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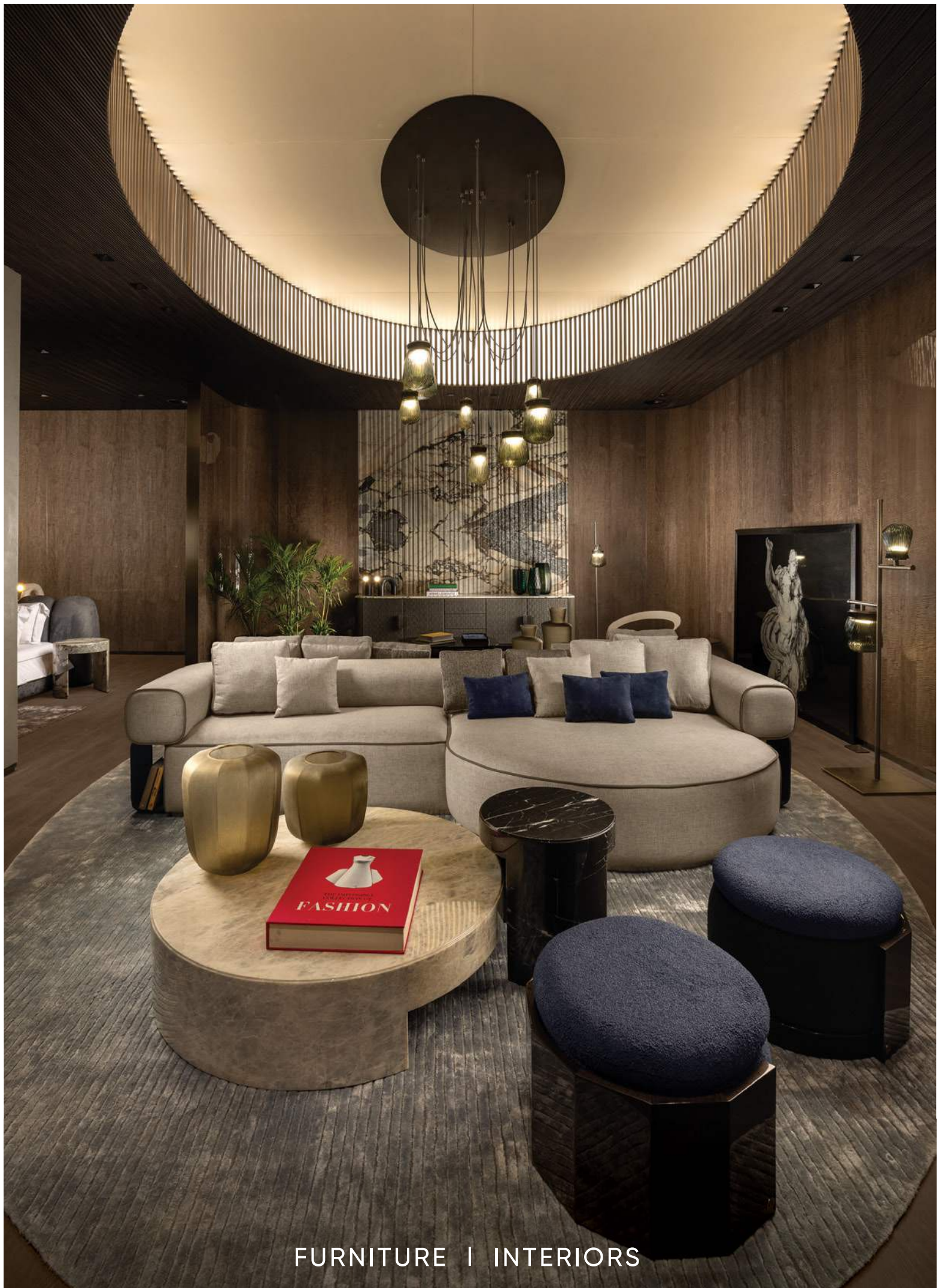
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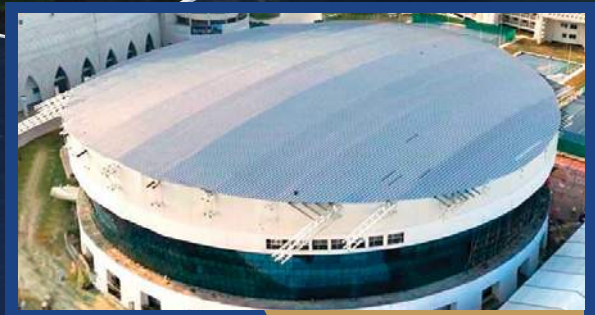
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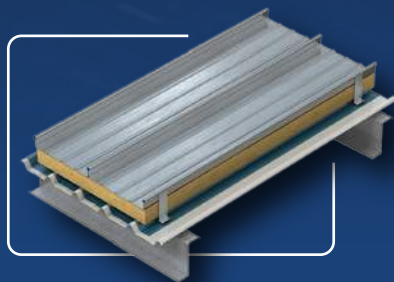
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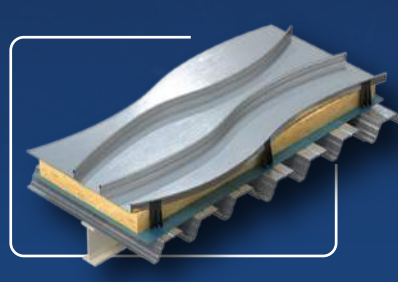
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FOREWORD



What a journey it has been! Architecture+Design is turning 41 this year, and we can't help but feel immensely proud of our legacy over these four decades.

As we mark this 41st milestone anniversary, we're taking our mission forward with not one, but two special issues. First up, with "Top 50" Architects, Designers and Practices of India. It's our way of giving recognition to the creative visionaries who've been consistently pushing boundaries and shaping the distinct "India Design Identity" through their work.

Our second commemorative "Design Dialogues," we're sparking engaging conversations by going straight to the source - insights from the brilliant design community itself. Let's face it, nothing shapes the world we live in more than the built environment and how it interacts with its surroundings - from the homes we live in, to the offices we work in, to the infrastructure that keeps societies running. In this issue, we've brought together expert voices across the AID community for candid dialogues unpacking nuances of design philosophies.

With each anniversary that passes, we renew our driving mission to be the definitive voice for the industry. As we look back at 41 years of leading design conversations, we're also excited to forge ahead as pioneers shaping a more sustainable, inclusive and human-centric future for the built world. Join us in raising a toast to the power of design.

(Sonal Das)

Director — Editorial and Brand Solutions

Lighting brilliance for iconic facades

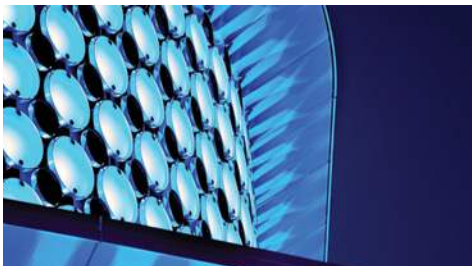


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“The mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own, we have no soul of our own civilization.”

—Frank Lloyd Wright

As we celebrate our 41st anniversary, we shine the spotlight on the top 50 architectural practices in India that have played a role in defining the identity of our civilisation. Unarguably, this has been one of the most challenging issues to curate. As we clinked our glasses to celebrate 41 glorious years as chroniclers of design, we also embarked on the herculean task of shining the spotlight on the top 50 practices in India. A task, it was. To find the best, amongst the best!

To quote architect Mariam Kamara, “Architecture is the stage on which we live our lives!” Aren't we all living in the physical manifestations of the imaginations of a designer, architect or an urban planner? And it seems fitting that we celebrate the names who matter—the names that are building the design identity of our ecosystem, and our civilisation. From giving a vision to our dreams when it comes to our personal spaces, to reimagining urban cityscapes, to experimenting with new materials and envisioning a more sustainable future, the architects and designers featured in this list have left an indelible mark on the built environment.

Here's us raising a toast to our design visionaries, the names who are defining the visual identity of the world we live in. Join us in lauding their impeccable vision and mastery over their art. And considering how crippled we felt in choosing 50 names this year, I'm manifesting the A+D Top 100 for our next anniversary!

Happy Reading!

(Seema Sreedharan)

Editor



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2013, Elite Elevators isn’t just a company; it’s a promise of safety and cutting-edge technology, all integrated into one’s home. From the renowned German engineering of TK Access Solutions to the groundbreaking in-house innovations of the X series, they have been at the forefront of revolutionising the home elevator industry. With operations spanning across India, Malaysia, UAE and Australia, they have touched the lives of over 3000 families, transforming mere



“

Our goal is to offer our customers a home elevator that is safe to use, technologically sound, energy efficient and stylish.”

—VIMAL BABU
Founder and CEO, Elite Elevators

houses into personalised sanctuaries. X300, the latest masterpiece from Elite Elevators is designed, engineered and manufactured in India. With its dynamic motor, operating at twice the speed of regular lifts, and a gearless belt drive ensuring a smooth ride, the X300 is the epitome of comfort and performance. But what truly sets the X300 apart is its groundbreaking features. From multi-performance options to the largest cabin-to-shaft ratio; every detail has been meticulously crafted to provide users with a bespoke ride experience. Magnetic driven rails, error notification systems and CANbus connectivity ensure not just convenience but peace of mind. And then there is X300 Plus, offering a plethora of customisable features, from personalised floor names to custom background music. But Elite Elevators doesn’t just stop at elevators; it redefines the very spaces they inhabit. Enter the Xshaft, a supporting structure designed to complement the X300. In a world where every detail matters, Elite Elevators believe that luxury should be both accessible and exquisite. With the X300 leading the charge, the future of home living has never looked more promising.

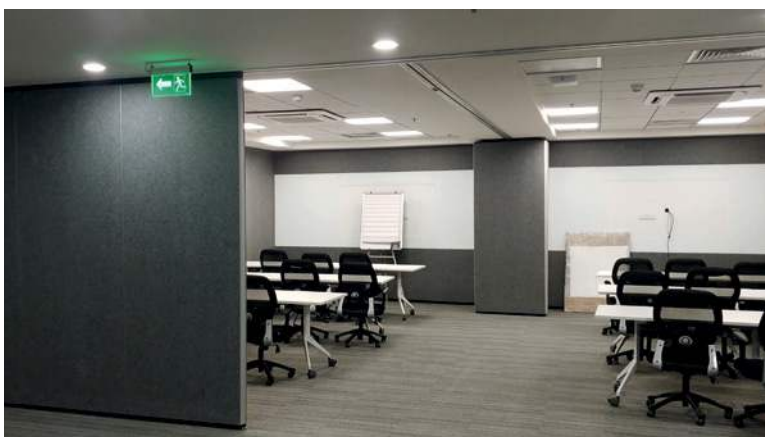
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Balancing Sustainability and Comfort: The Art of Upkeeping Sustainable Homes

Building a sustainable home is not just a trendy choice but a responsible and essential step towards a greener and more eco-conscious future. Here's how to build a sustainable home.



A sustainable home, also known as a green or eco-friendly home, is a residential dwelling designed and built with a focus on minimizing its environmental impact and promoting sustainable practices. These homes are constructed and operated in a way that conserves energy, reduces resource consumption, and minimizes waste generation. Building a sustainable home involves more than just using sustainable materials and goods, it also involves, sustainable maintenance techniques.

Here are a few options you can start with to create your sustainable home.

Bamboo: Bamboo is a versatile material that may be used for structural components, wall panels, flooring, and more. Known for its strength and endurance, bamboo is an ideal replacement for traditional hardwood, which contributes to deforestation. Bamboo has become a popular sustainable building material because of its quick growth and adaptability.

Low VOC Paints: Traditional paints and varnishes emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can be dangerous to human health and contribute to indoor air pollution. Low VOC paints contain substantially less of these harmful chemicals. By using the low-

VOC paint options from Nippon Paint, homeowners can improve the quality of the air within their homes, reduce health risks for inhabitants, and reduce the release of dangerous substances into the environment.

Insulation solutions: Here are some eco-friendly insulation options for your home that will help you keep it well-insulated to keep out the heat in the summer and keep the heat in during the winter. High thermal performance is offered by cellulose insulation created from recycled paper, which also reduces waste by reusing materials. Wool insulation is manufactured from natural sheep's wool, which is renewable, biodegradable, and requires less energy to produce than synthetic alternatives. Recycled denim insulation provides effective thermal and acoustic insulation while preventing waste from ending up in landfills. You can also opt for the PU Foam by Nippon Paint; that applies like foam but hardens into a thermocol-like substance that can be cut with a knife.

Water-Based Adhesives and Sealants: Traditional adhesives and sealants frequently have high solvent concentrations and hazardous substances. Water-based substitutes are a better choice for the environment. These

adhesives and sealants have a low VOC level and barely any environmental impact. While reducing installation-related health concerns and air pollution, they provide dependable bonding and sealing capabilities.

Energy saving solutions: With the rise of a 'Global Boiling' era, it's no surprise that our summers are getting hotter year-by-year. The harsh summers always result in electricity bills that put a hole in your pocket with fans and air conditioners being constantly in use. Using a cool roof coating like the Nippon Paint Walltron Hydrosshield Damproof on your roof can help reduce the temperature up to 10 degrees. This results in a cooler house thereby saving energy and that hefty bill.

Natural Oils: Eco-friendly preservatives are alternatives to potentially hazardous chemical treatments for wood. Treatments based on borate efficiently protect wood against fungi and insects while being safe for both people and animals. They have minimal environmental impact and may be applied on both indoor and outdoor wood. Construction-related wood is susceptible to insect and microbial deterioration. Therefore, eco-friendly wood treatments are required.

In conclusion, building a sustainable home is not just a trendy choice but a responsible and essential step towards a greener and more eco-conscious future. By embracing eco-friendly materials and maintenance techniques, homeowners can significantly reduce their environmental footprint and contribute to a healthier planet. As we move towards a more sustainable future, let us strive to incorporate these eco-friendly practices into our homes, setting a positive example for others and collectively making a significant impact on the global effort to protect our environment.

Together, let's build a world where homes are not just shelters but harmonious coexistence with nature, creating a better, greener, and more sustainable tomorrow for all.

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AN ICONIC TUNNEL GETS A LIGHT MAKEOVER

Signify's intervention with the 2nd Street Tunnel in Los Angeles is a study in architectural lighting solutions



The renowned 2nd Street Tunnel, originally built to relieve the notorious Los Angeles traffic congestion, is one of the most filmed and recognisable locations in the city. The City of Los Angeles Bureau wanted to create space at the tunnel's entrance that would provide more flexible lighting options for film production and engage the residents. The intent was to simultaneously recreate historical lighting and provide dramatic colour lighting inside the west end entrance of the tunnel.

Signify teamed up with Forman & Associates to create the light display. It is designed to boost local engagement, such as celebrate sporting team victories or holidays. "There is a lot of history associated with the project. The tunnel has been functional from 1924. It has been around for a long time. It was



Brian Ellsworth, Forman & Associates



Barry LeFave, Forman & Associates

initially built to alleviate the Los Angeles traffic. An interesting part of the history is the fact that they use glazed white tiles which was imported from a factory in Germany. This led to quite a controversy because it was during World War One," informs Brian Ellsworth of Forman & Associates. "We have worked on a lot of other projects, Coronado Bridge, UCLA - Royce Hall, USC - Joseph Medicine Crowe, Paramount Theatre at Paramount Theater, Warner Bros Studios - Water Tower, Paramount Pictures - Water Tower, KCRW Performance Studio, Disney Studios Water Tower, Theatre of Disappearance, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, but the history associated with this project makes it iconic."

Signify helped create lighting for the city's day-to-day traffic flow and operations with its Lumec Tunnelview



and Renaissance LED pendant to illuminate the open, Figueroa side of the tunnel. Together, the fixtures give the tunnel a vintage LA aesthetic, while improving the safety and coverage of the tunnel.

The tunnel, while it features in movies and is used as a backdrop for many performances, is still functional, and the primary purpose is to alleviate traffic. The challenge was to marry the functional as well as aesthetic aspects. "The tunnel lighting is all 3000K using the RN20's and the TunnelView's. When the Color Kinetics Color Blast Intellihue are activated for general illumination, they are at 3000K. The TunnelView fixtures are dimmed to a minimum level creating the correct lighting levels for standard traffic. The default color on the white columns outside the tunnel is 3000K

white. Static color shows are permissible on the white columns with active traffic. Moving color shows are only permissible when permitted by the city for film and television productions with no active traffic in the tunnel," explains Barry LeFave of Forman & Associates. "The ColorBlast fixture is incredibly unique in light mixing technology and allows us to punch light down the columns. The second fixture used on this project is the Vaya Tube, RGB which had unbelievable impact on the overall look of the project. When we turned those on, it was quite a revelation," adds Brian.

"I am proud of the collaboration between all parties with Forman & Associates at the center of it all. The city electricians did an amazing job of taking the beautiful design of conduit runs and fixture placements

and making it a reality. I am most proud of getting to work with an amazing project team, overcome technical challenges as a team, and give the City of Los Angeles an amazing state of the art lighting installation on an iconic location," concludes Barry. The tunnel was always iconic for more reasons than one. But with this intervention it became integral to the social fabric of the city. "On the evening, we did the commissioning and programming of the lighting, there were residents from nearby buildings who walked through the tunnel and saw the lighting. They commented on how they felt safer with the new lighting. Their other comment was how happy all of us on the project team looked. The power of colored light to generate an emotional response cannot be understated."

A SECRET LAIR

A resort nestled in the wilderness of Jim Corbett, ZANA draws inspiration from an English country house



Tucked amid the untamed beauty of Jim Corbett, where the air is thick with the whispers of ancient trees and the fleeting presence of wildlife, lies ZANA - A Luxury Escape. When at Jim Corbett, one is surrounded by the mystery and allure of the wilderness, feeling the rush of excitement at the prospect of spotting a tiger. It is a feeling that resonates deeply with the spirit of ZANA, a name synonymous with opulence and exclusivity in the heart of nature's embrace. ZANA Luxury Resorts has woven its magic once again with its newest gem, located in Dhikuli, Jim

Corbett. The property transports one to an English country house, set against the stunning backdrop of the Himalayas. The architecture has a European flair – think wood cladding, shingle roofs and stonework, all enveloped in the embrace of sprawling gardens and woodland. Just a brief jaunt from the Jim Corbett National Park, the property offers 57 strategically appointed rooms and cottages. The culinary delights complement the natural splendour surrounding the resort. The resort's name, inspired by the rare purple lily, signifies its uniqueness – much like the elusive tiger prowling through

Corbett's dense forests. ZANA Luxury Resorts made its debut in 2022 with the ZANA Lake Resort in Udaipur, followed by the ZANA Forest Resort in Ranthambore. Each property, like a majestic tiger, embodies a rare blend of grace and power. If Jim Corbett evokes the thrill of spotting a tiger, then ZANA encapsulates that same exhilaration in its promise of luxury and adventure.

Website: www.zanaresorts.com

Contact No.: 7838203203

Email: reservations@zanaresorts.com

Website: zanaresorts.com



ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN
AN INDIAN JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE

TOP FIFTY

"Architecture is the learned game, correct and magnificent, of forms assembled in the light." - Le Corbusier. These pearls of wisdom emphasise architecture as an intellectual pursuit that requires extensive learning and adherence to specific principles, while also allowing for creative magnificence.

In celebration of our 41st anniversary, Architecture+Design is proud to present the top 50 architects in India who have navigated this labyrinth, emerging victorious with exceptional work that has redefined the nation's architectural landscape. Through a comprehensive evaluation of their recent projects, accolades, and industry impact, we have curated a collection of India's brightest architectural minds. These firms and individuals have been recognised for their unwavering commitment to excellence, garnering accolades that underscore their mastery of form, function, and aesthetics. Whether reimagining urban cityscapes or crafting sustainable sanctuaries amidst natural wonders, the architects featured in this list have left an indelible mark on the built environment. Join us as we celebrate their groundbreaking achievements and explore the culmination of their visionary brilliance.

ABHA NARAIN LAMBAH ASSOCIATES

ABHA NARAIN LAMBAH

Pioneering architectural conservation since 1998, this firm priorities sustainability and resilience in all their projects



Photo Credits: Abha Narain Lambah Associates

Standing as a beacon of architectural excellence, Abha Narain Lambah Associates specialises in architectural conservation, building restoration and retrofit, museum design and more. Their endeavors have spanned across various heritage sites in India, from ancient Buddhist enclaves to colonial legacies and modern marvels. Guided by the ethos of societal contribution, they prioritise sustainability and resilience in every project. “Preservation of our heritage is

vital; it links us to the past and lays the foundation for the future,” says Abha Narain Lambah. Their collaborative efforts extend beyond design, integrating CSR initiatives and promoting traditional crafts to empower local artisans. Recognised with 13 UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards and numerous accolades, their journey is defined by a commitment to excellence and a vision for a more culturally vibrant and sustainable future.





“

Collaboration was key in this endeavour. Partnerships with corporates, citizen groups and local associations provided invaluable support, emphasising the communal significance of cultural preservation.”

—**ABHA NARAIN LAMBAH**, Principal Architect, Abha Narain Lambah Associates

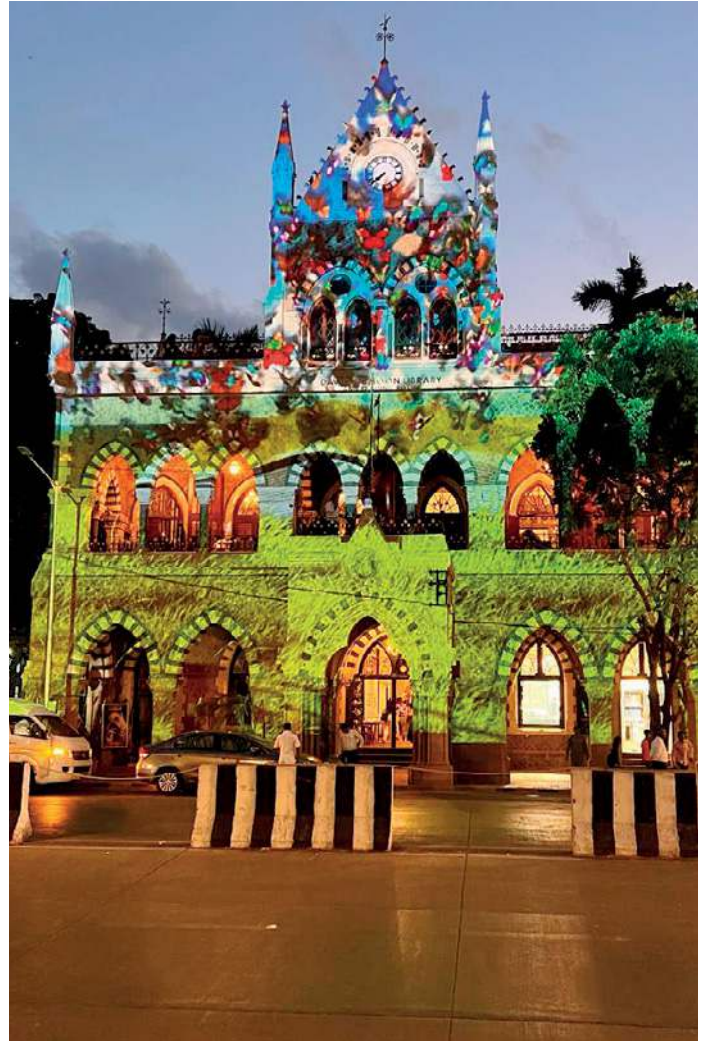
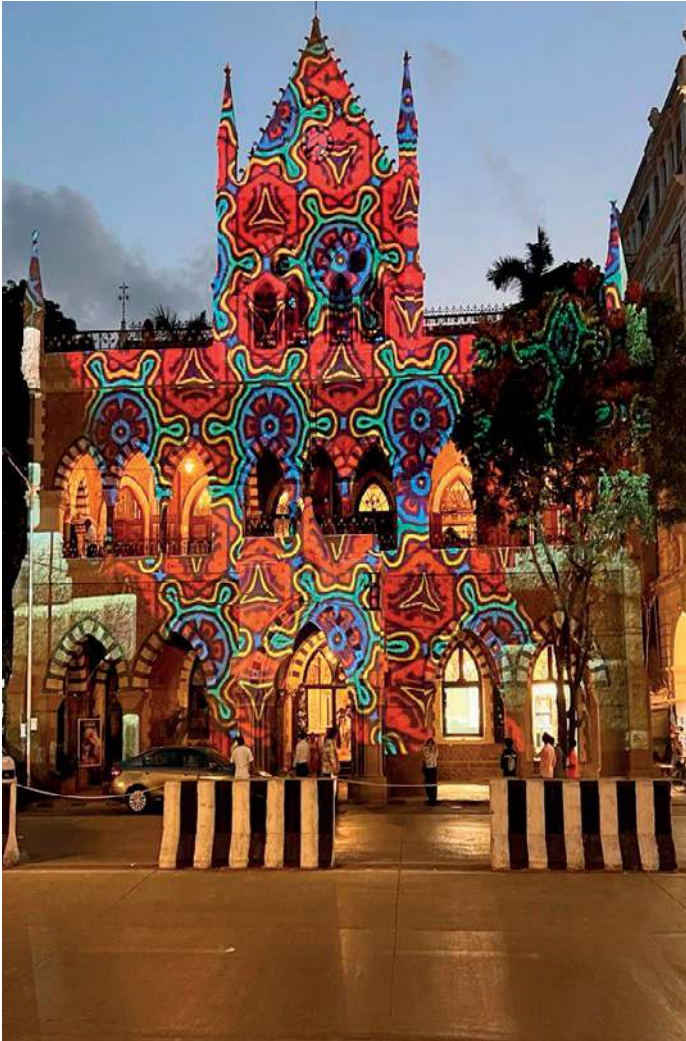


Photo Credits: Abha Narain Lambah Associates

PROJECT IN FOCUS - DAVID SASSOON LIBRARY AND READING ROOM

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Typology: Public

Year of completion: 2023

Design Concept: A heritage building restoration based on extensive archival research

What we heart: The restored sloping roof

The David Sassoon Library and Reading Room, a jewel nestled in Mumbai’s Kala Ghoda neighborhood, stands as a tribute to the Victorian Gothic architecture. Dating back over 150 years, it proudly holds the title of the oldest structure within the esteemed UNESCO World Heritage Site of the “Victorian & Art Deco Ensembles of

Mumbai.” Recognised locally and nationally as a Grade I heritage building, its restoration became a labour of love for Abha Narain Lambah Associates. Archival research revealed fascinating insights, guiding the team to reconstruct the original sloping roof, a feature lost to a later-added concrete slab. The Venetian Gothic style is characterised by intricate stone carvings and a cantilever stone staircase leading to the reading room. Sustainability was at the forefront of the restoration efforts. Lightweight materials such as die-cast aluminum were employed for cresting and finials, marrying structural integrity with environmental responsibility. This restoration is more than just preservation, it represents a commitment to honouring the past while embracing a sustainable future for Mumbai’s architectural treasures. ✚

Website: www.anlassociates.com

ABIN DESIGN STUDIO

ABIN CHAUDHURI

This Kolkata-based studio's work focuses on the idea of holistic design and is known for its experiments with materials and technology, and engaging with art and culture



Photo Credit: Sandeep Sarkar

Architect and Founder Abin Chaudhuri believes that architecture is an artistic expression as far as it transcends its purely utilitarian, technical, and rational realm, and turns into a metaphoric expression of the lived world, human condition, and context. "Our aim is to provide soul in the shell," says Architect Abin Chaudhuri. "At ADS, we believe that architecture is not merely about creation; it is a search. With the ever-evolving human existence, there arises a spatial demand, and the purpose of architectural design is to embark on a search to fulfil such a demand. At the same time, the human experience of 'life' starts with an emotional investment into the land we inhabit—we don't just exist on it but rather, co-exist in our communities, and it is for this reason that the architecture we use must spill beyond the walls and embrace the neighbourhoods they are in".

PROJECT IN FOCUS - SWARNIM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Location: Kolkata

Typology: Institution

Year of Completion: 2022

Design Concept: Modern and minimalistic yet standout design interludes.

What we Hear: The use of bold colours, unique design features, and seamless integration of interior and exterior spaces.

The school's design aims to create a harmonious and stimulating learning environment that prioritizes student engagement and well-being. While the overall massing sees a "tetris-stacking" of sorts, a harmonious composition of blocks exudes a dominative yet protective sense. The facade seems proud in its surrounding but on entering, becomes a C-shaped plan, skirting the field and playground. It is designed with a modern and minimalistic approach to create a sleek and cohesive design. The building's jali facade, highlighted in red, adds a characteristic element to the design. Functionally, it enables cross ventilation and an exciting play of light and shadow that is dynamic with the movement of the sun as the day progresses. ✚

Website: www.abindesignstudio.com



“

At ADS, we believe that architecture is not merely about creation; it is a search. With the ever-evolving human existence, there arises a spatial demand, and the purpose of architectural design is to embark on a search to fulfil such a demand.”

—**ABIN CHAUDHURI**, Principal and Founder Director, Abin Design Studio



Photo Credits: Niveetaa Gupta

AK ENTERPRISES

AMIT MAITRA AND KALLOL BAROI

This dynamic firm harnesses the collective strengths of a diverse team with backgrounds in architecture, engineering, and project management to deliver innovative and tailored design solutions

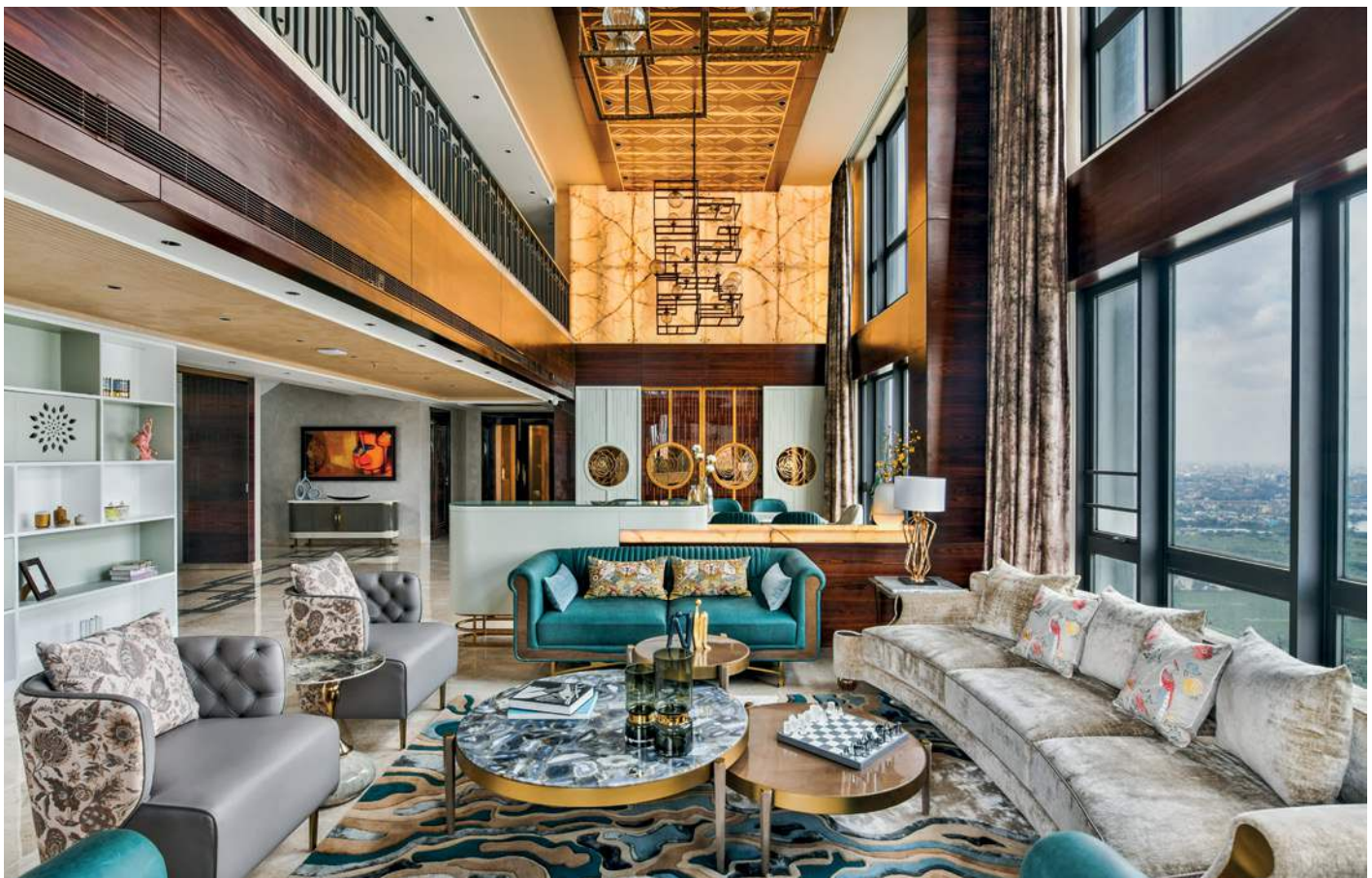


Photo Credits: Studio SP Photography

Founded on April 7th, 2005, A K Enterprises emerged as a collaborative venture driven by a vision to leverage individual strengths and advance the realm of design and construction. The symbiotic partnership between Amit and Kallol, two dynamic professionals with extensive experience in architectural interior design and execution, laid the foundation for a powerhouse team. "Fueled by our collective expertise, A K Enterprises swiftly expanded its offerings to encompass comprehensive Design, Turnkey Solutions, and Project Management services, catering to the evolving needs of the industry," shares Kallol Baroi. Today, the firm boasts a core team that embodies a diverse array of backgrounds,

including architectural interiors, civil engineering, facility management, and project management.

Design Philosophy & Approach

"By improving service standards yesterday to match the expectations of tomorrow, today, consistently and without fail' is our firm's philosophy," reveals Amit Maitra. From layout planning to project execution, the company handles every aspect, including design, detailing, and graphics. Operating from an office environment characterised by systematic processes and advanced computerisation, A K Group ensures continuous upgrading of software relevant to its core business operations.

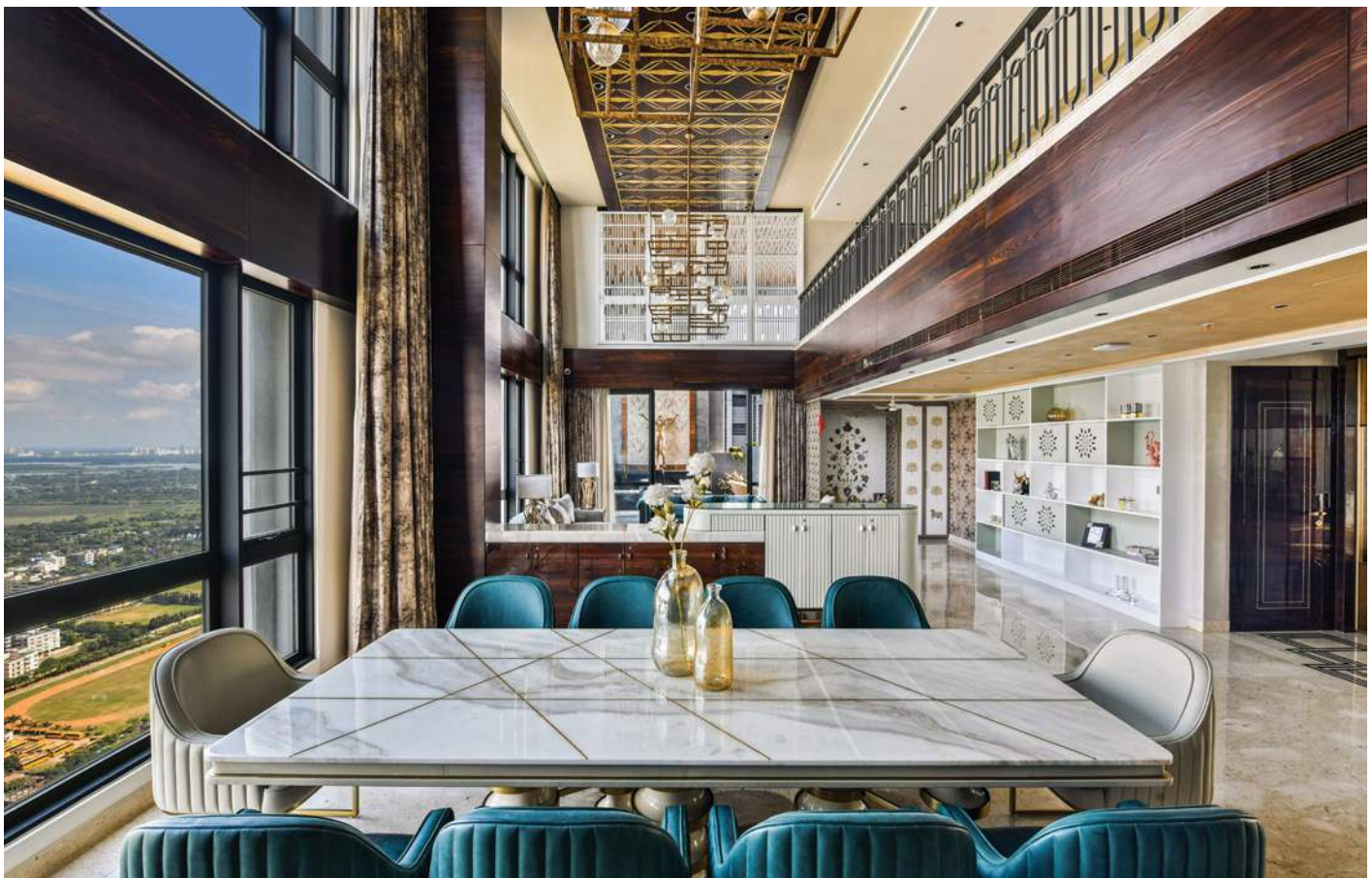




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— **AMIT MAITRA**, Co-Founder, AK Enterprises



“

Fueled by our collective expertise, AK Enterprises swiftly expanded its offerings to encompass comprehensive Design, Turnkey Solutions, and Project Management services, catering to the evolving needs of the industry.”

