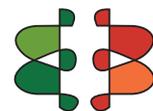


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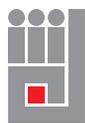
★ FLOOR IT WITH WOOD



DESIGN SPOT  
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## Chairperson's Foreword



Dear Members,

It is indeed an honour to be taking over the chairmanship of a thriving, successful Chapter like ours, from Gayathri Shetty, our dynamic immediate past Chairperson! She was instrumental in taking our Chapter to a new level.

We should consider ourselves blessed to be in some way helping the community around us, with creating built spaces, interior spaces, landscapes and townships.

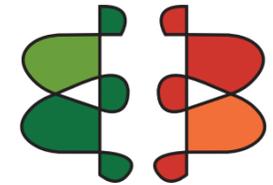
The art of living is in the joy of giving – and this is aptly reflected in the commitment to our social initiatives “SWAP” (Social Warehouse Project) and “CoDe” (Community Design Studio).

As they say, when the cause is common and the bonding is strong, the outcome is positive! With a young, energetic and dedicated team as our Managing committee, I have no doubt that together we will move forward and make IIID Bangalore Regional Chapter to be a force to reckon with. I am sure I can rely on your unstinted support!

Looking forward to a wonderful two year term!

**SHYAMALA PRABHU**

Chairperson IIID BRC, 2017-19  
aakruti\_ad@yahoo.co.in



IIID BANGALORE REGIONAL CHAPTER

**IIID Bangalore  
Regional Chapter Emblem**

The letter form B and its mirrored version together form this symbol. The idea is inspired by the forms of Rangoli. Bangalore as a city is a unique combination of the traditional and the contemporary. This coexistence of dual cultures is iconic of Bangalore as it is present in arts/architecture and the general landscape of the city and its culture. Using Rangoli (Traditional) as the basis, we have created letter form B (Modern) and reflected this form to enclose the space in between (Interiors). The colour palette is also representative of the traditional and modern.

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## Editor's Note



In this digital era, the response given to Antarya just proves that the design community still prefers to have the feel and look of good printed material as a magazine.

Thanks to our patrons, our readership is growing and now we are in the fifth year of our publication.

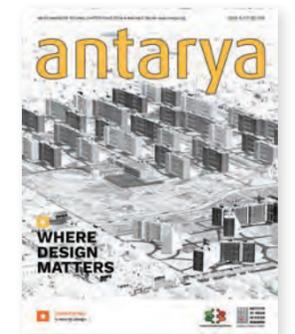
Antarya under the new leadership of IIID BRC Chairperson is sure to grow further and is looking forward to introducing newer sections of reading.

We are trying our best to maintain the regularity and quality of Antarya and need the support of the entire design fraternity to help us in this endeavour so that you keep getting the magazine at your doorstep regularly.

**DINESH VERMA**

Managing Editor  
verma@acegrouparchitects.com

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**REVIEWS**

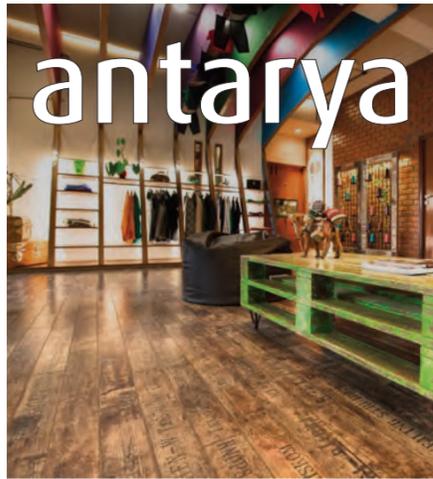
Dear Dinesh

I enjoy reading every page of Antarya and like the simple and sensitive language which is used consistently through out every issue.

**Arch Vijay**

Antarya has raised the level of design magazines in India. I await every issue and love the look and feel of the magazine.

**Arch Sucheta**



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**COVER IMAGE**

*Priya Boutique designed by Architect Leena Kumar.  
A colourful contemporary lean blended with a nostalgic peep  
into the past.  
Photograph by Mahesh Chadaga*

# 06 | FLOOR IT WITH WOOD

NANDHINI SUNDAR

## 12 | PROJECT FEATURES



GNA ARCHITECTS



BALAN & NAMBISAN ARCHITECTS



LOCUS



# 18 | THE LIVING ELEMENT OF WOOD

**PUBLISHED BY**

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# FLOOR IT WITH WOOD

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

Given the presence and abundance of wood, it would not be surprising to expect the interiors of historic residences to be covered in its warmth, displaying a copious presence of wood, be it the flooring, walls or the furnishings. Gleaming polished wood floors and rich rugs are the commonly expected décor of the early centuries, yet a look back in history of interiors reveals a diametrically opposite scene.

As late as 1625, the floors at ground level in many European homes continued to be beaten earth. The upper floors, if affordable, housed wooden joists and plank flooring of oak or elm that mostly was around 2 feet wide. Only the wealthy had in place floors that were not typically dirt floors but comprised of slate or other local stones. Royalty were the first to enjoy the warmth of wooden floors. But even these first wooden floors were hand scraped and sanded. It was arduous and only the rich could afford.



### THE BEGINNINGS

In Europe, the elegance of wooden floors was first recognised in the Baroque era beginning in 1625 with artistic French Parquetry and Marquetry patterns coming in. These floors were made from hand cut pieces of wood that were carefully fitted in the form of contrasting three dimensional designs. It was highly labour intensive as each piece had to be cut and fitted by hand. The floor would then be hand scraped, rubbed with sand, the wood stained and then polished to shine. It thus continued to involve meticulous hand craftsmanship, making the process expensive.

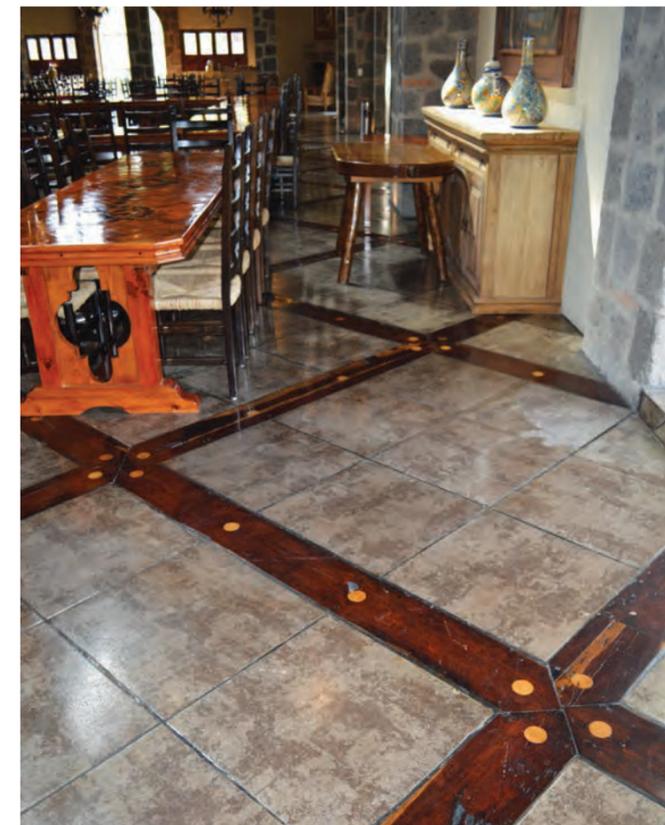
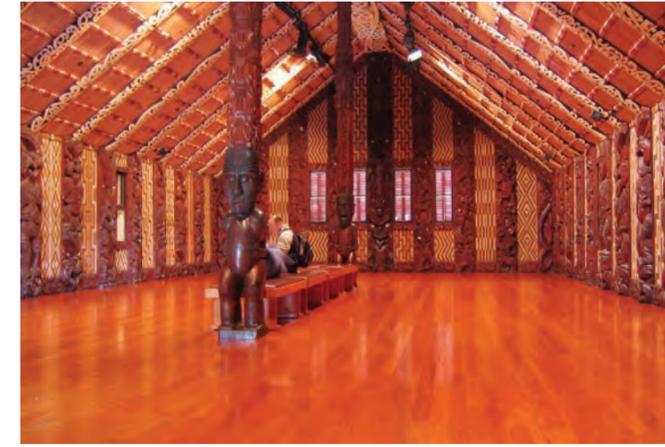
The Colonial era in North America, during the 17th Century, brought the plank floor into vogue, taking advantage of the great abundance of wood available during this period. These floors, invariably built using thick planks that were of random width, were not sanded, being mostly made of slow growth pine but simply polished by the feet of generations of colonists. They were essentially installed for comfort and practicality with no regard to style or finish.

The 18th century saw the emergence of painted wood floors, painting and ornamentation having come into vogue in the appearance of the interiors. While the popular pattern sought during this period was the geometric checkerboard, the painting could be monochromatic or fancifully ornamented.

**Top Left Image Source:**  
<https://pixabay.com/en/stairs-perspective-wood-old-steps-203464/>  
 Photograph by  
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**Top Right:** Floor pattern at  
 Royal Castle of Stockholm  
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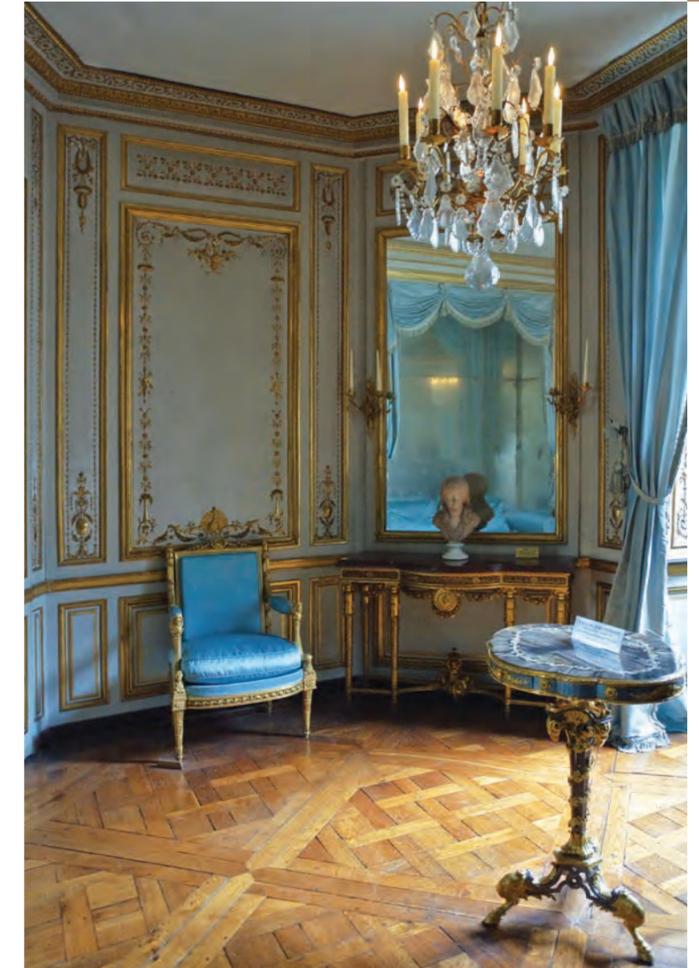
**Left:** Knight's Room, Royal  
 Palace of Warsaw, Poland  
**Source:**  
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### POLISHED HARDWOOD

Polished hardwood was not commonplace until the 19th century. Prior to this while wood was certainly the primary material used for flooring, its appearance was far humbler than what prevailed later. Towards the late 1800s, polishing wood floors with wax, orange shellac, came into practice. Appearing initially in public rooms and kitchens, it soon found its presence in the bedrooms and other private areas.

The hardwood used during this period was typically white oak, chestnut, maple, black walnut. Maple was a popular option for kitchens given its strength and resilience arising from the absence of open pores that could absorb spills. The latter half of 1800s saw



public rooms laid with alternating strips of walnut and maple while the turn of the century brought in fir as a sought after choice, initially in kitchens and later moving on to other areas.

The late Victorian era, 1840-1910, saw European parquet floors making their appearance in wealthy American households where factories started mass production of wood floors. The wood floors had a more finished look as compared to the Colonial days, the lumber used milled in fixed length and width, making it easier as well as faster to install.

This period also saw the introduction of 'wood carpets' which essentially were rolls of heavy canvas to which thin strips of wood were glued on. Once the 'wood carpet' was installed, the floor was scraped and sanded until it was smooth and uniform. Varnish was applied over this, with a final finish of hot wax and buffing. While this made the wood floors cheaper and easily accessible, the problem of squeaky floors riddled with splits and cracks emerged, making these less durable as compared to the original hardwood floors.

