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Shift From White Minimalism

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Salons, till early 21st century, had mostly been about selling good looks. They have gradually evolved with the pace of altering lifestyle and work culture in cities. Today, they are breathing pockets for those who occupy chaotic cities and live a muddled desk life.

Today's design serves the user more than the brand. The entry of brands in the beauty industry has dissolved the boundaries between functionality and user experience as they demand customised corners within the salon. Minimalism and a muted white palette were the consequences of this trend. Accent white lighting, white plastered and unadorned clinic-like furniture defined salon design for a while, wherein the brand identity determined the process of design exploration driving the theme and colour palette. While spatial arrangement was the first victim of the misunderstood minimalism; functionality and space organisation were also often misunderstood and one had

to accommodate the maximum number of activities in a linear volume with no concept of zoning, which only created chaos. The design scope confined to give opulence only to the styling section. As a result, the working environment was not a part of design intervention, which began to impact well-being and productivity. Further, the trend of bright hue lighting that is used for brand display scatters the focus as well as reflects the flaws on skin, thus making a person look unhealthy. Though this concept helps the brands, it moves away from the user experience.

Environmental damage is a major flaw of this style due leverage of concrete, artificial lighting, and cooling techniques. Transportation, execution and maintenance of these rarely available materials leave a destructive carbon foot print. Fumes from paints and varnishes not only ruin the aura of salon it causes irreversible damage to environment.

Design language, however, is fluid and flows in the direction of thought. Since salons started leading the beauty industry and became more approachable to everyone, quality of service defined the standards of a salon. They are no more just beauty parlours, but wholesome experiences that evoke peace of mind. Importance of customer experience made thought process more logical and gave birth to the semi industrial style that transitions design for every function. Elaborate play of exposed brick walls, metal frames and exposed ducts work in some cases to define the notion. Semi industrialism is a low maintenance alternative

for salon industry. Materials are intact for a longer time and restricts dust to themselves. Varnishing stays for much longer period, when redone material absorbs their fumes. Materials support interior landscaping and hence monthly mould check is no longer an issue.

High innovative ceilings dramatise the volume and encourages creative and open thinking. Ply and batons used to divide space break the monotony and integrate an earthy palette in design. Flooring has clear, calming patterns that do not overthrow the concept. Use of diversified material support a better functional design. Exquisite metal trellis with customised patterns, lend essence to the theme. Brick walls helps in concealing the casual interaction between hairdresser and customer. As an endeavour to render the salon experience, brands are confined

to opulent, but concealed corners. Natural rough textures of wood and coarse metal, being a feature of antiquity, are untouched as they invoke nostalgia. Metal, brick and wooden palettes can welcome collaboration of numerous décor styles and are flexible to any theme.

Revolution of lighting design is a major component; warm and neutral tones of lighting have come into play in order to add to the aura of salon. Natural light is now a compulsion as it eases the mood and connects one to the nature giving a sense of assurance. Accent lighting in tones that coalesce into the theme is restricted to the brand display.

Ceiling, in this style, has a freedom to epitomise the theme. Parametric and organic designs started to render the boring square ceiling. Trend of transparent salons being prominent, bespoke ceiling designs tend to narrate the story and uniqueness of the salon.

Despite this, minimalistic approach still has a chance to revert due to builders' disregard towards customisation



of space as it has limited real estate value and salon operators' intent of overselling brands. High end salons, on the other hand, adapted to this trend expressing their standards by better experience and unique themes that are mark of their brand. When design does not serve the user, it rebels effecting the yield of its function. A full retrospect of salon design is a perfect example this principle. A utilitarian space speaks for itself and should be the aim of design.

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