—**KALLOL BAROI**, Co-Founder, AK Enterprises



Photo Credits: Studio SP Photography

PROJECT IN FOCUS - DUPLEX APARTMENT

Location: Kolkata

Typology: Residential

Design Concept: Aesthetic and luxurious to ensure that both form and function harmonise

Material Palette: Combines natural elements like stone and wood with their derivatives

What we heard: The opportunity to utilise ample natural light and enjoy expansive views beyond the indoor living areas

Occupying the top floors of a prestigious luxury condominium in Kolkata's vibrant cityscape, this 8000 square foot duplex apartment exudes opulence throughout. Originally featuring a

swimming pool on the double-height open terrace, the space has been transformed into an additional living area, connected to the main level by an internal staircase. The entryway boasts a handcrafted solid wood door with distressed art finishes, seamlessly transitioning into the main living area through fabric glass doors. Leather Chester sofas, a custom upholstered sofa, and hand-tufted carpets create a cozy ambiance, complemented by existing marble floors with intricate brown marble inlay designs. Dramatic chandelier lighting and a luxurious powder room with Italian marble and intricate inlays define the living and dining spaces, perched approximately 150 meters above the bustling world below, adding to the organic, splendid environment. ✚

Website: www.akgroup.org

ARCHI HIVES

RUBY HARSHARAN SINGH, GAGAN KAUR, AND HARSHARAN SINGH

Established against the backdrop of the early nineties, Archi Hives emerges as a bastion of architectural and interior design prowess



Helmed by a cadre of eminent architects and seasoned professionals namely, Ruby Harsharan Singh, Gagan Kaur, and Harsharan Singh—this visionary firm serves as a gateway to an expansive realm of design services, offering a multifaceted approach that spans architecture, planning, and interiors across a diverse array of building types.

Design Philosophy & Approach

Under the stewardship of distinguished architects and industry veterans, the practice has forged a reputation for delivering projects of unparalleled quality, consistently surpassing client

expectations while adhering to strict timelines. Its success is underpinned by a nimble, yet meticulously organized team of creative minds, adept at augmenting their capabilities to address unique project requirements. “Over the years, we have spearheaded the development of numerous landmark projects, encompassing hospitals, factories, residences, commercial establishments, and public facilities, each a testament to the firm’s unwavering dedication to design excellence,” shares Ruby Singh, Principal Architect, proudly presenting a curated portfolio showcasing a rich tapestry of architectural marvels, offering a glimpse into their illustrious body of work.



Photo Credit: Anega Bawa Photography



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—**RUBY HARSHARAN SINGH**, Principal Architect, Archi Hives



PROJECT IN FOCUS - COUNTY 107

Location: Noida

Year of completion: 2023

Typology: Hospitality

Design Concept: Minimalistic Grandeur

Material Fusion: Marble and Metal Accents

What we heart:

Colour Palette: Earthy hues for unearthed richness

Furnishings and Decor: Beige tones with occasional bursts of colours

Within the walls of County 107 a narrative of minimalist grandeur unfolds where the fusion of marble and metal accents creates an ambiance of understated opulence. From the expansive lounges to the thoughtfully curated amenities like the spa, gym, and communal areas, every aspect of this development speaks to a refined sensibility. Beyond mere luxury, County 107 represents a harmonious blend of architectural restraint and indulgence. It reflects our evolving urban landscape, where sophistication meets functionality in a seamless fusion. ✚

Website: www.archihives.co.in

ARCHITECTURE DISCIPLINE

AKSHAT BHATT

Based in Delhi, this multi-disciplinary firm advocates progressive design for the modern world



Photo Credit: Jeeitin Sharma

Founded by Akshat Bhatt in 2007, Architecture Discipline is a New Delhi-based multidisciplinary architecture practice. The firm aspires to create environments that foster a sense of optimism for the future, bringing value to people's lives and work. Their portfolio spans varied typologies from interior projects, residences and workspaces, to retail and hospitality projects, to large-scale urban and commercial assignments. Notable projects include the Discovery Centre, a town hall for the Bhartiya City township in Bengaluru (2014), and the India Pavilion at the Hannover Messe in Germany (2015) which was adjudged the best pavilion in the 65-year history of the Messe. Critical commissions on the urban scale include JDH, an urban regeneration project within the Walled City of Jodhpur; and the Mohalla Clinics, neighbourhood-level, primary healthcare facilities for The Delhi Government.

"Our work is driven by a context-centric, rational approach, which is then defined and developed by a highly technical outlook with a focus on flexibility and longevity," says Akshat Bhatt. Elaborating further, he reveals, "I believe that by reminding ourselves that we are, through the design of every building, setting up environments for the future, we can cultivate a mindset of responsibility and foresight, ensuring that our endeavours leave a positive and lasting impact on both the planet and its inhabitants."

PROJECT IN FOCUS - RUG REPUBLIC HEADQUARTERS

Location: Okhla, New Delhi

Typology: Commercial

Year of Completion: 2020

Design Concept: Adaptive Reuse

Material Palette: Corten steel, Metal, Granite Stones

What we Hear: The sculptural inward-looking façade that shields the building from its industrial context and the helical staircase which becomes the fulcrum of the design.

The Rug Republic Headquarters, New Delhi, is an old, dilapidated structure which is given a lease of new life with minimal interventions. The building, located in the industrial hub of Okhla, is enveloped in a skin of Corten steel that protects it from its acrid context giving rise to an inward-looking structure. The design reuses the warehouse by undoing ad-hoc alterations in the building's layout and creating open-planned spaces. The building is a reflection of the current time and creates a strong impression on the onlooker. It has been designed as a protective armour offering very little views of the outside, keeping the hostile and acrid environment away. By doing so, it puts forth a pressing question "have we brought ourselves to this? And, even if we have, can we still make it interesting?" ✚

Website: www.architectediscipline.com



“

Our work is driven by a context-centric, rational approach, which is then defined and developed by a highly technical outlook with a focus on flexibility and longevity?”

—**AKSHAT BHATT**, Founder, Architecture Discipline



Photo Credit: Jeetin Sharma

ARCHNA AGARWAL STUDIO

ARCHNA AGARWAL

This Delhi-based multi-disciplinary firm offers an impeccable amalgamation of art and architecture in its works



A much sought-after architectural firm based in Delhi, Archna Agarwal's eponymous studio is not only known for creating aesthetically appealing spaces but also for making them stand out. The ability to go into detail and deal with complex technicalities is what makes the studio a premier architecture destination. Their extensive portfolio that ranges from high-end residences to commercial spaces are testimony to the firm's versatility. Archna is known for her attention to detail and unique design aesthetic, and this reflects in every single project of theirs.

Design Philosophy & Approach

"We create spaces that are not only aesthetically appealing but also practical. Every project designed has a unique soul that forms a network with all, living and nonliving, the tangible and the intangible," says Archna Agarwal. The design studio's projects are a journey deep into the values and culture of the people living in it, combined with superlative imagination. "We work in collaboration with the client to create their dream," she adds. Her unique design aesthetic in combination with the client's vision results in stunning design marvels.





“

We work in collaboration with the client to create their dream.”

—**ARCHNA AGARWAL**, Founder, Archna Agarwal Studio



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—ARCHNA AGARWAL, Founder, Archna Agarwal Studio



PROJECT IN FOCUS - THE COURTYARD HOUSE

Location: New Delhi

Typology: Residential

Design Concept: An amalgamation of traditional architecture and contemporary aesthetics

Material Palette: Natural materials

What we heart: The sculptural Champa tree designed by Alex Davis crafted from stainless steel with a cascading waterfall beneath, serves as the central feature, blurring the lines between nature and the artistic interior.

The client envisioned a space where the inside merged with the outdoors seamlessly. Their inspiration was the traditional courtyard house typically found in South India. However, they wanted their

home to be an amalgamation of traditional architecture and contemporary aesthetics. The three-story architectural marvel thus seamlessly blends modern luxury with the embrace of nature.

Imagine stepping into a serene oasis; a stainless-steel champa tree, its leaves a vibrant tapestry of moss, cascades over a soothing waterfall right in the heart of the home. Floor-to-ceiling windows dissolve the barrier between the meticulously landscaped garden and the expansive living space bathed in natural light. Neutral tones throughout are punctuated with bursts of emerald and ruby, echoing the surrounding greenery and creating a sophisticated yet playful ambiance. A dramatic stone wall stands in stark contrast, adding a touch of rustic elegance to this symphony of modern design. ✚

Website: www.archnaagarwal.com

ARCHOHM CONSULTS

SOURABH GUPTA

Based in Delhi, this multidisciplinary practice offers design, architecture and masterplanning expertise for projects of all scales and typologies across sectors



Archohm is a contemporary architecture and design studio addressing an array of opportunities with a responsive and responsible approach. "Our vision is to impact and inspire through architecture and design," says architect Sourabh Gupta, Founder, Archohm. Archohm's portfolio transcends scales, typologies and mediums and our scope extends right from envisioning the dream to articulating its deliverance, both in public and private realms. Archohm is committed to spreading awareness and elevating the role of design in society. Archohm aspires to be a tribe that celebrates life through design. We seek to explore directions in contemporary Indian architecture while producing contextually and climatically responsive architecture. We find ourselves building extensively for the public sector in India with a vision to impact through design."

PROJECT IN FOCUS - ARTHSHILA

Location: Okhla, New Delhi

Typology: Exhibition Space

Year of completion : 2024

Material Palette: Concrete and Corten Steel

Design Concept: Multi-use space

What we Heart: The façade which creates a rhythmic dialogue of concrete and corten steel fins. This gesture brings in the desired amount of light, a controlled view, and effective cross-ventilation.

Amongst one of Delhi's exclusive yet chaotic neighborhoods, Arthshila stands unapologetically, making an unassuming and brave statement within its urban context. Conceptually, this four-floor structure is an intense interconnected volume of voids and solids, connecting the entire building as a large functional plate. Laced with huge volumes, it houses a cafe on the ground floor, services, and an auditorium in the basement. The distribution of open & semi-open art galleries and office spaces on the upper floors follows a deliberate layout that balances functionality and aesthetics. The terrace offers an expansive area for events and seminars. The design incorporates numerous provisions to accommodate various activities. The building can itself be considered an example of 'exhibition' of 'space' with its intent at its core. The carefully curated concept, combined with the architectural form, scale, materials, and elements, bestow upon the city of Delhi and its inhabitants an unparalleled cultural center. ✚

Website: www.archohm.com



“

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— **SOURABH GUPTA**, Founder, Archohm Consults

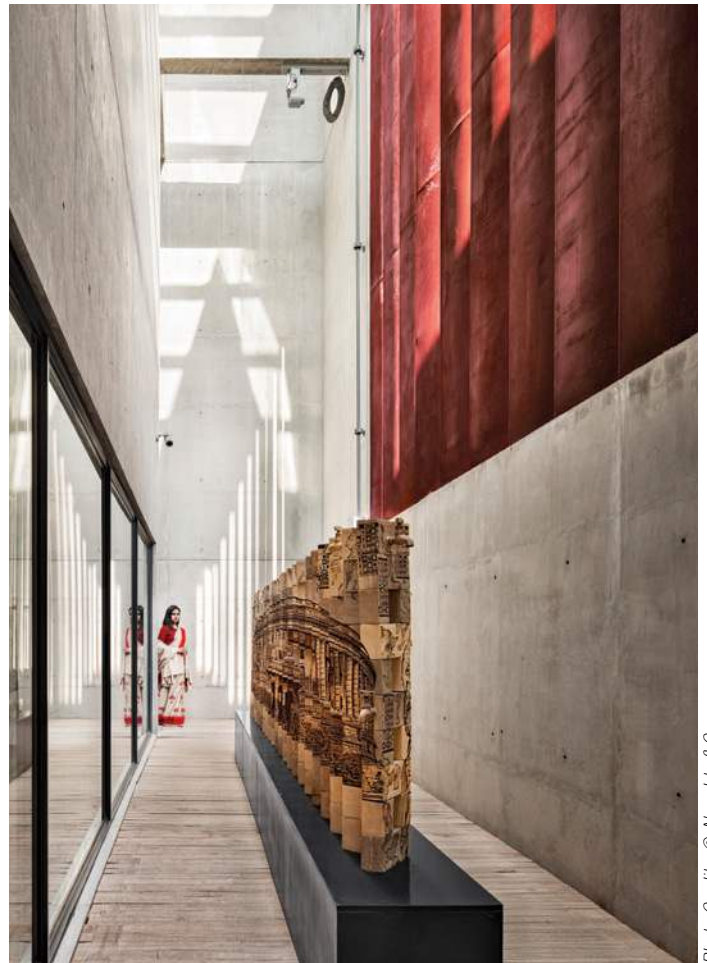


Photo Credits: © Naughtis & Crosses

ATELIER ASHIESH SHAH

ASHIESH SHAH

Beyond the facade of a mere architectural studio lies Atelier Ashiesh Shah—a quiet manifesto and unwavering commitment to gently push against the boundaries of art and design



Atelier, the brainchild of Ashiesh Shah's acclaimed architectural studio, emerged in 2017 with a bold vision to blur the lines between art and design. Serving as an extension of Shah's design ethos, Atelier Ashiesh Shah embodies a dedication to craftsmanship, experimentation, and technique, fostering a collaborative environment for creative exploration. Inspired by years of crafting bespoke furniture pieces, Shah seamlessly transitioned from interior to product design, guided by a penchant for geometry, materiality, and the elegant Wabi-Sabi aesthetic.

Rooted in sustainability and empowerment, Atelier serves as a dynamic hub where innovative minds converge to shape evolving narratives of aesthetics. Embracing Indian geometry and cosmic forms, Atelier redefines scale and elevates lesser-known crafts from across India, weaving a tapestry of culture, history, and tactile experiences into contemporary design objects. From Channapatna in Karnataka to Longpi in Meghalaya, Atelier's creations celebrate the rich diversity of India's artisanal traditions, offering a collection of functional monoforms that transcend time and tradition.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - ALTAMOUNT ROAD RESIDENCE

Location: Mumbai

Year of Completion: 2023

Typology: Residence

What we heart? Exceptional curation of furniture and art

Colour Palette: Monochromatic aesthetics with well-placed bursts of colour

Artfully curated for a family of two, this residence is a symphony of elegance and craftsmanship. Illuminated by natural light, the space effortlessly combines muted tones with handcrafted treasures, creating an ambiance reminiscent of an art gallery. Segmented into a social den and private retreat, the apartment showcases Shah's design finesse, incorporating global artistry. From Jean-François Lesage's contemporary macrame in the master bedroom to the tactile grace of the master bathroom, the space achieves a seamless fusion of minimalism and curated refinement. The dining area, adorned with dark wooden elements and exotic marble, harmoniously extends to the lush exterior. With a sophisticated blend of monochromatic aesthetics, minimalism, and well-placed bursts of color, this residence defines a refreshing and dramatic interior. ✚

Website: www.ashieshshah.com



Photo Credit: Björn Wallander

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Embracing Indian geometry and cosmic forms, Atelier redefines scale and elevates lesser-known crafts from across India, weaving a tapestry of culture, history, and tactile experiences into contemporary design objects.”

—**ASHIESH SHAH**, Principal and Founder, Atelier Ashiesh Shah



ATREY & ASSOCIATES

AR. ARUN SHARMA

This two-decade-old New Delhi-based firm has carved a niche for itself by seamlessly blending eco-consciousness with opulent aesthetics



Guided by Mies van der Rohe's famous adage, "God is in the details," Atrey & Associates meticulously crafts every project, from residential and corporate spaces to retail and hospitality environments. Their design philosophy revolves around the harmonious interplay of art, architecture, and spirituality, expressed through thoughtful use of light, materials, and architectural composition. Atrey & Associates' commitment to sustainability is unwavering. They ingeniously incorporate locally sourced, environmentally friendly materials like bamboo, ash wood, and mud bricks, creating facades that bridge the gap between exterior and interior spaces. Their interiors exude modern charm while embracing eco-conscious living, featuring wooden accents, soothing colour palettes, and tranquil water features.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - NADHYAVART

Location: Delhi

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2022

Design Concept: The seamless connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, achieved through open areas and extensive glazing

Material Palette: A sophisticated palette of grey, black, and wood

What we heart: The unique round-shaped facade, deviating from conventional rectangular structures

Amongst one of Delhi's exclusive yet chaotic neighborhoods, Nadhyavart is a stunning modern dwelling that harmoniously blends contemporary design with nature's elements. The grand double-height entrance sets the tone, juxtaposing raw, unadorned concrete with lush greenery. The unique round-shaped facade evokes continuity and harmony with its surroundings, while the concrete exterior exudes strength, and wooden accents introduce warmth and character. Nadhyavart's standout feature is its seamless integration with nature. The boundaries between inside and outside are blurred, allowing residents to feel perpetually connected to their surroundings. Large windows and glass walls flood the interior with natural light and provide breathtaking views, creating a truly awe-inspiring living space that marries modern design with natural elements. ✚

Instagram: @atreyandassociates



“

We invite you to a new realm of design fantasy, where each space tells a unique story of comfort and elegance. Here, luxury and sustainability coexist, making every corner of our creations a testament to style and environmental responsibility.”

—**AR. ARUN SHARMA**, Principal Architect - Atrey & Associates



BALAN+NAMBISAN ARCHITECTS

ARJUN NAMBISAN, ARUN BALAN AND NILANJANA ROY

Crafting emotionally resonant spaces, this firm seamlessly integrates context and craft through a collaborative design approach



Founded in 2012 as a convergence of two esteemed architectural practices and led by partners Arjun Nambisan, Arun Balan, and Nilanjana Roy, Balan + Nambisan Architects prioritises the creation of environments that evoke emotion and enhance human experience. The studio's extensive portfolio spans diverse sectors, including construction, residential, education, retail, hospitality, and community initiatives. In 2022, the firm embarked on a global foray with a focus on residential excellence in London. Over the years, Balan + Nambisan Architects has successfully delivered over 400 projects and garnered international acclaim, with their work showcased in leading publications and honored with prestigious awards.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - HOUSE OF STONE AND SCREEN

Location: Bengaluru

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2022

Material Palette: A blend of stone, metal, and wood

What we heart: The 4-storey elliptical metal and wood staircase wrapping itself around a bespoke designed elliptical glass lift within a five storey atrium

Nestled in the heart of a bustling urban landscape lies a haven of tranquility—the epitome of contemporary luxury. This custom-designed villa offers respite from the chaos outside, welcoming its inhabitants with open arms into a world of comfort and sophistication. Crafted from carefully selected materials, the villa exudes elegance with its blend of stone, metal, and wood. The comprehensive brief demanded a spacious, multi-generational home with ample entertainment spaces and privacy. The concept emerged: two wings connected by a transparent core housing communal area, seamlessly blending indoor and outdoor entertainment spaces. Integrating greenery was paramount, with verdant spaces manifested through decks, terraces, and gardens throughout. ✚

Main Contractor: Sumadhura Group

Website: www.bnarchitects.co.in



Photos by Ishita Sitwala & Styled by Samir Wadekar

CHESTNUT STOREYS

FARAH AGARWAL

Crafting contextual architectural experiences, this design and architecture firm explores the vernacular through meaningful spatial interventions and local materiality



Chestnut Storeys stands as a pinnacle of luxury design, offering avant-garde solutions for both interior and exterior spaces in residential, commercial, hospitality and retail sectors. Their expertise extends to personalised accents and reliefs, adding a touch of eclecticism to each creation. This youthful studio has revolutionised high-end living throughout India. From contemporary to art deco, they embrace a spectrum of styles, constantly experimenting to deliver innovative designs. Their philosophy revolves around crafting tasteful interiors using a wide range of resources, skillfully blending small elements with artistic nuances. Central to their approach is understanding and translating clients' visions into exquisite furniture, furnishings, and interiors, igniting inspiration for every project. Currently making waves across various Indian cities and venturing into international territory since 2020, Chestnut Storeys continues to garner acclaim for its discerning craftsmanship and visionary designs.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - RIVERVIEW APARTMENT

Location: Chennai

Typology: Residential

Design Concept: A space where diverse design preferences coexist

Material Palette: Mirror installations and bespoke brass doors in the living space

What we heard: Clean lines and neutral tones

Designing the two-story apartment for a family of four was more than just a renovation, it was about intertwining different personalities of each family member into a cohesive whole. Situated in a serene neighborhood with river views, the apartment came with a challenge of compounded family's diverse preferences for their personal spaces. The lower floor with neutral tones and clean lines is designated for public areas. Custom touches like mirrored installations and bespoke brass doors add personality while demarcating open-plan living areas. The upper floor, on the other hand, caters to private spaces, indulging each family member's interests and tastes. Throughout the apartment, a subtle unifying thread runs, connecting diverse elements through colour, art and materials. Walls that once separated now bridge. The formal living room with arches and artworks, the family room upstairs and the puja room foster relations. ✚

Website: www.chestnutstoreys.com



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Witnessing the completed project was truly rewarding. Walls that once divided were now bridges, connecting separate floors into a unified haven. This transformation echoed the true spirit of a family home: a space celebrating individuality while fostering togetherness.”

— **FARAH AGARWAL**, Founder and Principal, Chestnut Storeys



Photo Credit: Sudarshan Balaji, JanEsther Productions

CONARCH ARCHITECTS

SK GOEL

The firm's portfolio reflects its abiding desire to enrich human experience by designing spaces that express the needs, aspirations and identities of the occupants



Conarch is a Delhi-based architectural design firm founded in 1988 by Ar. S.K. Goel. The firm's portfolio reflects its abiding desire to enrich human experience, thriving on its obsession with continuously improving upon design solutions and bettering the previous best.

Design Philosophy & Approach

We seek to design spaces that consistently express the needs,

aspirations and identities of the occupants. We embrace the myriad desires of clients and project considerations to craft solutions unique to the given parameters by considering each project as a design opportunity rather than a design problem. We 'own' our projects from the day of the inception of their idea to the day they are occupied. As designers, we don't think of architecture as separate from interiors, and our approach towards space creation blurs the distinction and blends the two.

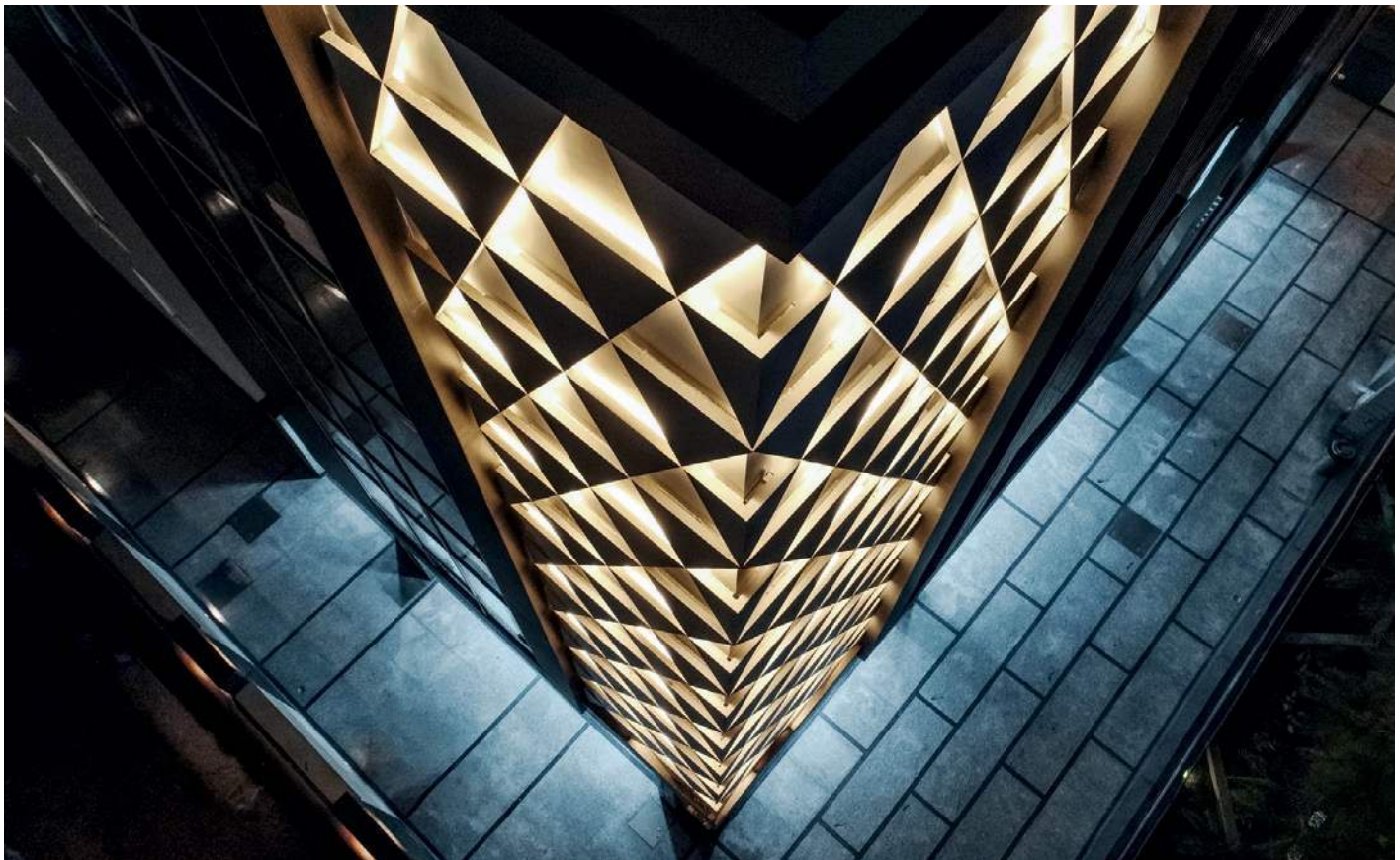




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We embrace the myriad desires of clients and project considerations to craft solutions unique to the given parameters by considering each project as a design opportunity rather than a design problem.”

—**AR. SK GOEL**, Founder, Conarch Architects



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As designers, we don't think of architecture as separate from interiors, and our approach towards space creation blurs the distinction and blends the two.”

—AR. SK GOEL, Founder, Conarch Architects



PROJECT IN FOCUS - JK HOUSE

Location: New Delhi

Typology: Institutional

Year of completion: 2020

Design Concept: The design is both functional and expressive in nature creating a positive, comfortable and productive work environment.

What we heart: Given the critical role daylight plays in the occupant's mental and physical health, a generously sized atrium was introduced in the middle to light the building from within.

Located in an uber-dense Delhi locale, JK House forms a distinct urban landmark. The building design is both functional and expressive in nature; its lively sculptural facade is rich in simplicity and proportions. The backlit geometrical surfaces transform a mundane building corner on a busy street into a point of interest and heighten the excitement of the onlooker. The

structure comprises six full storeys; floor plates are a combination of open-plan offices, individual offices, conference rooms and meeting rooms. The stilt and basement floors have service areas, breakout spaces, multipurpose halls and parking. On the floors above are the office units with meeting areas and open-space workplaces. The roof area is greened and partly designed as a roof terrace. Based on the interactions with the client, the primary goal was to create a positive, comfortable and productive work environment. Given the critical role daylight plays in the occupant's mental and physical health, a generously sized atrium was introduced in the middle to light the building from within. Low-height desk partitions, light material finishes and full-height glass partitions help daylight penetration in deeper areas of the floor plate. The building emphasizes occupant comfort with ample daylighting, natural materials, breakout spaces and a large landscaped terrace. ✚

Website: www.conarch.co

ARCHITECTURE CONTINUOUS

AR. ADITHYA KASHYAP AND AR. SHARADA SESHADRI

Crafting environments and shaping future, this Bengaluru firm blends creativity with pragmatism to design spaces that inspire and endure



Architecture Continuous approaches design with a deep-rooted passion and a commitment to excellence. The design firm's ethos is to leave a positive legacy for future generations through their deep commitment for the wellbeing of their clients in the context of the cultural setting and environmental stewardship in every project that is undertaken. With a diverse portfolio of projects spanning residential homes, group housing, hospitality, commercial, institutional, and public spaces, this award-winning firm is actively involved in a multitude of assignments across India and abroad.

Design Philosophy & Approach

The firm's design philosophy stands on a steady foundation which is a cohesive blend of creativity, dedication, teamwork and an

unwavering commitment to continuous innovation. We understand that each project is an opportunity to manifest the vision of a better and more sustainable future, resulting in spaces that not only serve practical needs but also inspire and enrich the lives of those who experience them. Our work is fuelled by a profound passion and a genuine enthusiasm for every aspect of the design and execution of each project, shares founder and director Adithya Kashyap. We look at architecture as an exciting pursuit to define the environments that induce the most appropriate experience to the users in response to the matrix of pragmatic concerns interwoven with sensibilities. Programmatic requirements, site conditions, climate, lifestyle, economics, and technical feasibility form the pragmatic concerns, while culture and aesthetics shape the sensibilities, reveals the co-founder and design head Sharada Seshadri.





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We look at architecture as an exciting pursuit that we choose to shape the built environment and influence the way we live, work, and interact through thoughtful planning, creative exploration, and meticulous execution.”

—**ADITHYA KASHYAP**, Founder and Director - Architecture Continuous



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“Architecture is a transformative process of envisioning and designing the future based on a deep understanding and appreciation of present and the past. We understand the need to appreciate the timeless principles, enduring design elements, and sustainable practices that have stood the test of time. By learning from the present and past, we can create designs that are rooted in tradition while embracing the demands of the future.”

—**SHARADA SESHADRI**, Co-Founder and Design Head - Architecture Continuous



PROJECT IN FOCUS - KABINI VILLA

Location: Mysore, Karnataka

Typology: Residential

Year of Completion: 2023

Design Concept: The Kabini Villa was conceptualised as a perfect sanctuary surrounded by awe inspiring natural beauty, where the users can find tranquillity on the outside and inside

Material Palette: Fly ash blocks for the walls and roofing shingles made from recycled materials. The outdoor landscape features native flora and gravel for hardscape that promotes rainwater percolation and soil health

What we heart: Creating earth-friendly spaces that foster harmony with nature and peace within one's mind, heart and spirit

Set amidst a lush green landscape, this eco-friendly villa boasts a thoughtful architecture that utilises passive design techniques. It is strategically positioned to align with the sun's path on a level meadow, partially shielded by trees, offering a stunning view of the serene Kabini River. The villa features a classic white exterior and a single storey layout, with an open and a linear floor plan. The heart of the farmhouse is a generously sized living, dining, and family zone, where loved ones gather for enjoyment and relaxation. Large fenestrations throughout the indoor spaces flood the rooms with natural light and seamlessly lead to wrap-around porches and a sun deck, allowing for intimate engagement with the surrounding nature. ✚

Website: www.architecturecontinuous.com

CP KUKREJA ARCHITECTS

DIKSHU C. KUKREJA

Started in 1969 with a vision to redefine architecture and planning in India,
CPKA is one of the most revered architectural firms in the country



Founded in 1969 by Late CP Kukreja, CP Kukreja Architects is a multidisciplinary architecture and urban design practice headquartered in New Delhi, with offices in New York, Tokyo, Vietnam and Dubai. Currently helmed by Managing Principal and Honorary Consul General for the Republic of Albania, Dikshu C. Kukreja, the firm aims to shape meaningful spaces that derive from their local physical, sociocultural, and economic contexts to birth uniquely designed, sustainable interventions. "As built environment professionals, we need to be conscious of the fact that our buildings have a larger impact on society," says Dikshu. A multidisciplinary collaborative of 200+ built environment professionals works in tandem to deliver holistic built environments. Over the last five decades, CPKA has worked in 30+ countries globally with more than 1000 projects across scales and typologies such as housing, healthcare, commercial, retail, institutional, master planning and urban infrastructure.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - YASHOBHOOMI

Location: Dwarka, Delhi

Typology: Urban Development Project

Year of Completion: 2023

(in association with IDOM Spain)

Design Concept: A futuristic development modelled to catapult India as a global exhibition and convention industry forerunner while providing a platform to display its spectacular sustainable design, innovation, and engineering skills.

What we Hear: One of the most significant design features of the entire project is the external LED video wall poised to be the world's twelfth-largest. Specially engineered for this project, the 1 lakh-square-foot screen wraps the building from roof top level and tilts outward at a 45-degree angle for easy viewing.

Yashobhoomi, or the India International Convention and Expo Centre, has been conceived as a smart, mixed-use urban development project to exhibit India's growth and achievements to the world and contribute to the country's GDP growth. Combining technology, innovation, and culture, the project aims to fulfill the need for a common interaction ground between Indian and international businesses, investors, and buyers. With a site area of 225 acres, the complex also boasts a curated juxtaposition of varied natures of development. The 73,000-square-metre, state-of-the-art Convention Centre is one of the world's largest. It is designed to host more than 11,000 people for international conferences, exhibitions, or trade shows. ✚

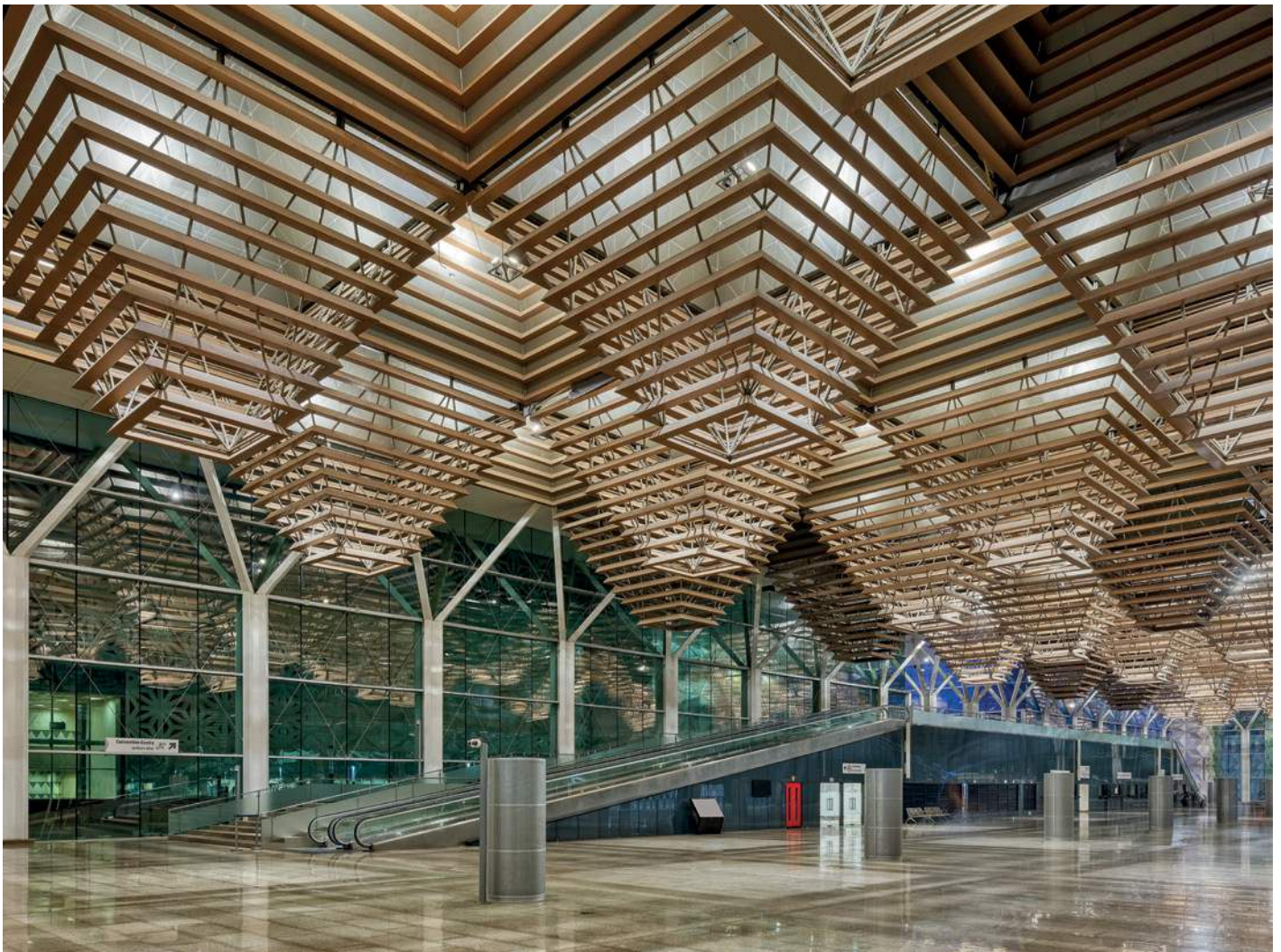
Website: www.cpkukreja.com



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As built environment professionals, we need to be conscious of the fact that our buildings have a larger impact on society.”