**Top Left:** Waitangi Meeting  
 House Interior, New Zealand  
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**Top Right:** Palace of Versailles  
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**Left:** Dining Room, Hacienda,  
 Santa Clara  
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**TONGUE AND GROOVE**

The early 20th century or the Edwardian era saw the advent of herringbone pattern of tongue and groove construction, where the planks were levelled before installation, permitting a more polished uniform look. The wood floors were installed on concrete floors with hot tar serving as the adhesive. However, the process continued to be labour intensive, every aspect being done by hand, the scraping, sanding, waxing, buffing of the floors to the required finish.

Hardwood continued to be a choice option till the 1920s when linoleum and cork flooring products came in, offering easier installation and maintenance. The 1930s increased the appeal of hardwood when improved finish in the form of polyurethane offered a no-wax finish and this continued till the onset of the Second World War.

Post the World War inexpensive carpeting replaced the appeal of hardwood and this continued till the 1980s when a reverse trend saw the market veering back to hardwood as an alternative flooring solution. However, soon with hardwood industry cutting corners on labour costs, resulting in poor quality, the reputation of hardwood floors witnessed a temporary setback.

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Photograph by Scott Lewis

**CONTEMPORARY SCENE**

A return to the clean classic look of wood planking sans the parquet patterns came about in the late 1980s with a rise in the use of prefinished woods. The view of wood as an alternative option to carpeting came about, with the prefinished wood planks offering smoother, more durable as well as far superior flooring as compared to the past.

Interestingly, the 20th century gave the broadest of choices when it came to flooring, starting from stone, terrazzo, and concrete to, linoleum, cork, vinyl, hardwood strip flooring and softwood boards to now the 'green' woods such as bamboo, river-recovered pine and cypress. Re-milled boards are the other sought after choice where beams and planks of mostly scarce species of wood are reclaimed from demolished buildings and reused as flooring.

Likewise, river-recovered woods are those salvaged from the rivers where wood sawn from logged trees were left to settle in the rivers instead of being shunted to lumber mills. These logs of wood, some preserved in the river water for a century or more, are excellent source of hardwood for flooring with many proving to be rare varieties such as heart cypress.

Bamboo will perhaps be the 21st century wood flooring material given its sustainable quotient. In demand and use for over a decade now, its wide popularity in usage will be gauged only in the coming years, pitching it to the domain of merely being a trend or an enduring material that will span the coming decades.



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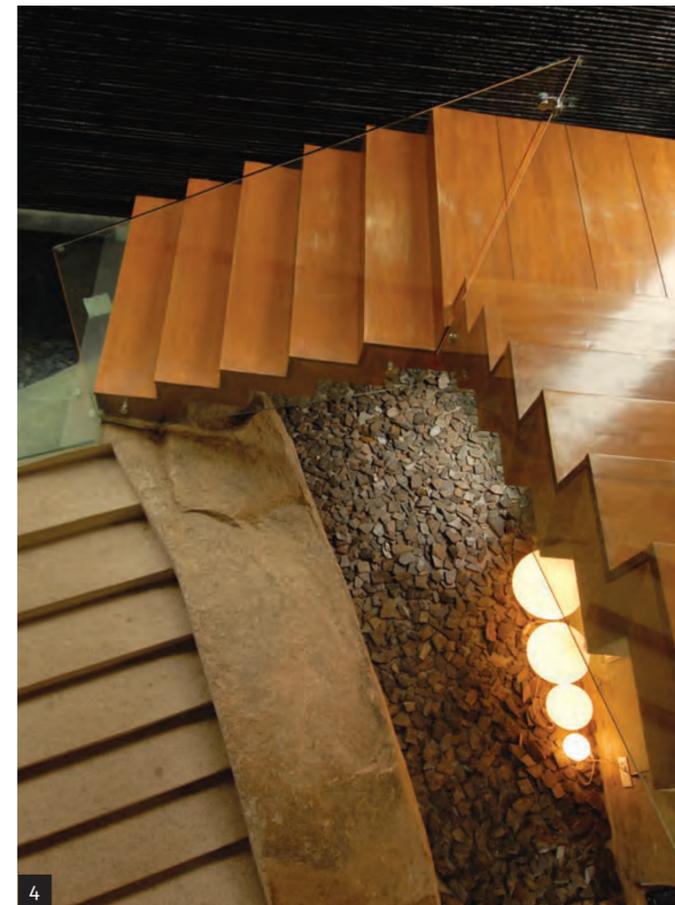
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1



4

1. The GNA office reception displays a varied use of wood, featuring as sliced raw wood that is used in its most natural form in the seating and desk, the wooden deck and screen using a more finished wood, bringing to the fore the stunning contrast of the same material.
2. A charming outdoor informal living space exuding a rustic flavour, the wood used contrasting once again in its raw and finished form, in the seating, flooring and ceiling.
3. The wood manifests in this sleeping area in copious measure in both flooring and the cot.
4. Contrasting the soft warmth with cold hardness can be arresting and the staircase achieves just that. The natural stone boulder is carved into steps and fused in with a striking wood staircase.
5. It is wood in its most natural state, the raw sliced log of wood turned into a dining table with matching seating, placed amidst smooth polished wood flooring, the contrast accentuating the varied beauty of wood.



2



3



### A VARIED DISPLAY

Wood has its own quiet beauty, both in its raw and finished form, fusing in its warmth into the interiors. **Architects Gayathri and Namith of GNA** bring in this quiet warm language into their spaces, the wood manifesting as both raw and finished, based on the dialogue of the interiors.



5

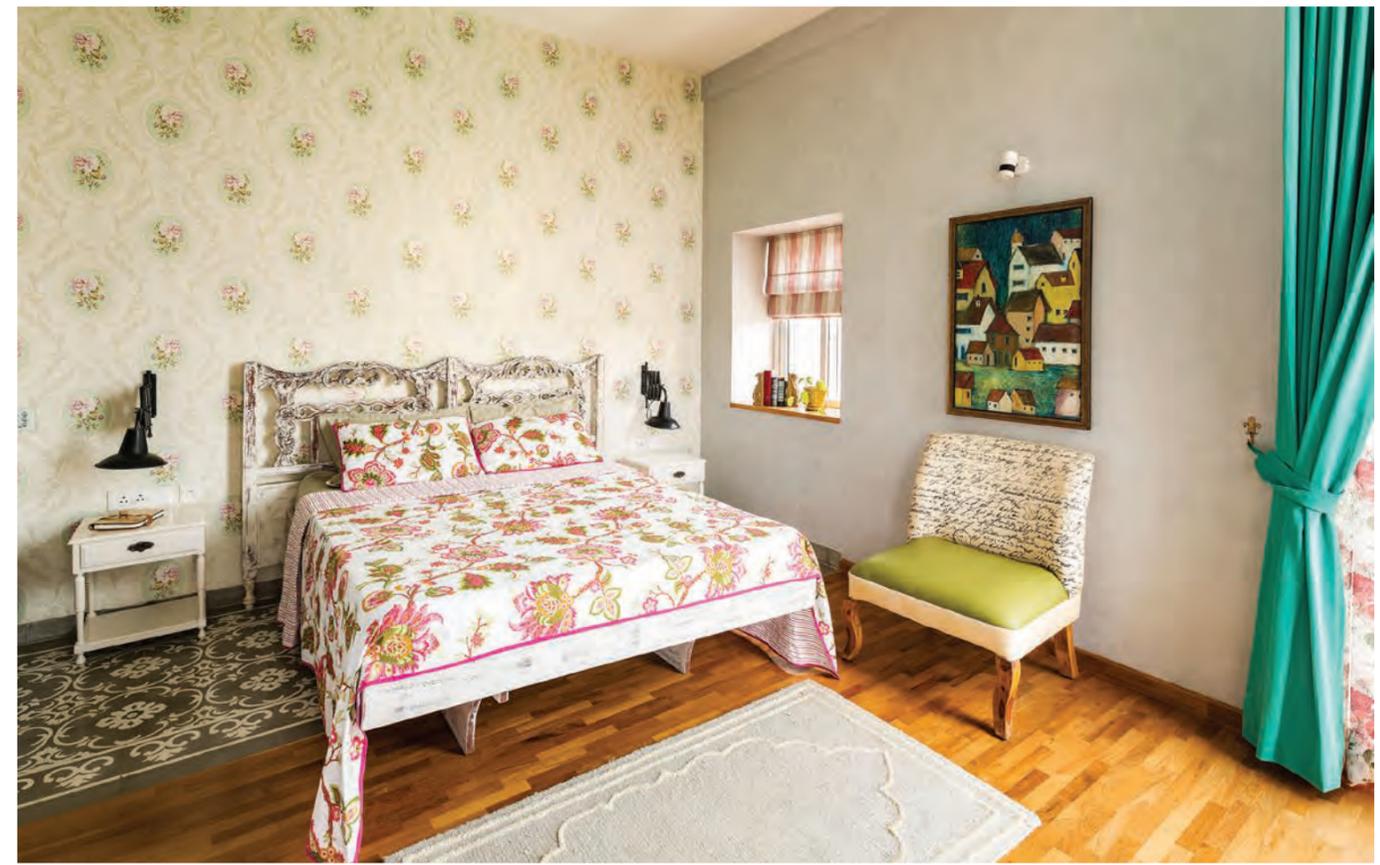


The apartment is conceived as a vibrant and open space complete with copious natural light and ventilation. The objective was to use as much natural material as possible in the spaces while keeping the décor simple yet eclectic. Wood was the obvious option to bring in the charm and warmth into the straight lined décor. The variation in colour is intentional, the wood sourced from different species. What is considered as waste was also reused and meticulously put together to keep in line with the design intent.



### NATURAL ELEMENT OF WOOD

Natural materials bring in their own unique charm to a space and wood is no different. **Architect Arun Balan of Balan and Nambisan Architects** uses wood effectively to usher in a vibrant, warm décor that effortlessly speaks the sensitive language of nature through its copious presence.





1



4



2



3



### CONTRASTING WITH WOOD

Creating a multitude of spaces with different kinds of design fused in, permitting the entire lay of interiors to alter from one point to another can bring in the fine element of surprise. **Architect Cruz Dennis Sam Shaju of Locus**, uses the beauty of wood as a contrasting feature amidst an eclectic choice of materials that prove to be stunning in their final finish.

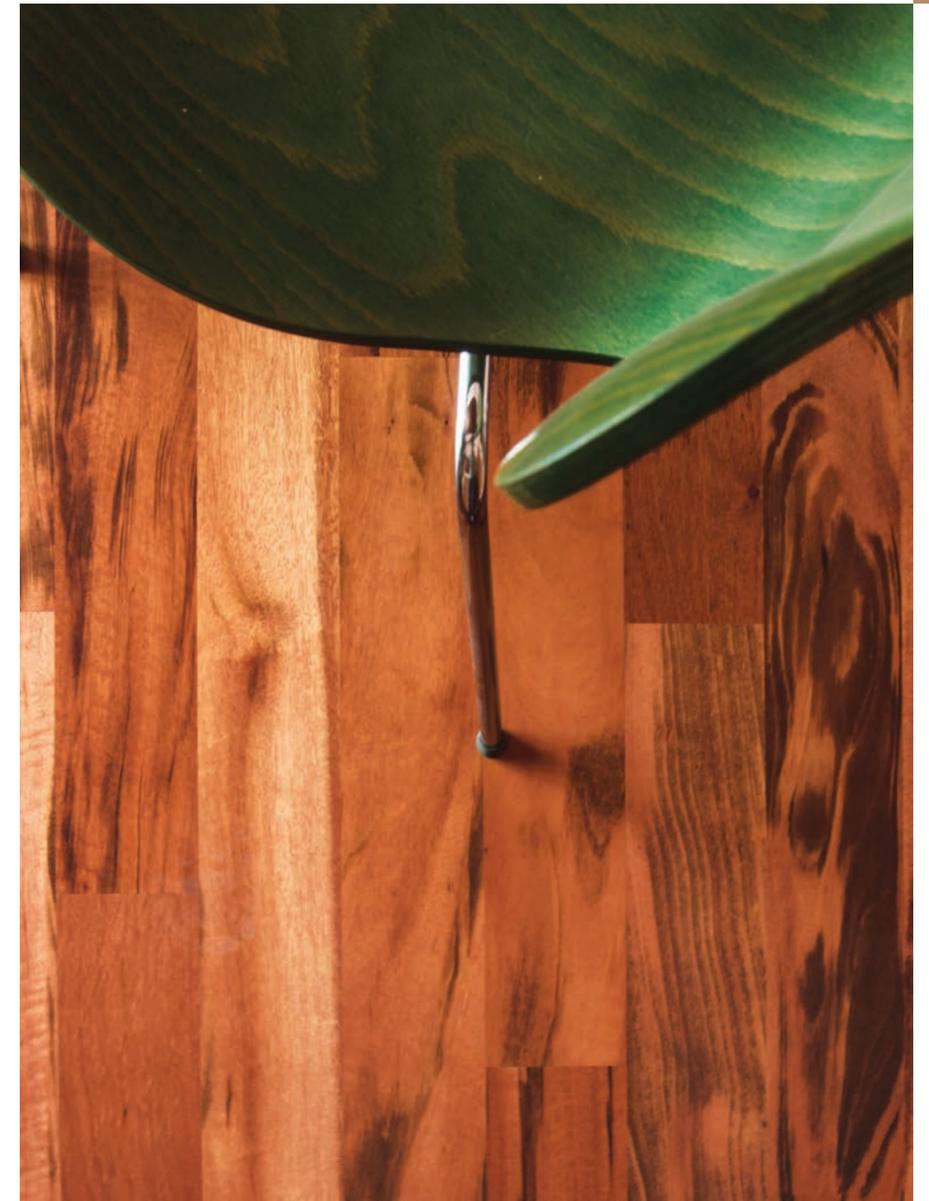


5

- 1 & 2. The hard surface featuring in the lower end of the staircase is contrasted with the warm soft material of wood at the upper end. The staircase leads further to the gym, continuing the flow pattern of wood.
- 3. The residence is in the suburbs, the bedroom blending in the nature of the exteriors with the copious presence of wood in the interiors.
- 4. The swimming pool area is a blend of multiple materials, of stone, exposed concrete, Corian along with the wooden deck, the collage of materials lending an eclectic feel to the clean simple lines, the presence of wood serving as a stark contrast in the space.
- 5. The connecting bridge laid in wood flows and blends in the transparent wooden screen that can be opened to bring forth a dynamic space.



