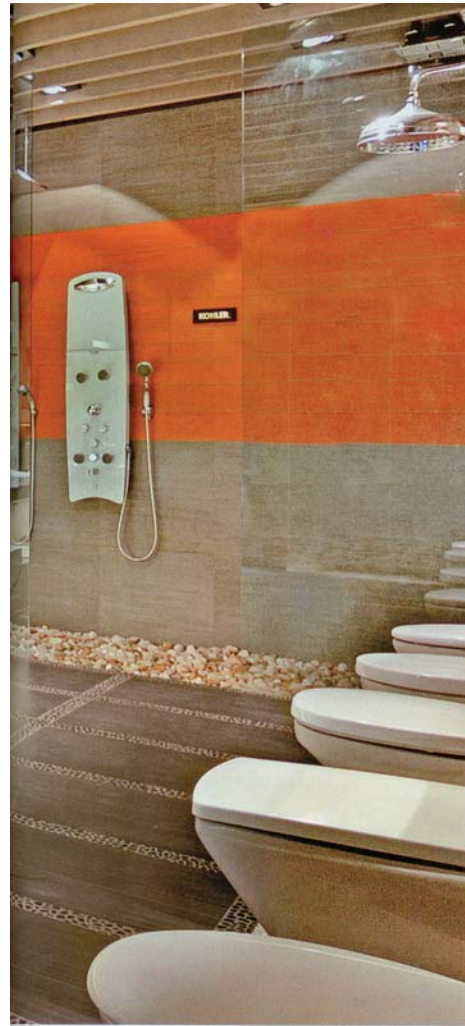


PURE TOUCH

DIPEN GADA & ASSOCIATES GAVE KOHLER'S FIRST RETAIL OUTLET IN BARODA A TOUCH OF THE RAW AND THE natural, using earthy palettes and untreated finishes. Here, tiles advertise, delineate spaces and provide a clutter-free display, giving a meditative, contemporary ambience

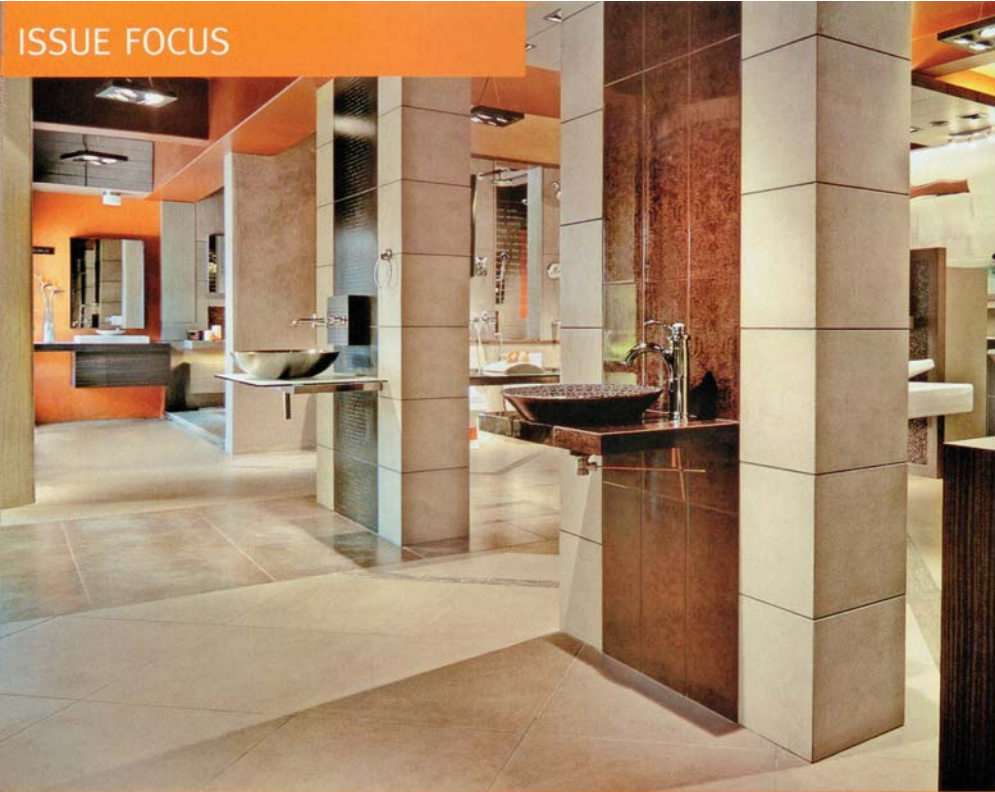


Dipen Gada and Devang Patel of DGA (Dipen Gada & Associates), who designed Kohler's first retail outlet in Baroda took the 1,025 sq ft space and used raw, organic and pure elements to create a unique aesthetic. The designers incorporated traditional materials and contemporary techniques to showcase the brand. What they achieved was a warm, meditative space that marked a departure from the cold, sterile feel of sanitaryware.

Mud was the material of choice for the showroom,

Vitrified matte-finish tiles are used in combination with border and mosaic tiles to provide visual relief

since it's the base ingredient used in most sanitaryware. The concept was to draw up extremes in contrast between the earthy palettes and raw finishes used with the fine finish of the ceramicware on display. Budget constraints allowed the designers to take the raw theme into the walls and the floor-



The organic feel to the store comes with the textured plaster on walls and earthy tones of terracotta and coffee-brown finishes

Mud was the elemental inspiration to contrast the raw finishes on the walls with the fine finish of the ceramicware

ing: They were able to avoid creating a false ceiling while the POP (plaster of paris)—used to impart a polished look—was kept off the walls. Instead, the walls were treated directly with paint on textured plaster.

Walls were clad in cement sheets while earthy colours in terracotta and coffee brown were used as finishing materials. Tiles were used extensively in the flooring, and this couldn't have been a better advertising strategy. Some of the exclusive tiles used in the showroom are straight out of the client's tile showroom, 'Bathworld'.

Vitrified tiles with a matte finish were used in combination with border tiles as well as mosaic tiles. The designers defined spaces for specific products; these were visually demarcated using tiles that gave visual relief and made it easy for a visitor to evaluate the products on display. Level

differences were also delineated through tiles, which meant that the showroom achieves a de-cluttered feel, although the range of display is huge.

Another highlight of the design is the clever use of graphic panels as one enters the showroom. Glass panels with film scripting, interspersed between columns, tell the visitor about Kohler's history and its corporate philosophy. Live shower and Jacuzzi displays enhance the waterborne experience. Finally, the showroom gets a spa feel with its lighting, strategically focused on the products. Since the showroom is located in the basement, it lacks natural light. To counter this, the designers introduced a huge vertical glass window at the entrance. Light slits on vertical windows also provide a good source of lighting.

Dipen says, "This project stands out from our regular projects where high-end finishes are employed in the interiors. The simple, clean and pure forms achieved here are an experiment with rawness, all the while maintaining a contemporary look." A walk through the showroom will testify to this statement.