—**DIKSHU C. KUKREJA**, Managing Principal, CP Kukreja Architects



CREATIONS X URBAN SAINTS

SHILPI & SATYADEEP SONAR

Creations has been a pioneer in revolutionising luxury interiors in Central India, and Urban Saints specialises in innovative space planning and comprehensive technological strategizing for projects of various scales



Creations, a multi-disciplinary design firm, is led by the esteemed interior designer, Shilpi Sonar. Established in 1988, Creations has been a pioneer in revolutionizing luxury interiors in Central India. To date, Creations has successfully completed over 3500 projects. Urban Saints is an architectural and urban design firm led by architect Satyadeep Sonar. Founded in 2018, Urban Saints specialises in innovative space planning and comprehensive technological strategizing for projects of various scales. Together, the mother-son duo is shaping the spaces of the future by combining their profound knowledge of the past with their contemporary zeal.

Design Philosophy & Approach

The core philosophy behind the collaboration of these two renowned designers is to pay homage to Shilpi Sonar's legacy as the pioneer of luxury interiors in Chhattisgarh. Shilpi Sonar is celebrated for her meticulous attention to detail and her maximalist design aesthetic. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated remarkable adaptability, incorporating various interior design styles into her work. Her designs are characterised by a natural flair for flamboyance. On the other hand, Satyadeep possesses a diverse portfolio of architectural styles, ranging from intricate Victorian details to cutting-edge contemporary designs. Their partnership results in an exceptional synergy, combining effective space planning with an extraordinary eye for detail.



Man: A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light grey blazer over a black t-shirt, standing with his hands clasped.

Woman: A woman with brown hair, wearing a black leather jacket and a large gold necklace, sitting at a desk with her hands clasped.

INSPIRATION BRAGGS
Shilpi
A WOMAN WHO IS
AN ARTIST





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“Our focus is to inspire our clients with a finished project that goes beyond their expectations. Our philosophy is to produce unique and individual design results that not only reflect our clients or their brand but enhances their lives.”

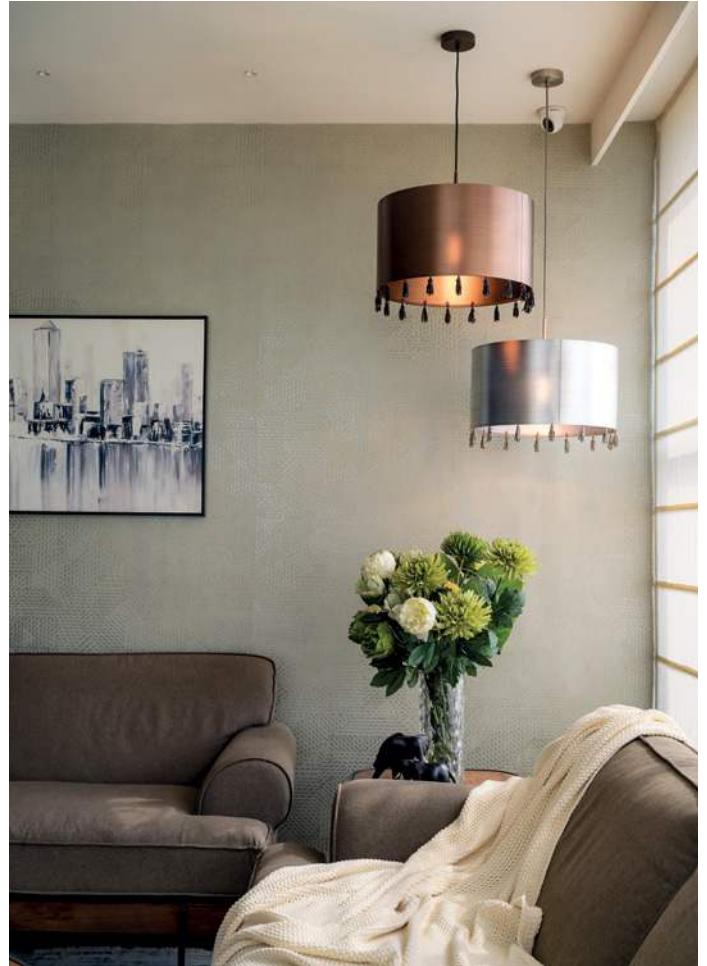
—**SHILPI SONAR**, Principal Interior Designer and Founder, CREATIONS



“

The most significant challenge was ensuring that diverse schools of thought could coexist harmoniously without compromising their practical distinctions.”

—SATYADEEP SONAR, Principal Architect, Urban Saints



PROJECT IN FOCUS - THE SANCTUM

Typology: Commercial

Location: Raipur, Chattisgarh

Design Concept: A blend of maximalism and sophisticated chic

Material Palette: Marble and wood

What we Heart: The synergy of two distinct design aesthetics.

The Sanctum, the office of Creations and Urban Saints, embodies the design principles of the principal designers, showcasing a harmonious blend of intricate details. The Sanctum welcomes visitors with a serene and tranquil ambiance. The waiting area mirrors the overall aesthetic, providing a relaxing space for guests to unwind while enjoying the cityscape of Raipur. The office spans approximately 3500 square feet and comprises three primary chambers with welcoming reception areas. Additionally, there is a material library that doubles as a conference room for in-depth client discussions, a rejuvenation room, and the central design workshop.

Shilpi's chamber exudes an atmosphere of opulence and

admiration for a luxurious lifestyle. The remarkable design elements enable clients to delve into the maestro's design aesthetics. The interplay of white calacatta marble with the overall sage green appearance, accented with hints of burgundy, elevates the visual appeal. Furthermore, her maximalist approach to styling adds an enchanting element to the space. Power, individuality, and tenacity have consistently been her strengths, and her chamber embodies these qualities.

In contrast, Satyadeep's chamber emanates a distinct ambiance. Featuring multiple finishes, the room subtly incorporates shades of taupe and other neutral tones. The design philosophy underscores an appreciation for luxury in all materials. From the polished surfaces of marble and gray mirrors to the raw statuario marble crust over the Black Marquina, and the depiction of Zeus emerging from within, Satyadeep's chamber truly reflects the essence of a creator. The innovative layering of design elements mirrors his core philosophy, allowing for the integration of diverse styles within a single architectural space. ✚

Instagram: @creationsbyshilpisonar

DESIGNERS GROUP

KHOZEMA CHITALWALA AND SUJATA CHITALWALA

Crafting luxury through simplicity, Designers Group keeps sustainability as a key focus while outlining astounding hospitality marvels



Established in 1988 by Khozema and Sujata Chitalwala, Designers Group has carved a niche for itself as an internationally acclaimed design firm. Their design philosophy revolves around the harmonious coexistence of luxury and simplicity, two seemingly contrasting elements that they masterfully blend in their creations. The turning point for Designers Group came when they collaborated with Taj Hotels and Resorts, granting them a directional focal point on hospitality design. Khozema firmly believes that "being simple is difficult," a philosophy evident in their designs.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - DEVI RATN - NEW WING

Location: Jaipur

Typology: Hospitality

Year of completion: 2022

Design Concept: A contemporary ode to the traditional heritage and royal opulence of Jaipur and to integrate the new annex with the previously established concept, which pays homage to the iconic Jantar Mantar observatory and features intricate carved spaces

What we hear: The new wing of Devi Ratn stands as an architectural marvel that not only venerates Jaipur's legacy but also reimagines it as an idyllic destination for modern weddings

Nestled against the Aravalli hills, Devi Ratn is a boutique hotel that eloquently weaves the narrative of Jaipur's rich heritage through an exceptionally non-traditional lens. The new wing at Devi Ratn emerges as a seamless continuum of the previous endeavor, aligning the novel theme with prevailing elements. The reception area harmonizes traditional and innovative design, while the Pan-Asian restaurant celebrates Oriental heritage and contemporary aesthetics. The conference rooms feature Jaipur motifs on the panels, and the Jiva Spa integrates tent structures with terracotta-clad walls and tensile roofing. The guest rooms are graced with reimagined Jaipur art, architecture, and culture, highlighting the 'Ratn' theme with magnificent adornments created using traditional Rajasthani mirror work. This boutique hotel skillfully fuses tradition and innovation, truly acting as a vibrant canvas portraying the dynamic essence of the Pink City. ✚

Website: www.designers-group.com



Photo Credit: Prashant Bhat

DIPTTII KHANNA DESIGNS

DIPTTII KHANNA

Beyond mere aesthetics, this Mumbai-based firm excels in crafting bespoke experiences that transcend the ordinary, aiming to create enduring memories through the principles of dynamism and fluidity



Dipttii Khanna Designs is a celebrated Mumbai-based design studio known for its opulent customisation and commitment to luxury. With a diverse portfolio spanning both residential and commercial domains, the studio's crowning achievement lies in its state-of-the-art villas, distinguishing it within the industry. Dipttii Khanna Designs has flourished since its inception, growing exponentially. Synonymous with tailoring client needs, the studio has etched its identity in the luxury design category. Principal Designer, Dipttii Khanna attributes her professional growth to personal development, drawing inspiration from her travels and insights gleaned from successful entrepreneurs, podcasts, and literature. This convergence of

personal and professional evolution underscores the studio's commitment to continual innovation and excellence.

Design Philosophy & Approach

Dipttii strives to create spaces that evoke positive emotions. "Whether it's a sense of tranquillity, excitement, or nostalgia, I want the occupants to feel a deep emotional connection to the design," says Dipttii. In essence, her design philosophy is to create spaces that are not just aesthetically pleasing but also functional, sustainable, and emotionally resonant with the people who inhabit them. Each design is a unique reflection of the client's aspirations and Dipttii's commitment to delivering exceptional interior environments.





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Whether it's a sense of tranquillity, excitement, or nostalgia, I want the occupants to feel a deep emotional connection to the design”

— **DIPTII KHANNA**, Principal Designer, Diptii Khanna Designs



PROJECT IN FOCUS - BAROQUE REVERIE

Location: Mumbai

Typology: Residential

Design Concept: Classic Luxury

Year of Completion: 2023

Material Palette: Wood, Marble

What we Heart: The Studio Workspace which features an elegant floral wall covering

This home combines opulence with subtlety — from the flooring and the ornate detailing to the wall embellishments, all provide a classic touch, juxtaposing the modern elements. Every room is a testament to classic elegance with a serene colour scheme. The classical design of the furniture, with its white carved wood and soft upholstery, offers comfort and luxury. The house speaks to a refined taste, where luxury is expressed through quality materials and craftsmanship, and the design supports a timeless aesthetic that combines the best of classic and contemporary styles.

When the client is a fashion designer and makeup artist, there is clarity in the kind of style and colour palette to be followed. For Diptii Khanna it thus became easy to start the design process of creating a white modern classic house where each area looks different yet brings together the whole house in a cohesive manner. The design theme of this house is rooted in classic luxury with a contemporary touch and each element of the house reflects a modern classic look. Most challenging for Diptii, however, was to follow vastu diktats in the use of certain colours and placement of mirrors and electrical points, but the team managed to achieve the same and make the place functional practical and aesthetically in sync with the client's wishes.

Each area has its own standout element that becomes a cynosure - the carved marble piece behind the sofa, the blue agate wall in the passage, the heavily detailed puja room, the sliding wall panel that hides the mirror in the parents' room, the ornate wall feature mirroring the headboard's classic design in the master bedroom that adds elegant touch to the walls, or the vibrant colours and bold patterns of the studio cum workspace, especially the floral wall covering, which energizes the space and inspires creativity. ✚

Website: www.diptiikhannadesigns.com

FADD STUDIO

FARAH AHMED AND DHAVAL SHELLUGAR

Rejecting the notion of a singular style, this studio embraces a philosophy of constant evolution and originality in design



The world of design is in a constant state of flux; exploring and evolving into and out of new ideas, concepts, trends and fads. It is also about revisiting older trends that were set decades ago and reinterpreting them in a fresh and contemporary way. So is the philosophy of FADD Studio. While FADD is an acronym for Farah and Dhaval Design, it is also a play on the word 'fad'. "It is easy to stagnate into a style that becomes a firm's identity. And we believe that having a singular style defies the purpose of design, which is to push beyond what we know, achieve something novel and unique in every project, and be constantly propelled out of our comfort zone into a world where we not only embrace new concepts and techniques but also create fads of our own," elaborates Farah, an alumni of the Istituto Marangoni, Milan. Dhaval, who studied at Rachana Sansad's Academy of Architecture in Mumbai, concurs, "With this stubborn sensibility and desire to be original, we aspire not to create a style unique to us but to give you a design identity that is exclusive to you and your space whether it is a home, restaurant or store."

PROJECT IN FOCUS - CLERMONT RESIDENCE

Location: SNN Clermont, Bengaluru

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2023

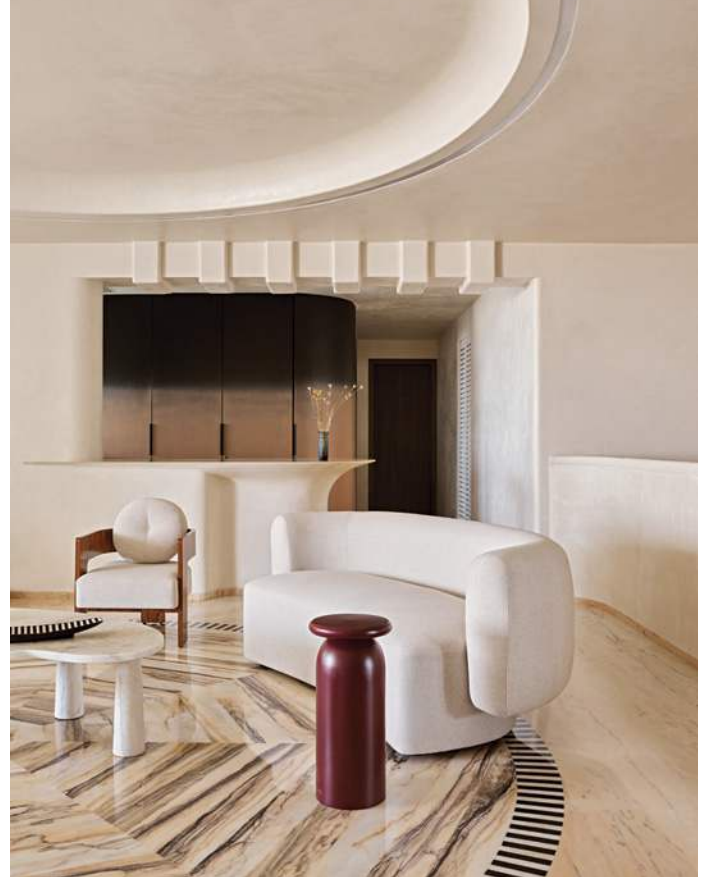
Design Concept: A peach canvas interspersed with soft 3D forms and meandering striped patterns in black and whites

Material Palette: A medley of materials intersected in harmony

What we heart: The two cut outs between the floors and their nature-inspired shapes

Flavors of fluidity; versions of voluptuousness; and caricatures of curves fill this home with softness. Peach-pink marble flooring with a unique stripe inlay is used in the house to enhance the story of curves. The ceiling takes in a topographical feel with concentric wave shaped steps. A circular and sculptural staircase with rounded marble risers is also an added detail. Walls like waves go from the lower level to the ceiling of the upper level of the duplex. With blacks, whites and peaches as the neutrals, this home is a work of art on its own. ✚

Website: www.faddstudio.com



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The world of design is in a constant state of flux; exploring and evolving into and out of new ideas, concept, trends and fads. It is also about revisiting older trends that were set decades ago and reinterpreting them in a fresh and contemporary way.”

— **FARAH AHMED AND DHAVAL SHELLUGAR**, Co-Founders, FADD Studio



Photo Credit: Gokul Rao Kadam Styling Credit: Samir Wadekar

FULCRUM STUDIO

HUSNA RAHAMAN

Based in Bengaluru, Fulcrum Studio functions as a laboratory to investigate art, life and self through a lens which is as personal as it is universal



Fulcrum Studio is a Bengaluru-based multi award winning practice established by Husna Rahaman. She describes herself as an adventurer, who uses the world to inform her insatiable spirit. Having received her design education from Incbald School of Design, London and Parsons School of Design, New York, she founded Fulcrum Studio two decades ago. The purest act of creation is her intoxication, one she seeks out every day, her artistic expression is inextricably linked to her inner core, her dreams and the beyond Fulcrum Studio enjoys the aroma of unrestrained passion and the rhythm of daring geometries as we traverse the immersive landscape of unrestrained art. It is a distinct design philosophy of detached free thinking, unbridled artistry and a surrender to the immense art of living. Fulcrum Studio views design from lens of profound psychological reactions to space and its interiority. Purity of intent creates a journey wherein experiences are heightened, manifestly taking the viewer on a sensorial journey of exploration.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - HIRA

Location: Bengaluru

Typology: Office cum Residence

Year of Completion: 2024

Design Concept: Sculptural and Minimalistic

Material Palette: Concrete and Wood

What we Hear: The stunning interplay of light and shadows, the maze of sharp geometry that leads you from one space to the other.

Hira is designed as two volumes one for Fulcrum Studio, and other for the residence interconnected by a series of bridges that manifest at various angles, not just on the architectural scale, but in fact moving inwards to become stairways. The composition of solid, void and most importantly the 'in between' are layered in a vertical dimension of constant overlays that culminates with the sky. Connections are in the form of bridges that creates pulse points of shared space. Overlapping angles, much like arrows, direct the transitions 'to and through' spaces. The space even in its stillness, the undefined and abstract spaces create a kinetic state of being. It reveals itself in unpredictable layers that captures views, stills the viewer into silence and provokes expression and collaboration.

"Our brief to ourselves was to create a 'bridge' between the physical and the emotional space within us. Despite being in the heart of the city, the interior spaces open up and capture a seamless interaction with the canopies, the sky and the birds. The shadow dance of branches makes one feel the freedom that we all seek," explains Husna. ✚

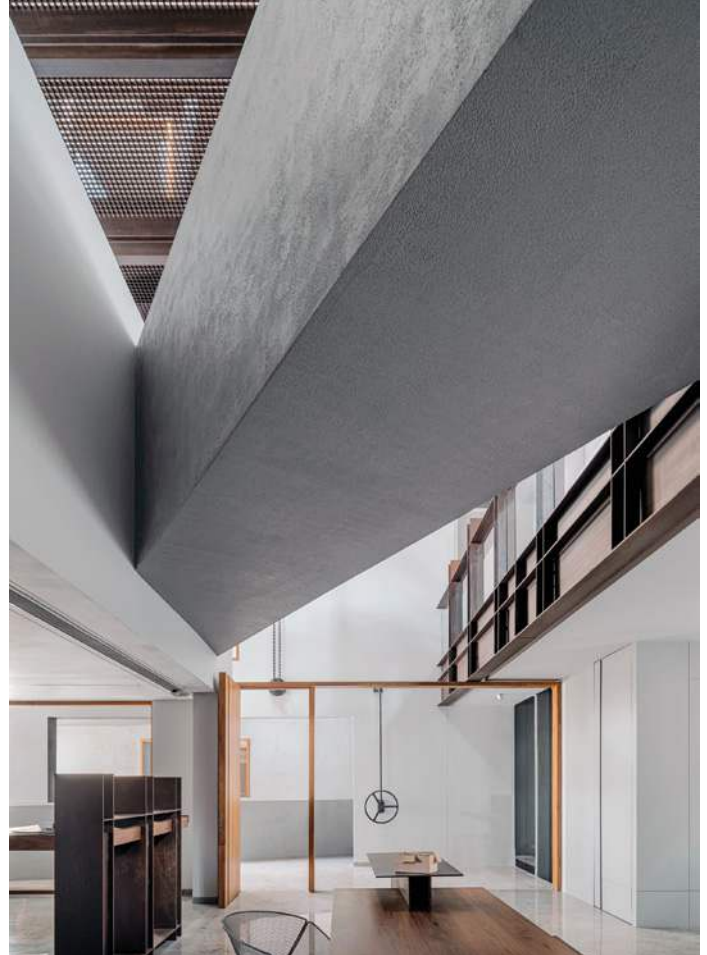
Website: www.fulcrumstudio.in



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Our brief to ourselves was to create a 'bridge' between the physical and the emotional space within us. Despite being in the heart of the city, the interior spaces open up and capture a seamless interaction with the canopies, the sky and the birds.”

—**HUSNA RAHAMAN**, Founder, Fulcrum Studio



HABITAT ARCHITECTS

ZAFAR MASUD CHAUDHARY

This multidisciplinary design firm has established itself as a trusted name in the industry, delivering revolutionary approaches to contemporary trends in design and construction



Photo Credit: Naughts and Crosses

Habitat Architects, conceptualised by Zafar Masud Chaudhary and Monika Choudhary and established in 1994 along with Ranjodh Singh, is a multidisciplinary design firm specialising in comprehensive architecture, interior design, master planning, landscape and product design services. The firm is driven by a commitment to create exceptional spaces that redefine the essence of architectural and interior design. From the initial concept to the final touches, the firm infuses each project with boundless creativity, functional excellence, and meticulous attention to detail. Their commitment to quality and innovation has allowed them to redefine the boundaries of architectural and interior design, delivering spaces that not only meet but exceed client expectations.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - COURTYARD HOUSE

Location: Ludhiana, Punjab

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2023

Design Concept: Minimalist with hints of industrial decor

What we heart: Its seamless indoor-outdoor connection, with strategically placed glass panels flooding the space with natural light

Nestled in the serene North Indian plains, this private residential villa stands out as a unique example of modern luxury. The design concept celebrates the structural material, showcasing clean lines and orthogonal forms that create a sense of order and symmetry. The exterior's muted concrete hues contrast beautifully with the lush green surroundings, while the interior features a minimalist design with industrial hints and a calming color palette of greys and browns. This dwelling epitomises luxury and pays homage to contemporary design by redefining luxury with brutalism. It is not just a residence but a haven that embodies modern living. The environment and living spaces seamlessly blend, providing a cosy sanctuary for its residents. ✚

Website: www.habitatarc.com



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With about 50 years of experience and a diverse team of professionals committed to creating spaces that matter now and, in the future, our aim is to rejuvenate people's lives and create beautiful and comfortable environments.”

—**ZAFAR MASUD CHAUDHARY**, CEO, Founder & Principal Architect, Habitat Architects

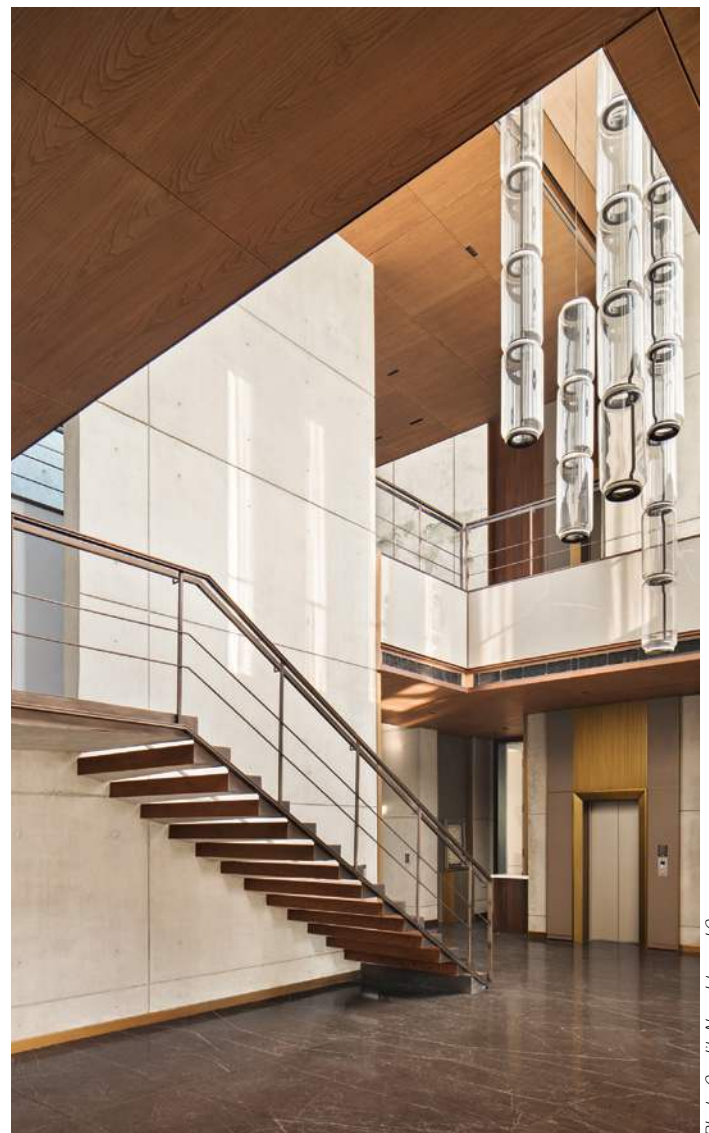


Photo Credit: Neughtis and Crosses

HOUSE OF LALITYYA

SHIVANI GUPTA MITTAL AND AYUSH MITTAL

A design firm whose every stride is a journey towards crafting experiences as unique as they are.



At House of Lalittyia the aim is to craft experiences tailored just for you. The company stands as a dynamic and innovative entity, dedicated to providing exceptional products and services that cater to unique needs. Specializing in architecture, styling and bespoke furniture manufacturing services; they are a highly skilled and experienced team that is deeply passionate about delivering excellence in every endeavour. They firmly believe in the transformative potential of every space to narrate its unique story, and they are committed to assisting one in scripting theirs.

Design Philosophy & Approach

Their philosophy revolves around the profound impact of

design in elevating everyday experiences. From inception to fruition, they are on a journey to reimagine spaces, harmonising style, functionality and personality. Their design ethos encompasses a fusion of artistic creativity with pragmatic functionality, prioritising the amalgamation of form and function to produce visually striking yet highly functional spaces. Throughout the process, from conceptualisation to installation, meticulous attention to detail and unwavering dedication to quality craftsmanship are their hallmarks, ensuring that every facet of our design meets our exacting standards.





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In a rapidly evolving world, where convenience meets connectivity, we believe in harnessing the power of modern technology to elevate the way we live.”

—SHIVANI GUPTA MITTAL AND AYUSH MITTAL, Founders, House of Lalitty



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From conceptualisation and planning to execution and installation, we prioritise attention to detail and quality craftsmanship to ensure that every aspect of the design meets our exacting standards.”

—SHIVANI GUPTA MITTAL AND AYUSH MITTAL , Founders, House of Lalittyta



PROJECT IN FOCUS - HOUSE 901

Location: Gurgaon

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2022

Design Concept: A space acing bold accents and dramatic contrasts

Material Palette: Textured stone and rich wood paneling for a dramatic feel

What we heart: Advanced automation and smart home systems

In this home, every inch is a masterclass on craftsmanship, blending natural elements with vibrant hues and state-of-the-art technology. From the organic textures of the furnishings to the strategic use of colour and the integration of cutting-edge technology, every detail has been carefully curated to create a

space that is visually appealing and technologically advanced. As the space unfolds, every element works in concert to create an environment that transcends mere design and becomes an immersive experience for its occupants. The team behind this project was passionate about pushing the boundaries of design and embracing the power of colour to evoke emotion, spark conversation and inspire change. Through a blend of bold accents, dramatic contrasts and unexpected pairings, they breathed new life into every space, transforming them into dynamic expressions of personality and style. With cutting-edge automation technology at the heart of their design, homeowners can enjoy unparalleled convenience, efficiency, and peace of mind, simplifying and streamlining daily tasks and leaving more time for the things that matter most. ✚

Website: www.lalittyta.com

HUMMING TREE

MOHAMMED AFNAN & ARUN SHEKAR

Fusing old and new, familiar and novel, subtle and dramatic, this multidisciplinary design firm holistically conceptualizes spaces with unexpected alchemy and creativity



Humming Tree is a multidisciplinary design firm where principals Mohammed Afnan and Arun Shekar, whose backgrounds are in interior design and architecture, lead a practice that considers all aspects of the built environment, from site plans to products. Intrigued by the juxtaposition of old and new, novel and familiar, subtle and dramatic, they guide the team in creating spaces with unexpected alchemy and creativity. At Humming Tree, the firm approaches work with the belief that spaces are accessories to the human experience and enrich the way we live. The studio aims to create work that leaves an emotional imprint, with a design approach that is instinctive, eclectic, and imaginative. Creativity is central to everything they do.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - SMARAGDINE

Location: Wayanad, Kerala

Typology: Hospitality

Year of completion: 2022

Design Concept: Tropical Modernism and a Wabi-sabi design vocabulary merged with minimalism

Material Palette: Locally sourced earthy and raw materials like stone, wood, and rubble masonry

What we heart: Celebrating local crafts, art, and indigenous influences and the seamless integration with the surrounding landscape

Smaragdine is a boutique resort in Vythiri, Wayanad, that blends seamlessly with the surrounding emerald-hued spice plantations and dense forests. The design pays homage to Tropical Modernism and is rooted in the local context, using materials derived from the landscape itself. The narrative seeks inspiration from the verdant landscape, adopting a Wabi-sabi vocabulary and merging it with minimalism. The spaces connect indoors and outdoors, creating a dialogue with sweeping vistas and placid water bodies. The indigenous communities, crafts, and site have been paramount influences, with artisanal vignettes and sculptural additions like moss-sheathed branches and earthenware urns. The rooms are sanctuaries of comfort with floor-to-ceiling fenestrations offering panoramic views of nature. ✚

Website: www.hummingtree.in



Photo Credit: Syam Sreesylam

INFINITY ATELIER

JYOTI A NAHATA

As a vanguard of innovative interior design, this firm embraces an eclectic fusion of diverse styles, skillfully crafting functional and sustainable environments



Infinity Atelier, led by Jyoti A Nahata, is a forward-thinking interior design firm that envisions creating breathable, functional, and aesthetically pleasing spaces. “We take a collaborative approach, blending creativity with technical expertise to maximise space utilisation and bring our clients’ visions to life. Our areas of expertise include residential, commercial, and hospitality design, with a focus on sustainability and eco-friendliness. By merging art and science, we create spaces that inspire, nourish, and elevate human experience,” shares Jyoti.

Design Philosophy & Approach

Driven by a philosophy rooted in harnessing the power of diverse design styles, the firm takes a collaborative approach, blending creativity with technical expertise to maximize space utilization and bring visions to life. At the core of Infinity Atelier’s ethos lies the belief that a home should be a harmonious blend of form and function, where every space is a reflection of its inhabitants’ distinct spirit. Embracing the diversity of design philosophies, the firm understands that each individual has their own taste and vision, which they strive to capture through their craftsmanship.





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I am an admirer of contemporary designs and fusing them with traditional elements. So this space is a true embodiment of transitional interior design which is always evolving with time.”

— **JYOTI A NAHATA**, Founder, Infinity Atelier

“

At the core of Infinity Atelier’s ethos lies the belief that a home should be a harmonious blend of form and function, where every space is a reflection of its inhabitants’ distinct spirit.”

—**JYOTI A NAHATA**, Founder, Infinity Atelier



PROJECT IN FOCUS - SAROJ

Location: Kolkata

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2022

Design Concept: A balance of modern and traditional elements with influences from the Art Deco and Mid-Century European styles

Material Palette: A blend of curated pieces

What we heart: Every room carries a different chapter in design and era but looks like a part of the same book conveying a transitional story

Nestled in the heart of central Kolkata, this expansive 2745 sq ft residential project harmoniously merges modern and traditional elements, catering to the client’s desire for distinct

aesthetics in each area. With an unobstructed vista of the bustling cityscape, the deliberate choice to forgo a partition between the Den and the main living area preserves the breathtaking panorama, enhancing the sense of openness and connection to the surroundings.

The residence showcases diverse design elements harmoniously orchestrated into a cohesive and nuanced living space. Every room carries a different chapter in design and era, yet collectively weaves a transitional story. The keen understanding of design fluidity is evident in the careful selection of colors, furniture, and intricate details, enabling the space to continually transform and adapt over time, mirroring the ever-changing nature of artistic expression and personal taste. +

Website: www.infinityatelier.com

JJ STUDIO

DEEPA BAGARIA

The firm stand as beacon of innovation in the realms of interiors by redefining spaces that inspire, uplift and enrich the quality of the inhabitants



Photo Credits: Studio SF Photography

Founded in 2005, JJ Studio stands as a beacon of innovation in the realm of interior design, consistently pushing boundaries and setting new benchmarks for excellence. Our diverse portfolio encompasses a wide array of projects, ranging from the intimate spaces of private residences to the grandeur of commercial developments, the allure of the entertainment industry, and the opulence of luxury hotels and spas. Our designs span from luxurious homes and encompass residential and commercial properties at both local and national levels. Driven by a passion for creativity and a commitment to excellence, JJ Studio continues to redefine the boundaries of interior design.

Design Philosophy & Approach

At JJ Studio, we believe in creating environments that not only impress visually but also enhance functionality and promote productivity. Our approach to design is holistic, taking into account the unique needs and preferences of each client while also considering the broader context of the space and its intended use. Whether it's a cosy home retreat, a bustling office environment, or a luxurious hospitality establishment, we strive to create spaces that inspire, uplift, and enrich the lives of those who inhabit them.





“

At JJ Studio, we believe in creating environments that not only impress visually but also enhance functionality and promote productivity.”

—DEEPA BAGARIA, Founder, JJ Studio



“

Our approach to design is holistic, taking into account the unique needs and preferences of each client while also considering the broader context of the space and its intended use.”

—DEEPA BAGARIA, Founder, JJ Studio



Photo Credits: Studio SF Photography

PROJECT IN FOCUS - RUKMANI PARASMANI

Location: Kolkata

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2023

Design Concept: Design ethos that blended opulence with functionality, exuding contemporary elegance while respecting the client’s religious practices.

Material Palette: A harmonious blend of tradition with modern comfort

What we heard: Throughout the design process, priority was given to functionality, aesthetics and reverence for the family’s values, resulting in a home that not only surpassed expectations but also served as a reflection of their unique identity and lifestyle.

Nestled in the vibrant city of Kolkata, Rukmani Parasmani is a residential project involving a comprehensive process, from initial conceptualization to the final touches of construction and interior design. A key challenge was to infuse a sense of spaciousness within the confined space. To address this, one of the balconies

was integrated into the dining area. Additionally, we introduced a swing and adorned a wall with a mural to carve out a cosy enclave within the dining space.

A pivotal aspect of the design was the incorporation of a prominent mandir to honour the family’s religious beliefs. A dedicated space was crafted that exuded reverence and serenity, serving as the spiritual focal point of the home. At the entrance, a previously overlooked area was transformed into a functional utility space. Employing slim partitions and fluted glass, natural light permeated the space, illuminating the entryway. Each bedroom was tailored to reflect the individual personalities of the family members while maintaining a cohesive design language throughout the home. The master bedroom was conceived as a sanctuary of luxury, featuring indulgent furnishings and sumptuous textiles.

Throughout the design process, we prioritized functionality, aesthetics, and reverence for the family’s values, resulting in a home that not only surpassed expectations but also served as a reflection of their unique identity and lifestyle. ✚

Website: www.jjstudio.in

KAVIAR:COLLABORATIVE

KASTURI WAGH AND VINEET HINGORANI

This young Mumbai-based architecture and interior design firm approaches every project as a poetic exploration of space, emotion and the five senses



Kaviar:collaborative's design process involves a mental algorithm that considers three key variables - the site, its context, and the user. This approach allows them to define boundaries within which they can experiment and play, resulting in unique spatial experiences tailored to each project's requirements.