# THE LIVING ELEMENT OF WOOD



Wood as a material has its own unmatched intrinsic charm, the warmth pervading the spaces it occupies, altering the language of the interior. Cosiness, a sense of nature, connect with the outdoors, an organic design, are some of the strong elements that stand out in the language of the space that accommodates a copious presence of wood. This fabulous material of nature makes its presence in multiple ways in an interior, as rich hardwood floors, wood clad walls, imposing beams across the ceiling, as exotic furnishings be it the seating, the cabinetry, wooden artefacts.



Wood in flooring has remained a preferred option for over three centuries, starting from the 17th century when the first hardwood floors appeared in Europe and North America. Since then wood in flooring has gone through many transformations to reach the current day manifestation in both residences and commercial spaces.

Interestingly, research shows that opting for hardwood floors increases the return on investment by almost five times because of the emotive as well as exotic flavour it evokes besides having a lifetime of nearly two centuries. Even rentals take an upward movement when spaced in hardwood. Functionally too the use

of hardwood yields its advantage, given its anti-fungal, anti-dust, anti-stain quality, enabling easier maintenance. Given its durability and toughness, hardwood is also suitable for high traffic spaces.

Specialising in hardwood flooring, with its exotic range of hardwood that spans over varieties from across the world is **Living Elements**, an interior décor solution company based in Bengaluru. Having started its operations in 2003, **Living Elements** offers customised hardwood décor solutions with special focus on flooring, meeting the exacting needs of the discerning customer. The solutions offered cover an array of segments ranging from residences, commercial spaces, sports arenas, hospitality.



#### HANDCRAFTED TO CUSTOMISE

The key is differentiation, personalising to meet individual inclinations, structuring to meet specific design ideas that eventually lead to the evolution of spaces that stand apart in not only the design sense, in final form that evolves but also in the arresting aesthetics the completed space offers. Handcraftsmanship forms a major plank of the philosophy on which this exotic product of nature is dealt with by **Living Elements**.

The handcraftsmanship offered is unique and done by highly skilled craftsmen who are personally involved in the design perceived, customising and crafting the wood to meet the exacting standards laid to the highest precision. To fulfil the high standards laid, a differential approach is adopted where the understanding of the design, analysis and exploration happens through active discussion and physical involvement in implementing the handcrafting and customisation.

#### EXPERIENCE IS THE KEY

The design option or choice is many a time the offshoot of physically experiencing the material and wood is no exception. This physical experience of handcrafted hardwood floors is offered by **Living Elements** to facilitate an informed choice and exercise customisation. The designer is facilitated to translate the same experience into the intent of the design where the manifestation of the work brings forth an unexpected surprise for the user where the final product offered goes beyond anticipations.

#### CONTEMPORARY TWIST

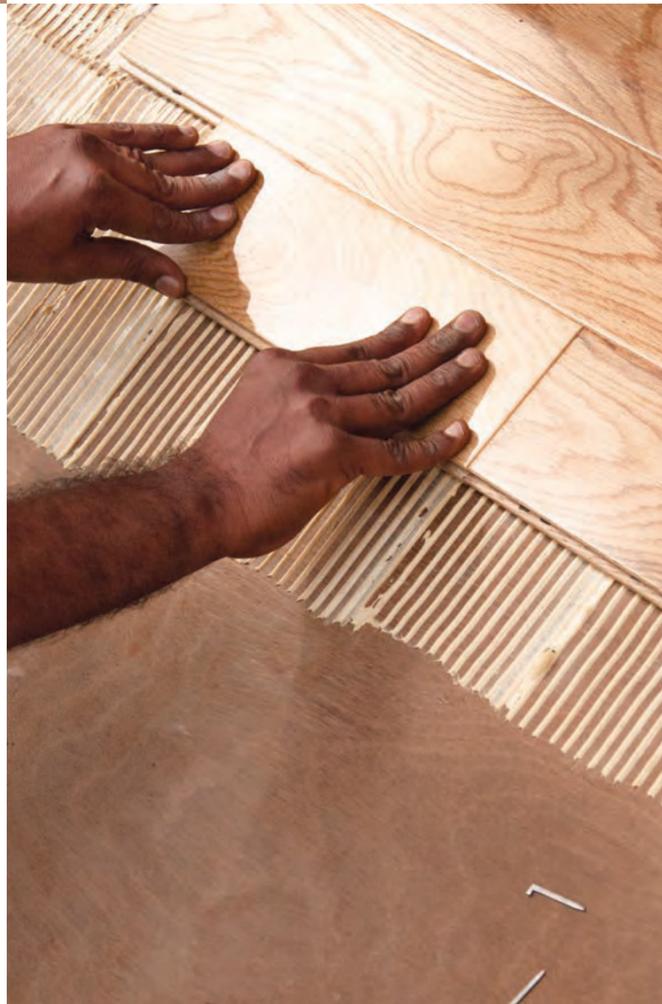
The traditional flavour of wood use in décor has its own charm that is timeless. Interpreting this flavour to suit the contemporary context where the modern leanings and inclinations are fused in to offer a design that is layered with tradition is **Living Elements**, offering handcrafted customised options to suit the selected design. The traditional language and flavours are consciously retained while delivering the contemporary twist.

#### THE KNOWLEDGE ADVANTAGE

Execution entails not only understanding what is required but knowledge to guide and suggest relevant options and design choices that would be most appropriate given the choice of the specific variety of wood. Wood incidentally comes with many features, where it can be of the soft or hard variety. The workability as well as use of a specific variety is dependent on the quality of each species.

Depending on the area of use, be it interior or exterior, the type of wood chosen would need to be different. The level of traffic expected in the area of use again determines the choice of wood. Resistance to mites, workability of different species in terms of pliability, easy fastening are again dependent on the level of curation the wood has been put through.

A deep knowledge of wood varieties from across the world ensures the designer is able to make an informed choice and the final execution is done using the right kind of species relevant to the patterns and models envisioned. **Living Elements** offers this knowledge and guidance to designers, assisting in the right choice and execution of design.



### SHARING THE INSPIRATION

Installing hardwood flooring involves a sizeable budget, the presence of it lasting for long term in the interior. Not surprisingly there is plenty of thought addressed, inspiration sought before the final outcome that would totally transform the feel of the interior. This inspiration of the designer is shared, possibilities assessed, design assisted in terms of the quality and variety of wood in mind, the patterns desired. The customisation of the finalised design as well as the choice of the right type of wood variety to suit the requirement is assisted, approaching the design and selection from the same inspired space.

### AN ARRAY OF CHOICE

A desired design can be executed only if the right variety of wood is available to meet the requirements. **Living Elements** offers this wide variety of both indigenous as well as exotic species that are grown in various regions of the world. Besides the expansive varieties on offer, varied sizes prevail in the handcrafted wood segment too with the availability of broad planks of wood that range from 6 to 8 inches in width.

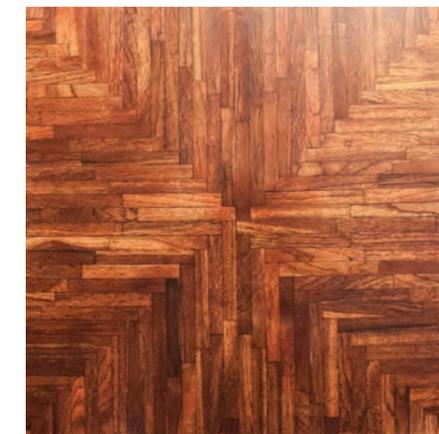
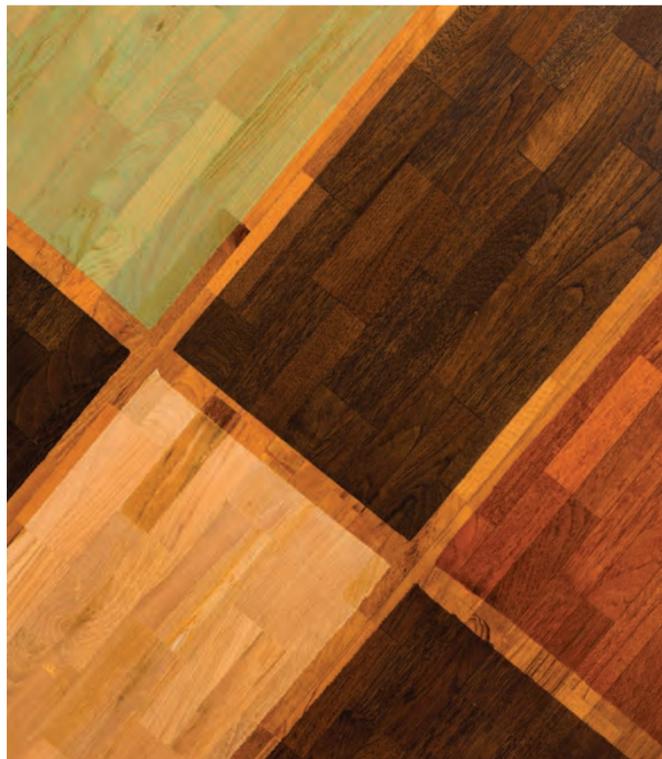
### DELIVERY MATTERS

The final execution of design is dependent on the mode of delivery opted and the service offered both during and after delivery and installation. Meticulous follow up and response, systematic approach and organisation in delivery and installation is offered, making the process of selection and execution of the design seamless and trouble free.

### A RANGE OF EXOTICA

While the depth of knowledge of varied species of wood and the high level of hand crafting and customisation is the unique advantage offered, a differential approach to cater to the most exacting requirements cannot be met unless the range of wood species housed is not only wide but also exotic. **Living Elements** offers the advantage of both, the varieties on display being both wide and exotic, the varied species sourced from across the world.

The expansive range on offer include exotic species such as the African Wenge, African Kayakuku, African Sapeli, Brazilian Tiger Wood, Brazilian Cherry, Brazilian Sukhipura, Brazilian Cumru, Brazilian Ipe, Burmese Teak, American Walnut, Austrian Oak, Brown Palm, Indian Laurel, Iron Wood, Indonesian Merbau.



### CRAFTED BY EXPERTS

The high level of customisation and handcrafting that is expected is ably met by expert wood craftsmen with experience in temple architecture. The varieties of handcrafted wood offered are evolved from the designs crafted by these expert wood craftsmen. The key varieties of handcrafted wood include Chevrons, Four Squares, Strips, Rombus, Inlays, Wood Weaves.

**Chevrons:** These are a range of herringbone patterns, with the varieties offered being Morning Flush, Fishbones, Single, double, triple herringbones. As with herringbone, the chevron pattern is currently enjoying something of a renaissance though installation can be a lengthy process.

**Inlays:** This variety offers a differential inlay of wood strips or even stone inlay in wood if so desired. Inlays essentially involve a range of techniques in sculpture and decoration whereby contrasting, often coloured materials are inserted into the depressions that form the ornamentation. Living Elements provides a range of materials for inlay, each offering a different ornamentation and final product in hardwood.

