

Not Your Grandparents' Wallpaper

02/17/2022 by Keith Twitchell (<https://www.bizneworleans.com/author/keith-twitchell/>)



For all the glory of New Orleans architecture, most people lavish far more attention on the interiors of their homes than the exteriors. In fact, for some folks managing every detail of every wall, every piece of furniture, every single inside space is an obsession.

Count Nomita Joshi-Gupta, principal of Spruce, among the obsessed. In fact, she proclaims this affliction proudly on the website of her wallpaper, fabric and interior design studio.

“I love working in design,” she affirmed. “I live and breathe it. I can spend hours researching new product lines. I really love interior environments”

Joshi-Gupta brings a whole-structure perspective to her work, having graduated from the LSU School of Architecture and worked for several area architectural firms. However, she had a lifelong passion for interior design, and like so many people, after Hurricane Katrina she revisited her path.

“Our house flooded, we had to redo and rethink everything,” she recalled. “I wanted to use new materials, take a more sustainable approach. After researching all the information, I thought maybe I should just have my own resource store.”

She opened Spruce in 2008 as a retail storefront and interiors resource, with an emphasis on sustainable products. But when the big box stores and then online retailers proliferated, she found that she simply could not continue with such a general focus. The result was streamlining down to wallpaper and fabrics, and providing the design services to maximize their impact and value.

“Shockingly, when I changed my trajectory and had this narrower focus, people and projects just started pouring in,” recounted Joshi-Gupta.



Nomita Joshi-Gupta

That focus begins with that most misunderstood aspect of interior design: wallpaper.

“Wallpaper is an old and decorative art that somehow fell out of favor in the U.S. in the 1990s,” she explained. “But wallpaper is transformative. You can find something that fits your personality and your vision for your home, that makes a statement about your style. Like art, wallpaper is personal.”

Joshi-Gupta seeks out boutique and one-of-a-kind vendors from all over the world to supply her studio, and the resulting line of products is definitely not the wallpaper of generations past. Nor is it used simply to create a background for the entirety of an interior. Papering one wall, or even a section of a wall, can create what she described as “a focal point in a room. You can use it on ceilings,” she continued. “It can be a texture rather than a pattern. It can be like art on your walls.”

She also noted that most people do not immediately apply wallpaper throughout their homes. “Ninety percent of the time, the powder room comes first. Second would be a feature wall in a bedroom.”

Today's products are more sustainable than wallpapers of the past, which were not always made of the best materials and could even be harmful to both people and houses. It can be as or more durable than paint, and often is more easily cleaned. However, Joshi-Gupta highly recommends hiring a professional to install it. "Hanging wallpaper is an art in itself," she commented. "Doing it yourself makes for a time-consuming and difficult project."

The other featured product at Spruce is fabric. "Textiles and wallpaper go hand in hand in terms of decorating the house," said Joshi-Gupta, citing upholstery, draperies and bedding as examples of how fabric choices accent the overall interior look. Spruce's fabric offerings are similarly varied and sustainable.

With so many options for recreating interiors, both residential and commercial, Joshi-Gupta's interior design services become even more valuable. She helps her clients clarify the look they want to create, then guides them through the process of selecting styles, colors and installation points to achieve the desired effects.

"Wallpaper has come a long way, and I think it is here to stay," she stated. "We place so much importance on artistry, on making spaces that are different and creative and unique. Making that happen is what I really enjoy in my work."

Spruce is open by appointment only; these can be made on their website, www.sprucenola.com (<https://www.sprucenola.com/>)

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