"Architecture is the cause and effect of anything and everything one can feel. Sharp lines, smooth curves, rough edges, voids - each element births a unique thought that seamlessly glides from one node to another resulting in an explosion of emotions within. That is Architecture to us - a sensuous sufi poem recited by a raggedy saint. We believe Architecture is the manifestation of the five senses in a built form. It lives within us and takes the form of our alter egos. As such, Architecture forms the third and the most important pillar on which we build this collaborative," share Kasturi and Vineet.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - CHARLEE

Location: Bandra West, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Typology: Commercial

Year of completion: 2024

Design Concept: Monochromatic colour scheme dominated by dark tones

Material Palette: Textural materials like stone, gabion walls, and concrete for an industrial edge

What we heard: "batcave meets gentleman's club"

Charlee, a clandestine speakeasy hidden above a Bandra wine shop, offers an immersive experience fusing dark tones, textures, and modern sophistication akin to a "batcave meets gentleman's club." Enveloped in mystery and allure, the monochromatic design features industrial materials like stone and concrete juxtaposed with sleek, polished surfaces. Steel and brass accents punctuate the brooding atmosphere, balanced by warm lighting that creates an intimate setting. Transcending conventional bars, Charlee blends ruggedness with refinement, darkness with elegance, transporting guests into a world of intrigue and escapism. ✚

Website: www.kaviarcollaborative.com



“

Architecture is the cause and effect of anything and everything one can feel. Sharp lines, smooth curves, rough edges, voids - each element births a unique thought that seamlessly glides from one node to another resulting in an explosion of emotions within.”

— **KASTURI WAGH AND VINEET HINGORANI**, Partners & Principal Architects *kaviar:collaborative*



Photo Credit: Studio Suryan/Dang

KUNAL MANIAR & ASSOCIATES

KUNAL MANIAR

This Mumbai-based firm pays homage to the coexistence of nature's core elements through soulful designs that reconnect people with the environment



“It’s so important to me that my work pays ode to the coexistence of the core elements of nature—I strongly believe that soulful landscape design can reconnect people to these Elements,” shares the founding partner and principal architect Kunal Maniar. Over the past two decades, his firm has worked across various scales in the public and private realms, with projects ranging from campuses and resorts to rooftop terraces and sprawling weekend homes across the country. Kunal strongly believes that creativity cannot be compartmentalized, and his bespoke landscapes draw inspiration from across disciplines—fine art and craft, product design, and even fashion.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - VILLA VANILLA

Location: Mumbai

Typology: Landscape

Design Concept: Modern tropical living experience that blends with the surrounding coastal environment and principles of sustainable design

Material Palette: A rich mix of philodendrons, monstera, pandanus, crinum lilies, champas, heliconia, vibrant bougainvillea and frangipani interspersed with towering indigenous coconut palms and dense, lush green shrubbery

What we hear: The villa adheres to the principles of sustainability, water conservation, and ecological sensitivity

Villa Vanilla revolves around creating a modern tropical living experience while showcasing sustainable landscape design principles. The gravel driveway maximises rainwater infiltration, promoting groundwater recharge and reducing surface runoff, contributing to local flood mitigation. Lawn space occupies less than twenty percent of the site area, a key water conservation strategy that also promotes soil health and diversity. A sunken seating area is nestled between the pool and an angular, asymmetrical pond, with a glorious frangipani tree framing the views. A wooden plank footbridge over a water channel with floating lotuses creates a transient experience reminiscent of a luxury resort in Kerala’s backwaters. The foliage, the calming presence of water, and light-colored Shabad stone, used marginally, contribute to the creation of a microclimate. ✚

Website: www.kunalmaniarassociates.com



“

It's so important to me that my work pays ode to the coexistence of the core elements of nature—I strongly believe that soulful landscape design can reconnect people to these Elements.”

—**KUNAL MANIAR**, Founding Partner and Principal Architect, Kunal Maniar & Associates



Photo Credit: Gajendra D. Mantrekar

LIJO.RENY.ARCHITECT

LIJO JOS AND RENY LIJO

Based in Kerala, this architecture firm embraces an open-ended approach to design, instead of binding themselves to any particular design philosophy



Established in 2005, LJO.RENY.architects is a highly acclaimed design studio located in Thrissur, Kerala. Renowned for its innovative approach, this multi-award-winning studio has significantly influenced architectural practices throughout the state. In addition to pioneering architectural designs, LJO.RENY.architects is celebrated for its impactful site-specific art installations, showcasing their deep-rooted passion for artistic expression. Their commitment to pushing boundaries and integrating contemporary sensibilities into architecture is fueled by a profound love for art. "Instead of binding ourselves with a specific style or philosophy, we recognize the unique personality of each project, shaped by client needs, site requirements, and social context. Avoiding the constraints of a fixed philosophy allows us to remain dynamic and responsive, continuously evolving with each new challenge, users and communities," says Lijo.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - BEHIND THE SCENES

Location: Kerala

Typology: Exhibition

Year of Completion: 2023

Design Concept: This pavilion was designed to touch the earth lightly, both in terms of its structure and the materials used, leaving no trace upon its removal.

Material Palette: MS box sections and kora cotton cloth

What we Heart: The fabric covered roof which captures the shadow patterns of the tree canopies creating a captivating interplay of dappled light.

The pavilion, named 'BEHIND the SCENES' (pun intended), for the celebrated ITFOK (International Theatre Festival of Kerala), was primarily designed to showcase the illustrious retrospective work by the famed scenic background artist 'Artist Sujathan'. Sets and backdrops for many of Kerala's renowned professional plays have been designed and created by Artist Sujathan over a career spanning approximately fifty years.

Designed to resemble a large bright lantern as dusk falls, the external form of the building hints at what lies within, inviting viewers to explore further. The drama backdrops were integrated into the facade, blurring the indoor-outdoor distinction, making it a structure enjoyable from all directions. This simple yet sophisticated structure, delicately balancing between the built and the unbuilt, creates intricate spatial arrangements that invite viewers to experience the artworks in a wholly unique manner. ✚

Website: www.ljorenearchitects.com



“

Avoiding the constraints of a fixed philosophy allows us to remain dynamic and responsive, continuously evolving with each new challenge, users and communities.”

—LIJO JOS, Co-Founder, LIJO.RENY.architect

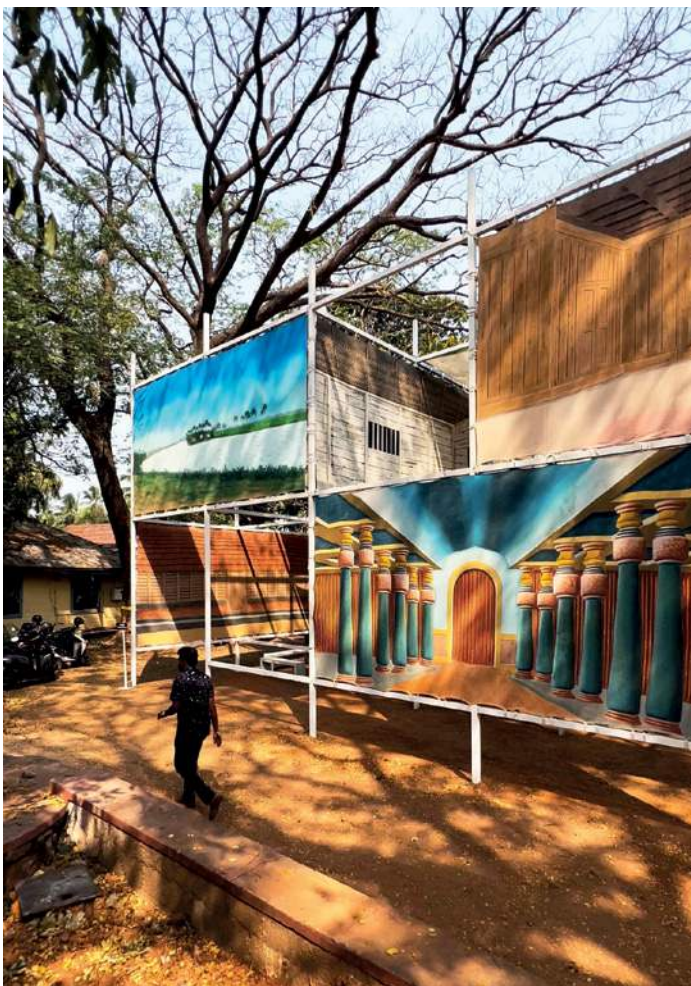


Photo Credit: Praveen Mohandas

MUSELAB

HUZEFA RANGWALA AND JASEM PIRANI

This Mumbai-based design practice is known for their pluralistic approach to design often resulting in spaces that are inimitable



MuseLAB is an end-to-end design studio; creating thoughtful and engaging architecture, interior environments, furniture and products. In 2012 partners Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani founded the studio built upon their shared passion for design. Each experience and or product embodies integrity and is created with the same care, skill and attention to detail. "At MuseLAB, we believe that design is a constant dialogue between the built and the unbuilt, the inhabitable and the habitable, the realised and the desired. Our approach is often pluralistic where we try to find the balance between diverse thoughts and ideas. The studio is held together by ideas, beliefs and shared humanistic values and refuses to adhere to any defined boundaries."

PROJECT IN FOCUS - HACIENDA

Location: Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Typology: Residential

Year of Completion: 2023

Design Concept: A fusion of different styles of architecture

Material Palette: Marble, Spanish and Chettinad Tiles

What we Heart: Charming courtyards, lofty arched openings, and sloping roofs that pay homage to the architectural styles of both Spain and Chettinad. The Swimming Pool - a 75-foot-long vault covered in black and white mosaic tiles, which serves as a captivating focal point.

Tradition merges with modernity in this architectural curation by Jasem Pirani and Huzefa Rangwala of MuseLAB. Their most ambitious project yet adheres to Manaiyadi Shastram, an ancient Southern Indian science, while paying homage to Spanish haciendas. Spread across a 39,400 sq ft plot, the home features charming courtyards and sloping roofs. The 12,000-square-foot residence centres around a courtyard, connecting social areas like the pool and dining space.

MuseLAB infuses the home with authenticity, curating spaces that evoke timeless sophistication. Collaboration with local artisans adds depth and character, creating a transformative retreat for homeowners. ✚

Website: www.muselab.in/home/

Photo Credit: Ishita Sivwala



“

Stories excite us. Through each one of our projects, whether it may be through architecture, interiors or products and furniture, we are looking to inspire and share a story.”

—HUZEFA RANGWALA, Co-founder, MuseLAB



PROJECT 810

VRITIMA WADHWA SINGH

Rooted in contemporary India, this firm creates memorable spatial experiences through a process-driven approach and a commitment to quality craftsmanship



Photo Credit: Reuben Singh

From crafting detailed pieces of furniture to building expansive interiors, Project 810's strength lies in the flexibility of their expertise. The firm follows a process-driven approach of research, exploration, and iteration to bring experience-centered designs to life. "We believe in using local resources, complemented with the sensibilities of quality craftsmanship, to create distinct experiences," shares Vritima, founder of Project 810.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - AK-OK / WORKSPACE FOR RELIANCE BRANDS PVT. LTD. X ANAMIKA KHANNA

Location: Kolkata

Typology: Commercial

Year of completion: 2023

Design Concept: Taking the brand's 'Everything is Ok' dictum forward, the design strategy makes room for an easy-going, assimilative balance. Clean, uncluttered yet delightful

Material Palette: Wood, concrete and metal

What we heart: The artful spirit of AK-OK, an ode to the building's original soul

Set within an age-old context, the workspace for India's leading designer fashion brand AK-OK by Anamika Khanna in Alipore, Kolkata is a search for balance between the old and new, classic and contemporary and muted yet vibrant. Located in the larger premises consisting of outdoor recreational spaces and a tailoring block, the main office space is an existing three-storeyed structure with charming Art Deco details from a bygone era. The 9,500 sq ft studio and office space illustrates how conventional boundaries of design can be pushed within an adaptive reuse context, while also paying homage to the existing built form. A palette of naturally distressed materials, which embrace the wabi-sabi of life in the adaptive reuse context come together to create delightful corners and artful spaces. ✚

Website: www.project810.com



“

From crafting detailed pieces of furniture to building expansive interiors, our strength lies in the flexibility of our expertise. Our collaborative approach helps us span retail, hospitality, workspace & residential projects.”

—**VRITIMA WADHWA SINGH**, Founder, Project 810

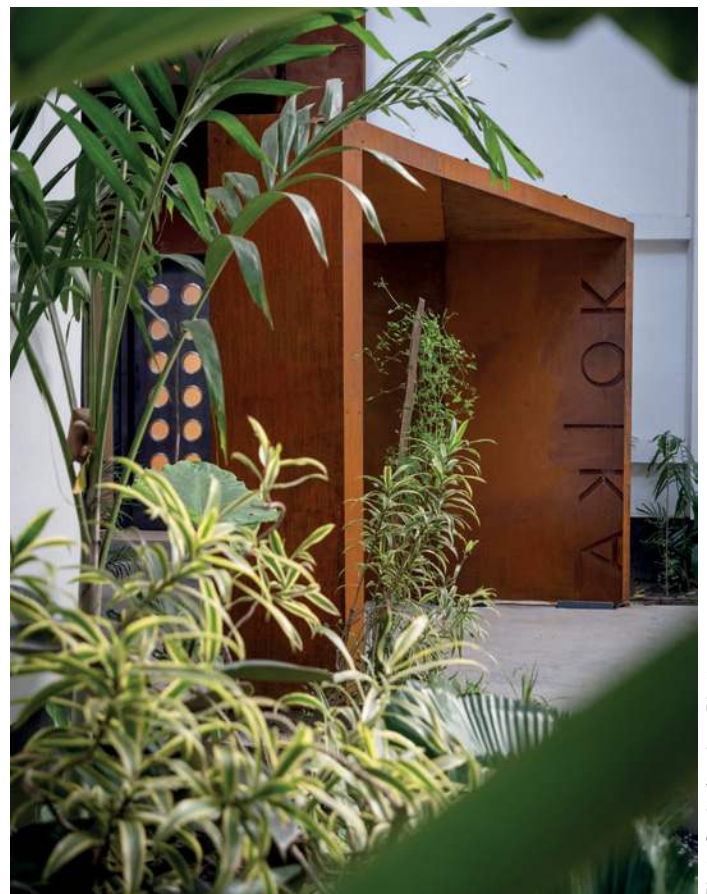


Photo Credit: Anushree Bhatner

QUIRK STUDIO

SHIVANI AJMERA AND DISHA BHAVSAR

Crafting people-centric spaces with contemporary flair, this firm blends innovation and individuality to elevate lifestyles



Aboutique interior design firm headquartered in Mumbai, Quirk Studio was established in 2013 by Disha Bhavsar and Shivani Ajmera. Rooted in the fusion of their design philosophies, the studio focuses on crafting people-centric spaces across residential, commercial, hospitality and retail sectors. With an unwavering commitment to quality, Quirk Studio has completed over 50 projects nationwide, spanning major cities like Mumbai, Pune, Goa, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and even London. Their approach revolves around creating spaces that reflect individuality and resonate with its occupants. The studio's contemporary vision injects innovation and experimentation into every project. Quirk Studio's knack for elevating lifestyles through design has garnered global acclaim, showcasing a repertoire of distinct yet minimalist styles tailored to a diverse clientele.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - AD HÔM

Location: Mumbai

Typology: Residential

Design Concept: A space that is subtle and open, complementing the vast sea it overlooks

Material Palette: Sleek lines and textures drawn from Japanese design

What we heart: Oak accents and hints of green and sea blue

Perched high above the sea, this apartment in South Mumbai is home to a young couple in their early thirties and their lovable labrador, Whiskey. Their wish for their new love nest? Pure heart and totally personal. They wanted a place that felt like them – warm, inviting and perfect for their little fur baby. A blend of sleek lines inspired by Nordic simplicity and textures drawn from Japanese design, along with the breathtaking view of the sea, makes it feel like living in a painting! With soft, soothing tones like ivory and beige mixed with bold pops of black and charcoal, the home boasts beautiful oak accents and hints of green and sea blue, courtesy of some well-placed plants. But it's not just about the looks, it's about how it feels. This home is like a quiet hug – balanced, nuanced and gentle. Inspired by the architecture and landscape around it, it mirrors the openness and serenity of its surroundings. ✚

Website: www.quirkstudio.in



“

Our biggest inspiration for this home was the surreal, unobstructed sea view of the apartment. It served as a beautiful, all-encompassing and captivating backdrop.”

—**SHIVANI AJMERA AND DISHA BHAVSAR**, Founders, Quirk Studio



Photo Credit: Sudarshan Balaji, JanEsther Productions

STUDIO IAAD

RACHNA AGARWAL

Based in Gurugram, this award-winning architecture and interior design firm is known for creating exceptional spatial experiences across workspaces, retail, hospitality and residences



With a design philosophy that revolves around sustainability and client collaboration, Studio IAAD (It's All About Design) delivers aesthetically pleasing and functionally superior spaces. Rachna Agarwal, who established the multidisciplinary firm in 2007, is also the co-founder of ZOERA, a studio that brings together stylishly curated layers of furniture, art and accessories to create exclusive and extraordinary spaces. Rachna crafts opuses perfectly epitomising avant-garde design narratives that conjure a sensorial and memorable spatial experience—ones that find their origins in the purity and integrity of design values. Under her capable superintendence, IAAD has been recognised as a pioneer in the discipline of architecture and design. Its illustrious body of work spans diverse typologies, such as corporate offices, expansive resorts and hospitality spaces, educational

institutes, high-end retail stores and experience centres, housing developments, model and showcase apartments, independent villas and a vibrant array of multiplexes.

Design Philosophy & Approach

“My clients are my key collaborators, I respect their aspirations and ensure that their imagination and aspirations are meshed ubiquitously into the construct and design narrative of any space,” says Rachna. With a keen eye for detail and an ardour for creating evocative spaces, her design process is an amalgamation of strong aesthetics, inventive material utilisation and the inclusion of sustainable practices at its core through a responsible and biophilic design approach. Recognised for their meticulous craftsmanship and innovative design, Studio IAAD continues to shape the future of design with a focus on quality and innovation.





“

My clients are my key collaborators, I respect their aspirations and ensure that their imagination and aspirations are meshed ubiquitously into the construct and design narrative of any space.”

—RACHNA AGARWAL, Founder and Design Ideatorr, Studio IAAD



“

Our design philosophy revolves around sustainability and client collaboration, delivering aesthetically pleasing and functionally superior spaces.”

—RACHNA AGARWAL, Founder and Design Ideatorr, Studio IAAD



Photo Credit: © Noughts and Crosses

PROJECT IN FOCUS - HERITAGE XPERIENTIAL SCHOOL

Typology: Institutional

Design Concept: Contextual design that seamlessly merges with its surroundings.

Material Palette: Natural Materials

What we Heart: The synergy of comfort, functionality, and accessibility.

Team: Anuradha Arora and Richa Singh

Nestled in Gurugram’s upscale DLF Phase 5, the Heritage School exemplifies contemporary education through its innovative design and commitment to holistic learning. This forward-thinking institution, rooted in an International Board curriculum, caters to children aged 4-7, fostering a dynamic educational environment that transcends traditional boundaries.

The school’s architecture seamlessly merges with its surroundings, embracing nature and promoting well-being. Repurposing existing structures and incorporating open spaces creates a harmonious blend of indoor and outdoor learning environments. The design ethos revolves around flexibility and experiential learning, allowing students to

explore and discover in a safe and nurturing atmosphere.

Drawing inspiration from Nordic design principles, the school prioritises comfort, functionality, and accessibility. Sliding glass doors encourage connectivity between different age groups, while ample natural light floods the classrooms, creating a conducive environment for learning. Each classroom is thoughtfully crafted with soft furnishings and dedicated interactive walls, fostering engagement and creativity.

Innovative spaces like the Maker’s Studio provide hands-on learning opportunities, complemented by a parent’s café for observation and interaction. Neutral tones and natural materials dominate the aesthetic, creating a cohesive and inviting atmosphere throughout the campus. Elaborate lighting installations add visual interest and enhance the learning experience, while ergonomic design elements promote transparency and curiosity.

The Heritage School’s thoughtful approach to design enriches educational experiences, empowering students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. By focusing on holistic development and embracing innovation, the institute sets a new standard for educational excellence in the region. ✚

Instagram: @studioiaad

RED ARCHITECTS

MAITHILI RAUT, RAJIV AND EKTA PAREKH

Transcending trends and fads, reD creates enriching spatial experiences through multidisciplinary collaboration and research-driven design



ReD (research || enquiry || design) is a studio that emphasises research and inquiry as the driving force behind their design process. The three principals Maithili, Rajiv and Ekta, although trained as architects, prefer to view their practice as a multidisciplinary confluence of architects, interior designers, graphic designers, product designers, urban planners, and even stylists. They believe that true creativity emerges from the collaboration of these diverse disciplines.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - ARTESIA

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2023

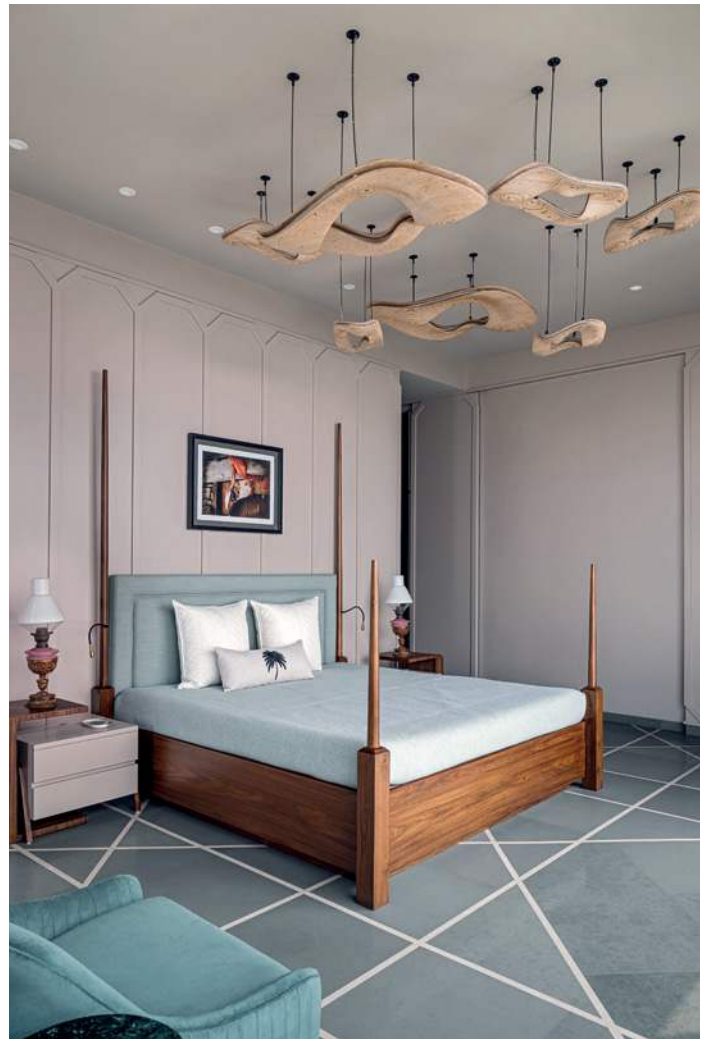
Design Concept: Hidden layers, multifunctional spaces, and a seamless indoor-outdoor flow

Material Palette: A mix of stones in geometric patterns, neutral backdrops with woven textures, hand-painted asymmetrical tiles, and a plethora of varied materials, homogenised seamlessly

What we hear: It's adaptability and layered spaces, concealing and revealing as the need arises—guest rooms, Murphy beds, bathrooms, door panels or even televisions

This 3-bedroom home, reconfigured from a 4-bedroom apartment, features a multipurpose den that can double as a guest room. The entry vestibule leads to a sculptural console and custom armchair. The living room has a formal seating area and a bar with a metallic cabinet concealing a TV and bar equipment. The dining area features a 10-seater table with a forest of legs visible through the tinted glass top. The outdoor deck has a breakfast nook and casual seating with a swing. The den can be closed off and has a hidden murphy bed. Other highlights include the master bedroom's four-poster bed, the older daughter's monochromatic room with a 3D wall, and the younger daughter's room with a curved steel desk. ✚

Website: www.redarchitects.in



Photos by Ishita Sitwala & Styled by Samir Wadekar

RITU AND ASSOCIATES

RITU CHANEKAR

An architectural fusion, Ritu Chanekar and her team blend Indian heritage with modern design principles, crafting spaces that resonate with cultural richness and timeless elegance

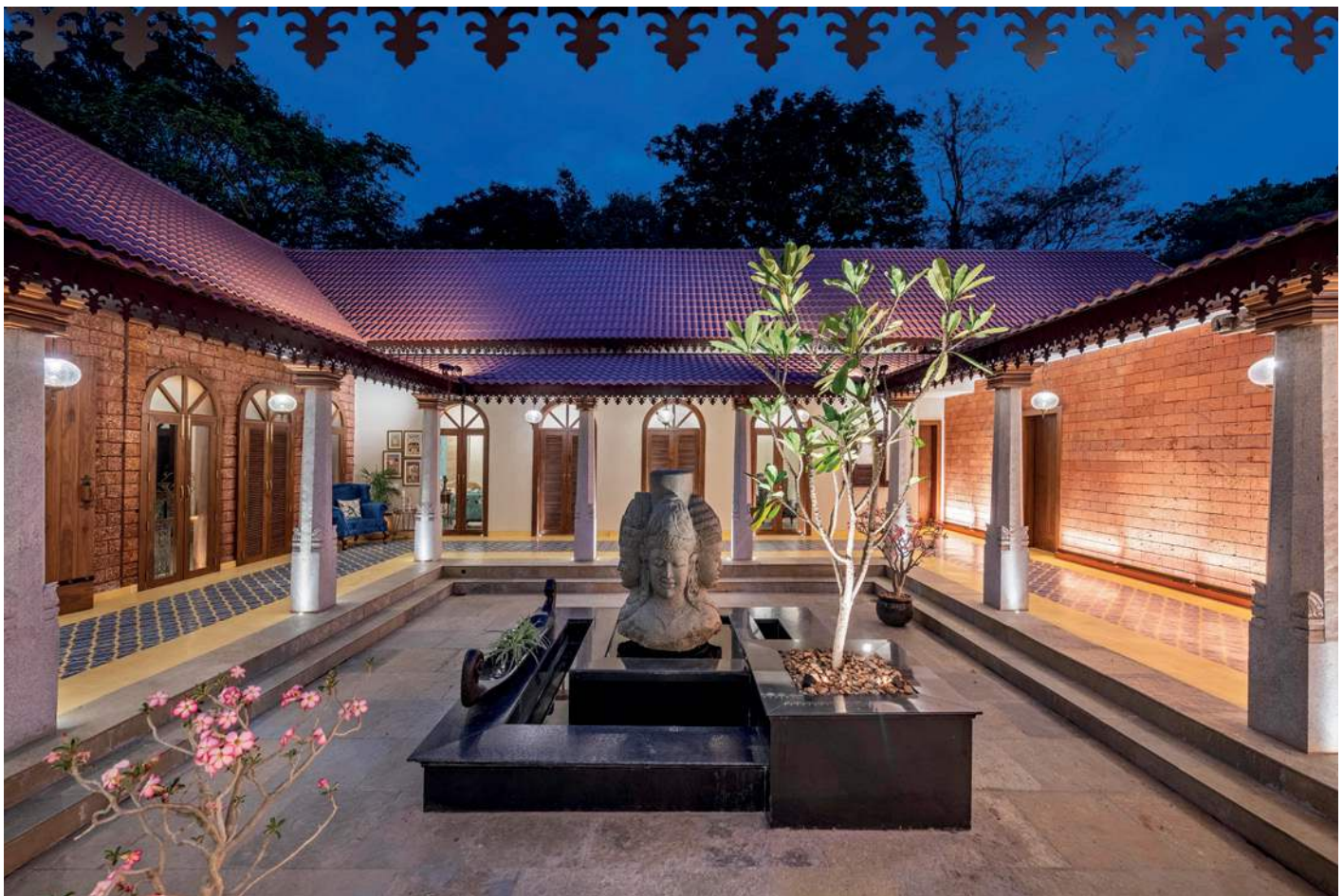


Photo credit: Prashant Bhat

A team of young professional & creative minds Ritu Chanekar and team have won lot of appreciation for their bold ideas and visionary approach. Designing boutique residences, farmhouses, second homes, resorts, and restaurants, the firm's emphasis on timeless design involves a delicate balance between old-world charm and contemporary elegance. They might draw inspiration from historical architectural styles, local craftsmanship, and traditional materials while infusing spaces with modern comfort.

Design Philosophy & Approach

Specialising in fusion style, blending Indian art with contemporary design, prioritize honoring cultural heritage while embracing modern aesthetics. "Our approach involves seamlessly integrating traditional elements, materials, and craftsmanship with innovative technologies and sleek forms to create harmonious spaces that reflect both the past and the present. We focus on creating unique, culturally rich environments that evoke a sense of timelessness and celebrate the beauty of cultural diversity," shares Ritu.





“

We focus on creating unique, culturally rich environments that evoke a sense of timelessness and celebrate the beauty of cultural diversity.”

— **RITU CHANEKAR** , Principal Architects, Ritu and Associates



“

Our approach involves seamlessly integrating traditional elements, materials, and craftsmanship with innovative technologies and sleek forms to create harmonious spaces that reflect both the past and the present.”

—RITU CHANEKAR, Principal Architects, Ritu and Associates



Photo credit: Prashant Bhat

PROJECT IN FOCUS - MERAKI

Location: Nagpur

Year of Completion: 2023

Typology: Second home

What We Heart? Cozy nooks and outdoor lounging areas, integrated with passive cooling strategies.

Oriented Courtyard: Passive cooling strategies, such as orienting the courtyard according to wind direction and solar path, enhance comfort and reduce reliance on mechanical cooling systems.

Maximizing Natural Ventilation and Daylight: By positioning the courtyard to capture prevailing breezes and optimize solar exposure, natural ventilation and daylight can be maximized throughout the home.

High Ceilings for Enhanced Airflow: Incorporating high ceilings in circulation areas promotes upward air movement, facilitating the flow of cooler air from the courtyard into the living spaces, creating a natural cooling effect, keeping the interior spaces comfortable even during hot weather.

The second home, designed for a couple, serves as a serene retreat amidst urban chaos, offering a tranquil escape where they can reconnect with nature and find respite from city life. Situated amidst tranquil surroundings, the home functions as a sanctuary where they can unwind and recharge while managing their work remotely. The design prioritizes comfort, functionality, and a seamless indoor-outdoor flow, allowing for plenty of natural light and breathtaking views. Thoughtful touches such as cozy nooks for reading or reflection and outdoor lounging areas contribute to the home's ambiance of relaxation and rejuvenation. A well-appointed kitchen designed for family gatherings enhances the functionality of the space, fostering a sense of togetherness and comfort.

The design pays homage to the surrounding environment by incorporating elements of local craftsmanship and materials, fostering a deeper connection to the land. Overall, the second home strikes a perfect balance between modern convenience and rustic charm, offering the occupants a retreat where they can create cherished memories with their family. ✚

Instagram: @rituandassociates

SHANTANU GARG DESIGN

SHANTANU GARG

Leading the charge in bespoke Indian smart homes, Shantanu Garg Design (SGD) seamlessly fuses modernity with tradition to showcase how transitional themes are aced!



From the vibrant streets of Dubai to the historic landscapes of Jaipur and the timeless allure of Pisa, Shantanu Garg Design (SGD) has etched a distinctive design identity for the last ten years. With meticulous attention to detail and tailored precision, SGD marries global aesthetics with functional brilliance, distinguishing itself through a holistic approach.

“Our philosophy revolves around crafting spaces into bespoke narratives,” emphasizes Shantanu, founder and self-taught design maestro. Further adding, “Our forte lies in weaving together modern and traditional themes from diverse design eras, resonating with Indian design sensibilities on a global scale.” Known for his interest in the history of luxury, vintage detailing, and craftsmanship, this time Shantanu says, “I am on a mission to raising the bar in design and elevating Indian luxury aesthetics beyond ethnicity—to make it egalitarian and globally palatable.”

PROJECT IN FOCUS - RESIDENCE MELANGE

Location: Jaipur

Typology: Penthouse Residence

Year of Completion: 2021

Design Concept: A Royal Indian Smart Home

Architectural Modernity: A cohesive design language blends drama, contrast, and balance, marrying luxury with made-to-measure functionality.

What we hear: Leather-clad wall boiseries embellished with graphics of Indian royalty. A custommade totem fountain made with semi-precious stones, the Kaleera pendant lights above the dining ensemble and the coffee bar placed within a vertical trunk.

The 10,000 sq ft “flying bungalow” redefines penthouse living with its architectural modernity, blending luxury with functional details. Luxurious Italian furniture, art deco, mid-century antiques, and global artefacts coalesce into a synchronised harmony, marrying Indian tradition with contemporary design. Black-and-white details inspired by Araish lime plaster, seen on marble walls, cushions, and bedding, exemplify the contextual Indian approach, achieving visible balance through contrasting styles and materials. ✚

Instagram: @shantanugargdesign



“

I am on a mission to raising the bar in design and elevating Indian luxury aesthetics beyond ethnicity—to make it egalitarian and globally palatable.”

—**SHANTANU GARG**, Architect & Interior Designer, Shantanu Garg Design



SHRUTI SODHI INTERIOR DESIGNS

SHRUTI SODHI

Led by the visionary Shruti Sodhi, the firm stands at the forefront of the industry, seamlessly blending engineering expertise with creative artistry to create designs that redefine luxury living



For over a decade, Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs has been at the forefront of redefining luxury residential spaces through a unique blend of innovation and opulence. Central to their design ethos is the seamless integration of sophisticated elegance with forward-thinking creativity. “We believe in crafting spaces that not only dazzle the eye but also function flawlessly,” affirms Shruti, reflecting the firm’s commitment to sustainable design practices. By embracing environmentally conscious approaches, their designs not only captivate aesthetically but also endure as sustainable solutions for the future.

Design Philosophy & Approach

Led by Shruti Sodhi, the firm’s founder and creative luminary,

their team of experts is driven by a relentless passion for innovation and unwavering commitment to excellence. Renowned as pioneers in avant-garde design, Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs stands as India’s pinnacle in hotel design, earning accolades for its unparalleled excellence and visionary creations. With a focus on residential projects, their studio endeavours to exceed client expectations by curating bespoke homes that reflect individual personalities and lifestyles. “Our mission is to translate our clients’ visions into tangible realities,” Shruti emphasizes their commitment to creating spaces that not only inspire but also withstand the test of time, serving as timeless reflections of their residents’ unique identities.





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We believe in crafting spaces that not only dazzle the eye but also function flawlessly.”

—**SHRUTI SODHI**, Founder, Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs



“

Our mission is to translate our clients' visions into tangible realities.”

—**SHRUTI SODHI**, Founder, Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs



PROJECT IN FOCUS - WHITE HOUSE

Location: Nagaland

Year of completion: 2022

Typology: Residential

What we Heart? Classic English design with modern aesthetics

Distinctive Architecture: Architectural features such as intricate facades and carefully planned interiors contribute to the White House's timeless appeal and visual allure.

Attention to Detail: Intricate facades and carefully curated interiors contribute to the White House's timeless charm and visual allure, reflecting meticulous attention to detail.

Environmental Consciousness: Despite its luxurious appeal, the White House prioritises sustainability, incorporating eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient systems to minimise its environmental impact.

Modern Functionality: Alongside its classic design principles, the White House integrates modern amenities and technologies to ensure comfort, convenience, and practicality for its inhabitants.