**Wood Weaves:** Bringing in a basket weave pattern to the floor can totally alter the aesthetic dimensions of the room. Infusing as accent squares, strips of exotic wood such as Oak, Teak and Walnut would

further define the weave, enhancing the beauty laid bare on the floor. The wood weave range offers a specific pattern of wood weave or is customised to the weave sought in the desired design.

**Four Squares:** This pertains to parquetry, a geometric mosaic of wood pieces used for decoration. The patterns used in parquet flooring are entirely geometrical and angular squares. The hardwood used here is mostly timber that has strong contrast in colour and grain such as oak, walnut, cherry.

**Strip, Planks and Boards:** This essentially addresses hardwood strips arranged in alternating directions. Here the strips are laid in multiple ways where the boards are not of the same width and come in a range of varieties such as diagonals and parallel strips, vertical and horizontal strips.

**Rhombus:** Rhombus wood parquet flooring is available in custom made grid sizes to suit individual inclinations and requirements.



Vydehi Memorial

**PROJECT SPEAK**

The manner of use in different spaces conveys more lucidly the differential approach and address of the requisite design with the appropriate wood variety as well as the stipulated details for customisation. While the type of projects catered to are multiple and as varied as the possibilities that customisation and individual craftsmanship can offer, a few merit special mention for the manner in which the assistance to the desired design was given, enabling the final evolution of the space in manner intended.

**The Nike Story:** The 7000 Sqft triple height space of the Nike Store has its walls wrapped in hardwood, the script engraved exquisitely on the wooden walls. The objective of the design was to create an experience of being in a woody interior, the warmth and presence of nature profound, the language imparted tying the user closely with the outdoors. Yet, the presence of wood was not expected to be overpowering but merely filtering into the senses in a manner that is warm, homely and refreshing.

Implementing the design to perfection required understanding the nuances of the design as well as fine knowledge of the hardwood varieties to offer the most appropriate choice of species for laying. Living Elements not only enabled the execution of the project to precision through personal guidance and appropriate customisation, the final finish was so arresting as to become the model branding décor for Nike across the world.

**Brewing to Perfection:** The space addressed is a micro-brewery, The Malt and the experience sought is an aged timeless presence

of wood. The idea was to recreate the Berlin October Festival in the ambience. This entailed rugged furniture, copious presence of wood on the walls, the staircase, with the décor rustic in finish.

In tune with the design planned, hardwood was chosen for the furniture, lending them a rock solid rugged finish. The right species of hardwood was again chosen and customised to the specified requirements for cladding the walls, part of the flooring and also laying of the staircase, where the raw rugged feel of natural wood was retained in the finish. The rustic appeal of the exposed concrete used in the décor was further accentuated by the presence of this unpolished wood.

**A Wooden Monument:** The 10,000 Sq ft space wrapped totally in wood, from the walls to the ceiling of the Adikeshwalu Memorial, called for plenty of customisation and the choice of the right wood species to bring out the design intent in totality. The design chosen was expected to be not overbearing, given the copious presence of wood. Yet, the warmth and the connect with nature was intended to be experienced, the final outcome aesthetically pleasing, yet spellbinding for the beholder, wrapping the visitor into the folds that is solemn, yet warm, exuding the peace befitting a memorial.

**A Classy Residence:** This contemporary themed residence spanning 4000 Sq feet had Italian themed furniture which was juxtaposed with an exotic hardwood floor. The focus was on ensuring the furniture did not rob the floor off its classic beauty and vice versa. The resulting design that ensued was minimalist, the chevron and four square patterns brought into the brown and white teakwood flooring, making a stunning statement in the interior.



The Druid Garden

**DISPELLING MISCONCEPTIONS**

Many myths, misconceptions prevail when it comes to use of hardwood for flooring. Be it erosion of green cover, global warming, affordability, maintenance, reservations are many and mostly unfounded. Contending that wood flooring is most environment friendly flooring option, Vikram Sampath, CEO, Living Elements says, "Wood flooring is a carbon neutral product, it stores the carbon throughout its service life, maintaining its carbon neutral status even after the tree has been harvested." Hardwood floors require less energy and water for their production as compared to other flooring options, he says.

To reiterate, Vikram further points to a study done by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which showed minimal emissions of carbon dioxide in the wood production process for flooring, nil emissions of methane and nitrogen oxide and other particulates that contribute to global warming. "Since hardwood floors can last for a few centuries, this precludes the use of raw materials, energy and other natural resources in replacement of these floors over the years."

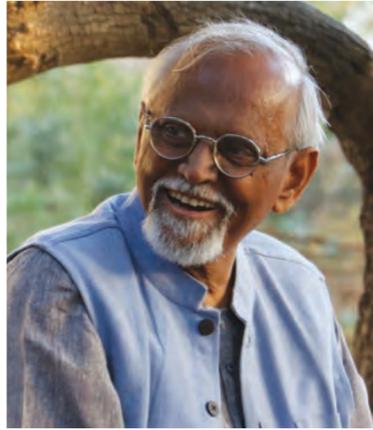
Stating that wastage in wood floor installation is far less compared to stone based flooring, Vikram adds, "Unlike laminates, carpets, vinyl or even stone, hardwood floors can be polished and made to be as good as new when they begin to appear a little worn. This actually results in big savings in expenditure." He points to the other benefits such as better air quality in interiors to address users with allergies, the absence of dust mites, bacteria or moulds, the grime and dirt being easy to cleanse from hardwood.



# AN INSTITUTION OF **SUSTAINABILITY** PARUL ZAVERI & NIMISH PATEL

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It is a deep conviction and sensitivity to heritage and traditional methods, the designs and construction methodologies speaking the language of sustainability, conservation and innovation tuned to the context. It is living and designing based on these convictions, the ensuing spaces emerging as masterpieces. **Nandhini Sundar** traces the journey of architect couple **Parul Zaveri and Nimish Patel**, their architecture as intense as their convictions.

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Previous page & Above: Samsara Luxury Resort & Camp, Dechu  
 Right: Shambhu Niwas Interior View of Verandah, Udaipur. Photo Courtesy: City Palace Complex





Facing page & Above: The Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur

When I was told to take the flight to Ahmedabad to cover the work of architect couple Parul Zaveri and Nimish Patel of Abhikram, I wondered if it was even possible to cover a life work that was literally an institution, an institution for sustainability, in a few hundred words. The answer obviously was in the negative. But the opportunity to interact with the couple for whom the concept of sustainability and heritage conservation was one that flowed in their veins, living their life in every sense of the term true to their convictions, and yes, physically walking through the amazing spaces they have created, was irresistible. I boarded the flight.

Architect Nimish Patel was just as I had expected; fierce in his convictions and value systems. Hailing from Charotar in Central Gujarat, Patel is as intense as the roots he originates from, his khadi attire revealing the freedom fighter family background and the childhood

exposure to the multiple tales of our Independence movement. His tryst with architecture was more to avoid becoming a doctor and pharmacist, given the pharmaceutical background his father belonged to. Patel belongs to the fourth batch at CEPT Ahmedabad, tutoring under Architect Doshi.

“He made us fly without fear, prompting us constantly to ask the question, why not”, he says, adding “Doshi shaped what I am today. He taught us that learning continues till you die. Professor Horacio Caminos was the other major influence, teaching us to ask the question ‘why’ and keep our feet on the ground. Why and why not are the boundaries of my life.”

When it comes to sustainability Patel believes every decision has to be brought to the level of measurability to judge the most judicious decision. “When I see a new material, I ask, what is the cost? No

developing country has enough to provide for all and it is important to use the available resources such that it reaches the maximum number.” Remarking that the couple inked their convictions first before opening their studio, he adds, “All our projects conserve resources, contribute to the continuity of Indian traditions in form, space, technology.”

Stating that innovativeness is a necessity, not a luxury, Patel contends that responsible design emerges only if you contextualise in all respects. Patel and Zaveri’s designs rest on three main beliefs; every problem irrespective of nature of scale, constraints or complexities has an appropriate solution. This solution can be found if the problem is defined correctly by choosing the appropriate tools and applying them judiciously. Finally, design and construction process should offer opportunities for creative inputs to all involved.



Facing page top & Above: Monsoon Palace Resort, Udaipur

Giving these non-negotiable tenets, Patel laughs, “This was the sieve for our clients. Many on hearing these never came back!” Given the deep convictions and single minded focus of Abhikram in initiating a design direction and design process that addresses the internal and external environment contextually and promotes the use of traditional materials, technologies and genetically inherited or developed skills, conservation is a major plank the couple’s architecture rests on.

Talking about conservation, Patel asks, what do you conserve? “Heritage fabric of a settlement that constitutes the man-made elements has its roots in the site such as use of stone, wood, laterite, where the heritage stems from the availability of natural resources; these are the aspects that require identification and conservation.”

As for the ways of conservation, “Find the causes of decay. What constitutes these resources, is it the elements in use, or the skills? Even attitude of governing agencies can be a resource. Addressing all these sentiments would lead to real conservation.” For Patel, it is the lack of familiarity with traditional materials and technologies amongst existing professionals that keeps them out of taking up heritage conservation.

Their conservation ideals do not stop with buildings but extends to crafts too where their sister concern Panika Crafts and Technologies takes up conservation and support of genetically inherited and developed skills of craftsmen.

Says Architect Parul Zaveri, also a student of CEPT Ahmedabad, “The childhood exposure to heritage city of Jaipur as well as our native village with its open cluster courtyard houses, the cotton mills, served not only as an inspiration to take up architecture but also to conserve and cherish our cultural heritage and skills. Early interaction with craftsmen from Kutch, the problems they faced, further cemented the urge to support our ancient craft based skills.”

Noting that in countries like the United States, all structures appear similar in design inclination, she points to the rich variety of our culture and architecture. “The fact that modern buildings gave way faster, requiring ample periodic maintenance while our erstwhile stone structures have stood the test of time, prompted me to want to take up conservation of our traditional methods and techniques.” To stress her point on our cultural heritage she points that even simple design elements such as low eaves and pitched roofs of yore effectively kept the rain out while contemporary windows sans sunshades invite them plenty indoors.



Santoor Farm, Interior View of Central, Ahmedabad.



Vithlani Residence, Valsad. Interior view of covered corridor. Photo Courtesy: Abhikram



The Ethnic Restaurant

Their conviction in heritage and conservation brought home the restoration of Shambhu Niwas Palace of the City Palace Complex, Udaipur, in the early nineties where minimum yet appropriate interventions were to be made to meet current living styles. The project was treated more as a source of knowledge, the restoration conducted by traditional craftsmen using technologies handed over through generations.

Their project The Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur, amply demonstrates their ideology, achieving a balance between continuity from the past while ushering in change without making it out of context, proceeding on the firm beliefs they had inked. The project hired craftsmen whose ancestors had earlier worked in the main palace. “The project was a big challenge, requiring us to prove many wrong, mired as it was in many controversies. But the end result gave us the direction for our future projects”, says Patel.

Situated on the banks of Lake Pichola, on the erstwhile hunting grounds of Maharana of Mewar and spread over 35 acres, the spaces resemble the traditional palace structure and complex with every room having a courtyard adjacent to it. Thick lime washed walls, arched openings and niches, domes covered in traditional lime plastering, hand carved stone columns numbering 450 mark the structure that employed over 300 highly skilled craftsmen for over 3 years. “We did extensive research to ensure the ensuing structure appears more as a restoration than a completely new structure. The experience offered is of yesteryears but in 21st century luxury.”

Incidentally, the smooth lime plaster is evident in almost all their projects, not only putting to use the traditional method of plastering which is far more eco-friendly compared to the ubiquitous cement plaster and contextually appropriate in hot dry regions such as Ahmedabad, the beauty and skill of this dying knowledge is also being actively revived and promoted by the couple through their work. Equally

prominent in presence are the hot air vents placed at strategic points in their spaces to keep the interiors cooler by a few notches. “The objective is to reduce mechanical and electrical energy used for comfort in the buildings”, states Patel.

Reflecting this sentiment amply is the project Torrent Research Centre, then country’s largest passive cooled building, the energy consumption proving to be 1/4th of the energy benchmark recommended by TERIGRIHA. The building uses a system of designated inlets and outlet shafts that bring in the required movement of air in different places without the use of electrical or mechanical energy. While the additional civil works required for the same hiked the cost by 13 per cent, the savings realised not only covered this additional cost but also the entire cost of civil works incurred for the project in about 15 years of occupancy.

The Anokhi Haveli at Amber, which was a conservation project involving renovating and restoring the ruins of the Haveli, proved that conservation is not as expensive and time consuming as normally assumed and the traditional materials and technologies of skilled craftsmen are still available for use.

Interestingly no drawings were made but instead the inputs of the traditional craftsmen were taken up for the conservation work along with information on Amer and other Havelis that prevailed during that era. Even the materials used were totally traditional, re-establishing the relevance of traditional materials and technologies in the contemporary context.

