile phone camera).

What to shoot? Well, you can start with pretty much anything at home. Framing your garden flowers each morning, birds visiting you, colours, contrasts, patterns or even your home itself. This is an appropriate time to create everlasting family portraits or for trying your hand creatively at food photography (your cooked delicacies framed exquisitely). For the more adventurous seeking challenges, go spot interesting knick-knacks and subjects in your home and



Painting with Light: Texas Tornado



Colours of India

don your experimenting hat. The outcomes may surprise you, just like they surprised me. From crystal glasses, cheese graters, pen springs to cookies to light painting, I tried them all. Like any craft, practice makes us better, but here I wish to share a few techniques for you to attempt.

### Oil on water

What patterns do oil or soap liquid make when they spread on water?

**Basic ingredients:** Moderate sized glass dish/plate, olive or similar oil, colourful backdrop (anything from a chart paper, paperbacks to a colourful carpet), a low table, washing-up liquid, dropper



Oil on water technique: Celestial



Life of the Crystals. PHOTOGRAPHY BY AUTHOR

### Glassware

Can kitchen glassware, be it a flute, wine or drinking glass, become the hero of your image?

**Basic ingredients:** Transparent clean crystal glasses (of any kind), white and/



Low Key: Frost of the Fire



Oil on water technique: Mutation



Glassware: Contours



Incredible India

or black backdrop, colourless acrylic sheet or any reflective surface at the bottom on which glass can be placed. While the photograph, 'Incredible India' was shot using Bright Field lighting technique (lighting is from the front bouncing off the white backdrop), 'Contours' was conceptualised using Dark Field lighting technique, where lighting is from the back of the black backdrop.

### Low key

Next, out of my kitchen came the white coffee mugs, to be shot as Low-Key images. Low-Key photos contain predominantly dark tones and colours, creating striking contrasts through reduced lighting. Tad bit tricky for a novice and the experienced, yet a technique that brings about a drama in your image. From the couple of maiden attempts I made, I understand that it is all about illumination and elimination.

**Basic ingredients:** Anything white (mugs, glass, bowls) against a black backdrop, sugar (or white granules) or coloured lentils and lighting (flash preferable or window). I will leave you with 'Texas Tornado', a Painting with Light technique, created with an empty bottle, a torchlight and a long exposure. Become a shutterbug at home to bedazzle and de-stress yourself during the lockdown.

**For some calmness** Candles are amazing for creating a calm and serene atmosphere. If you haven't lit candles in a while you should shut off all your lights and try it out! Candles are extremely soothing, and they make your space smell great as well.

## ART ATTACK

### Art in times of quarantine

**U**ncertainty and the impact of Covid-19 worldwide has already started to affect our mental and emotional balance. If it would not have been art and its power to entertain, refresh, inspire, distract, cleanse and reinstate aspiration, we would all have been victims of quarantine, malaise, and melancholy. Perhaps that's what makes art so valuable and desirable in these times of pandemic and its consequences.

Patrons of art will agree that while science has been saving the world from falling in the grip of the nasty virus, art has been keeping us all motivated and alive. Visual things, tangible items of all shapes and sizes, and our everyday creations are empowering us to every bit. With the help of art, we can feel limitless, even in the lockdown. We are vulnerable individuals and this sudden detachment from our regular life is not coming easy on us. Shift your perspective and you will see how art and artists are helping in being more proactive.

The reality of the virus and the fact that travel seems a distant dream now can be just the right reason to focus on situational drawings, more so, on #stayhomestay-safe. In an attempt to rejuvenate and keep yourself busy, make one creation every day. The intention should be to remind others to stay calm and never lose hope in the times when we feel like giving up. I have used Indian art forms, Gond and Warli art to propagate awareness. I am also using art to live my affair with travel. An artist and traveller never lose their passion and inspiration. This is the time when both can be combined.