The White House project in Nagaland epitomizes Shruti Sodhi Interior Designs' dedication to merging classic English design with modern aesthetics while adhering to environmental regulations. This unique fusion creates a captivating and distinctive aesthetic, seamlessly blending architectural elegance with contemporary flair. Notable architectural elements of the White House include its intricate facades and carefully curated interiors, reflecting meticulous attention to detail. Despite its luxurious appeal, the White House prioritizes sustainability, incorporating eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient systems to minimize its environmental impact. With its sophisticated atmosphere and modern functionality, the White House promises enduring beauty and comfort for generations to come. ✚

Website: www.shrutisodhi.com

SIKKA ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS

RAMAN SIKKA

In the past three decades, Sikka Associates has played a pivotal role in defining the built identity of India. From airports to institutions, the multi-disciplinary firm has charted an impressive trajectory



Photo Credit: Arja Arora

Sikka Associates was founded by Raman's father SR Sikka in 1981. Raman Sikka joined his father in 1993. Known for his contemporary and modern design balanced with simplistic and sophisticated architecture, Raman Sikka, over the past three decades, has carved an indelible niche for himself. For someone with such an illustrious portfolio Raman keeps a surprisingly low profile. It's only when you delve deeper into their practice that you realise how diverse the portfolio is. In fact, the firm has also been listed amongst the world's Top 100 by the annual listing WA 100 of the British Journal of Building Design. Through his focused approach and distinctive design style, Raman has led his firm to establish a strong foothold beyond borders as well. The firm now has projects in China, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Dubai, Abu Dhabi & Muscat. "Our philosophy is to offer complete client focused service at all stages of the project and to develop long term business relationships with each of our clients," says Raman.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - PRADHANMANTRI SANGRAHALAY

Location: Delhi

Typology: Cultural

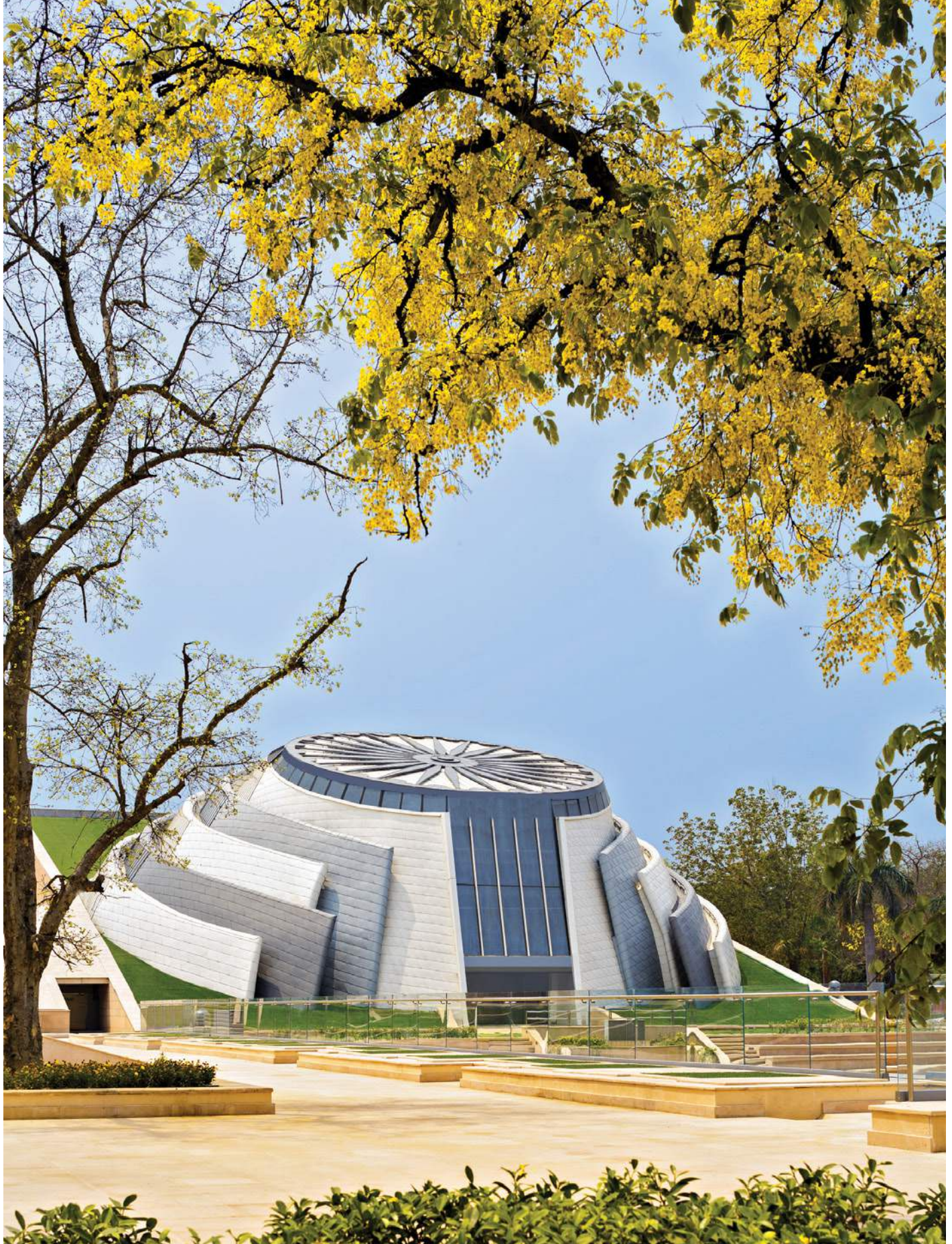
Year of Completion: 2023

Design Concept: Inspired by the Dharmachakra on the Indian Flag, the museum embodies the spirit of comprehensive development and continuous progress, with the Dharmachakra's 24 spokes symbolising the nation's advancement.

What we Hear: This architectural marvel artfully combines architectural elements, structural innovation, and landscape design.

In the heart of India's capital city, a remarkable structure stands tall, embodying the essence of the nation's journey. The Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, a museum dedicated to the Prime Ministers of India, goes beyond mere artefacts and historical narratives. It stands as a testament to the hands that have shaped the nation, representing India's rise as a global power. This captivating piece of architecture enthralls visitors with its unique design, seamlessly blending landscape and structure, and embracing the spirit of the nation's ongoing progress. "In fact, our architectural design concept itself became the logo of the museum," informs architect Raman Sikka, Associate Principal, Sikka Associates. ✚

Website: <http://saaindia.net/>



“

Our philosophy is to offer complete client focused service at all stages of the project and to develop long term business relationships with each of our clients.”

—**RAMAN SIKKA**, Associate Principal, Sikka Associates Architects

SIMRAN BOPARAI ARCHTELIER

SIMRAN BOPARAI

Known for luxurious designs that combine cultural heritage with grandeur, this firm focuses on integrating luxury with functionality in their neoclassical design philosophy



Photo Credit: Arya Arora

Since its inception, Simran Boparai Archtelier has carved a niche for itself, becoming a torchbearer for architectural excellence. Simran's residential projects are a study in opulence, with her Neoclassical designs featuring grandiose elements such as stately columns, pediments, and sinuous mouldings. From sprawling mansions adorned with intricate stone carvings and ornamental motifs, to palatial estates replete with grand entrances, sweeping courtyards, and lavish interiors, her designs seamlessly blend the grandeur of the past with contemporary luxury.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - JEWELLERY STORE

Location: Punjab

Typology: Commercial

Design Concept: Blending cultural heritage with grandeur through neoclassical elements, ornate facades, and intricate detailing

Material Palette: Rich fabrics like velvet and silk for draperies and upholstery, deep green and gold colors dominating the interior to evoke a sense of regal grandeur, and classical architectural elements such as ornate moldings and fine detailing on the facade

What we heart: The seamless integration of craftsmanship, quality, and cultural heritage with opulence and functionality

Designed by the visionary architect Simran Boparai, this luxurious jewellery store showcases a seamless blend of cultural heritage and grandeur in its neoclassical design. The exterior exudes elegance with classical architectural elements like ornate facades and intricate mouldings, reflecting the store's commitment to craftsmanship. Upon entering, customers are welcomed into a sumptuous interior adorned with a rich colour palette of deep green and gold, creating a regal atmosphere. ✚

Website: www.simranboparai.com



“

I have a unique way of working as a process where we bring concepts and then derive them into practical design. The process is the key to my unique perspective.”

— **SIMRAN BOPARAI**, Founder, Simran Boparai Archtelier

SJK ARCHITECTS

FOUNDER: SHIMUL JHAVERI KADRI

PARTNERS: VAISHALI MANGALVEDHEKAR, SARIKA SHETTY, ROSHNI KSHIRSAGAR

This Mumbai-based collective is known for creating environments that are true to its context and rooted in the earth



Photo Credit: Hashim Badani

SJK Architects is an architecture, interior design and master planning practice founded in 1990 by Shimul Javeri Kadri, and led by her and Partners, Vaishali Mangalvedhekar, Sarika Shetty and Roshni Kshirsagar. They design spaces for a rapidly urbanising India, meticulously crafted from a study of climate, culture, history, and technology.

“We believe in designing environments that are rooted in the earth – using the sun, the wind, and nature to create spaces that are suffused with light and contemporary innovations that draw from Indian traditions and spiritual metaphors,” says Shimul.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - JSW SANJEEVANI MULTISPECIALITY HOSPITAL

Location: Raigad, Maharashtra

Typology: Healthcare

Year of Completion: August 2021

Design Concept: The project is a case study in social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Material Palette: AAC (autoclaved aerated concrete), Ita Gold limestone

What we Heart: The use of grey water from the STP (sewage treatment plant) and ETP (effluent treatment plant) to irrigate the hospital landscapes and in flushing systems. • Energy-saving features like the solar-powered hot water system and a variable chilled water pumping system to minimise AC loads, carbon monoxide sensor for fresh air intake

India's rural communities face a significant shortage of healthcare facilities. Less than 25% of the country's healthcare facilities are concentrated in rural areas where 70% of the population resides. An initiative of the JSW Foundation, the JSW Sanjeevani Multispeciality Hospital in Dolvi village, Maharashtra, was envisioned to bridge this gap in the rural areas of the Raigad district. The architects designed the facility as an antithesis of the typical fear-inducing, white, sterile spaces that hospitals are infamous for. Warm, earthy colours in the form of ochre flooring, earth-coloured walls and the dark-brown roof, commonly found in the local context, create a sense of comfort and belonging. Smooth and calm recuperation is at the heart of spaces such as balconies along patient rooms and wards. Connection with nature has also been a particular focus of the design, with many studies linking it with reduced anger, fear, and stress and increased feelings of pleasantness. ✚

Website: www.sjkarchitects.com



“

We believe in designing environments that are rooted in the earth – using the sun, the wind, and nature to create spaces that are suffused with light and contemporary innovations that draw from Indian traditions and spiritual metaphors.”

– **SHIMUL JHAVERI KADRI**, Founder, SJK Architects



SPACES AND DESIGN

POOJA BIHANI

Embracing a boundless approach, this firm creates harmonious, personality-infused environments through Pranic Feng Shui principles



Spaces and Design is an award-winning design studio based in Kolkata, founded by Pooja Bihani with the intent to create harmonious, aesthetic, and highly functional environments that enrich the lives of the users. Pooja believes in giving each project its own identity, working within the constraints of site, budget, and the clients' lifestyle and needs. "We like to work sans boundaries. Spanning from eclectic Indian to Scandinavian influences, and frequently crafting customised design elements and wall art—our firm embraces the idea of infusing personality and uniqueness into every project," reveals Pooja.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - ART MODERNE

Location: Kolkata

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2023

Design Concept: The ground floor embraces an Art Deco theme in every space

Material Palette: Marble inlays, bespoke wallpapers, and artworks on the ground floor along with oak veneers, oakwood, and black bespoke furniture create a perfect fusion of past and present

What we hear: The pooja room doused in a palette of greys and gold, marrying modern and traditional elements, reinforced by an asymmetrical layout of miniature temple columns inspired by various Indian temples across the country

This residence, spread over two floors, is a beautiful amalgamation of old-world charm and contemporary lifestyle that pays homage to the look-feel of a generational bungalow yet celebrates the modern. Pooja's design language of fusing disparate styles with the use of rich materials like marble and oak wood in a classic, timeless colour palette on the lower floors and abstract, muted tones on the upper level, establishes the blended ethos of this home. A combination of luxury and tradition with the appropriate touch of modernism gives birth to this captivating residence, where every corner leads to a design discovery. The attempt to honour the old while bringing in new elements gives rise to this successful fusion experience of Art Moderne. ✚

Website: www.spacesanddesign.com



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The concept of ‘Interior Architecture’ underpins every design endeavour by Spaces and Design. Based on simple circulation plans, the spaces flow into each other, highlighting the studio’s inherent style of capturing the beauty of simplicity and symmetry.”

—**POOJA BIHANI**, Founder, Spaces And Design

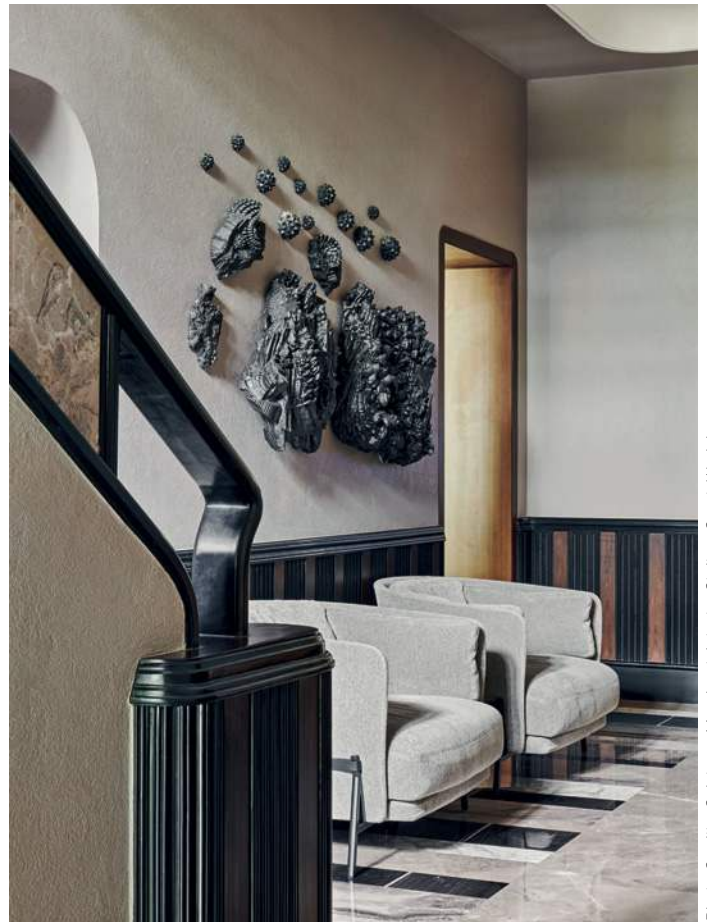


Photo Credits: Suleiman Merchant; Interior Styling: Samir Wadekar

STHAPATI

VIPUL VARSHNEYA & HARSH VARSHNEYA

From public infrastructure projects to high-end residential spaces, this multi-disciplinary architectural practice, is known for their expertise in diverse typologies



STHAPATI is a multidisciplinary architectural practice headquartered in Lucknow and New Delhi. Their globally recognised portfolio spans a spectrum of building typologies, from individual dwellings to large-scale urban developments. The practice is a pioneer in airport terminals and public transportation infrastructure. Their most recent project – the Ayodhya Airport Terminal garnered them a lot of acclaim. The firm is also well-known for its heritage conservation efforts and has successfully restored many significant sites across the breadth of the country. STHAPATI's work extends beyond the Indian subcontinent and is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards.

“Our aim across various projects in India and globally has been that each project should follow the 3 Cs: Culture, Climate, and Context,” says Harsh Varshneya.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - RESIDENCE MELANGE

Location: Noida, India

Typology: Urban Housing Project

Design Concept: An innovative linear cluster system that seamlessly intertwines housing units with the central green acre.

What we Hear: Paved pathways leading to tower entrances that are thoughtfully flanked by semi-covered seating areas under elegant wooden pergolas, allowing residents to immerse themselves in the lush landscapes and verdant surroundings.

Spanning an impressive 26 acres of prime Noida real estate, Leisure Park offers homes for over 2,993 families distributed across 30 residential towers. It confronts the universal problem of urban overcrowding, striving to provide innovative solutions that address the contemporary needs of city dwellers.

The layout of the residential towers is consciously designed to foster social cohesion and recreational continuity. It was not merely about stacking buildings but connecting people and nurturing a community spirit. The design encourages linear circulation, providing access to the blocks from the outer periphery while linking the inner periphery to a lush, one-acre green space - a true 'retreat'. The retreat - a serene oasis, features a meticulously designed club building with stepped terraces overlooking an amphitheater.

The central core is a masterstroke - fostering unhindered movement for the residents. It seamlessly interconnects the entire residential complex, creating a neighbourhood within a residential complex. Flanked by lush green pockets on either side of the towers, abundant natural light pours into every residence, ensuring comfortable ventilation and a delightful living experience. Spatial planning is a design ingenuity, with maximised pathways for circulation and strategically opening communal gathering areas. Each pathway is designed to avoid dead corners and is oriented to embrace soft natural light. This thoughtful arrangement elevates the mundane living experience to a community where residents thrive in open-spaced and interconnected living. +

Website: www.sthapatiindia.org



“

Our aim across various projects in India and globally has been that each project should follow the 3 Cs: Culture, Climate, and Context.”

—**HARSH VARSHNEYA**, Director and Principal Architect, STHAPATI



STUDIO LOTUS

AMBRISH ARORA, SIDHARTHA TALWAR, ANKUR CHOKSI, ASHA SAIRAM, HARSH VARDHAN

This multi-disciplinary design powerhouse has redefined Indian architecture with its path-breaking approach to conscious design that celebrates local resources, cultural influences, and meticulous attention to detail



Photo Credit: Noughts and Crosses LLP

Fostered by a culture of learning and intrapreneurship, Studio Lotus has redefined Indian architecture by seamlessly integrating local materials, cultural narratives, and sustainable practices into their projects. The firm embraces a profoundly contextual approach, combining it with a strong focus on the tactile and sensory qualities of the spaces they craft. In the context of India, where they aim to make innovations scalable and relevant, the practice explores low-tech methodologies rather than high-tech as a method of choice to innovate. They understand the significance of adapting and reusing existing buildings en masse, recognizing the vast amount of underutilized built spaces and the opportunities they present for re-use before embarking on new construction.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - RAAS CHHATRASAGAR

Location: Nimaj, Rajasthan

Typology: Hospitality

Design Concept: Treading lightly on the site, with minimal impact additions.

Material Palette: A blend of local timber and stone, complemented by tensile fabric roofs and boarding partitions. Local crafts are expressed as contemporary interventions.

What we heart: The property's sensitive ecological approach

RAAS Chhatrasagar, the fourth boutique hospitality destination by Walled City Hotels, is a 20-key property located near the historic town of Nimaj, Rajasthan. Nestled alongside an artificial lake formed by a Rajput chieftain's embankment, the site's sensitive ecological context necessitated a low-impact design approach. At the heart of the experience is the Baradari, a contemporary expression of the Rajputana twelve-pillared pavilion, constructed using a light-weight metal frame. Private suites nestle between lightweight partitions adorned with hand-painted fabrics, offering uninterrupted views of the forest and lake. Local crafts are expressed as contemporary interventions, echoing the design philosophy of the acclaimed RAAS Jodhpur. The unique selling proposition lies in the property's sensitive ecological approach, creating an immersive and sustainable hospitality experience that celebrates the region's architectural heritage. ✚

Website: www.studiolotus.in



Photo Credit: Avesh Gaur

SUMESSH MENON ASSOCIATES

SUMESSH MENON

With an impressive portfolio of high-end dining establishments from Mumbai to New York, Sumessh Menon continues to redefine the boundaries of restaurant design



With a passion for experimentation and a flair for innovative design concepts, Sumessh has established himself as a master of modern aesthetics, constantly pushing boundaries with new age materials. His design philosophy is simple yet powerful - to aim for the “wow” factor in every project, ensuring that each space resonates with style and energy. Sumessh’s approach to restaurant design focuses on developing functional floor plans that facilitate smooth service operations while offering an enjoyable dining atmosphere for patrons.

“I believe that an excellently designed restaurant should not only cater to the operational needs but also elevate the dining experience, creating a comfortable yet stylish environment for unforgettable moments,” shares Menon, thriving on the challenge of balancing practicality with desirability.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - TAKUMI

Location: Santacruz, Mumbai

Year of Completion: January 2024

Typology: Restaurant

What we heart? The cuboid punctured burgundy wall

Colour Palette: Blend of red and grey hues, complemented by biophilic elements like bamboo shoots

Design Approach: No hard angles, organic and curved forms

A ‘PURELY ASIAN’ experience is what the brand-new restaurant designed by Sumessh Menon Associates at Santacruz promises us. An Asian warrior lady sculpture greets you at the very entrance to this deeply rooted Asian space, standing within a custom-made Japanese torii gate. There is a lot of artworks that is subtly woven into the design of the whole space which emanates the Asian vibe into the whole space. Custom lights being the USP for Sumessh Menon Associates, the decorative lights were all customized with Asian design inspirations wherein the outdoor lights were organic shaped cane lights and the indoor ones were formed having x-ray effect of Asian motifs, both lending a uniquely charming ambience to the spaces. ✚

Website: www.sumesshmenonassociates.com



“

I believe that an excellently designed restaurant should not only cater to the operational needs but also elevate the dining experience, creating a comfortable yet stylish environment for unforgettable moments.”

—**SUMESSH MENON**, Design Director & Founder, Sumessh Menon Associates



TALIESYN

SHALINI CHANDRASHEKAR AND G S MAHABOOB BASHA

Crafting contextual architectural experiences, this design and architecture firm explores the vernacular through meaningful spatial interventions and local materiality



Taliesyn's design philosophy revolves around creating meaningful spatial interventions that are deeply rooted in the landscape and respond to the vernacular paradigm of site and materiality. Co-Founded in the year 2010 by Ar. Shalini Chandrashekar & Ar. G S Mahaboob Basha, the firm has projects dotting the Southern-Indian frontier ranging a diverse portfolio of Residential, Hospitality, Recreational, Institutional & Cultural genres. "Our body of work is unified by a common thread of contextual sensitivity and architectural experiences that holistically engage the senses," shares the designer duo.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - THE CABIN HOUSE

Location: Bengaluru

Typology: Residential

Year of completion: 2023

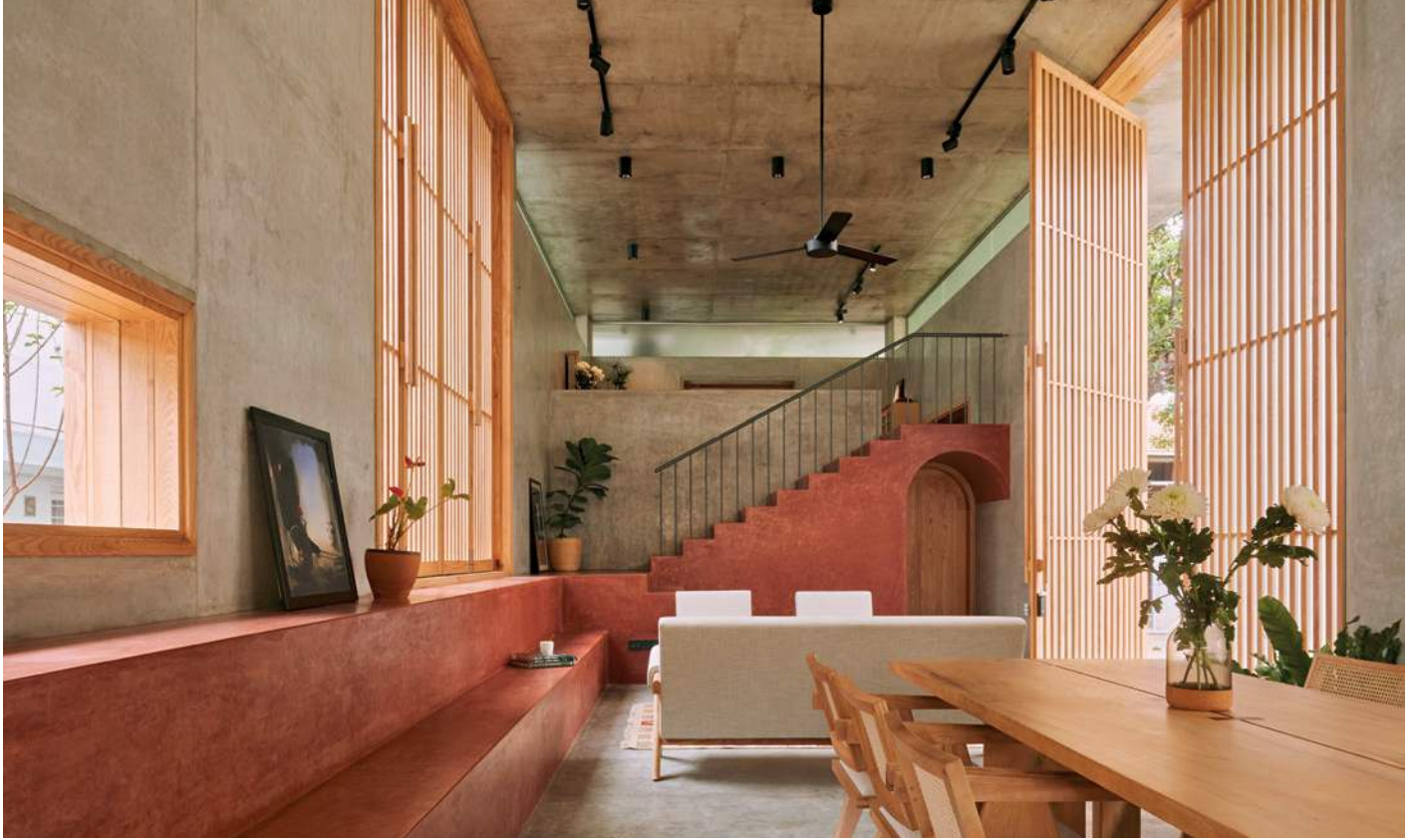
Design Concept: Vernacular influences fused with a minimal design language

Material Palette: Earthy tones evoke the setting sun, while the starkness of cement and warm tones of furniture offer depth

What we hear: Its seamless integration with nature, blurring the lines between the built and natural environments

The Cabin House is a one-bedroom weekend home in South Bengaluru, designed as a retreat from urban realities and a celebration of nature. The 349 sq m rectangular dwelling is nestled among jackfruit and mango trees, with pivoted doors blurring the boundaries between the landscape and the residence. The architecture of The Cabin House draws inspiration from simple forms and native bearings. The interior of the rectangular volume is broken effortlessly into a double height living, dining and kitchen with a mezzanine floor on one end to accommodate the master bedroom. Earthy tones throughout the dwelling evoke the setting sun, whilst the starkness of the cement and warm tones of the furniture offer the required depth. Below the mezzanine is the washroom that features a cast in-situ island-concrete basin overlooking the landscape and a full-sized walk-in closet. ✚

Website: www.taliesyn.in



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Exploration of materials based on their proximity to the site, properties, appearances & the effect it introduces into space is paramount. Taliesyn's body of work is strung together by a common thread of contextual sensitivity & architectural experiences that holistically engage the senses.”

— **SHALINI CHANDRASHEKAR AND G S MAHABOOB BASHA**, Co-Founders, Taliesyn

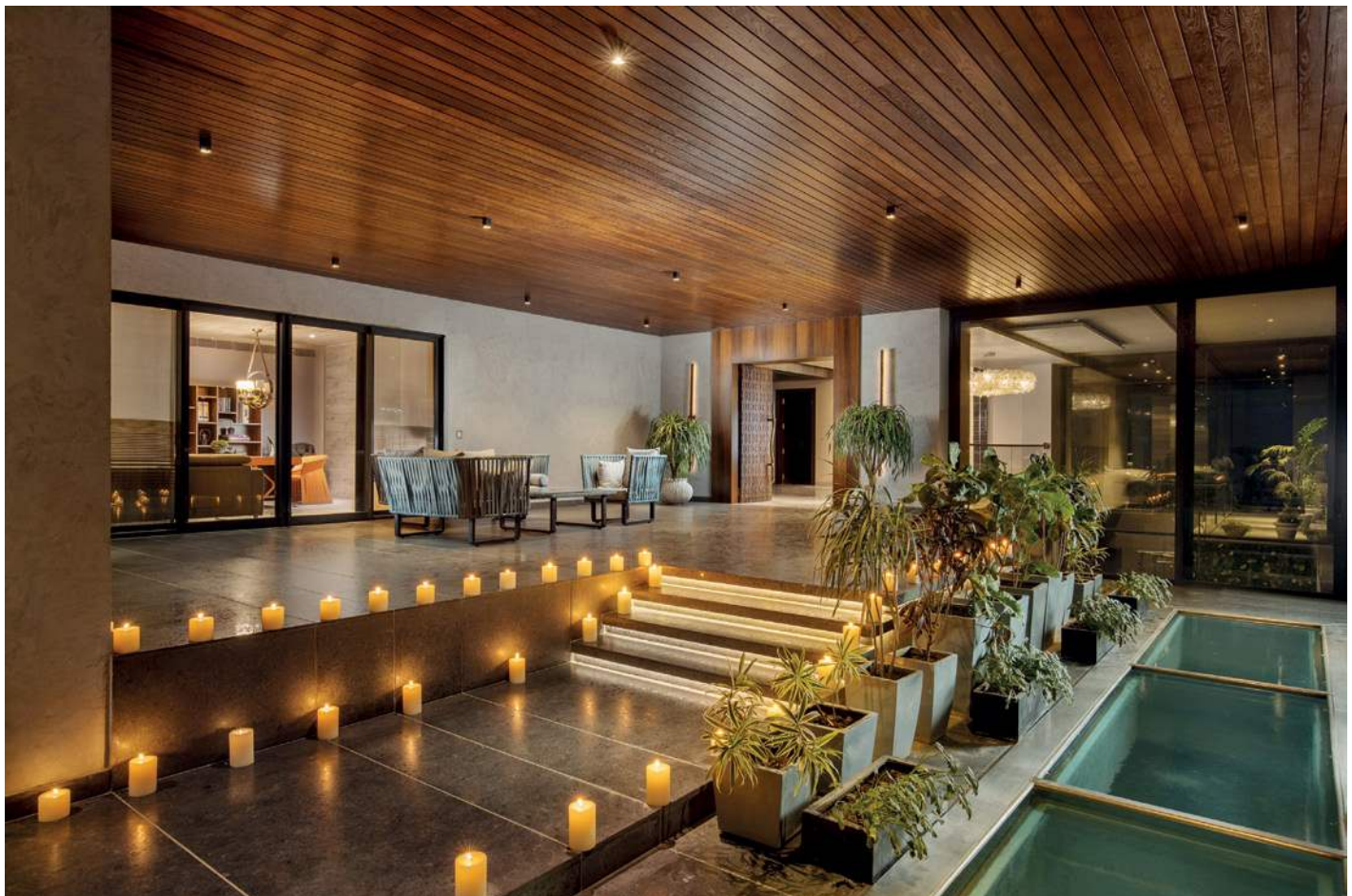


Photo Credit: Aaron Chapman

THE EARTH HOME™ ARCHITECTURE

ADREESH CHAKRABORTY

For a thriving future home for humanity, through conscious design, driven by a hedonistic appreciation of nature and objects, The Earth Home believes in creating with the planet rather than just building on it!



For a thriving future home for humanity, through conscious design, driven by a hedonistic appreciation of nature and objects, The Earth Home believes in creating with the planet rather than just building on it!

Design Philosophy & Approach

"We're not just about building structures; we're about crafting experiences that resonate with the spirit of our planet," exclaims

Adreesh. "We're on a mission to fashion a future where every home embodies a harmonious blend of conscious design and a passionate celebration of nature and objects." Fuelled by boundless curiosity and an insatiable thirst for exploration, they are constantly pushing the boundaries of design innovation. "Our goal? To revolutionise the way we build, creating spaces that not only perform better but also nurture our environment and uplift communities," says Adreesh.





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We're not just about building structures; we're about crafting experiences that resonate with the spirit of our planet.”

—**ADRESH CHAKRABORTY**, Founder, The Earth Home Architecture



“

We're on a mission to fashion a future where every home embodies a harmonious blend of conscious design and a passionate celebration of nature and objects.”

—ADREESH CHAKRABORTY, Founder, The Earth Home Architecture



PROJECT IN FOCUS - RUBIK'S CUBE

Location: New Delhi

Year of completion: 2020

What we Heart: Bold yet balanced, the space boasts grand volumes and sleek lines that create a sense of fluidity and movement.

Design Concept: Conceived as a cuboid, the house features double-height volumes subtracted strategically to open up spaces and provide views of desired areas.

Climate Design: The zoning, influenced by climatic considerations, strategically places buffer zones like dressers and toilets to shield main habitable areas from the harsh summer sun, while allowing daylight to flood the interiors.

Nestled on a sprawling 2000 sq. yd. plot at the outskirts of vibrant New Delhi, this site is a haven of natural beauty. Lush tree lines adorn the landscape, with the house positioned snugly against the verdant tree line, offering breathtaking foliage views from its north face. Picture a cuboid-shaped marvel, its form cleverly carved with double-height volumes to flood the interiors with radiant daylight. Even the basement features strategic volumetric subtractions, creating inviting spaces illuminated by natural light.

The house boasts large decks and verandahs that open onto lush greens, creating dynamic spaces with bold volumes and cantilevered planes. Luxurious amenities include a heated wave pool, gymnasium, and a salon with a service lift, enhancing comfort and indulgence. ✚

Website: www.theearthhome.com

THE INK STUDIO CO.

RUPESH SHAH & BIJAL SHAH

For this studio based in Mumbai and Gujarat, design is all about creating lasting memories



Rupesh Shah and Bijal Shah, Founders, The Ink Studio are synonymous with homes that exude an edgy yet classic design narrative. Both Rupesh and Bijal are passionate about travelling, and their design narrative is deeply inspired by their myriad journeys. The design duo solemnly believe that any piece of art should always reflect the owner's choice, and must be poised with the current fashion trends and practical design. This studio headquartered in Mumbai and Gujarat has executed projects across India; they have now widened their horizon, and are now working on a hospitality project in Switzerland and residential & commercial projects in Australia.

Design Philosophy & Approach

"With over 15 years plus experience in a combination of tradition & innovation, arty & creative work, we inspire the way people LIVE / WORK / PLAY," says Rupesh Shah. "We embody global & indigenous design sense and reflect the contemporary, classic, modern, & fusion design from the world of Interiors." The design studio religiously follows quality & workmanship. Our design and detailing carve a long-lasting impression and milestone, propagating the DNA of our client's values and emotions.





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With over 15 years plus experience in a combination of tradition & innovation, arty & creative work, we inspire the way people LIVE/WORK/PLAY.”

—**RUPESH SHAH**, Co-Founder, The Ink Studio Co.



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We embody global & indigenous design sense and reflect the contemporary, classic, modern, & fusion design from the world of Interiors.”

—BIJAL SHAH, Co-Founder, The Ink Studio Co.



PROJECT IN FOCUS - CASA TIMELESS

Location: Mumbai

Typology: Residential

Material Palette: Exclusive use of Italian Marble, High end bathroom fittings, British PU wall panels, Exquisite fabric used in Curtain & Back panel & Bespoke 8' huge Wall clock.

The Regal Entrance Foyer: The chequered black & white marble entrance foyer with the waiting area welcome guests & gives off a regal impression.

The Master Bedroom: The space impresses with a stunning wine wall adorned with fabrics and golden metal plates, along with a floating bed.

The term “Casa Timeless” perfectly encapsulates this stunning white home, a true masterpiece born from the desires of a young traveling couple. Spanning 3500 square feet, this luxurious apartment is a meticulous curation of materials, all envisioned by our talented designers. Situated at the top floor of a premium high-rise building, it offers breathtaking views that complement its beauty. A seamless balance is achieved by connecting a 3-bedroom

apartment with a lavish 2-bedroom one, both boasting magnificent vistas. Every corner of this exquisite space tells its own unique story, creating an immersive experience for its inhabitants.

“Our designers have poured their hearts into crafting this captivating masterpiece, ensuring that every detail captures the essence of the residents’ spirits. “It’s not just a home; it’s a work of art that reflects the aspirations and dreams of its occupants,” says Bijal. The main entryway welcomes guests with Italian flooring and gold leafing designs. The living area is elegantly furnished, featuring plush pink sofas and a bar with black Italian marble. The dining area showcases a bespoke marble top and handcrafted wooden chairs. The kitchen stands out with black matte ceramic finishes and a glazed island platform. The master bedroom impresses with a red wall adorned with fabrics and golden metal plates, along with a floating bed. An entertainment room offers comfort with crimson plush recliner seats.