Says Patel, “In year ’87 we had decided that our role would simply be to initiate an action that would snowball by itself. This has happened in the conservation of our heritage in Rajasthan.”

Patel and Zaveri’s personal residence exudes the same timelessness in design and décor, the lime plastered and lime washed walls, the high ceiling and copious presence of wood taking one back to another era,

yet affording the comfort befitting the contemporary context. The residence which is merely over a decade old, effuses an irresistible old world charm, the design elements pertaining to traditional modes of construction, the interiors designed to be naturally cool, the strategically placed hot air vents letting the heat out while a cool draft permeates the spaces.

The residence, which also incorporates, what is referred as the Brahmasthaan, stone frame windows and lintels akin to traditional construction methods, has plenty of heritage furniture that were refurbished, complementing the traditional construction techniques and design.

The resort Tree of Life in Jaipur is yet another project that reveals stunningly designed spaces that are totally sensitive to the context and incorporate traditional modes of design and construction methodologies. Says Patel, “The project required blending of spaces with the local terrain while our convictions demanded maximising use of local materials, technologies and crafts blended into a contemporary framework.”

The site had two different landforms, one a ravine like formation and another, a relatively flat land. The suites are located in the ravine with a large pool in the valley. The random rubble masonry walls, Patthar Patties roof and insulation follow traditional techniques of construction by local craftsmen. The domes too were built using random rubble sans cement, in the traditional way, without drawings or inputs from structural engineers, thus implementing the design sentiments of Abhikram in totality.



## SHARUKH MISTRY

### PROJECT

Auditorium at Agastya International Foundation

### DESIGN FIRM

Mistry Architects

### DESIGN TEAM

Ar. Sharukh Mistry, Ar. Sandeep Umapathy,  
Ar. Vinoth Kannan GK, Kulenthiran, Vishwanath

### AWARDS

INSDAG 2013-14 National Award Competition-  
Professional 2nd place on Structural Steel Design  
and Construction.

JK Architect of the Year Awards 2015 for Institutional Buildings

Invited to present at World Architectural Summit  
at Montreal on 17th October 2017.

### PICTURE CREDITS

Umeed Mistry, Tasneem Khan, Anand R

# DESIGNING TO THE CONTOURS

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

*Contours of land and life.....Lives matter, even the dung beetle's*



*Dung beetle*

It is the language of the land, a language that goes back four billion years in embedded intelligence, standing testimony to the infinite events unfolding in this endless time period, interpreting and connecting the same to the current day scenario of technology and development. It is a case of translating this intrinsic, exquisite story into design where the communication is subtle, timeless, infused so finely into the lines of the structure as to lay open the script for all to read.

For **Architect Sharukh Mistry, of Mistry Architects**, and his team, design is one that is connected inseparably with the narrative of the land and distinctive traits of the user, expressing in a dialect that is fun, exotic yet easy to fathom, the simple lines powerful in their message, underlying the very essence of creation.



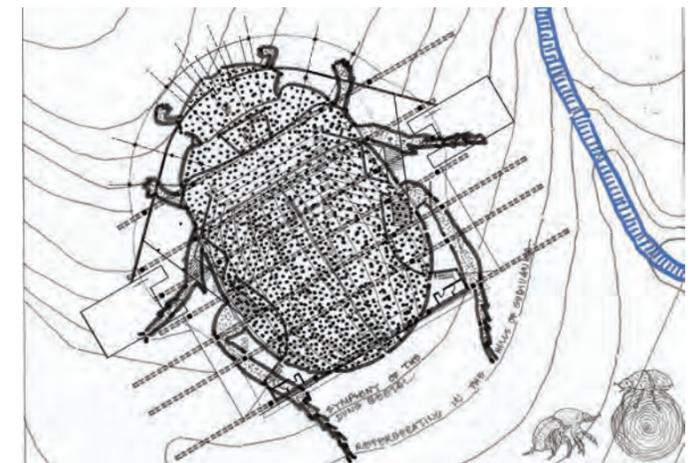
*Aerial view of the Auditorium*

“As architects we always have two choices, to augment what naturally exists and build upon its language or to obliterate. Without sitting in judgement, both have their values. At Mistrys we invariably relate to the first option and build layers to understand the deeper meaning of that existing script”, says Sharukh.

This award winning design of the auditorium in Agastya International Foundation in Guddivanka (AP) amply reveals this inclination, the lines speaking the sentiments lucidly, the structure evoking the image of the lives that prevailed in the site prior to their displacement. The auditorium emulates the body of the dung beetle, the curved roof and structure hugging the ground, the fins holding the structure miming its multiple legs.

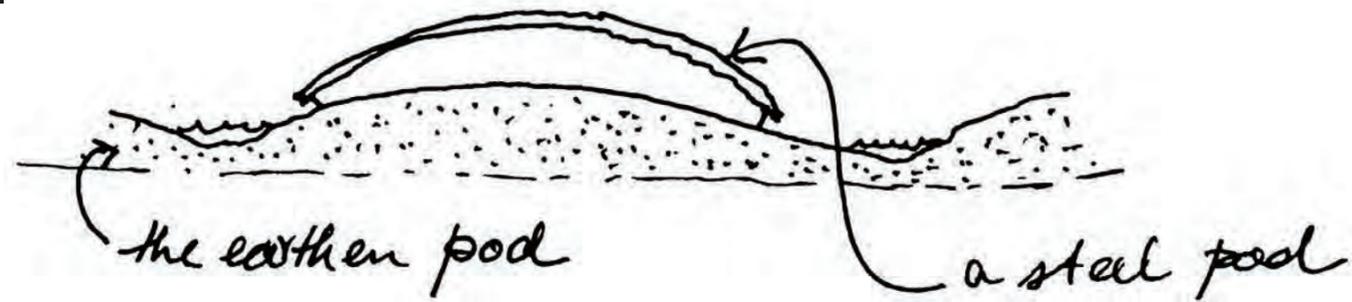
The site housing the auditorium is on the Deccan Plateau, situated between two valleys that drop 20m from North to South, amidst an undulating terrain of 172 acres in the picturesque rolling hills of the rural district of Andhra Pradesh. The valley on both sides of the structure connects to a series of water holding ponds that not only harvest rainwater, but also recharge the natural aquifer of the land, enhancing the microclimate and vegetation on site.

The architectural response for the program was tucked into the existing lay of the land. Minimum cut and fill became the process



*Concept sketch*

of integrating the structure to the slopes. Says Sharukh, “The auditorium is part of Agastya’s thrust into rural education, catering to children where learning is not confined to classrooms but to hands-on experience where children can experiment; the standard of tutoring is cutting edge, going beyond the mundane textual-classroom pedagogy.” He further adds, “We have done away with the classroom model and created multi-functional spaces that are fun and exhilarating to use.”



Earthen steel pod

The institute reflects this ideology in the manner of its physical structure, the spaces designed to permit an active interaction and learning ambience for the children where educationists, researchers can interact with the students, culminating in some arresting models and findings that have gone forth to elicit recognition at the national level. "Imagine the head of 'Design Thinking' from Stanford University interacting with bright, enthusiastic rural children. An unbelievable joy for me", smiles Sharukh.

The auditorium, built on this approach to education, brings forth a design that is sensitive to the site and nature while permitting multi-use that addresses varied kinds of gatherings celebrating a range of occasions, be it a science workshop, yoga, cultural fest, exhibition, art and several others.

As for choosing the dung beetle to reflect the exterior contours of the structure, Sharukh says, "The insects of the site are the original residents who are now displaced when we put our footprint here, taking away their domain. Be it the snakes, the beetles or the birds, we never stop to think about their domain being hitherto occupied. The dung beetle resemblance is a reminder of this reality."

Given the rural setting and the firm belief in eco-solutions, the earth bound structure, merging with the land is erected using steel pods, with steel trusses hugging terra firma. Random rubble masonry, using locally available stone, forms the exterior walls. The inner walls laid with bricks along a curvilinear profile serve as a good insulation for heat and sound.



Framework



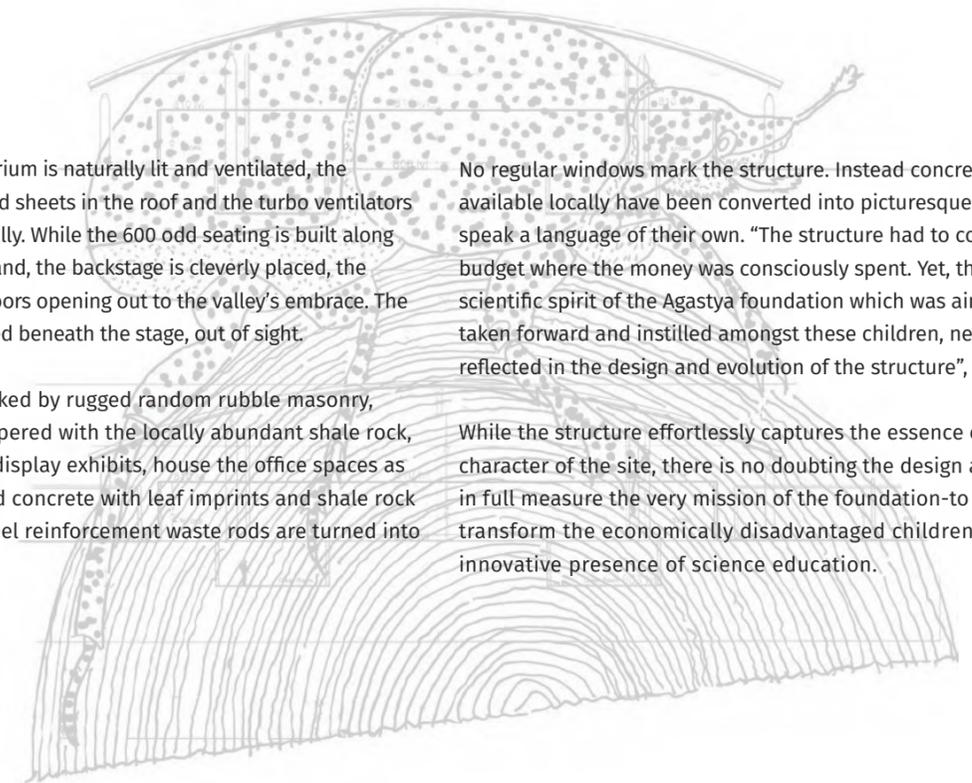
Ground hugging structure

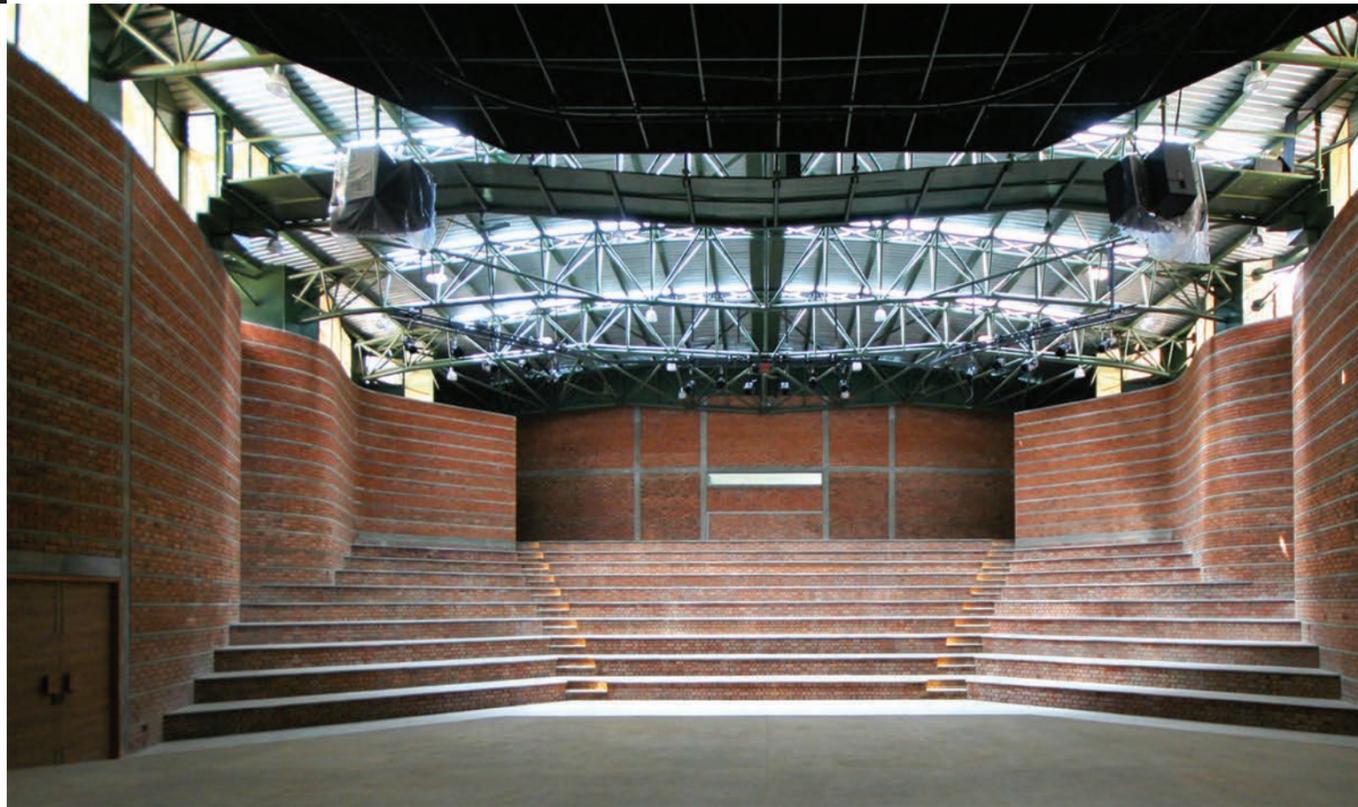
The interior of the auditorium is naturally lit and ventilated, the presence of the perforated sheets in the roof and the turbo ventilators sucking out hot air naturally. While the 600 odd seating is built along the natural slope of the land, the backstage is cleverly placed, the massive 30 foot sliding doors opening out to the valley's embrace. The changing rooms are tucked beneath the stage, out of sight.