What if we cannot travel now, we can always re-create our old memories or make new ones from pictures around the world. While travel is a far-fetched idea right now, I am capturing the impact of social distancing, lockdown, and Covid-19 in different places through my sketches. Let's raise a toast to the indomitable spirit of mankind. Like Sir Albert Einstein said: "A society's competitive advantage will come not from how well its schools teach the multiplication and periodic tables, but from how well they stimulate imagination and creativity." **Manjulika Pramod**



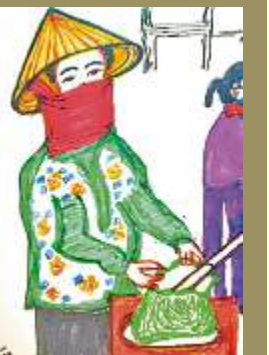
Charlie Chaplin's take on Covid-19



Thinking about World Heritage Day



Social distancing is shown through Gond art



Rice ATMs that have come up in some of the cities of Vietnam during the pandemic



When the highest building of the world said stay home

## Design reboot

In a united call to combat the contagion, a flurry of design entities are rallying to pour in functional, aesthetic support, writes **Shilpi Madan**

**F**rom fashion designers Shantanu and Nikhil stylishly sporting masks in a 'masked' post on Insta, to Hollywood celebs donning skull bandanas and Batman masks while shopping for groceries, to local celebs slipping on Hermes scarves as a home-mask, the ideas are bubbling and bouncing in the 'mask-querade' in Covid-19 climes. It does help in establishing a safeguard against the pandemic. Now, flowing in are asymmetrical patterns, *khadi*, colourful and reusable renditions in a melee: a collective uprising to meet the demands of the



Anita Dongre

present, rather unconventional situation. "As long as people need masks they will be produced and distributed," says fashion designer Anita Dongre as her team powers the production of cloth masks for distribution to contribute further in the fight against Covid-19. After receiving necessary permissions from the government authorities, the production of these reusable masks has begun in two of the five rural

village centres that were initiated in collaboration with the Maharashtra state government four years back, starting with Charoti. Through these centres, the Anita Dongre Foundation trains women to make garments and has set up a production facility close to their homes to bring gainful employment to them, using the multitude of materials used for making clothes from the house of Dongre. These centres have had voluntary participation of about 24 women for making close to 7,000 reusable, washable and sustainable masks each week for distribution to NGOs, villagers, individuals, and hospitals. The workers are maintaining strict social distancing and hygiene protocols. It is an ingenious solution to an

Women in Maharashtra making masks



equally unconventional situation that envelops the world today. Making prudent use of the leftover fabric in their manufacturing units and production studios, designer hands have risen to the fore shaping adjustable saviours using *khadi*, *ikat*, cotton... Likewise, fashion designer Ritu Kumar and her team are powering the production of over 50,000 non-surgical masks to meet the needs of the prevailing situation as wearing masks becomes the new normal. Designers Pallavi Mohan and Manish Tripathi are among the others dedicating their effort and time into the making of the much needed oral covers.

Nanki Papneja, founder of fashion portal Limerick.com, has leveraged her textile savoir-faire to bring out designer face masks for maximum protection when stepping outdoors.



Ritu Kumar

"These are testing times and since we already manufacture fabrics that are used in healthcare products like surgical masks, diapers... we decided to rise to the occasion," she says. "Arranging and donating masks is very much the need of the hour. We have pledged to donate 3,000 surgical masks to frontline healthcare workers at Katurba Hospital, Mumbai. Each designer face mask is constructed using multiple layers of germ-resistant filters that provide protection from over 90% germs and microbes. "The efficacy of the masks has been verified through a Bacteria Filtration Efficiency Test as per international standards. Designed for maximum convenience, the reusable masks can be easily treated with

Masks from Limerick



Vistaprint

a disinfectant wash in cold water after being worn thrice," explains Nanki. Of course, the 27 variants available online include 12 embroidered and 15 printed options that make for a stylish cover especially now when wearing a face mask has become the new normal for at least the next few years. The world has clearly changed.

### Good to know

Vistaprint India, an e-commerce platform for custom printing services, has unveiled Covid-19 templates and face masks online. The designs of the printed face mask templates showcase vital health and safety information. Says Bharath Sastry, CEO of Vistaprint India, "These include compelling illustrations and messages that are very easy to customise like how to observe preventive measures like social distancing, washing hands thoroughly... We believe that this initiative will help further in



Women in Charoti making masks

people staying safe and coming out of this challenging period unscathed."

HipCouch, an interior design walk-in booths for coronavirus tests. The Covid-19 kiosks allow contactless safe collection of samples from an acrylic, aluminium and particle board, where a doctor/technician can put hands through the two holes in the façade using arm-length gloves and safely collect samples under five minutes. Says Pankaj Poddar, the co-founder of HipCouch, "Apart from the speed of sample collection, these booths are also being used by the hospitals to provide more PPEs to healthcare workers who are working in the field and have higher direct exposure."