“Together, our designers have created a genuinely captivating masterpiece by including a beautiful abode that perfectly catches our spirits into the design of this beautiful home.” concludes Bijal. ✚

Website: www.inkstudio.in

THE PICTURESQUE STUDIO

PRIYA DOON

With an unwavering dedication to precision and artistry, The Picturesque Studio transforms spaces into bespoke havens that seamlessly blend elegance, comfort, and functionality, redefining the essence of modern living

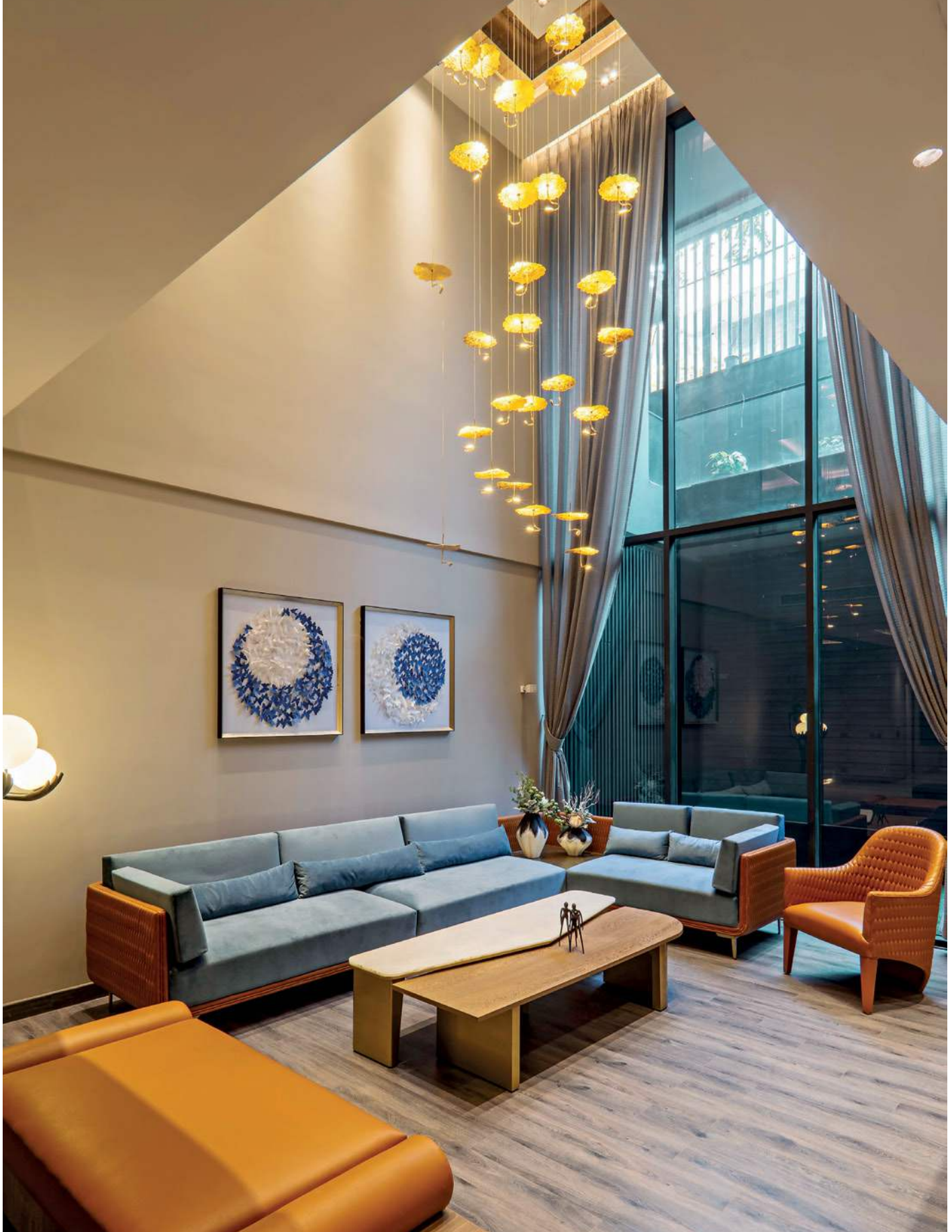


The Picturesque Studio, under the visionary leadership of Principal Designer Priya Doon, stands at the forefront of luxury interior and exterior design. Since its inception in 2015, the studio has garnered acclaim for its unparalleled expertise in crafting visually captivating spaces tailored to the distinct personality and lifestyle of each client. With an unwavering dedication to precision and artistry, The Picturesque Studio transforms spaces into bespoke havens that seamlessly blend elegance, comfort, and functionality, redefining the essence of modern living.

Design Philosophy & Approach

“At The Picturesque Studio, we believe in turning dreams into reality through innovative design solutions tailored to our clients’ individual preferences. With a foundation rooted in creativity and design curiosity, our philosophy revolves around translating personalities and lifestyles into tangible design concepts,” says Priya Doon. Whether it’s a minimalist haven or a lavish maximalist retreat, the studio approaches each project with equal enthusiasm and pragmatism. Their expertise lies in creating high-end interiors and exteriors that seamlessly blend outstanding materials, exceptional design, and intelligent functionality, ensuring spaces that are both visually stunning and user-focused.





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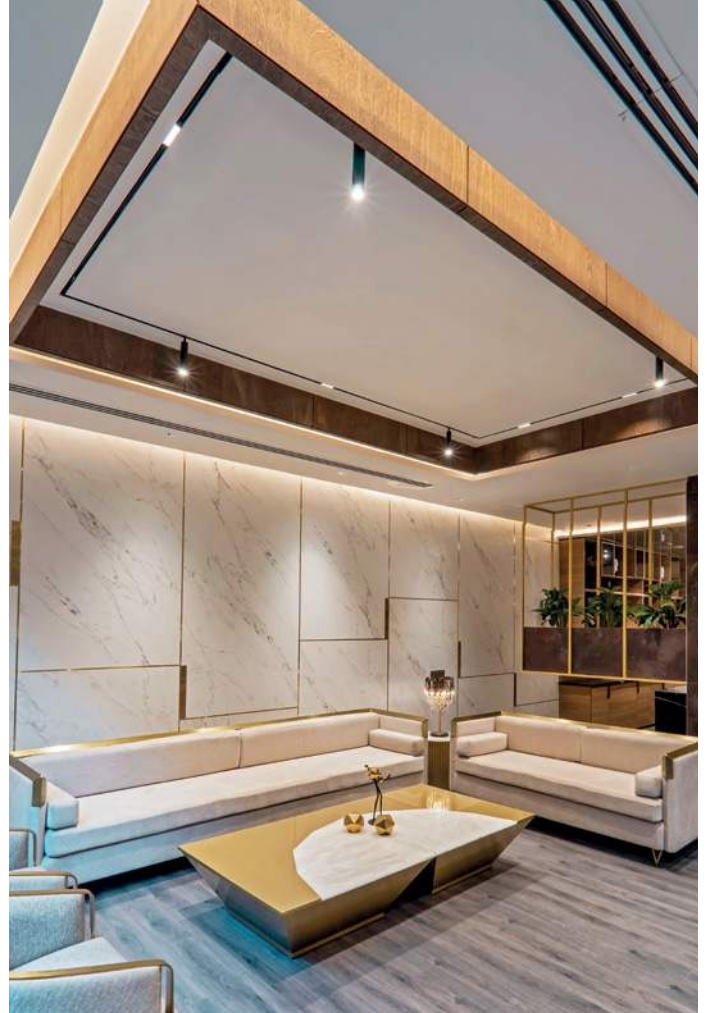
At The Picturesque Studio, we believe in turning dreams into reality through innovative design solutions tailored to our clients' individual preferences.”

—**PRIYA DOON**, Founder & Principal Designer, The Picturesque Studio

“

With a foundation rooted in creativity and design curiosity, our philosophy revolves around translating personalities and lifestyles into tangible design concepts.”

—PRIYA DOON, Founder & Principal Designer, The Picturesque Studio



PROJECT IN FOCUS - A LUXURY RESIDENCE

Location: Gurugram

Typology: Residential

Design Concept: A luxurious yet functional living environment reminiscent of a boutique hotel.

Material Palette: A mix of rich, opulent materials – marble, wood, and glass.

What we Heart: To enhance sustainability, each space seamlessly connects with nature, with abundant natural light flooding the interiors and every room opening onto greenery.

Nestled within the serene neighborhood of South City, Gurugram, Residence SC18 emerges as a beacon of harmonious family living amidst the bustling urban landscape. Completed in 2023, this sprawling 500-square-yard abode stands as a testament to the client’s vision of creating a sanctuary where each family member can enjoy private living

spaces while fostering a strong sense of togetherness.

At the heart of this remarkable residence lies a dedication to shared experiences, evident in the meticulous design approach that prioritizes circulation and communal areas. The basement, a true entertainment haven, features a grand central bar, a gaming area with a pool table, and a spacious seating zone beneath a soaring double-height ceiling, all complemented by a state-of-the-art home theatre.

The design language of Residence SC18 exudes elevated luxury, characterized by the extensive use of rich materials that bestow a sophisticated and timeless aura upon each space. Each of the three master bedrooms is a masterpiece, boasting distinctive themes and bespoke detailing. From calming grey tones and standout art pieces in the parents’ retreat to creamy white palettes accented by gold metal inlays in the older son’s room, and rich, luxurious textures in the younger son’s domain, every corner exudes opulence and sophistication. ✚

Instagram: @the.picturesque.studio

THE PURPLE INK STUDIO

AKSHAY HERANJAL, ADITI PAI, NISHITA BHATIA AND ARPITA PAI

This multifaceted practice is crafting captivating narratives and pragmatic urban solutions through an unconventional architectural approach



Photo Credit: Reshma Karnat

Whether it's crafting imaginative residential spaces or transforming urban landscapes, The Purple Ink Studio's unconventional approach ensures that each project is a unique expression of their creative vision. Conceived by Principals Aditi Pai and Akshay Heranjal in 2011, and later joined by Nishita Bhatia and Arpita Pai, the studio passionately believes in an approach that is contextual and unburdened by normalcy. The studio's focus is divided into two distinct typologies. The first involves unique briefs, through which the team crafts captivating narratives that transcend time and space. The second typology delves into the studio's non-linear approach to Indian urban projects.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - MARC AUDITORIUM AT THE MAHE BENGALURU CAMPUS

Location: Bengaluru

Typology: Institutional

Design Concept: Removing boundaries and reducing the urban weight while creating social spaces

Material Palette: Vivid orange building skin, continuing from the exterior to the interior

What we heart: The orchestrated movement of people through diverging ramps and layered transitions creates visual interest and a dynamic experience

The MARC - Dr Ramdas Pai Convention Hall & Food Court in Bengaluru is a part of the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) campus. The design combines a food court on the lower level and a 1,200-seater auditorium above. The design concept revolves around exploring the relationship between built and open spaces, creating a sense of place through orchestrated movement of people in the surrounding plaza. The structure incorporates two lower levels of food court beneath a rigid auditorium framework, blurring the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces. The upper levels emphasise the auditorium's functionality and the idea of movement through porous transitions and multiple layers concentrated around its circular form. The building skin was rendered in vivid orange continuing inside out symbolising the youthful, vibrant and innovative ideologies that define the very essence of the campus. ✚

Website: www.thepurpleinkstudio.com



Photo credit: studio suryan/dang

TOUCHWOOD INTERIORS

MUNNA LAL SHARMA

This Kolkata-based design firm with over 22 years of experience and a portfolio of 500+ projects blends creativity with functionality



Photo Credits: Studio SP Photography

Touchwood, headquartered in Kolkata with a nationwide presence, has carved a niche in the interior design industry through its unwavering commitment to excellence, strategy, and artistry. Driven by a dedicated team of passionate designers, Touchwood prides itself on delivering outstanding results, from conceptualisation to execution. Their attention to detail and commitment to exceeding client expectations are at the forefront of every project they undertake. "At Touchwood, we blend creativity with functionality to create spaces that inspire and delight. Trust us to bring your vision to

life with style and precision," shares founder Munna Lal Sharma.

Design Philosophy & Approach

The firm's philosophy revolves around de-cluttering physical spaces through the integration of art, creating harmonious environments that resonate with the occupants' preferences. Whether it's an office, residence, corporate or commercial space, Touchwood understands the significance of optimising objectives and delivering tailored solutions that strike a balance between functionality and aesthetics.





“

At Touchwood, we blend creativity with functionality to create spaces that inspire and delight. Trust us to bring your vision to life with style and precision.”

— **MUNNA LAL SHARMA**, Founder, Touchwood Interiors

“

The firm’s philosophy revolves around de-cluttering physical spaces through the integration of art, creating harmonious environments that resonate with the occupants’ preferences.”

—MUNNA LAL SHARMA, Founder, Touchwood Interiors



Photo Credits: Studio SP Photography

PROJECT IN FOCUS - LUXURY ABODE

- Location:** Kolkata
- Typology:** Residential
- Design Concept:** Functional and a comfortable experience that caters to the needs of a young family
- Material Palette:** Natural wood, marble, leather, metal, raw concrete, and textile
- What we heart:** The internal staircase with a skylight

This luxurious residence captivates you from the moment one steps into the ground floor living area, featuring a stunning internal staircase with a skylight that bathes the space in natural light. The

design harmoniously blends functionality and personal expression, creating a memorable ambiance. Elegant yet unpretentious, the overall concept focuses on comfort and catering to the needs of a young family, with ease of maintenance in mind. The first floor accommodates bedrooms that epitomise clean lines and simplicity. The master bedroom exudes grandeur with fluted wallpaper detailing, fabric panelling for acoustic absorption, and a neutral palette with soft undertones. The daughter’s bedroom alternates between pastel hues and contrasting textures. On the second floor, a glass house with marble, wood, and metal inlay flooring opens to a lavish terrace area with a mandir. ✚

Instagram: @touchwood.in

WALLMAKERS

VINU DANIEL

The Kerala-based architectural firm is known for its experimental approach to design



Vinu Daniel completed his B. Arch in 2005 from The College of Engineering, Trivandrum, following which he worked with Auroville Earth Institute for the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Post-Tsunami construction. He started 'Wallmakers' on returning from Pondicherry in 2007. Many eye-openers during his practice prompted him to resolve to devote his energies towards the cause of sustainable and cost-effective architecture.

Amidst the current Global climate crisis, it becomes more important to question the direction in which we humans, as a race are headed. In the place of questions like "What should we build?", queries like "Should we build?" should become more relevant. And in facing the inevitable situation where we must build, the need to use materials that has already become an environmental hazard in the place of fresh material has become the need of the hour. "At Wallmakers we believe in understanding and using materials easily available from a site or in building with waste, which led us to research and develop techniques such as the Debris Wall and the Shuttered Debris Wall. The aim is to build sustainable spaces that are responsive to specific site contexts and conditions, while maintaining a balance between innovative, utilitarian designs and creating contextual dream-like spaces," says Vinu Daniel.

PROJECT IN FOCUS - TOY STOREY

Location: Vadakara, Kerala

Typology: Residential

Year of Completion: 2024

Material Palette: Compressed Stabilised Earth Blocks, Discarded Toys

Design Concept: Contextual and Climate-Sensitive. The design reimagines plastic waste into a sculptural and sustainable home.

What we Hear: The complex, latticework façade of earthen tiles which integrate over 6200 discarded toys. The circular design which makes it accessible from all sides and the playful verandah.

The architect conceived the project as a living museum for plastic toys discarded by local students, 6200, to be precise. The residence is conceived as a "house within a house" where the large living space will always be frequented by neighbours and members of the community, but the Japanese-style inspired shoji screens become translucent partitions providing light and visual connectivity for the private half. The central courtyard and the composite CSEB- Toy Jaali wall (Compressed Stabilised Earth blocks made from soil from the site), acts like a perforated external skin, with mesh in the interior, allowing constant cross ventilation and better insulation. The project also features a radial ferrocement shell roof that helps to reduce reinforcement by 33%, CSEB walls that with a very less embodied energy of 572 MJ/cum and the traditional oxide flooring technique. ✚

Website: www.wallmakers.org



“

At Wallmakers, the aim is to build sustainable spaces that are responsive to specific site contexts and conditions, while maintaining a balance between innovative, utilitarian designs and creating contextual dream-like spaces.”

—VINU DANIEL, Founder, Wallmakers

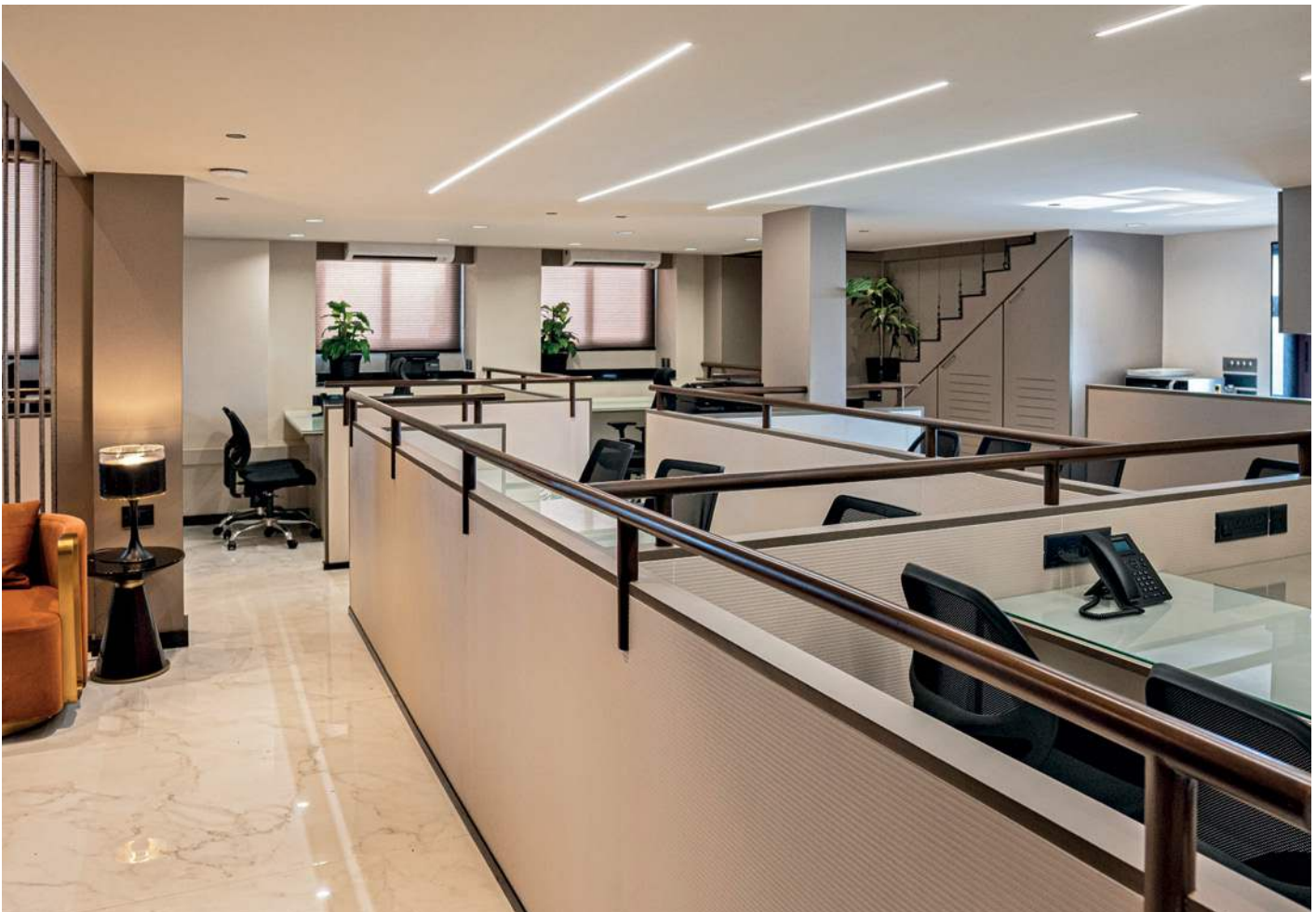


Photo Credit: Syam Sreelam, Althaf Rasheed

YOGITA SUREKA INTERIORS

YOGITA SUREKA

Delve into the world of Yogita Sureka Interiors, a beacon of design excellence rooted in Kolkata's vibrant landscape



Yogita Sureka Interiors, headquartered in Kolkata for nearly a decade, has left an indelible mark on the city's design landscape. With a core philosophy rooted in precision and innovation, the studio is renowned for its unwavering commitment to excellence. Passionate about reimagining spaces, they take pride in infusing each project with the unique identities and lifestyles of their clients.

Design Philosophy & Approach

"Our approach involves meticulous attention to detail and the use of professional technical drawings in project execution," says Yogita Sureka. Her primary objective? To craft designs that mirror each client's distinct personal taste and functional requirements. "Their individual personality and lifestyle serve as our guiding inspiration," she affirms. This client-centric approach ensures that every project is a bespoke creation, tailored to resonate with the essence and vision of those who inhabit the space.





“

Our approach involves meticulous attention to detail and the use of professional technical drawings in project execution.”

—**YOGITA SUREKA**, Principal Designer, Yogita Sureka Interiors



“

Client-centric approach ensures that every project is a bespoke creation, tailored to resonate with the essence and vision of those who inhabit the space..”

—**YOGITA SUREKA**, Principal Designer, Yogita Sureka Interiors



PROJECT IN FOCUS - VIKIRAN

Location: Kolkata

Year of Completion: 2023

Typology: Office

What we Heart: Curated pendant lights complemented by natural light influx.

Colour Palette: A sophisticated palette of neutral tones including beige, white, and grey, complemented by marble flooring, wooden railings, and strategic lighting.

Spanning 3500 sq ft, project VIKIRAN commenced in September 2022 and reached completion by March 2023. This commercial venture posed challenges in harmonising the client specifications with Vastushastra principles while maintaining exceptional quality standards. Integration of Vastushastra guidelines, including precise partition heights and air conditioning unit placement, was paramount. Carefully curated pendant lights illuminated areas like the reception, lobby, cabins, and conference rooms, creating a refined ambiance.

Staff areas prioritised natural light influx to foster a vibrant work environment. Despite its complexity, the project was executed with precision within six months, showcasing our commitment to excellence.

Design Goals: Balancing client needs with Vastushastra principles, particularly ensuring no partitions

touched the ceiling, was foundational.

Vastushastra Integration: Every detail, from panel design to airflow direction, was meticulously cross-checked with Vastushastra principles.

Creative Passage Design: A long, narrow passage, necessitated by the need for a north entry, was creatively utilised to break monotony with materials and panels.

Staff Area Innovations: Stylish wooden railings provided separation in staff areas without sacrificing openness.

Mezzanine Floor Transformation: Clever solutions addressed challenges like low ceiling height and lack of windows, including removing padding, raising the ceiling, and adding light- and air-bringing openings.

Description of conference room: Situated on the mezzanine level, the conference room had limited headroom of just 6 feet. Consequently, we opted for vinyl flooring due to its lightweight nature and minimal thickness. During the design process, we incorporated numerous vertical lines to create the illusion of greater height within the space.

Consistency and Individuality: Unique designs utilising the same materials across directors' chambers demonstrated the harmony between uniformity and individuality. ✚

Instagram: @yogitasureka_

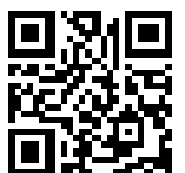
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FOREWORD



What a journey it has been! Architecture+Design is turning 41 this year, and we can't help but feel immensely proud of our legacy over these four decades.

As we mark this 41st milestone anniversary, we're taking our mission forward with not one, but two special issues. First up, with "Top 50" Architects, Designers and Practices of India. It's our way of giving recognition to the creative visionaries who've been consistently pushing boundaries and shaping the distinct "India Design Identity" through their work.

Our second commemorative "Design Dialogues," we're sparking engaging conversations by going straight to the source - insights from the brilliant design community itself. Let's face it, nothing shapes the world we live in more than the built environment and how it interacts with its surroundings - from the homes we live in, to the offices we work in, to the infrastructure that keeps societies running. In this issue, we've brought together expert voices across the AID community for candid dialogues unpacking nuances of design philosophies.

With each anniversary that passes, we renew our driving mission to be the definitive voice for the industry. As we look back at 41 years of leading design conversations, we're also excited to forge ahead as pioneers shaping a more sustainable, inclusive and human-centric future for the built world. Join us in raising a toast to the power of design.

(Sonal Das)

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Director – Editorial and Brand Solutions **SONAL DAS**

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ABOUT THE ISSUE



Anniversary Special 2024

All drawings and visuals for the projects and articles, unless mentioned otherwise, are courtesy the architects/authors.

Architecture+Design was conceived by a group of architects led by Architect CP Kukreja. It's been 41 years since its humble yet illustrious beginning. Since then, A+D has always positioned itself as the voice of the industry. We inherited a great legacy; with legacy comes great responsibility. And we take this seriously.

So, instead of us writing about architecture, architects, and designers; we turned to the industry. We looked to the luminaries of the design industry to understand what matters to them, what design means to them, and how they respond to challenges. Over the last few weeks, our only job was to listen, and absorb! And it has been an exhilarating experience.

From the impact of rapid urbanisation to the impact of technology on architecture, to the evolution of luxury, the discussions covered the various aspects of the architecture and design segment.

Through our first edition of Design Dialogues powered by Schueco, we bring you excerpts from these insightful discussions. And yes, don't forget to follow us on our YouTube Channel for the entire conversation.

Happy Reading!

(Seema Sreedharan)

Editor



Vimar Creative

Market Review

TRADE NEWS

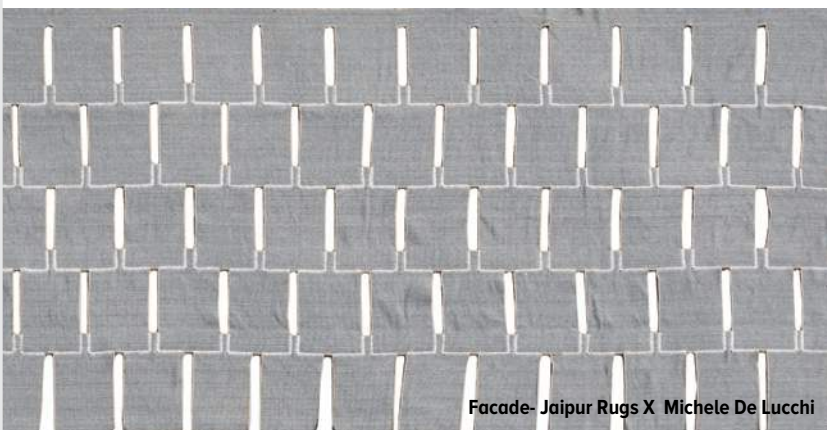
Jaipur Rugs' Three Italian Collaborations at Salone del Mobile Milano 2024

Jaipur Rugs proudly presents its latest offerings at Salone del Mobile Milano 2024, showcasing a fusion of Indian artisanship and Italian design excellence. Celebrating the Indo-Italian connection, Jaipur Rugs unveils three groundbreaking collaborations with esteemed Italian design studios, each embodying a blend of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary sensibilities. At the heart of their exhibit

lies the Hall booth at Salone, featuring a landmark architectural façade crafted by the Italian architect, Michele De Lucchi. This architectural masterpiece sets the stage for an immersive exploration into the world of luxury, innovation and craftsmanship. The collaborations span diverse design concepts and techniques. In a pioneering collaboration, Vimar 1991, the yarn atelier owned by Chanel, ventures into couture carpets for the

first time with the Couture Collection, characterised by a monochrome palette and threads woven into intricate patterns reminiscent of haute couture fashion. Architect Michele De Lucchi's studio, AMDL, reimagines traditional carpet construction with contemporary kilims in the Façade collection, inspired by architectural principles and geometric compositions, blurring the lines between flooring, wall coverings and room dividers. DAAA, a multidisciplinary design practice, bridges the gap between Mumbai and Milan with its abstract black and white rugs in the ZIG ZAG Collection, symbolising the fusion of two vibrant cultures. These collaborations highlight Jaipur Rugs' commitment to excellence in craftsmanship and innovation.

Jaipur rugs X DAAA Haus Zig Zag Creative



Facade- Jaipur Rugs X Michele De Lucchi

Updates

TRADE NEWS

New Touch-Free Sensor Faucets by GRAFF

Renowned for luxury bath and kitchen fixtures, GRAFF introduces an innovative addition to its Art of Bath portfolio: touch-free sensor faucets. These faucets, activated by a simple wave of the hand, offer a sleek, hygienic solution for modern bathrooms. Designed for public spaces, GRAFF's sensor faucets blend intuitive functionality with discreet aesthetics, prolonging fixture lifespan by reducing wear-and-tear. Complementing various interior styles, they enhance elegance and grace in the bath space.



CEO Ziggy Kulig highlights their contemporary profile and advanced technology, ensuring confidence in hygiene and water conservation. Available in exquisite finishes like Steelnox® Satin Nickel, they maintain

Designed for public spaces, GRAFF's sensor faucets blend intuitive functionality with discreet aesthetics, prolonging fixture lifespan by reducing wear-and-tear.

pristine environments while reflecting elevated design standards. Crafted with the highest-quality materials and European craftsmanship, GRAFF's sensor faucets promote sustainability and minimalist versatility, steering towards a greener future.

TRADE NEWS

Action TESA Launches Versatile HDF Laminate Flooring

A leading manufacturer of Engineered Panel Products in India, Action TESA unveils new earthy shades of HDF Laminate Floorings in 8mm and 12mm variants. The highlight is their wear-resistant surface layer, ensuring longevity. Comprising four layers including decorative paper, HDF core, balancing paper and an aluminum oxide-coated tissue, these floorings resist impact, scratches, burns and stains. Laminate flooring is preferred for its



easy installation, minimal upkeep and durability. It features a click-lock design, resembling a jigsaw puzzle assembly, offering a seamless surface without sub-floor attachment. Managing Director Mr. Ajay Aggarwal

emphasises Action TESA's commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction, offering both thickness variants to meet different project requirements. The 8mm variant suits spaces with height constraints, while the

12mm option offers enhanced stability and sound insulation. This release reaffirms Action TESA's dedication to delivering innovative solutions, furthering their status as a pioneer in the panel industry. ering towards a greener future. ✚



HARMONY IN DESIGN

Essentia teams up with Schueco enriching this project with unparalleled heights of architectural distinction

Nestled amidst the bustling streets of Ishwar Nagar, a towering six-storey edifice emerges as a testament to familial reverence and architectural finesse - the Shreem Kamalaya Residence. Bearing the name of its matriarch, Shrimati Kamla Rani, this dwelling echoes with tradition and spirituality, christened as "Kamalaya," translating to the abode of Goddess Lakshmi Ji.

Amidst the urban cacophony, this residence stands as a beacon of cultural

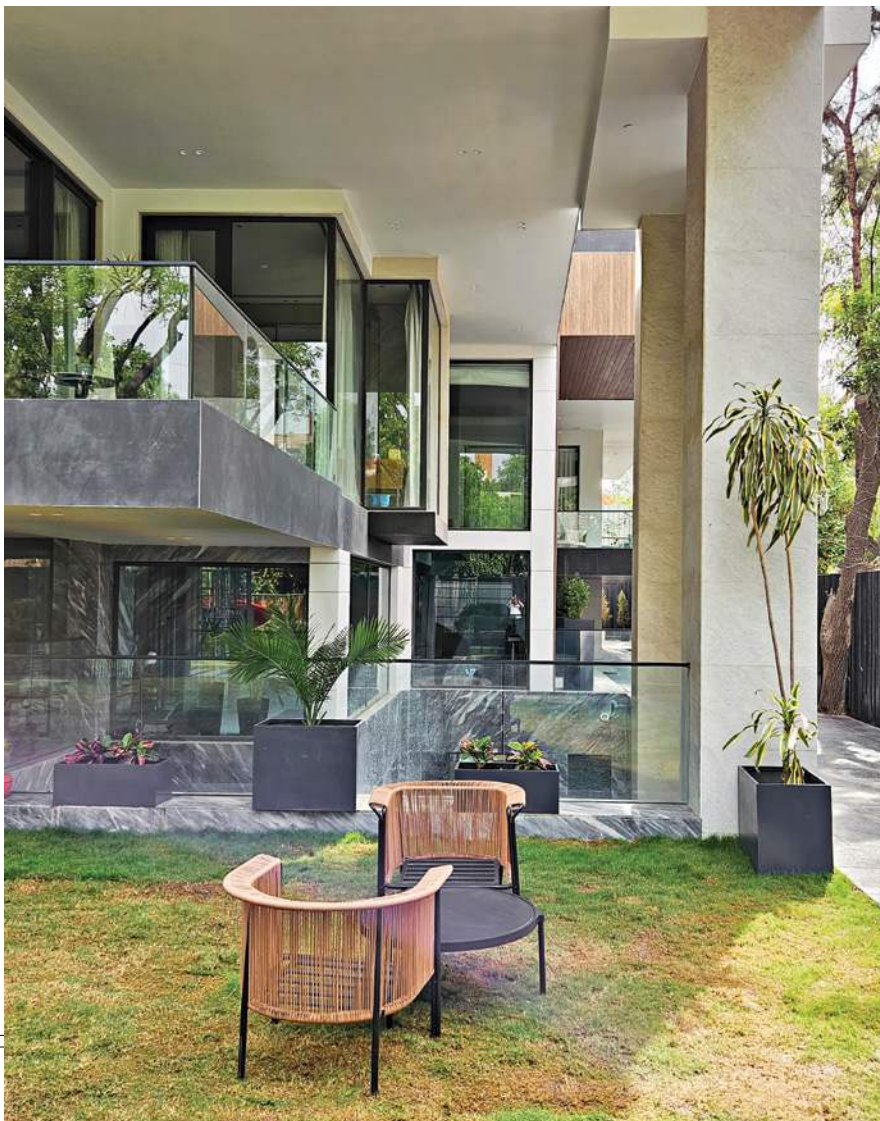
Amidst the urban cacophony, this residence stands as a beacon of cultural legacy and contemporary design, where every corner narrates a story of harmonious coexistence between the old and the new.

legacy and contemporary design, where every corner narrates a story of harmonious coexistence between the old and the new. Essentia — Sai Glazing were tasked with transforming this dream into reality. Their canvas? A plot on one of India's arterial roads, a coveted space where the rhythm of daily life beats loudly. But the challenges are manifold. How does one integrate a fully functioning clinic for the family doctor without disrupting the serenity of the home? How can lush greenery



Inside, soft greys and natural materials create a calming ambiance, while strategically placed windows invite the outdoors in. And then there is the pièce de résistance: a sculptural staircase that not only connects floors but serves as a symbol of architectural ingenuity.

outside become an integral part of the living experience within? These are the questions that drive the design process, fueling creativity and innovation at every turn. Inside, soft greys and natural materials create a calming ambiance, while strategically placed windows invite the outdoors in. And then there is the pièce de résistance: a sculptural staircase that not only connects floors but serves as a symbol of architectural ingenuity. But what truly sets the Vidhu Khullar Residence apart are the Schueco products adorning its façade. More than just windows and doors, they are gateways to a world of comfort and security. With sound insulation and dustproofing capabilities, coupled with abundant natural light, they redefine urban living. The brand offers a range of exceptional products designed to elevate residential spaces. The AW40.NI window system boasts high wind load resistance of up to 2400 PA and impressive water tightness of 600 PA, allowing architects the freedom to create tall openings for breathtaking views. Its dual-mode locking system and air permeability of 600 Pa ensure fresh air circulation even with windows closed. Meanwhile, the ADS.50.NI door system combines grace with practicality, offering barrier-free movement between rooms and burglary resistance up to WK2, providing residents with peace of mind. Lastly, the AS.39.SC.NI sliding system integrates interior and exterior spaces, enhancing the overall living experience with its blend of functionality and design. In this home each floor, each space, is crafted with precision to foster a sense of community without compromising on privacy.



DESIGN DIALOGUES

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The first edition of Design Dialogues brings together luminaries from the industry to indulge in conversations, discussions and debates. As the design identity of our country and our planet evolves, we look to the names that matter to engage in conversations that dissect the nuances of design and could set the blueprint for the future.

Designing HerStory

→ With **Mitu Mathur and Aparna Kaushik**

Urban Infrastructure in India

→ With **Sonali Rastogi and Goonmeet Singh Chauhan**

The Evolution of Luxury

→ With **Bhuvan Kapila and Ashish Batra**

The New Face of Design

→ With **Vivek Gupta and Manish Gulati**

Partners in Design

→ With **Priyanka Khanna and Rudraksh Charan**

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DESIGNING HERSTORY: WOMEN SHAPING THE DESIGN WORLD

→ WITH APARNA KAUSHIK AND MITU MATHUR

By Kashish Kaushal

Throughout history, women have made invaluable contributions to the world of architecture and interior design. As the ultimate multitaskers, they seamlessly blend creativity, functionality, and an innate understanding of human needs to craft spaces that not only captivate but nurture the soul. From the pioneering work of legendary architects like Zaha Hadid, Sheila Sri Prakash – India's first woman to establish her own practice, to the contemporary visionaries reshaping our world today, the 21st century has witnessed a seismic shift, with women taking center stage and reshaping the very essence of how we experience the built environment.

As we celebrate our 41st anniversary issue, it is imperative to shine a light on the role of women in shaping the world around us. In this session of Design Dialogues, we bring together two accomplished architects, Mitu Mathur - Director of GPM Architects and Planners and Aparna Kaushik - Principal Architect and Founder of Aparna Kaushik Design Group, to engage in a thought-provoking conversation about the challenges, triumphs, and unique perspectives that women bring to the world of design. Read on,

as Aparna and Mitu share their experiences in empowering and mentoring aspiring women designers and architects, paving the way for future trailblazers.

FORGING PATHS, BREAKING BARRIERS

When Aparna asked Mitu about her decision to venture into urban design and architecture, she credited her father Gian P. Mathur, Founder & Managing Director of GPM Architects and Planners, as the driving force behind her choice. "I give all the credit to my father to actually inspire me to be in this industry," she said. However, she acknowledged that the industry was predominantly male-centric, which made it intimidating for her initially. "To be very honest, he's been surrounded with men mostly. So, it was a little scary in the beginning," Mitu admitted. Despite the challenges, Mitu found motivation in the very environment that at first seemed daunting. She explained, "But I think that is something that gave me that kick and the excitement. When I'm in a room full of men, especially taking all the decisions, it's when I kind of got the courage to raise my voice and put my opinion forward."