The external spaces marked by rugged random rubble masonry, which is attractively peppered with the locally abundant shale rock, are used as galleries to display exhibits, house the office spaces as well as rest rooms. Paved concrete with leaf imprints and shale rock mark the floors while steel reinforcement waste rods are turned into attractive railings.

No regular windows mark the structure. Instead concrete Hume pipes available locally have been converted into picturesque windows that speak a language of their own. "The structure had to conform to a budget where the money was consciously spent. Yet, the creative scientific spirit of the Agastya foundation which was aimed to be taken forward and instilled amongst these children, needed to be reflected in the design and evolution of the structure", adds Sharukh.

While the structure effortlessly captures the essence of strong character of the site, there is no doubting the design addressing in full measure the very mission of the foundation-to inspire and transform the economically disadvantaged children through the innovative presence of science education.

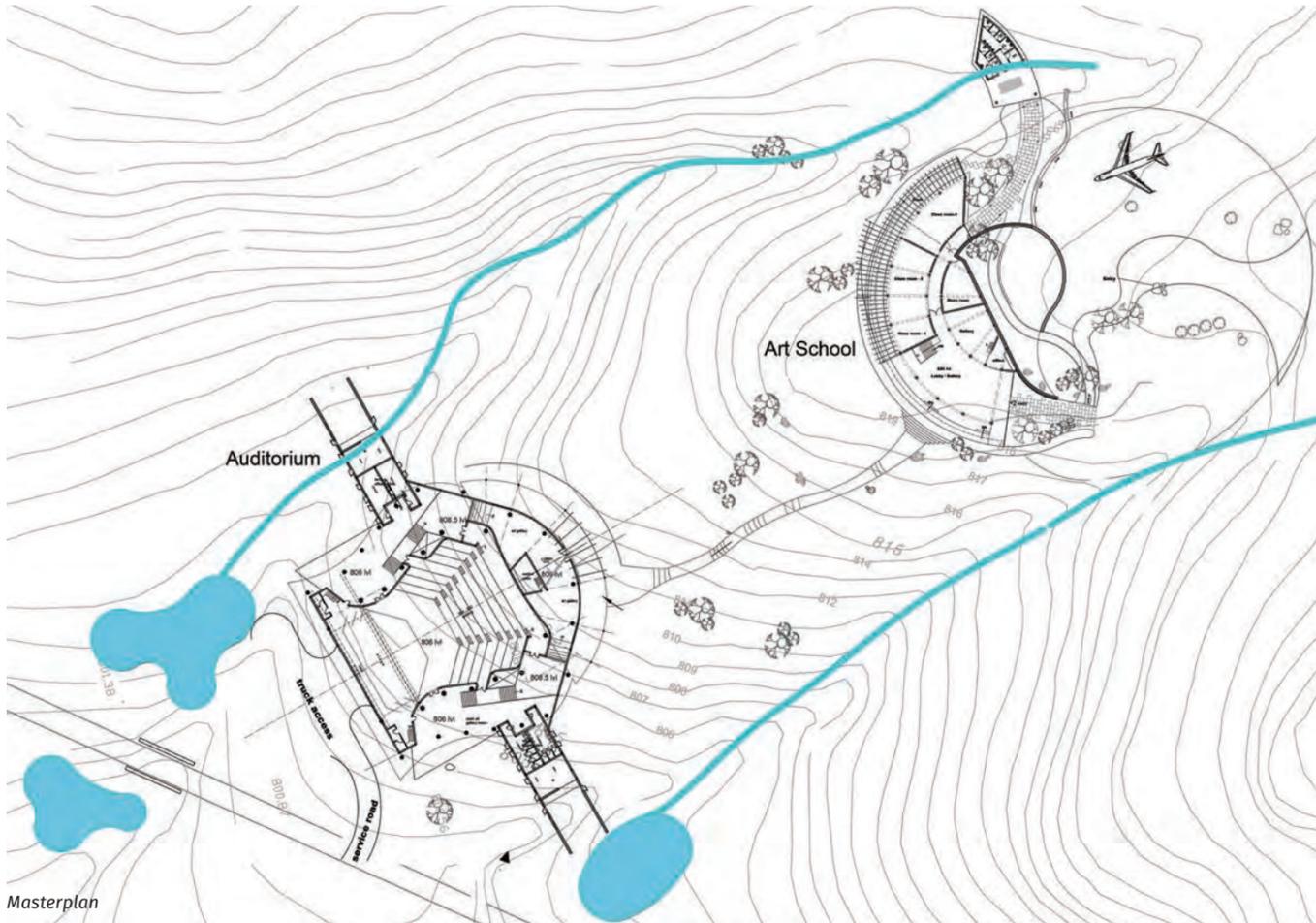




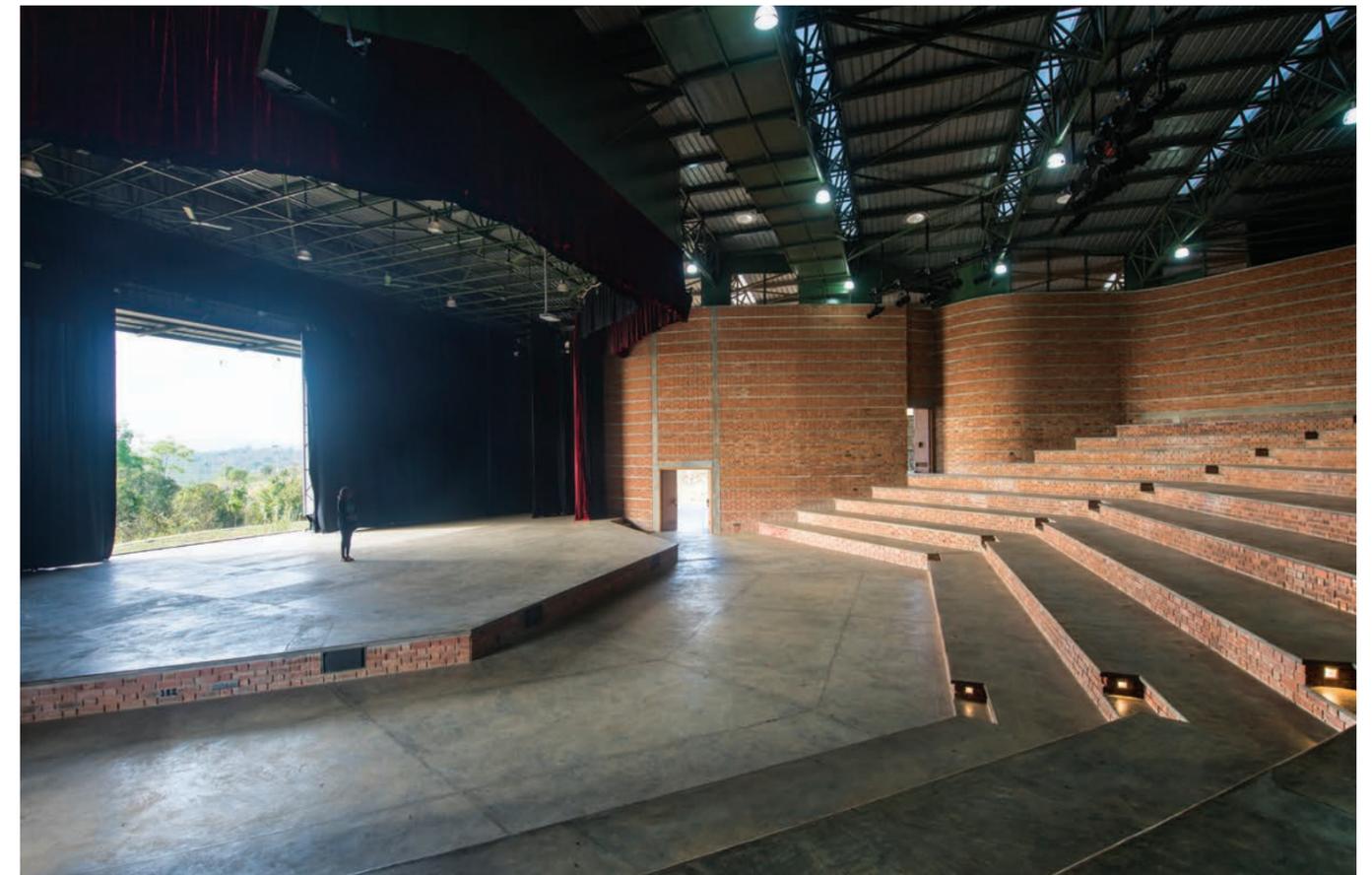
Raked seating daylit



Agastya family



Masterplan



Stage overlooking the valley



## ANSHUL CHODHA

### PROJECT

Sanctuary Architects Office

### DESIGN FIRM

Sanctuary Architects

### AWARDS

IIID ANCHOR AWARD 2016

# ENSCONCED IN GREEN

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

The project involves extending an existing building by 1700 Sqft to accommodate a larger office. The objective of the design was to accommodate the existing as well as future growth of the firm while serving as an inspiration for creativity as well as reflecting the firm's ethos, says Principal **Architect Anshul Chodha, Sanctuary Architects**, commenting on the design of the extension made to his office space, Sanctuary Office.

### SITE CONTEXT

The architectural studio is built on the terrace of an existing structure, the site being located in the heart of a residential area in the garden city of Bengaluru. Not surprisingly it is surrounded by a large canopy of Gulmohar and Coconut trees. The extension to the existing building measures 1700 Sq ft and comprises a double height studio with a mezzanine floor.

### DESIGN CONCEPT

The preliminary concept employed in the design and structure involved bringing in the surrounding trees into the space. Keeping this in perspective, the design orientation was towards the West façade, permitting the trees to become part of the space, the double height ceiling enabling further a better connect with the trees. The space opens up further through a multifunctional open-to-sky linear courtyard which is used as a meeting area for a major part of the day while doubling up as a lunch space and also a lounge to unwind in the evenings.

The new extension is juxtaposed against an angular plastered and painted old concrete structure. This transition between the old and new is defined by the change of materiality, scale and volume in the

new structure. A multifunctional unit catering to a resource area for printing, library, material library, file storage, features towards one end of the workstation. This successfully clears up the remaining space for workstations and circulation.

A folded metal plate staircase leads up to the mezzanine where the Principal architect's cabin is located. The cabin leads to an outdoor deck that is shaded by a canopy of trees, offering the best view of the surrounding urbanscape.

### STRUCTURAL DETAIL

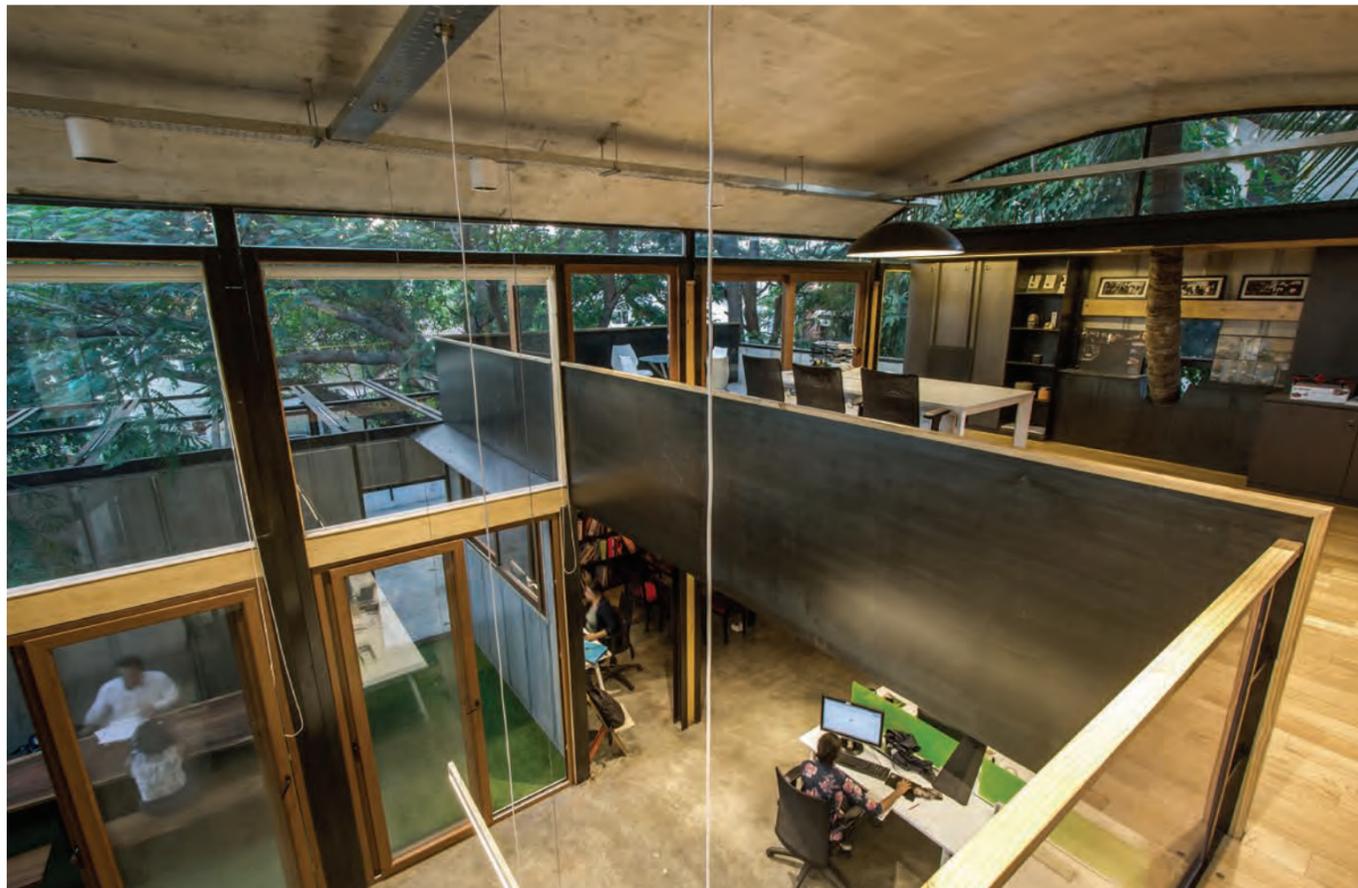
The exposed structure offers the beauty and experience of the materials in their raw form. Being built on top of an existing structure, the construction had to be light, of a good thermal quality as well as easy to dismantle. Hence, light weight Aerocon panels were bolted to the metal framed structure, forming the vertical shell of the structure.

The first layer of the roof is formed by Aerocon blocks shaped in the form of a shallow arch without any intermediate structural supports. Over this is a GI sheet roof with an air gap to allow the hot air to escape. Knotted Pine, sheet metal, grey cement concrete floors complemented by white work surfaces and GI sheets, form the backdrop to a cheerful work environment.

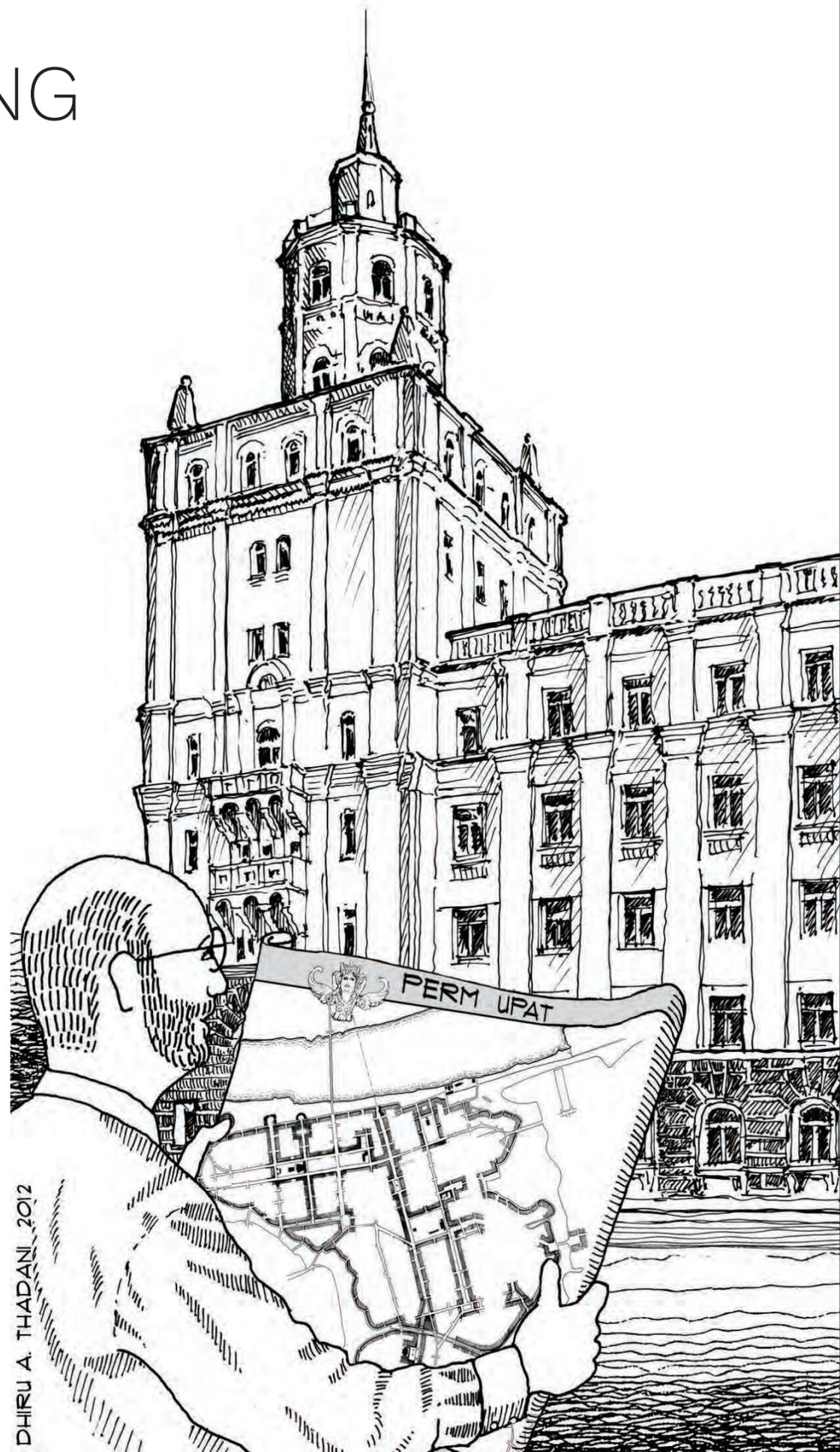


Caption





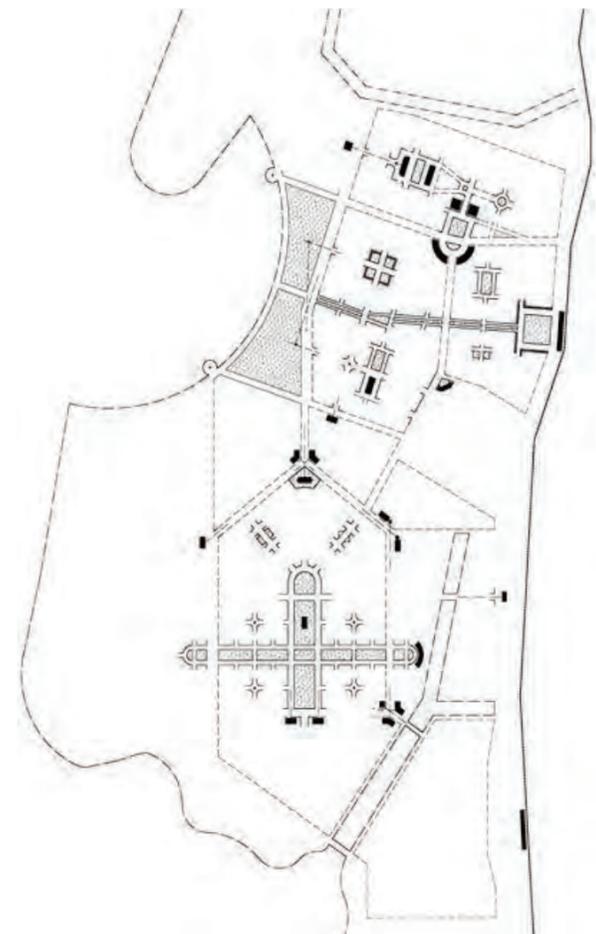
# DEFINING THE URBAN SPACE



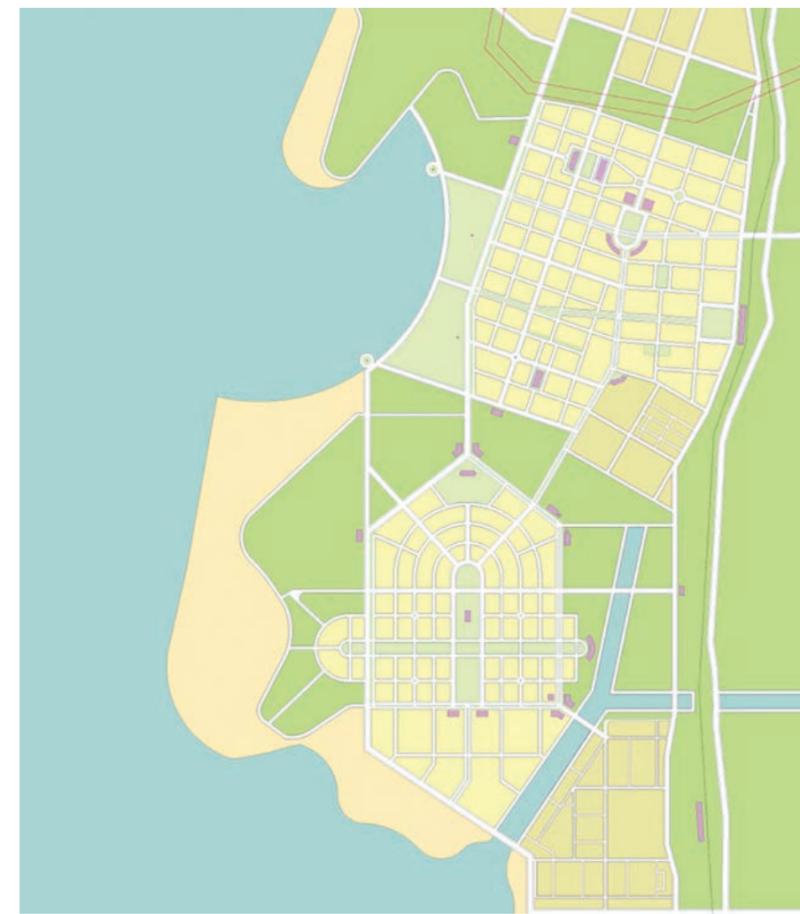
Photograph by Jack Gardner

## IN CONVERSATION WITH **DHIRU A THADANI**

Congestion, lack of context, strong dichotomy, inefficient public transport besides others mark the urban spaces in the country leading to multiple ills, deterring smooth functioning. **Architect and Urbanist Dhiru A Thadani**, professor, author of multiple books and urban design consultant to several US and international cities, recipient of 2011 Seaside Prize, an award given for significant contributions to the quality and character of communities, speaks on urban spaces, their design and the way to transform, in a lengthy chat with **Antarya**.