**Aparna
Kaushik**



**Mitu
Mathur**

Mitu also drew inspiration from prominent female designers in the field, such as Elizabeth Diller of Diller Scofidio + Renfro, renowned for her work on projects like the High Line Park in New York. “During my learning years, especially during college, a lot of international women designers inspired me. I looked up to Elizabeth Diller because she’s one of the few pioneering designers who got into the urban realm,” Mitu said. “Along with that, yes, we’ve been seeing the likes of Zaha Hadid and Denise Scott Brown. Looking up to them and seeing a different world from the perspective of design was something that kept me going for sure,” she added.

Aparna Kaushik’s journey into the world of design and architecture was an organic one, driven by her passion for beauty and creativity rather than a predetermined goal. In her own words, “It wasn’t really a goal or anything but more like an organic journey.” Coming from a family with a business background, Aparna’s interest in design was an unconventional choice. She recalls, “I was never a mathematical or a scientific mind, so to speak. I was more into pictures and beautiful objects, and I would get attracted to everything that looks pretty around you, be it a landscape or a movie or the sets or anything.”

In the early stages of her career, Aparna faced challenges as a young professional, compounded by her gender. She admitted, “So when I began my journey, I quickly realized that A, you’re a girl, you look a bit quaint when you go on the sites, so you need to look a bit older.” Her father even suggested hiring an older colleague to accompany her to meetings to be taken seriously. Reiterating the sentiment, Mitu shared, “In addition to your point about how women adapt to these situations, I also decided not to colour my hair and just embrace the greys. I’ve learned to appreciate my authenticity and confidently present myself without concerns about gender stereotypes. This mindset has empowered me to step up, share my ideas, and be open to whatever unfolds.”

CRAFTING DREAMS, SHAPING LEGACIES

Aparna Kaushik (AK): I have always been fascinated by the fearlessness exhibited by international firms in their work. They are not afraid to experiment and create unique designs, establishing a distinctive environment rather than borrowing from existing sources.

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The main challenge I face in my own work is to establish a design-oriented firm where the concept stage is as interesting as the execution process. When traveling abroad as an architect, I observe the intricate details in various stores. In India, you often find a single style that everyone follows. However, in places like Milan, you can stroll down a street and find a modern cafeteria, a vintage one, and even a futuristic version in the same street. The diversity and creativity in these designs make me wonder how such different concepts can coexist in such proximity. It has taught me that while creative ideas can be put on paper, it is equally important to have a team that can bring those designs to life. This realisation has been my greatest inspiration, looking to the West. However, I do believe that our country possesses immense talent. When I visit places like Banaras and witness the skill of carpenters and silk weavers, I am reminded of the vast talent pool that exists. It is up to someone to connect these talents together, and that has been a major source of inspiration for me in recent years.

Mitu Mathur (MM): Another topic that I find quite interesting is the role of teams and how we, as women in powerful positions within the industry, can empower other women. I often find myself in situations like walking into a boardroom, giving a presentation, or

During my learning years, especially during college, a lot of international women designers inspired me. I looked up to Elizabeth Diller because she's one of the few pioneering designers who got into the urban realm."

— MITU MATHUR

Director, GPM Architects & Planners

even just working in my office, where I sense that there are people who look up to me. This not only makes me feel responsible as a professional but also as someone who wants to pave the way for other women designers or aspiring designers in our field. Having said that, Aparna, I would love to hear your perspective on this matter. As women in design leadership roles, what do you think is our responsibility in empowering other women in the industry and helping them navigate their way forward? Do you have any interesting stories or ideas to share?





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ARCHITECTS OF EMPOWERMENT

AK: I have noticed an interesting trend, Mitu. In my experience, when we conduct interviews and seek talent, we have observed that most of the applicants in the design industry are women, approximately 70% to be precise. This influx of women deciding to pursue careers in design is quite encouraging, and it's a positive shift in our industry. Furthermore, I have observed that women have a natural inclination towards multitasking, which manifests in their exceptional coordination and leadership skills. For example, in my firm, I have seen female project managers effectively juggle their responsibilities, including coordinating with clients, collaborating with contractors, and supervising design teams. This innate ability to multitask makes them excellent managers and leaders. While we aim to hire based on talent rather than gender, this observation has led to our organisation humorously being labeled as 'woman-empowered,' with jokes about needing more men to balance out the ratio. In terms of empowerment, I believe that women are already empowered, especially considering their education, multitasking abilities, and the results they achieve in their roles. While there may have been initial difficulties in being taken seriously, these have been overcome with practice, experience, and tangible results. I believe the next decade will further demonstrate the progress and potential for women in our industry.

MM: I completely agree with you, Aparna. Women have unique

I was never a mathematical or a scientific mind, so to speak. I was more into pictures and beautiful objects, and I would get attracted to everything that looks pretty around you, be it a landscape or a movie or the sets or anything."

— APARNA KAUSHIK, Principal Architect & Founder, Aparna Kaushik Design Group

strengths that bring significant value to the workplace, including their natural compassion and empathy. It's admirable to see so many women balancing multiple responsibilities and still excelling in their roles. At my organization, we prioritize empowering women by offering flexibility in working hours, leaves for maternity or higher education, and work from home options. It's heartening to see that women have taken advantage of these opportunities and have been able to progress in their careers despite taking a break. I am particularly proud to share that we have several women in leadership positions in our firm. Our head of structure engineering and business development are both women, and I firmly believe that women are excellent at multitasking, leading teams and taking ownership of their work.

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Moreover, I believe that education is a powerful tool for empowerment. I encourage younger women and those who have been in the industry for some time to pursue further education and invest in their personal and professional growth. Our responsibility is to support and encourage our female workforce to study, return to work, and achieve their goals, even if they decide to start a family. It's essential to embrace and celebrate the diversity and strengths of women and create a supportive and inclusive work culture that enables all employees to thrive. As we move forward, I believe that we need to continue working towards effortless integration of work and life to build a stronger and more empowered female workforce.

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS: MAIDEN SITE FORAYS

AK: Mitu, I have a fascinating experience to share with you about my initial site visit experiences. It happened during my third year of practicing architecture. I remember visiting a site where we were working on a beautiful villa. At that time, I was quite young and inexperienced, trying to communicate with a contractor who had decades of experience and a somewhat patronising tone. As I was explaining a design concept, he kept dismissing my ideas. Despite my efforts to assert myself, I found it challenging to make my voice heard in the conversation. At my 7th or 8th time inspecting the site, I noticed one of the plastered walls—someone had drawn a very thin and tall caricature of me using chalk. At first, I was extremely upset and bothered, I kept thinking about the best way I could deal with this unpleasant situation. Before leaving, I confronted the contractor and asked him who the drawing was and eventually had it washed off. This moment marked a turning point in how I was perceived on the site. From then on, I noticed a shift in how I was treated – I was taken more seriously, and my opinions were valued. This experience taught me the importance of stepping out of my comfort zone and seizing opportunities to assert myself, even when it feels intimidating. It was a moment of personal growth and empowerment, showing me the value of speaking up and taking control of a situation.

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MM: Interestingly, a similar experience resonates with me. When I first started my journey in architecture, I was thrown into a site visit for a large-scale project without much guidance. Feeling a little overwhelmed, I was on the verge of speaking up when someone shared a valuable piece of advice with me: "Before they ask you anything, always ask the experts on site to explain their process first." This simple tip became a game-changer for me. During every site visit or inspection, I made it a point to approach the workers and ask them to walk me through their methods. By doing so, not only did I gain valuable insights into the construction process, but I also established a connection with the team on site. It was like taking control of the stage and becoming the focal point of the interaction, just as you described. This approach has stuck with me ever since. I believe that in architecture, and in life, we are constantly learning and evolving. There is always something new to discover, and every experience, whether it's a site visit or an interview, presents an opportunity for growth. Making mistakes, asking the right questions, and embracing the learning process are all part of the journey towards becoming a better professional.

EDIFICES OF ENDURING EXCELLENCE

AK: I find the project I'm currently working on to be incredibly intriguing. It involves designing a home for a multi-generational family, spanning four generations, each with their distinct preferences and visions. It's quite a challenge, considering the diverse aspirations and exposure levels within the family. Sitting down with each member, trying to grasp their individual needs and desires, has been both enlightening and complex. The goal is to create a space that not only caters to their varied tastes but also stands the test of time as a cherished legacy.

Take the iconic Rambagh Palace, for instance – a family-owned property that has become a timeless emblem. When designing a home, I strive to create a space that transcends generations, one that the family can proudly pass down through the ages.



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My aim is to craft a residence that is truly timeless, imbued with an everlasting charm and flexibility to adapt to evolving needs, while maintaining an unwavering sense of beauty. The current project we are undertaking shares a similar ethos, and we are pouring our passion into creating a lasting legacy for the family.

It's not just about creating a beautiful space; it's about understanding the emotional and psychological aspects of my clients' needs. And we kind of become the confidantes, especially with the women in the family, as they open up about their desires, turning the project into a captivating family drama series managed by the architect. This dynamic often spills over to my dinner table, where emotional calls from clients interrupt the meal, blurring the lines between architect and therapist. My mother jokingly remarks that if my therapy sessions are over, we can finally start with the food, highlighting the evolving role of an architect as a listener, problem-solver, and, at times, a therapist. It seems like being an architect-therapist might just be the new profession in the making!

MM: When I joined the practice, I was eager to engage in a more public role, captivated by the growth of our cities and the lack of revitalization within them. Having observed New York's transformation during my studies in the U.S., I often wondered why similar redevelopment wasn't happening in Indian cities. This curiosity drove me to focus on urban redevelopment, and I was fortunate enough to be involved in two significant projects in Delhi: the Netaji Nagar and Sarojini Nagar redevelopments, covering 150 and 280 acres, respectively. These projects are not only substantial in scale but also hold a special place in the heart of Delhi. We've encountered numerous challenges, from environmental concerns to legal and infrastructural issues. I've had to work closely with lawyers to justify the need for revitalisation to both the government and the people of Delhi. This process has been enlightening, revealing a certain nostalgia among Indians for the past, yet a reluctance to evolve these sentiments into something we can bequeath to future generations. This aligns with the idea of creating spaces that endure through time, which is something I am deeply passionate about. The redevelopment projects are long-term, expected to span over 7-8 years, making the process and framework we establish crucial. My passion lies in creating a blueprint for the city to grow organically from within, using these projects as exemplars.

Another opportunity arose with the revitalization of railway stations. Often, railway lines divide cities, but I believe stations can serve as unifying urban hubs. Collaborating with the railways, we're reimagining these stations as vibrant centers of activity, integrating commercial, residential, hospitality, and food plazas. The goal is to transform these nodes into places of pride rather than areas of neglect. As we continue to work in the public urban realm, we're also expanding into commercial projects and hospitality, which are burgeoning sectors. It's an exciting time to be in India, a period of significant infrastructure growth. This era of economic prosperity is



Aparna Kaushik Design Group



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fostering a renaissance in architecture and interior design, as well as other art forms. Economic growth brings patrons who are willing and able to invest in the development of culture and the arts, and we are witnessing this firsthand in our country.

SCULPTING THE HORIZONS AHEAD

MM: It is crucial that we start perceiving our industry not just as a design endeavor but as a growing business that significantly contributes to the country's economy. The real estate sector is one of the highest economic generators for our nation, and we need to acknowledge and grow as part of these burgeoning businesses. Currently, I am focused on implementing robust systems within our organization and architectural practice. We must learn to approach our work from a business perspective, which includes aspects like billing, payment collections, and contracts – areas that are often overlooked in architectural education.

As architects, we need to systematize our entire practice, from design processes to execution. This is a critical gap in our industry, and it is one of the reasons why architectural firms led by one generation often fail to transition to the next. We must approach our work as entrepreneurs and establish the right systems to ensure continuity and success. While design itself can never be entirely systematic, as it is an organic and idea-driven process, we must have proper execution systems in place. Without such systems, even our most innovative designs may never see the light of day. Therefore, my vision is to transform our industry by emphasizing the importance of systematic processes, business acumen, and entrepreneurial mindset, while still preserving the creative essence of design. This holistic approach will not only ensure the longevity of our practices but also contribute to the growth of the economy as a whole.

AK: As a young and enthusiastic country, I envision my firm expanding its horizons and taking on international projects in the next 5-10 years. While we are already working across 15 cities in India and have completed a few projects in Dubai and London, I

When designing a home, I strive to create a space that transcends generations, one that the family can proudly pass down through the ages. My aim is to craft a residence that is truly timeless, imbued with an everlasting charm and flexibility to adapt to evolving needs, while maintaining an unwavering sense of beauty."

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have a strong desire to diversify our global footprint and work in different parts of the world. This international exposure will not only broaden our perspectives but also enrich our design

To achieve this goal, I recognize the need to implement robust systems that will enable us to operate seamlessly across borders while being based in New Delhi. Having the right systems in place will allow us to work efficiently in any part of the country or the world, ensuring that our creative vision translates into reality, irrespective of geographical constraints. Furthermore, I envision building a more inclusive practice by bringing in young, talented designers from diverse cultural backgrounds and walks of life. This diversity will not only foster a vibrant exchange of ideas but also equip us with the cultural sensitivity and global mindset required to deliver exceptional designs that resonate with audiences worldwide. By combining a systematic approach, international expansion, and a diverse talent pool, I aspire to establish our firm as a globally recognized force in the architectural realm, pushing the boundaries of design while staying true to our roots and ethos. ✚

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URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA: CHALLENGES. IMPACT. SOLUTIONS

→ WITH SONALI RASTOGI AND GOONMEET SINGH CHAUHAN

By Seema Sreedharan

India is at the cusp of rapid urbanisation. According to studies, by 2030, India's urban population will reach 600 million people. The growth trajectory has been unprecedented and often chaotic, and the relentless pace comes with a myriad challenges—environmental degradation, housing shortages in response to waves of distress migration, and a highly incoherent built environment. The role of an architect or an urban planner becomes even more pertinent in this scenario. Architecture, as a critical component of urban development, plays a pivotal role in addressing these challenges, offering innovative solutions that can lead to more sustainable, equitable, and liveable urban environments. In that sense, Architecture as a discipline, has the responsibility of building cities that can mitigate the challenges they're facing now, and anticipate the challenges they may encounter in future. Architecture is the only profession that can actually make a physical, tangible difference or alleviate the current situation. From environmental sustainability, critical challenges posed by urbanisation to the social dimensions of urbanisation, architects can make a considerable impact.

In this segment of Design Dialogues, we bring together two

visionaries from the realm of architecture to discuss and propose a blueprint for the future. Architect and Urban Planner Sonali Rastogi, Founding Partner, Morphogenesis and Architect and Futurist Goonmeet Singh Chauhan, Founding Partner, Design Forum International come together to create a roadmap for the future of urban design in India. Read on, as they discuss the imminent roadblocks on the path to urbanisation and deliberate on the solutions.

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA: THE CURRENT SCENARIO

Goonmeet Singh Chauhan (GC): India is on this path to rapid urbanisation; we see new airports, commercial establishments, condominium projects and all the different facets of urban development across India. But there is a great challenge embedded within this imminent growth, and the role that architects play is extremely vital. As people who are pretty much the vanguards of the habitats, we need to build to fulfill the aspirations of urbanisation, while balancing what we build in a manner that is climate change resilient and minimizes the damage to the environment, and if possible, create a paradigm where we don't damage at all. I think



as architects, we are the ones who need to educate our clients, inform the policy makers, and let our work be informed by the best knowledge available, so there is sustainable urban growth that leaves a positive mark when judged by history.

Sonali Rastogi (SR): I've been reading a lot of figures about India's growth and urbanisation. I believe about 18% of our entire rural population is going to become urban by the end of this decade. What concerns me is that when we were in college and we started to study the process of design, the first thing we were told was to go stay within a community to understand the needs of that community and then design. However, today we are designing for entirely displaced individuals quite often—not families, not communities, and that for me is a big source of concern because like many architects I too am building more condominiums, more retail experiences, hopefully some more cultural experiences, and aviation transport facilities. But in all of this, I'm seeing the fragmentation of the Indian family structure. I am concerned that in this rapid urbanization of India, there is going to be a very imminent loss of Indianness,

because Indianness is rooted in family structures and communities.

GC: It's interesting that you speak of how the family structure is getting disrupted by migration to the city. I think one needs to dissect this issue: Why are people coming to the city? There are essentially two reasons; one is pure economic reason as it is assumed that cities can be the only engines of growth. I think one solution would lie in changing that truth as it were, if we can make the rural setting also an engine of economic growth. Then this mindless migration to the cities may not happen or even if it does, it will be at a more sustainable pace.

The second aspect is the absence of social infrastructure. It is assumed that in the city, you'll have better infrastructure, better access to health care and even better recreation. If you look at social infrastructure, there is education, health, sports, recreation and then eventually religious infrastructure, which the village offers on an equal measure or possibly more. I think as a nation and as architects we need to see how better social infrastructure can be made available, so that even if the earning members migrate to the city, the family at least gets good education, access to healthcare etc.

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I've been thinking about sustainability so far in terms of energy and environment but social sustainability has to go hand in hand because if there is no social sustainability there is no scope to think about any other form of sustainability."

—SONALI RASTOGI

Founding Partner, Morphogenesis

And there are some beacons of hope there. As a group of architects and philanthropists, we started a school in a rural setting that is providing education to migrant workers' children and skill empowerment to the wives. Secondly, for governance infrastructure, I've tried to pursue projects that are fairly transformative in Delhi. I found that the governance infrastructure in the city is so fragmented—the urban local bodies and the state government all have different setups. In Delhi, the central

government has yet another setup, and then there are many regulatory bodies that are neither centre nor state. So, any positive initiative takes between 2-5 years to come to fruition, by which time the scale of the problem rises. So, I think we need to really dissect this issue of urban infrastructure.

It's not just roads. It's social infrastructure, mobility infrastructure, governance infrastructure, IT infrastructure, as well as green infrastructure in the city where they've become residual spaces. One of the things we can do is come up with a conscious policy for green infrastructure—how we can have contiguous green spaces in the city and have a correlation between tree count and people. Eventually all cities in India are suffering on AQI, and we can blame the vehicles or forest fires or farm fires, but the real truth is that we have been cutting trees and not planting enough. We've to recognise the green spaces and as the size of our population increases, we need to increase the size of the land available to plant trees.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: CREATING RESILIENT SOCIETIES

SR: You've touched upon many topics, but I would want to continue thinking a little bit more about this perception of migrants that when they move to the city, there will be better opportunities, better jobs, or better social infrastructure. However, the world's





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We need to inform the policy makers and equally allow that our work be informed by the best knowledge available so there is urban growth which is sustainable and something that leaves a positive mark as it were when judged by history.”

—GOONMEET SINGH CHAUHAN
Founding Partner, Design Forum International

largest reverse migration during the pandemic showed us otherwise. In fact, it demonstrated the absolute opposite of this and that is where I got thinking as an architect. I've been thinking about sustainability so far in terms of energy and environment, but social sustainability has to go hand in hand because if that doesn't exist, there is no scope to think about any other form of sustainability.

Clearly, it's a false notion that migrants will find better infrastructure of varying kinds in cities. I would like to propose a new map, besides the state map of India—one that matches the density of usable resources without environmental degradation, overlaid with the density of human population. We need to

create a new road map of development, which has many points across the country and allows one to identify the employment centres maybe a couple of hours away. This will require a socialist approach. It requires someone with a vision to create these little seed cities, and we as a country will have to invest in this. Yes, urbanisation is exciting. But this excitement comes with a lot of trepidation for me.

GC: It's interesting that you speak about social sustainability. The last decade was spent just talking about environmental sustainability and this dimension really is so powerful and relevant. As a collateral damage, it is the children who get left behind without any idea of what the future holds for them. I think the last seven decades of India have completely missed rural development in terms of the built environment in the village. Yes, a lot has happened under Swachh Bharat, but is there a single master planned village or a block and is there an effort to ensure that good quality education is available to them?

The solution may actually lie in fixing the villages and whether we can make good education accessible for them. Not all of them are going to become engineers and doctors, but we can surely make them more future-ready. I think the whole median of skill sets of the society is going to rise if we can actually have a great impetus towards rural infrastructure. That might just be one of the key elements of the vision of the future.

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SR: True. For instance, the Forest Essentials building holds a pivotal role in supporting the livelihood of the entire Lodsi hill community. It stands as an off grid building that autonomously manages its energy, does water conservation and waste recycling. This project serves as a testament to the potential of decentralized industrialization, driven by local participation. When we shift our focus to the Surat Diamond Bourse, which operates at a scale several hundred times larger, we again witness a remarkable community-driven effort. In the throes of the pandemic, with disrupted supply chains and transportation systems, the local community banded together and swiftly established one of the largest townships overnight. They channeled this collective energy into constructing the colossal bourse.

In both instances, the choice of locally sourced materials, with a minimal waste-to-landfill approach, was pivotal. The Lakha red granite and Gwalior white sandstone were procured from within a 300 km radius, and the stone-working communities from the Deccan Plateau played a crucial role at every stage of the process, from quarrying to finishing and installation. One of the largest façade manufacturing plants was set up at the site! This approach reflects the concept of decentralized development, symbolizing Surat's progress, and rapid economic growth. Beyond the bourse's construction, it generated employment opportunities in the area, with the establishment of local manufacturing units, further contributing to the region's growth. In case of the Lodsi project, the design didn't change but the construction methodology did. The materiality changed because nothing was coming across the state border and we created not net zero but energy surplus building, which in the evening is utilised as a tuition centre for children.

GC: That's interesting. The project led to growth in the local geography, you used local materials, people were upscaled. That's the vision we need to power India. Because that also keeps unnecessary migration in check.

SR: I agree with you. At this point, what we lack or rather need is a consolidated national growth plan.

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—SONALI RASTOGI

Founding Partner, Morphogenesis

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—GOONMEET SINGH CHAUHAN

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THE ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE: THE GROWTH OF SATELLITE CITIES

GC: Talking about growth plans, in Delhi there is a regional master plan that envisions the city expanding to satellite regions like Alwar, Meerut, Sonapat and Panipat, and the implementation of a metro connecting Delhi to Meerut. I think, this development by NCRTC (National Capital Region Transport Corporation) will be pathbreaking because it will allow people living in Meerut and all along the axis to partake of all the opportunities that the entire axis has to offer, and similarly from Delhi to Alwar or Panipat.

To begin with, if we have a mobility master plan that will allow for parallel growth centres to emerge along the axis, there is hope. And if this linear mobility infrastructure is dovetailed with a vision for sustainability, I think that's what we need to aim for. I remember, in 2005 there was this vision to put a kilometre thick green belt around Delhi, the east west corridor and the north south expressway. For some reason this was not implemented. Imagine if that kind of greening is done along the highways, it would be possible to fulfil the social aspects so people will be able to live in the villages or the suburban areas along this axis. And in the process also create lakes and forests because that is the only way we counter all the damage caused due to urbanisation.

SR: Unfortunately, that's not what happens. On the last count, I know that 198 lakes have disappeared from the city. So my concern is that in the notion of development and mobility connection, and the fact that we don't have an overall master plan, this is inevitable. We talk about corridors where growth will happen, but will the green belt be implemented? Unfortunately, no! With development in infrastructure, especially roads and metros, comes retail development. Where are the trees?

GC: I agree. We need a lot of clarity in government policies. There should be a legislation where a certain percentage has to be set aside for green forests. I'm writing a book called "The Future of Cities" where I recommend and advocate 20% green space. The book also talks about a legislation called restoration of urban lands to forests instead of land acquisition to build an industry.



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We need a hydrological master plan at a regional level; we need a tree infrastructure master plan at a regional level, and we need a legislation which says that for every million people you need 100,000 trees of a certain biomass.”

—GOONMEET SINGH CHAUHAN

Founding Partner, Design Forum International

We need a hydrological master plan at a regional level; we need a tree infrastructure master plan at a regional level, and we need a legislation saying that for every million people you need 100,000 trees of a certain biomass.

We recently did a project in Chanakyapuri, Delhi where on an acre of land we had five bhargat trees and the option was to get permission to cut them and plant 50 or to give up some buildable space or to build above the trees. So, we built above the five trees. And when you stand in that space under the building, the microclimate created by the canopy of the trees is astonishingly different. I feel we need a legislation that can actually compute how much carbon a tree is sequestering and how many people it can support. And if that number is enshrined somewhere then you are automatically forced to put trees. That is the kind of urban infrastructure story that can actually save the city in 2050.

CHASING THE NET ZERO DREAM: IS DECENTRALISATION THE ANSWER?

SR: Absolutely! As India aims to achieve net zero by 2070, we must reconsider how construction takes place in the country and how it affects our environment. As stakeholders of the built environment, architects and designers must explore the possibilities of a closed-loop typology of architecture that positively contributes to the environment at all stages, from the design process to construction and demolition. I believe that a combination of passive and active design strategies, along with the use of renewable energy sources, is crucial to be employed to achieve this.

But the current scenario is different. We are building more, and not all buildings are net zero. I don't understand the mathematics though! If we continue to build the way we are building, we will have to first find ways to get surplus energy and then become a net zero. So, how exactly do we become net zero in 2070?

GC: We are nowhere close, unless we decentralise growth and

move from being a consumerist society to actually building the very basic minimum that we need. As a society, we have lost the sense of calibration. We consume everything to the point of debauchery. I think it is an ontological question: are we net zero as human beings? Unless we cause a shift there, it's impossible.

SR: There should be a two-pronged approach—an overall vision of where we need to get, and then there's the architectural vision. I feel that is missing. Post-Independence, when we embarked on nation building, many cities followed an architectural vision, for instance Chandigarh and Vishakapatnam. Today, that inspiration or vision is lacking. We both agree on the absence of a consolidated decentralised master plan, but I also feel the need for an architectural inspiration for growth.



Morphogenesis



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As stakeholders of the built environment, architects and designers must explore the possibilities of a closed-loop typology of architecture that positively contributes to the environment at all stages, from the design process to construction and demolition.”

—SONALI RASTOGI
Founding Partner, Morphogenesis

THE NEED FOR AN ARCHITECTURAL VISION

GC: I do agree with that. Architects are uniquely blessed to be able to synthesize into physical form the real solution to a problem, and that if some bright architect or team of bright architects were to create a vision in terms of guidelines as well as the physical shapes of it, then it can be used as a guiding light whenever a new city is planned, for instance Raipur has been planned in the last few years and many other cities are bound to come up. I think we need to fundamentally build less and create multi-use, versatile spaces. Just like the project you spoke about which transforms into a centre of education in the evening. I think as society is becoming more and more individualistic, we are building more and more walls. The village model was always based on sharing. I think the future therefore would require us to build a lot more sensibly and that's the only way we can achieve net zero ambition.

We recently designed a district court and we initially decided against air-conditioning the entire space. The idea instead was to

plant trees all around so that the natural microclimate is pleasant, and to design the space in a way that it maximises cross ventilation, and insulate the building through building techniques. But the much-spoken about green building movement does not do that. Instead, it will tell you to air condition the space, and then use technology to reduce energy consumption. Essentially, create a problem, and then solve it. This whole methodology needs to be replaced with a more conscientious model.

GC: Ours is a profession where whatever you create is going to be physically manifested. It is like you have this indelible ink that is a physical reality, which is going to exist for the next 50 or more years. It has a big impact on its occupants, on people who even may not occupy it but see it. The environmental impact, the social impact, the economic impact of your work is far beyond your current imagination. So what do you need to do since you are the custodian of all the impact that you are going to make on the built environment is what you must learn. And then use that to inform your work equally. You also need to learn about contextuality, so that through your work you can actually empower the people who may be engaged in that construction process. Many skills are dying out and as architects, you're also a patron to those vernacular construction styles and how you may make an impact in that domain.

Since the field is so diverse, you'll discover your own calling during the first decade of practice, and whether you lean more towards sustainability or just creating chic interiors. I think the opportunity that our country offers and is going to offer in the next few decades is huge. You must seize the moment, and perhaps from your generation we may see a new paradigm for Indian architecture, which is rooted in Indianness and yet truly international. So, along with that advice, I'm also putting a lot of responsibility on the future generation of architects. ✚

DESIGN DIALOGUES

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REDEFINING OPULENCE: LUXURY INTERIORS FOR THE MODERN AGE

→ WITH ASHISH BATRA AND BHUVAN KAPILA

By Kashish Kaushal

Luxury, a term as elusive as it is evocative, has long been an emblem of aspiration and a hallmark of success. It is a concept that transcends mere opulence or material wealth, embodying the pinnacle of comfort, quality and aesthetic appeal. Yet, the definition of luxury is as varied as the individuals who seek it; for some, it may be the tactile pleasure of bespoke materials, for others, the serenity of a thoughtfully curated space that speaks to their soul.

As we embark on our milestone anniversary issue, we turn to two visionaries who have carved their own paths in the world of architecture and design: Ashish Batra, the founder of Uniiffy, and Bhuvan Kapila, founder and principal architect at Workshop for Metropolitan Architecture (WMA). Seated together, they engage in a profound conversation that traverses the past, present and future of luxury in interior design. Their exchange is a treasure trove of insights, drawing from their experiences and the bold strides they have made in their respective fields.

In the ensuing paragraphs, Ashish and Bhuvan delve into the myriad facets that constitute modern luxury. They explore the

role of technology in crafting spaces that are both intelligent and intuitive, the resurgence of artisanal craftsmanship as a counterpoint to mass production, and the growing emphasis on creating environments that nourish the well-being of their inhabitants. Join us as we eavesdrop on this insightful conversation, where the passion for design and the quest for innovation converge to paint a picture of luxury that is as diverse as it is discerning.

LUXURY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Bhuvan Kapila (BK): Well, luxury is subjective and means different things to different people. In the past, luxury was often associated with ostentatious and opulent designs, but now the definition has evolved towards having an experience. Clients are now looking for something timeless and are focused on the experiential aspect of luxury. They want something that not only showcases wealth but also provides an enjoyable experience.

Ashish Batra (AB): Yes, I agree. People today are moving away from material possessions and towards minimalism. They value the



**Bhuvan
Kapila**



**Ashish
Batra**

meaningful consumption of materials and appreciate the natural state of the material, whether it is wood or stone. I believe luxury is now more about visual calmness and a clutter-free environment. People are following basic design principles such as symphony, harmony and balance.

BK: I couldn't agree more. The pandemic has made people more sensitive and aware of what is happening around them, and they now realise the importance of luxury in their experience, time and life. I think the definition of luxury will keep on changing with time, and it will be subjective to the different eras. As young architects, we have already gone through the sensibilities of this transition, and we believe it will be fruitful for all the upcoming architects.

AB: It's a wonderful time to be a designer as we are currently experiencing a shift in the definition of luxury. In the past, these principles were often lost in interiors designed for the sole purpose of show-off. Today, people appreciate interiors that are designed with these principles in mind.

LESS IS MORE

BK: Ashish, I still remember when we were in college, there was a very famous saying that goes by 'less is more'. So, there was a time when interiors and architecture were moving towards a trend where it was looking at minimalistic lines and designs. Eventually, what I've realised is that 'less but better' is the new demand. They want to have minimalism, they want to have simple straight lines, materials, designs, but at the same time, they want that bespoke, detailed and a sensitive touch to whatever we are designing. What is your take on that?

AB: Yes, I agree. Less is better and it matters a lot in today's luxury. When it comes to the materialistic approach, the tactile qualities of the materials are what make all the difference. If people are asking for less is better, then it's important to respect that demand and create bespoke solutions for them.

BK: Exactly, and it's not just about materials. Even when it comes to planning and designing spaces, the approach has changed completely.

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Clients want us to have a very different and evolved approach. They want us to design their space in a way where everything is intermingling with each other. It is not so much about being focused on material possessions, but rather about being focused on the experiences they want to have. Luxury has evolved from a materialistic approach to a more experience-driven approach. Even a simple space like a powder room can be designed to create a memorable experience for the user.

AB: I agree. Experience is the right word. You can create experience by using skylights, natural light and open spaces. Luxury today is not just about the materials but also about the forms, environment and atmosphere that we create. And I believe that it's a fresh and exciting approach to interior designing. It's important to respect the client's expectations for an evolved approach.

THE LUXURY OF LIGHT

BK: When we started our architecture practice, one of our first clients wanted us to design an apartment for him. This industrialist client had owned many houses before, but this 11,000 square foot, 5-bedroom apartment in the city was his first high-rise residence. Initially, he was quite restrictive in his desires—he wanted very enclosed, private spaces with limited window sizes. However, when he recently approached us again to design a villa for him, his perspective had completely changed. His only criteria this time was that he wanted as much natural light as possible in his home. He even said he didn't want to turn on artificial lights until after sunset. This gave us an exciting opportunity. The site was in a dense urban area with neighboring houses on all sides. For the basement level, instead of a typical closed-off basement, we sunk half of the plot down to that level to create an open-air courtyard and party hall filled with natural light. We used massive 22-foot glass windows and fenestrations to let in abundant daylight. The rest of the house was designed around the concept of a courtyard, but with an atrium and massive skylight at the center instead of being open-air. Huge walls of collapsible glass opened up the bedrooms to the sunken courtyard below. Rather than just decorative elements, we spent significantly on glass, windows and technology to intelligently filter and control the natural light.

People today are moving away from material possessions and towards minimalism. They value the meaningful consumption of materials and appreciate the natural state of the material, whether it is wood or stone."

—ASHISH BATRA, Founder, Uniifyy

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Founder and Principal Architect, Workshop for Metropolitan Architecture (WMA)

AB: You've really summed up the concept of a "sunken lawn" nicely. By allowing so much natural light into the basement level, it doesn't feel like a typical basement at all—it's almost like being at ground level. In the past, courtyards were created simply as a necessity to get natural light into a home. But now, the way we are able to artfully filter, control and experience that natural light is the true modern luxury. On another penthouse project, instead of curtains, we used wood louvers to delicately filter the incoming light in a warm, natural way as it bathed the interior. Changing how we perceive, and experience light is the new definition of luxury design.

BK: Exactly. Rather than the old definition of luxury being about expensive decorative elements, this project showed that true luxury is in bringing the outdoors inside through intelligent natural light design. The client understood the value of investing in systems like advanced glazing to be able to filter light in precise ways for both privacy and atmosphere. Lighting and fenestration choices ended up being the biggest priorities and expenses, more so than decorative elements.

BIOPHILIC DESIGN AS MODERN LUXURY

BK: Green spaces and incorporating nature have also become a huge part of luxury. Creating these micro-climates and local green spaces within a project is now a major responsibility for designers, whether residential or commercial. For a hotel we're designing, we are working to provide green views from every guest room—essentially creating a "city resort" environment by blurring indoors and outdoors. For a lawyer's basement home office, the main luxury he wanted was being surrounded by green living walls and sunken gardens that he could look out on, rather than expensive furnishings. So, we actually worked out on these sunken courts, sunken lawns, and then created massive biophilic green walls. I also got to know about this term very recently, because when we started working, we were looking at vertical green as a solution. But then we realised, apart from vertical green, a local microclimate needs to be created to sustain that vertical green in basements. And also, to make those sunken lawns more livable, more enjoyable. So, we created these biophilic green walls.



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Biophilic design means allowing those pure, natural elements from outside to authentically participate indoors as well. Not just plants and water, but materials like stone walls continuing their natural form inside without any visual barriers or separations.”

—ASHISH BATRA, Founder, Uniify

The term is very interesting. So, you will not only work with greens, but you will also work with natural materials, you will work with mist, you will work with water bodies and create a local environment.

AB: Yes, this blending of indoors and outdoors is the definition of biophilic design. It's not just allowing plants and water elements inside, but having the same natural materials, textures and forms transition seamlessly between interior and exterior. So, a stone wall on the building's exterior could become an interior feature wall without any visual boundary. Bringing in those pure, natural elements in their authentic state is the highest form of biophilic luxury design.

BK: Exactly, creating those localised micro-climates with living green walls, water features and natural materials is how we're redefining luxury environments today. When it comes to hotels nowadays, we are trying to create what are being referred to as "city resorts" a new definition of luxury in hospitality. These are still large, multi storey hotel properties in urban areas, but with resort-like outdoor environments integrated throughout. On one hotel project, we are collaborating closely with landscape architects to really focus on incorporating lush greenery and gardens. The goal is to provide views of nature from every guest room. The evolution happening now is this blurring of indoor and outdoor environments. When designing any space, we need to make sure the landscaped outdoor areas seamlessly blend and flow into the inside living areas. It's becoming expected for water features or landscaping from the exterior to carry through to interior spaces.

AB: Biophilic design means allowing those pure, natural elements from outside to authentically participate indoors as well. Not just plants and water, but materials like stone walls continuing their natural form inside without any visual barriers or separations. The lack of boundaries between the organic, natural environment indoors and out is what defines true biophilic luxury. We aren't trying to reinterpret nature, but letting it exist in its truest state whether inside or outside.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DEFINING MODERN LUXURY

BK: One aspect I want to highlight in the evolution of luxury is



the increasing importance of technology. Luxury is now heavily associated with comfort and convenience enabled by smart systems and integrated tech solutions. Initially, luxury design was more focused just on interior finishes and aesthetics. But now, especially living in urban areas with high pollution and temperatures, we are extremely dependent on technology to deliver that luxurious living experience. When designing a luxury space today, we have to ensure it is properly air conditioned with fresh, purified air circulation. So, we are implementing advanced HVAC systems like VRV/VRF along with dedicated outdoor air and integrated air purification components from the start.

AB: You're right. At every level, there is a baseline technological integration required to facilitate true modern luxury living. It's not enough to just recirculate air-conditioned air—the luxury expectation now is constantly introducing treated fresh air as well. Earlier, luxury tech was just about having AC units, fans, lighting and backup power. But now we've advanced to building technologies that better support the natural systems and physical needs of the human experience. Seamlessly integrating mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems into the overall interior environment is the new standard. However, this proliferation of tech can also become overwhelming if not implemented intelligently. We don't want residents feeling like slaves to operating all these disparate systems constantly. That's where automation and integrated control systems become another layer

of contemporary luxury. The ability to universally control all your air, lighting, shading, temperature and more from one streamlined platform or app delivers an effortless convenience and comfort. With one touch, you can transition between customised amenity scenes tailored to your needs in that moment.

BK: Exactly, smart home integration and automation is now definitively a part of the luxury palette. Client expectations have evolved - true luxury means never having to worry about manually adjusting systems like plant watering, water heating, etc.

When designing any space, we need to make sure the landscaped outdoor areas seamlessly blend and flow into the inside living areas. It's becoming expected for water features or landscaping from the exterior to carry through to interior spaces."

—BHUVAN KAPILA

Founder and Principal Architect, Workshop for Metropolitan Architecture (WMA)



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Sustainability will play a pivotal role in defining luxury going forward. We can't continue to deplete natural resources just for the sake of opulence. While that connection to nature is part of luxury, we must be responsible about how we use and source those materials."

—ASHISH BATRA, Founder, Uniify

Everything should be seamlessly automated and controllable. This technological melding of advanced climate, lighting, shading and amenity controls into a holistic, centralised smart living environment is a major evolution redefining the modern luxury experience. Ashish described it perfectly—tech enabling an intuitive, comfortable experience, not a cumbersome array of disparate systems to constantly fiddle with.

INCORPORATING BESPOKE AND CUSTOMISED ELEMENTS INTO LUXURY DESIGN

BK: Technology and home automation are now essential parts of the luxury palette. Clients today view having a fully smart home system as a key aspect of modern luxury living. There has been an evolution where tech integration and the ability to control everything from your mobile device is expected in high-end homes. They are even willing to dedicate significant budgets towards incorporating smart home solutions and customised tech integration. It's an area we can't overlook.

AB: Absolutely, integrating the latest technological advancements through centralised automation systems is that top layer of luxury environments. But it has to be executed in a seamless, user-friendly way that even children or elderly can easily operate. When it comes to bespoke, one-of-a-kind luxury solutions, I believe the highest level is creating exclusive experiences and narratives, rather than just material customisation. Let me give you an example from a home we designed in Jodhpur. The clients had a deep connection to metal as they were in the stainless-steel pipe manufacturing business. But I also wanted to pay homage to Jodhpur's iconic local heritage of working with the region's beautiful pink stone and embrace the skilled artisanal stone carvers there. My solution was to create a C-shaped floor plan that allowed these two distinct material narratives to intersect and blend throughout the interior experience. On one side, we incorporated intricately chiseled pink Jodhpur stone walls that flowed seamlessly from the exterior landscaping into the interior living spaces, celebrating that local stonework craft. Then on the other side, I ran a linear metal wall along the main corridor, forming an industrial counterpoint inspired by the clients' personal history and work with stainless steel. So, in one cohesive perspective, you could experience both the grounded, earthy stonework and the clean, precise metal surfaces interacting together as one environment. The architecture ingeniously wove these two seemingly disparate material influences into a unified, immersive luxury experience unique to this client's story. From the outdoor approach, you'd see the projecting stone 'blades' alongside pockets of metal cladding. But inside was this seamless ebb and flow of those textures representing both contexts. By taking the narrative circumstances so specific to these clients—their professional



metalwork background juxtaposed with Jodhpur's traditional regional masonry styles—I was able to produce an exceptionally personalised luxury environment for them. It was bespoke opulence not through decorative embellishment, but through a richly layered dialectic between nature and industry manifested in the architectural experience itself. Simply using custom furniture wouldn't have achieved that same emotional resonance.

BK: You make an excellent point. While sourcing customised product solutions is one aspect, larger experiential and narrative-driven bespoke design is the highest tier. When we design luxury homes, we do grapple with balancing those higher customised visions with the practical realities of sticking to the overall set budget. There is often a need to incorporate some off-the-shelf or semi customised pieces among the truly bespoke moments.

AB: Those client desires for exclusivity are understandable and our responsibility as luxury designers. But rather than getting too caught up in material customisation, I believe the more impactful solution is developing rich, personalised narratives that directly inform the spatial experience itself. Maybe it's a unique flooring inlay pattern or architectural move that subverts expectations in a fresh way. But more than just sourcing custom decorative products, it's about shaping volumes and environments tailored to that specific client. Those are the kinds of bespoke luxury solutions that will truly resonate on a deeper, emotional level for the longer term.

SUSTAINABILITY IS THE TRUE LUXURY?

BK: I also want to bring up how the definition of luxury now encompasses the aspect of sustainability. Luxury can no longer be divorced from being sensitive to nature and the environment. As designers and architects, we must become more sustainable-minded when creating luxury spaces and products. Even for something like a luxury faucet, premium brands are now designing their products to be sustainable—using materials responsibly,

Luxury can no longer be divorced from being sensitive to nature and the environment. As designers and architects, we must become more sustainable-minded when creating luxury spaces and products.”

—BHUVAN KAPILA

Founder and Principal Architect, Workshop for Metropolitan Architecture (WMA)

controlling water usage and temperature in intelligent ways. Luxury today is not just about opulence, but integrating smart sustainability features and durable materials that can stand the test of time. In our practice, we envision luxury homes as “green homes”—utilising sustainable systems, durable materials and products built to last. This push towards being environmentally conscious is a major evolution I've witnessed over the years.

AB: You're right, sustainability will play a pivotal role in defining luxury going forward. We can't continue to deplete natural resources just for the sake of opulence. While that connection to nature is part of luxury, we must be responsible about how we use and source those materials. The example of low-flow faucets producing the same luxurious experience with less water is perfect. This kind of sustainable technology integrated into luxury products and environments will only grow. We'll see smart systems that modularly control and responsibly limit resource usage while not compromising the premium experience. There may even be feedback mechanisms that increase awareness - alarms when too much water is being wasted, metrics showing daily consumption in a household. Embedding that sustainable mindset into luxury living is crucial for a responsible future. ✚

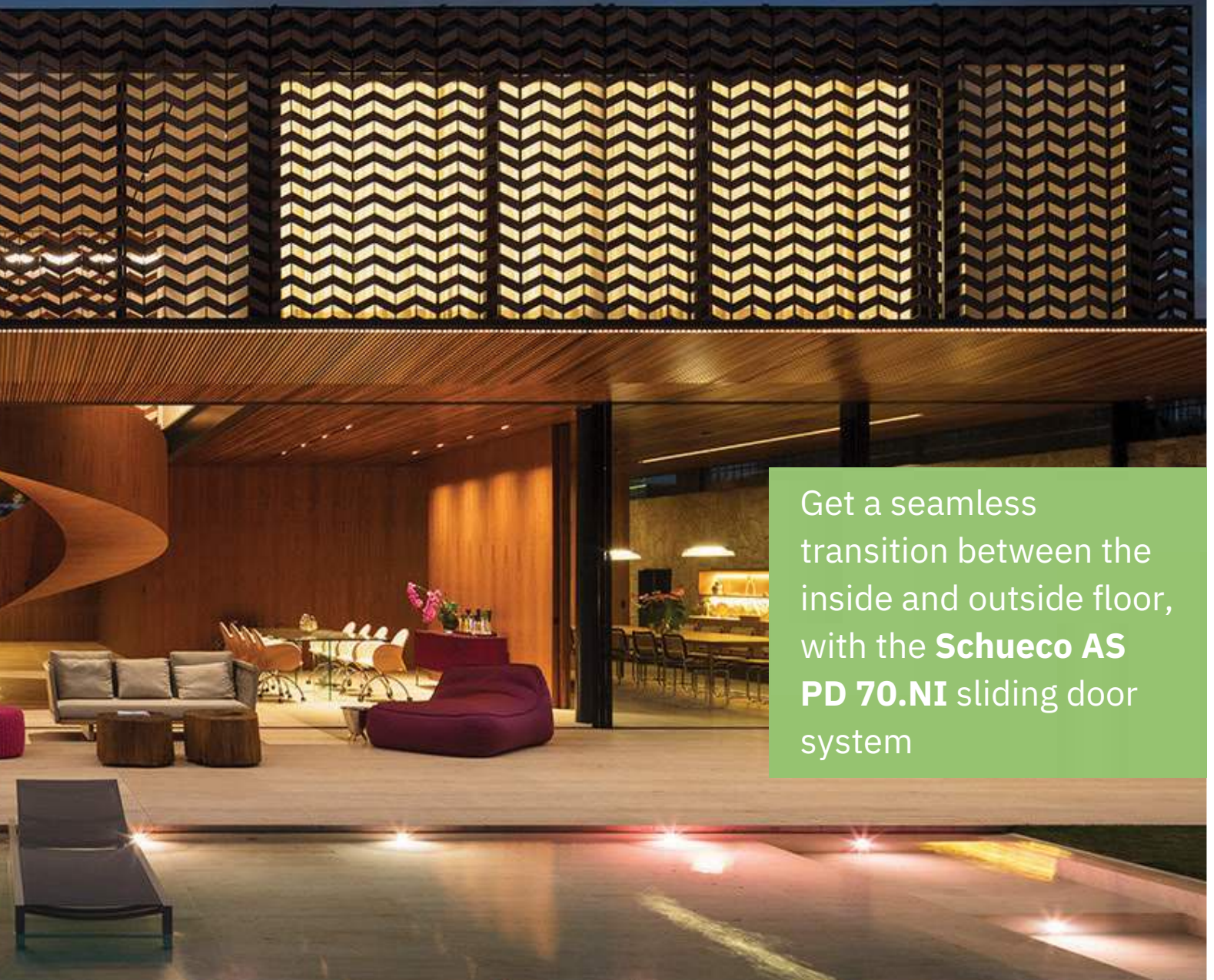
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THE NEW FACE OF ARCHITECTURE: THE ADVENT OF TECHNOLOGY

→ WITH VIVEK GUPTA & MANISH GULATI

By Seema Sreedharan

Technology has revolutionised the world of design and architecture. The influx of technology has altered both the process and the result. From computational design, 3D printing, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, and now AI, the architectural landscape has certainly witnessed a tectonic shift. From increasing efficiency, reducing time, aiding collaboration to opening up a window of possibilities that could not have been imagined just a decade ago, technology has certainly altered the world of architecture. While some believe that technology has deprived architecture of its intuitiveness, others believe that it has truly accelerated the process, increased accuracy, and even the longevity of the buildings. There are some architects who are apprehensive about embracing technology; there are others who are constantly experimenting, adopting and adapting to the changing landscape.

In this segment of Design Dialogues, our topic of discussion is the impact of technology in the field of design. We bring together two design visionaries—Vivek Gupta, Principal Architect, Arvind Vivek Associates and Manish Gulati, Founder, Manifestation

of Fluid Architecture (M.OFA) to engage in a discussion on how technology has led, aided, or accelerated the evolution of architecture. Is it a tool for advancement? Is it the bane of imagination, creativity and intuitiveness? Can we envision a future where technology seamlessly integrates with architecture to create sustainable, intelligent, and beautiful spaces?

We will let Vivek and Manish answer these questions. Read on...

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

Manish Gulati (MG): We use the tools that are available to us. Every architectural practice in the world has used the context and the tools available to them. Twenty years ago, there were three parallel lines—design, engineering and construction. They never converged. In the past two decades, with the advent of technology, those lines have converged.

Vivek Gupta (VG): I couldn't agree more. I am technologically challenged and I've remained so. There are some people who can easily adapt to technology. But I've always been a little resistant. So,



Vivek
Gupta

when you talk about technology, I really am clueless. But having said that, taking a cue from what you said, we were always three parallel lines. And as an architect, I felt at that point in time and even today that I was wearing all the three hats. It gave me complete autonomy over the project; it did not allow my control over the project to slip from a human being to a machine, which I feel is happening today.

We are losing the EQ of the project. You are brilliant with your calculations, your parameters and you're mathematically accurate. But the emotional quotient that comes because of your intuition in architecture is irreplaceable. And that's why I'm a very intuitive architect. I don't have a preconceived notion. I don't have a design philosophy, except for the fact that I'm creating for the context and the climate. So, these have become my tools. I am not the one who is actually looking at any other tool, except the fact that I am into problem solving and providing a solution for the problem that we have because of the context that we are creating in and the climate that we are creating for.

I must admit that as much as I am reluctant to lose control over the project that I'm designing as the master architect, there is



Manish
Gulati

definitely ease of work, practice, time-saving, thriftiness, all of which is happening because of new technology.

MG: The truth is that the architect doesn't want to lose control over their project and that is why they are averse to technology. I mean, a good point is that you have done these things in the past, you have laid the foundation. The master architects of the 60s and the 70s laid the foundation with their intuitive thinking, with whatever experiments they did, to form the basis of technology today. So, if AI is functioning today in a very effective manner it is because of certain foundation principles that were laid down by the masters. Without that, nobody would be able to build those things. It's the architects of the past who actually wrote the poetry about it, imagined it in their fantasies, and today that is getting executed in reality. That will always be the cycle.

VG: I'm not averse to technology. You know, wherever technology is a problem solver or wherever it becomes a solution provider, it is most welcome.

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I set up my practice 40 years ago. I'm talking about the evolution of the practice, the way it happened for me. We started putting pen to paper without any technology. We used to have a drafting board, just a parallel bar and pens. And it was just the thought process. I think after almost two decades of my practice, computers came into architecture. I remember having bought a PC XT in 1992, and then we bought a Modi Olivetti. And an entire team of marketing from Delhi came to deliver that game. It used to be a fanfare in those days. I acquired technology because I knew the merits of acquiring technology.

MG: What if I tell you that today, with technology, you don't even have to draw a line? So, when you're saying intuition is getting lost by the use of technology, with the advent of AI, it's the poetry. Surprisingly, it has come full circle. The technology understands poetry better than a logical prompt. If you were to give a logical prompt to AI, it'll give you terrible results. It gives you the most beautiful results if you are able to word it in the most poetic language. AI is nothing but thought process of millions and millions of poets and artists and architects who have put in and created this world in the past.

VG: I personally feel that there is a certain amount of emotional quotient. Because architecture is an experience. It is not just a building. Architecture is experiential, which comes with the intuitiveness or the emotion that an architect pours into a project, right?

I personally feel that there is a certain amount of emotional quotient. Because architecture is an experience. It is not just a building. Architecture is experiential, which comes with the intuitiveness or the emotion that an architect pours into a project."

—VIVEK GUPTA

Principal Architect, Arvind Vivek Associates

MG: Without a doubt. Nobody's saying that you can drive technology without an architect. But with the way things are moving ahead, with the way the world is moving, your client wants your solution immediately.

We had time. The master architects had time. They could control the entire design process. And I'm all for the democratisation of the design process where it's not one person's mind, it's a collaborative process of not just one person in a team, not two people in a team, but probably your client, the person who's building, everybody gets involved in this whole process. Technology enables





Arvind Vivek Associates

communication. It's logic versus intuition. But you need both. You can't base your project completely on intuition, and you can't rely entirely on technology. Either way, things might go wrong. You need a good balance of both.

IS ARCHITECTURE GETTING REDUCED TO IMAGERY?

VG: I fear that architecture is getting reduced to imagery. And also, just imagine builders. You know, they will not need architects because they sell a space, right?

MG: Trust me, there are builders who have made buildings without architects in the past. They will continue to do that. And there will be builders who have always used good architects to make good buildings and good architecture. They'll always need architects. You reminded me of one of the expressionist painters who had the same reaction when the camera was invented. He said everything will be reduced to a visual imagery because nobody would want to paint. I think we have moved far, far ahead from there. Photography is an accepted art form now.

VG: As long as architectural practices are using it not just as an extension of their practice, it's fine. But when it gets used blindly, technology and especially AI, that's where the issue arises. I think it's at a very nascent stage. The creator of AI resigned saying that I fear what can happen to AI. What if AI acquires emotion? Suddenly the world will get taken over by machines.

MG: We need people like you who can control, who can put that sort of discipline, that rigor. Your practice is all about rigor and discipline.

VG: Great, so we resolve that I will continue to remain a disruptor who would want to disrupt this kind of rampant use of technology and Manish would remain at the forefront of technology.

TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

VG: When we were building in Ladakh, the temperature would drop to -40 degrees and escalate to 35 degrees in summer! How do we build in such extreme weather? We learned the

What if I tell you that today, with technology, you don't even have to draw a line? So, when you're saying intuition is getting lost by the use of technology, with the advent of AI, it's the poetry. Surprisingly, it's come a full circle. The technology understands poetry better than a logical prompt."

—MANISH GULATI, Founder, Manifestation of Fluid Architecture (M.OFA)

indigenous way of building. When we started way back in the 1990s, we built our first building, the assembly building for Leh and Ladakh, the Secretariat Degree College, Governance House, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, we did the Navodaya Vidyalaya... all those projects were in extreme climates. We harnessed the solar energy and that is what made us sustainable because we were using what we learned from the local building techniques. Now we realize that material innovation played a very, very important role.

We still go with the fact that yes, we will always base our building facing the south where we are harnessing the maximum solar energy. We are using technology like the Trombe wall. We are trying to minimize the aperture on the north side so that we can retain the heat and everything. So any building, any successful architecture that has to happen is always going to be with material innovation. There is one thing that I always say when we go to conferences that vendors are actually our tools.

We are space planners. But if we don't have skin to it, if we don't have material that will sustain the building and make it functional, I think we'll be nowhere. So it is extremely important that the material innovation is married to good architecture and we keep making more efficient and resolute buildings.

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And I see that in your projects all the time, Manish. All the projects that you are doing, whether you are making your building in Goa or Kangra, two extreme climates, two extreme zones, they are sustainable.

MG: It is interesting how you pick up the point of sustainability. Rapid urbanization has become inversely proportional to sustainability. What you did in Ladakh, your experiments with temperature, you did real time experiments in terms of knowing how to create a sustainable building. Sustainability is not an independent aspect from innovation.

Nothing can be sustainable if it's not financially sustainable. In order to do that, material innovation is definitely one thing. We all, in the industry, look at how to recycle materials. When I was doing the Goa building, the L1 contract in the government did not allow me to use any expensive materials at all. I was expected to use laterite because it's a local stone. They say that by using a local stone it becomes sustainable. Unfortunately, there's no laterite left in Maharashtra. The hills have been wiped out because of rapid urbanisation. So at that point, do I use an industrial material, let's say a metal sheet or a colour-coded sheet that is cheaper and highly sustainable because it lasts very well in Goa weather? Or, do I go and wipe out another hill for laterite? So that's a big question that we all architects have to keep asking all the time. Sustainability is not just about using local materials.

VG: I agree. It's also about the life cycle of a project. It depends on the context. If it's a government building, we realize today that they are being demolished like what's happening in Central Vista. I don't fully agree that sometimes the buildings outlast their usage, outlast the technology, outlast their life cycle. So they need to go, or they need to be reused. Or they need to, if they are very, very important, to come into adaptive reuse. Many buildings can be put to adaptive reuse without becoming redundant or without becoming a monument. If the expectation is for that building to outlast you and last for 150 years, then you need to use appropriate materials and technology.

MG: Absolutely. You can't maintain environmental sustainability if your building cannot pay for it. There are projects being done where you spend three times the amount in making and then you

Given a choice, I would not want to build. I would instead devise a plan to reuse all the defunct buildings. But that would be quite a challenge."

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—VIVEK GUPTA

Principal Architect, Arvind Vivek Associates

spend twice the amount in maintaining that technology. But that building just dies because there is no money to sustain it.

If given a choice, I would want my buildings to last more than a thousand years. We all want that; we are all narcissists as architects. I remember meeting this very senior architect in Ladakh. He told me a story about a project he was doing for a monastery in Ladakh, where they asked him how long his building will last? He replied about 70-80 years, or 100 years if it's concrete. They said that they want the building to last a thousand years because that's how old the monasteries are and they're built of the mud found there. It is important to understand context, principles and then apply them keeping in mind the urbanization or the pressure that you are going to put on this earth.

Given a choice, I would not want to build. I would instead devise a plan to reuse all the defunct buildings. But that would be quite a challenge.

VG: I am talking about adaptive use of spaces, not just spaces that shut. For instance, I remember back in the day when the Fort area in Bombay used to shut after 5 pm and not a soul would be present there. And today, how it has got converted slowly, retail and other activities have come in and enlivened the whole area. That is how you can adaptively reuse the same space that is there—up to 5 o'clock it can function as an office, post 5 o'clock it could work as a street for food stalls or something like that. It would work very well. Yeah, so I think that's another way of not building new but using the same spaces for different activities.

WHAT IS PARAMETRIC ARCHITECTURE?

VG: I think one of the most misunderstood or abused words in today's jargon is 'parametric'. Manish explained it well; it's all about parameters. I love the definition. But you can't build something that is not sustainable and put a parametric skin around it to make it look pretty.

Unfortunately, everything in this world is parametric. Everything. That's the new definition for me.



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Arvind Vivek Associates

We're conscious about the work that goes into, because we know that architecture is something which will outlast the architects. That's a huge responsibility. Buildings will outlive you. Buildings are leaving a very indelible footprint on the earth."

—VIVEK GUPTA

Principal Architect, Arvind Vivek Associates

MG: Terms are always misunderstood. I've been, from the very beginning of my practice more than 20 years ago, done manifestations of fluid architecture. People think that it's fluid buildings or forms, but it's got nothing to do with forms or fluidity of forms. Usually as human beings, we have a tendency to pick up a term, and imagine it the way we understand them. So parametric is one of the most misused and misunderstood terms in design practice. When students come to me and say, you do parametric facades, I don't even understand what that word means; there is nothing called parametric facade, because every facade is parametric.

But what if I tell you that you code all the factors into a machine, you do an intuitive design, and then there is a machine that checks all these parameters for you. You can parameterize Vastu, you can put down principles of Vastu, because it is all about climate, nature, sun's direction, wind, water... If you can put all of that into a series of algorithms, which can vet and check your design, in terms of saying that this is optimized design, this building will lead you to this much of energy wastage, then you are not dealing with things on the surface. You are actually using parameters, and getting into the DNA of a building. That is how you define a good building versus a bad building; a good or bad building is not defined by surface looks, but how it functions, how well it serves humanity, how well it takes care of the climate, what is the carbon footprint of that building, etc.

VG: To put things into perspective, parametric doesn't mean anything that is geometrically distorted.

MG: Interestingly, when you bring this point up of geometrically distorted buildings, I think the term came into being when Zaha started building. We all know Zaha was a mathematician, her sense of mathematics and equation was far more complex than anyone could imagine. We think in simple mathematics, whereas she thought in complex mathematics; she was a mathematician before she became an architect, so she could apply the mathematical principles that were far more complex in terms of distorting those geometries. And while those geometries could be distorted, they were structurally stable. She knew that Gaudi's catenary principles are parametric catenary principles, more complex to an average human eye but they are pretty much part of the mathematics parameters as such. So, it totally depends on the level of complexity that each of us can go up to, but we are all thinking of a parametric bottom line.

VG: We're conscious about the work that goes into it, because we know that architecture is something that will outlast the architects. That's a huge responsibility. Buildings will outlive you. Buildings are leaving a very indelible footprint on earth. So I ensure that I create for the client, the context, and the climate. These become the three main pillars on which we are



constructing; I add the client because without the client there wouldn't be any project, and the client sometimes is the most important aspect. The financial aspect can't be discounted. In all our projects, what we try to do is marry technology with our intuition and new innovations in material.

MG: I want to share this experience about designing the National Institute of Water Sports in Goa. It was a long project, and we went through a series of emotions, experiences throughout that project. But with the project, the brief from the government and the competition was that they wanted to create a building that would be a statement for the city of Goa, which would put the project and the city on the world map. It would put something like a water sports institute, which is the first of its kind in Asia, to be recognized worldwide. So the architecture must say something like that. That was the competition brief.

We of course created something that was inspired from the waves and the sea and other elements out there. But more than that, we also understood that in a government institution, it is important that your movement and the functions, the way they flow into each other, are fairly fluid. You cannot box certain functions in an institute like this.

A sea surfer who is an adventure sports player wants to go to the sea. He's not going to sit in a classroom and study adventure sports, but you still have to teach the theory. So the architecture in a way has to be so fluid that the transition between the corridors and the classrooms to the hostels and the admin block have no boxes or walls. So, the plan is fluid. Number two, we were building it on the sea beach. Sea levels are rising every day. We wanted to build it on stilts, so that even if flooding happens, you don't get affected by it. There's a rainwater collection pond right at the entrance of it. So, the whole idea of putting a building like this starts with the planning itself, then going on to translating that expression of poetry, of the waves and everything into real-time materials.

It is fairly complex, and then you have to keep the budgets in mind. When you said the client is averse to materials, we were planning to use a lot of local materials that would not

A good or a bad building is not get defined by what it looks like on the surface, but how it functions, how well it serves humanity, how well it takes care of the climate, what is the carbon footprint of that building."

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have been possible to use at that scale, so we had to innovate and look at newer materials. That time, WPC was not widely used in the government sector. And we're talking about ten years ago when the tender document was formed. To convince the government to use WPC, or to use a pressure equalization system in a roof, to do a double roof—two steel roofs parallel to each other that would equalize the sea pressure so that you don't have leakages inside the building—took us about 14-15 presentations at the ministry to explain to them that this is how it's going to work scientifically, with simulations and animations of waters and everything.

THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE

VG: I don't think there's any other profession as fulfilling as architecture. Not even medicine. Each time you pass a building that you built, there is a certain sense of pride. Architecture impacts you, impacts the society, impacts the city like nothing else does. It is also the culture of that city. Today, cities are being marked by the buildings, not by anything else. Not even by flags.

MG: I think you've worded it beautifully. And that's where the wisdom comes in. That's where you sort of feel that architecture has become a part of you. And you have become part of your architectural practice. They are not two distinct things. And it's important for the future generation. ✚

DESIGN DIALOGUES

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PARTNERS IN DESIGN: STRIKING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

→ WITH PRIYANKA KHANNA AND RUDRAKSH CHARAN

By Ankita Rathod

In the buzzing world of design and construction, the duo of Priyanka Khanna and Rudraksh Charan emerges like a blockbuster script waiting to be told. Picture this: from their humble beginnings in the labyrinth of architectural academia, they rose, not just as real-life partners, but as the dynamic duo behind the super successful design powerhouse—42mm. Think of it as a charming rom-com meets architectural brilliance, with Priyanka's meticulous eye for detail perfectly complementing Rudraksh's flair for innovation.

But hold your popcorn, because there's more! As spouses and design partners, they aren't just battling blueprints and budgets; they're navigating the rollercoaster of married life. Cue the drama: balancing dreams and deadlines, passion and pragmatism, love and labour—all against the backdrop of construction sites and client meetings.

Interestingly, their story isn't just about buildings; it's about the power of partnership in shaping destinies. It's about how collaboration isn't just about sharing tasks; it's about sharing dreams. In the glittering world of design, where every line drawn

is a stroke of destiny, Priyanka and Rudraksh show us that the real masterpiece isn't the building—it's the bond between two people chasing their dreams together.

FORGING A DESIGN ALLIANCE: FROM ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL TO CO-FOUNDING 42MM

Priyanka Khanna (PK): Well, Rudraksh and I met during our time at architectural school as batchmates. And, while there wasn't a single defining moment that brought us together, it was our shared passion for design and compatible working styles that formed the basis of our connection. After gaining experience at different firms, we decided to combine our strengths and open our own firm to collaborate on projects.

Rudraksh Charan (RC): Our relationship played a crucial role in our professional collaboration. The ease with which we interacted due to our comfort with each other facilitated seamless communication. Despite our individual differences and diverse design sensibilities, effective communication allowed us to



Rudraksh
Charan



Priyanka
Khanna

understand each other's perspectives, which was instrumental in our decision to establish our practice together.

**HARMONY IN PARTNERSHIP:
NAVIGATING THE HUSBAND-WIFE DYNAMIC**

RC: There was obviously a lot of flux, peer pressure, you know, husband-wife working together, how compatible it is, how compatible it's not been, but I don't think we've ever faced any challenges. You know, it's been very smooth. We've been very clearly communicative with each other and, you know, it's ultimately a relationship. It's a relationship in terms of partnership in business and it's a relationship in terms of partnership in life. So, yeah, I don't think there were, well, we didn't face any challenges.

PK: I think it's because of the relationship that we had that we could be honest about our point of views towards each other. So, the kind of personal relationship we have, we are honest and transparent about our point of view and the respect we

have for each other. We take each other's point of view also in a very healthy manner. So, it really strengthens the collaborative work relationship that we have, and it improves the creative environment in our office as well.

**THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE STRUGGLE:
UNABLE TO SWITCH OFF**

RC: One of the most challenging aspects is that you cannot, even if you want to be insensitive towards an aspect of work, you cannot be because you cannot shut down. You cannot switch off, you know. There is never going to be a moment where I am going to be surrounded by people in my family who are not aware of my work and, you know, as a result that I could be in oblivion because Priyanka is always aware of my work.

PK: Even if Rudraksh was not really my life partner, but even then, as a designer, you are seeing life through a lens of design. So, it is never that when you come back from the office, you will switch off and you will not even think about your work at all.

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We are two different individuals. My personality, Priyanka's personality is different, but they are compatible. And because they are compatible at a personal level, they are also compatible at a professional level."

—RUDRAKSH CHARAN
Co-Founder, 42MM Architecture

So, that is just one of the challenges that switching off, you must make a conscious effort to switch off and not discuss design or office related issues back at the dinner table.

COMPLEMENTARY DYNAMICS: SYNCHRONY IN PERSONALITY AND PROFESSION

RC: We are two different individuals. My personality, Priyanka's personality is different, but they are compatible. And because they are compatible at a personal level, they are also compatible at a professional level.

PK: And, Rudraksh as a person or as a leader in our office would look at a bigger picture for each project. We have different sets of projects, but I would always take Rudraksh's advice. I would use him as a critic for my design projects so that it can be evolved even further. And at the end of the day, Rudraksh also becomes a great knowledge resource for me because the lens that I use while I'm designing is very focused only on my clients. So, when it comes to technology and other aspects, I always look towards Rudraksh for the knowledge that he imparts.

BUILDING DREAMS WITH A TOUCH OF ROMANCE: CONVINCING THE BOSS TO HIRE YOUR BOYFRIEND

RC: So, we'll talk about two things. First, it's been 20 years of fun joyride. There's a very interesting story. And second, this

was probably our first project together. So, I started the company two years before Priyanka joined it because we decided to get married, and we wanted at least one person to be in the job while we are married so that the money keeps on flowing in.

PK: I was extremely passionate about that project because it was a metal structure. It was a complete glass pyramid that they were making. And eventually, I got to know that the person who was taking the building is planning to open a nightclub.

RC: So she basically convinced her boss to get her boyfriend on that interior project.

A COMICAL TURN OF EVENTS: SOURCING ABROAD WITHOUT A PARTNER IN CRIME

RC: So this is I think sometime between 2008-2010, we were finishing a house, and this is one of our flagship projects. A fantastic house. We decided to get the furniture from Italy, and I decided I'm going to fly the clients to Milan, and we're going to go and buy furniture and do the entire house. And the clients and their entire family and everybody was all set to scoot and cut to four days before we were supposed to leave.

Rudraksh as a person or as a leader in our office would look at a bigger picture for each project. We have different sets of projects, but I would always take Rudraksh's advice. I would use him as a critic for my design projects so that it can be evolved even further."

—PRIYANKA KHANNA
Co-Founder, 42MM Architecture

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Design as a field is not a linear process. So, there can never be just one solution to any design problem. We are always, whenever we are doing a design resolution, we always try and present two different schemes to our clients."

—PRIYANKA KHANNA

Co-Founder, 42MM Architecture

I was playing tennis; I had a fall and broke my arm. And now I cannot go. And I'm like Priyanka, why didn't you take them? And she's like, what?

PK: The thing is that me and Rudraksh, we don't work on one project together. So, I was clueless about what was going on with that project, what were the design lines, what kind of furniture they had shortlisted. And here there's the full family along with their small kids all set to travel to Milan and Rudraksh is nowhere there in the picture. So, I took the whole family, I think seven, eight people, for four days. And I'm selecting furniture on Rudraksh's behalf. So that was also quite a fun trip I had.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A MYTH IN THE WORLD OF DESIGN

RC: So yeah, work-life balance. The simple answer is we don't. There is no work-life balance at a level. It's been a long time and I think now, since we've been recognized as a big brand, people have a different temperament towards us. But it's very interesting. Earlier years, we were talking about women bias. So yeah, somehow everybody thought that Priyanka is an interior designer. And somehow everybody thought that Rudraksh looks at architecture. I don't know why.

Projects are process-driven, they are very long. As a policy, me and Priyanka are going to be part of all projects when the core design is happening. Once we are out of the concept design, one of us is going to take the project through."

—RUDRAKSH CHARAN

Co-Founder, 42MM Architecture



PK: It's been a struggle. But I don't think we fear the struggle. I think the struggle is pretty much natural for us now, for me now, and for her also. Obviously, there are systems in place. We are a very sorted, systematic company now, so that releases a lot of pressure.

DESIGN DYNAMICS: LEVERAGING INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS

PK: So I think when it comes to Rudraksh, he's technically very, very strong when it comes to other aspects of any of the projects. So, the whole studio, including me, would fall back on Rudraksh when it comes to the technical know-how of any stage of the project. He is more like a resource, a knowledge resource for the detailing work, any procurement that needs to be done, any material or any project strategy.



RC: So, like our personalities, we also have a different set of skill sets. If I talk about Priyanka, she's very, very focused. If we need to crack a design in seven days flat, and if I tell her that if we have a deadline, she will crack it. It's as simple as that. Whereas I will not be able to crack it in seven days because I will not be able to dedicate focused time to it because there are a hundred other things that I need to be able to do.

SYNERGISING DESIGN PROCESSES: A TANDEM APPROACH

PK: Design as a field is not a linear process. So, there can never be just one solution to any design problem. We are always, whenever we are doing a design resolution, we always try and present two different schemes to our clients. And, while my scheme would be more design-oriented, the scheme that

Rudraksh would present would have more to do with the context and other finer aspects as well. So, we don't really see it as a challenge, but I see it as part of the process and bringing a different perspective altogether in a project.

RC: Projects are process-driven, they are very long. As a policy, me and Priyanka are going to be part of all projects when the core design is happening. Once we are out of the concept design, one of us is going to take the project through. The aspect where one of us takes the project through is because our intervention reduces. We have a huge team. We have very senior people in the company who are going to step in and there is the structure engineers, there are MEP engineers, there are project managers, there are senior architects, there are consultants. Everybody comes in and it's like machinery.

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My advice to aspiring couples who are in the design industry would be to have patience and trust. Also, the key to a successful partnership would be communication. Don't be afraid to have difficult conversations."

—PRIYANKA KHANNA
Co-Founder, 42MM Architecture

It goes through and then at the end of the project, then both of us come in again because that's the final touch of the project, the handover stage where what we have conceived a year or two years ago has completely come to shape and now we need to garnish it perfectly to be able to present it to the client.

**THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS:
FOSTERING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

PK: My advice to aspiring couples who are in the design

industry would be to have patience and trust. Also, the key to a successful partnership would be communication. Don't be afraid to have difficult conversations. If there are certain personal goals which are not aligned with the other partner, have that conversation, sort it out. It's essential that you communicate your goals to your partner so that there is, for long-term association and long-term partnership and happiness, I think that is something that I would advise on.

RC: Yeah, because there is definitely going to be a lot of, I would say... Friction. At work, at home. Yeah, so communication is very, very important because you need to know what the other person is thinking and talk it out. You need to either convince the other person or get convinced. And if you are not aligned, then the partnership's not going to work. You might have a different point of view. Your partner might have a different point of view. And both the point of views might be correct in their subjectivity in the context that is there. I think it needs to be talked out. You need to be able to come to a collaborative compromise. And live happily. And one more thing. I think they should take time in nurturing their relationship outside the professional goal as well. Because that's also essential that you're not just professionally insane. ✚

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