Open space diagram copy of Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai



Masterplan, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai

**Q. With rapid urbanisation being the norm, urban spaces are increasingly becoming congested and unliveable. Prevailing designs of buildings and urban spaces are not helping to alter this. How would you alter this to bring in an urban design that creates value?**

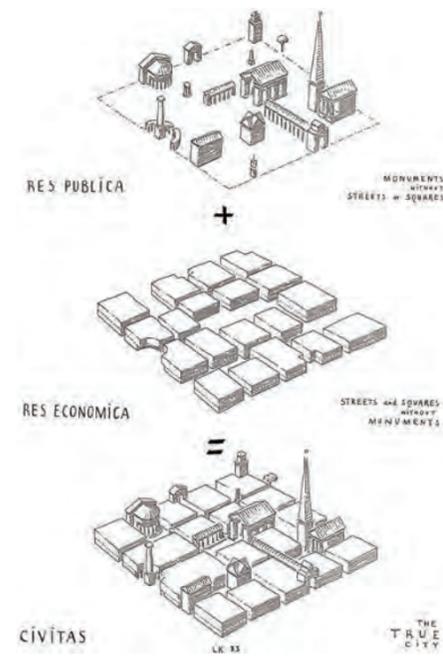


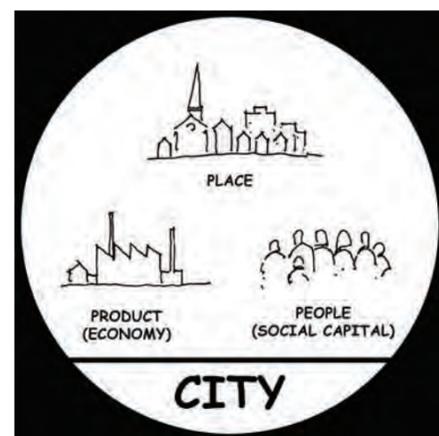
Illustration by Léon Krier

There is a fundamental misunderstanding between what is Urban Design and what are Large Scale Architectural Projects. When one architect or firm makes a master plan and designs all the buildings, it is not urban design – it is a large scale architectural project where the result is either a spectacle or monotony.

Urban design makes a framework accompanied by a set of rules and urban guidelines, which are based on time-tested precedents. This structure and process permits several architects to participate in creating diversity and harmony, and yet produce a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. One Indian example is Marine Drive where the envelope of every building is the same, yet the design and details of each building is different, and the composition of the whole creates a memorable public realm greater than the sum of its parts. The buildings around the Oval Maidan create uniform walls framing the public room, residential on the west side and institutional on the east side.

What Indian cities need is 'real' urban design, where the public and private realms are clearly defined, and 40 per cent of the public land is dedicated to gardens, plazas, and thoroughfares. The private lands are coded by building setbacks and building heights, where parking is permitted, and mixed-uses that animate the street level, thereby producing a comfortable human scale that is responsive to pedestrian life.

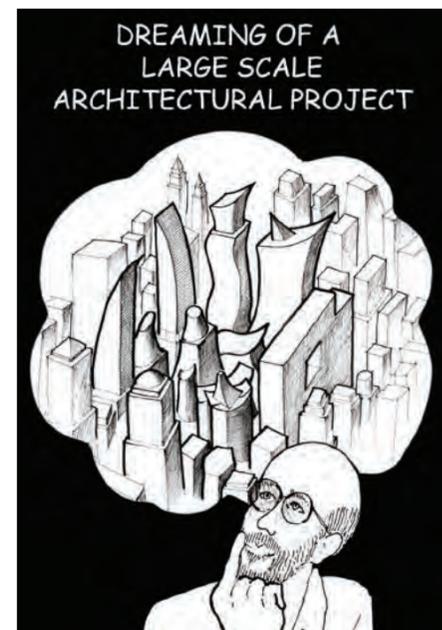
**Q. Invariably Indian cities are seeing strong dichotomy in urban spaces. Mumbai is a classic example of wrong design and investment. How can designers be sensitised to alter this, avoid forceful imposition of an out of context global image amidst slums?**



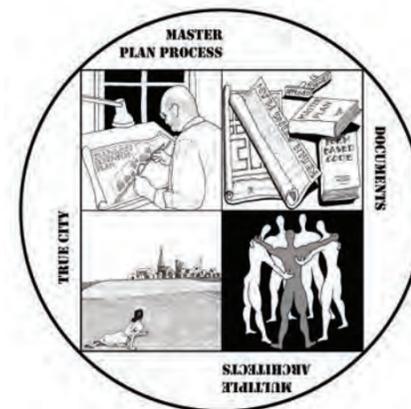
Slums are a product of a disproportionate abundance of employment opportunities juxtaposed by the inability of the housing sector to supply the demand. What needs to be built immediately are transitional single room occupancy (SRO) units that cater to the burgeoning workforce. This is similar to a long-stay hotel where the units have only a sleeping space and shared or private toilets.

An abundance of single men and women travel to the city for employment or in search of employment. SROs can provide transitional housing for them and prevent slum expansion. This housing is the first step toward renting a place for their families or purchasing a permanent home. There is also the issue of relocating slum dwellers, which needs to be addressed humanely, for at present it is only discussed as warehousing of people.

**Q. For an urban space to be balanced and socially just, public spaces and social housing requires right design address with an absence of economic segregation. Pointedly, affordable housing needs address where housing for less privileged is not pushed entirely to the outskirts. With prevailing space and budget constraints, how would you approach this issue?**



Income discrepancy is pushing developers to build segregated gated communities all over the world, with little regard to the social fabric and the long-term impacts of these decisions.



The traditional model of housing mixed income families in the same building provides one solution. The higher priced units have views facing the public realm, such as the street, garden, view, or open space. Whereas the lower priced units are smaller in size and face the rear. Vertical circulation to access units may be separated. However, the close proximity permits greater employment opportunities and reduction in travel times for the poor, while providing an opportunity for both income groups to interact.

**Q. Efficient public transport with high connectivity releases public spaces, reclaiming for uses other than automobiles. Given the Indian scenario of urban spaces, is it possible to reclaim vast swathes for public use, removing automobiles and turning them into walkable spaces, making cities truly 'walkable cities'?**



Every transit trip starts and ends with walking, resulting in a healthier society that is more aware of and invested in the public realm. For any city to be walkable it needs a robust transit system, which is capable of

moving at least 90 per cent of its population. Unfortunately, the powers-that-be in most cities aspire to car ownership and build roads that favour cars over pedestrians. Building a robust transit system should be the primary focus of any city administration, along with safety for its citizens and affordable / attainable housing for everyone.

Society in general subsidizes automobile owners by providing the roadway surface to drive on, and parking spaces for cars at rest. Auto owners should pay their fair share for use of this public amenity – the thoroughfare. At present the vehicle taxes are too low and the pedestrian realm is severely compromised.

**Q. The emerging structures in urban spaces increasingly display a lack of connect with the locational context, the disconnect extending to cultural, climatic sensitivities. Most public spaces are civic institutions while those that are not, are unusable, with entrances often not easily accessible. The charm of our traditional urban spaces, their planning and structures, clear demarcation between public realm and private realm, are absent. What design intervention can alter this?**



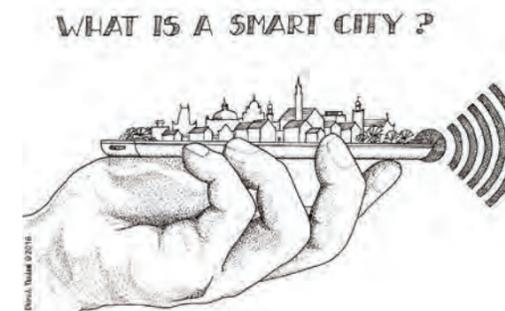
Design interventions have to be undertaken one neighbourhood at a time, and on a case-by-case basis. For a public urban space to be comfortable, it should be thought of as an outdoor room, with the buildings that surround the space serving as walls and building heights implying a ceiling. Of course there are well documented ratios



to be observed between the height of the surrounding walls and the width of the space being defined. What is often overlooked is that street spaces form the vast majority of the public space and these outdoor rooms must be designed as such.

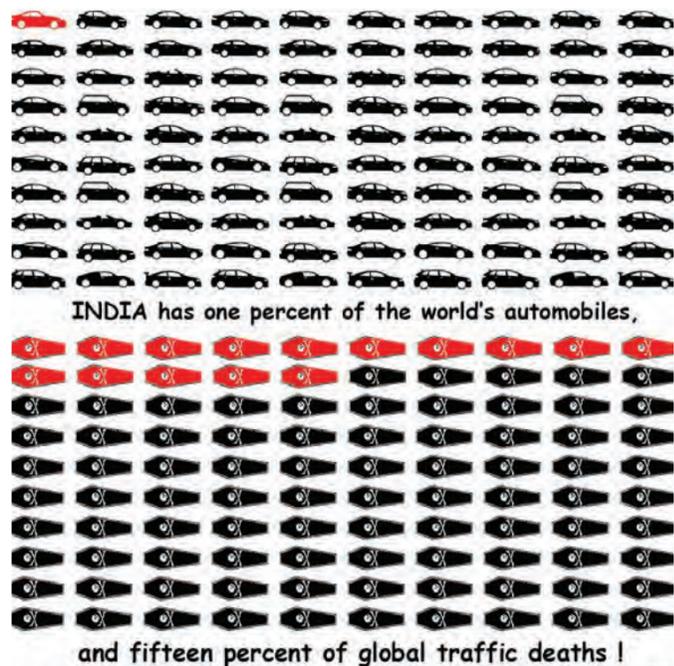
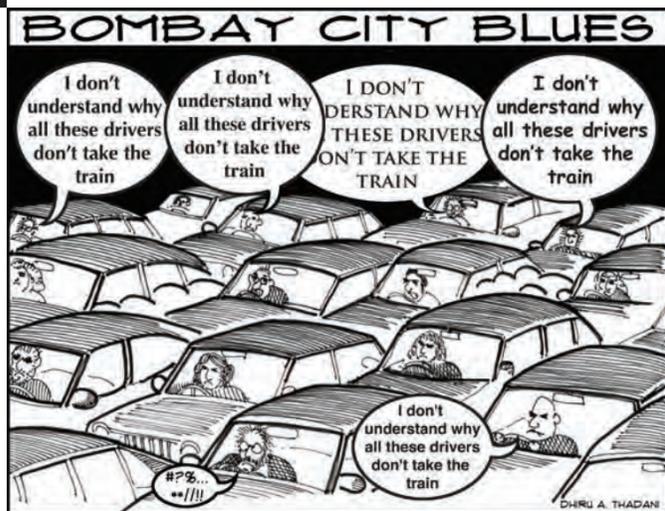
**Q. India is currently talking about developing smart cities. What in your view encompasses a smart city?**

At a recent conference three words – smart, safe, and sustainable, were used to define what a smart city was. However, the follow-up explanation for the words encouraged high-capital investment in technocratic solutions and did not mention quality of life, urban form, community, or place making. Here is an approach to make a smart city that does not rely on intense capital investment, but employs wise planning principles.



**Smart:** Before a single fibre optic cable is laid, a 'smart city' should be planned to be compact, connected, and complete.

**Compact** refers to access for all residents to their daily needs, within walking distance.



**Complete** refers to a diverse multi-cultural environment where all income and age groups are welcome to participate in daily community activities.

**Safe:** Before a single closed circuit camera is installed, all public spaces must be fronted by buildings that have windows that look onto the public realm. The line of sight between private space and public space must be unobstructed. This is the most efficient way to create a safe and secure environment. A hundred eyes on the street are better than any number of cameras.

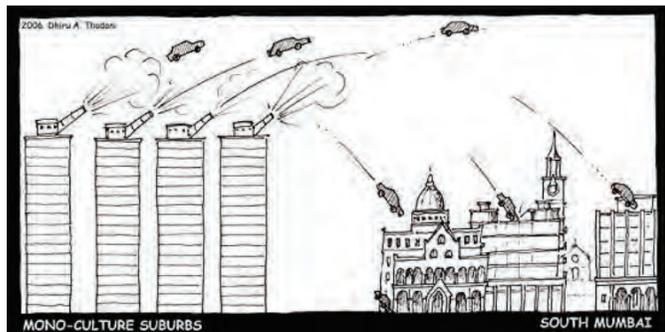
**Sustainable:** Before investing in expensive high-tech digital sensors and computer monitoring systems, the location of the smart city should be in close proximity to reliable potable water and fresh food sources. Fresh produce should not travel a long distance to nourish the local population.

Although the electric light bulb and air-conditioning are extraordinary inventions, buildings must be designed to take advantage of natural light and cross ventilation, so that the interior is habitable during the day without artificial lighting, yet not be all glass so that it is comfortable for the majority of the year without expending energy on cooling and heating systems.

Consumers should demand that all materials and building systems incorporated in the building be evaluated for their potential life cycle cost, before taking a loan to purchase the property. What will the actual expense be to occupy and maintain the property over the time period of the loan?

If these basic planning recommendations are not adhered to, then no matter how much technology is incorporated into the 'Smart City' it will not work.

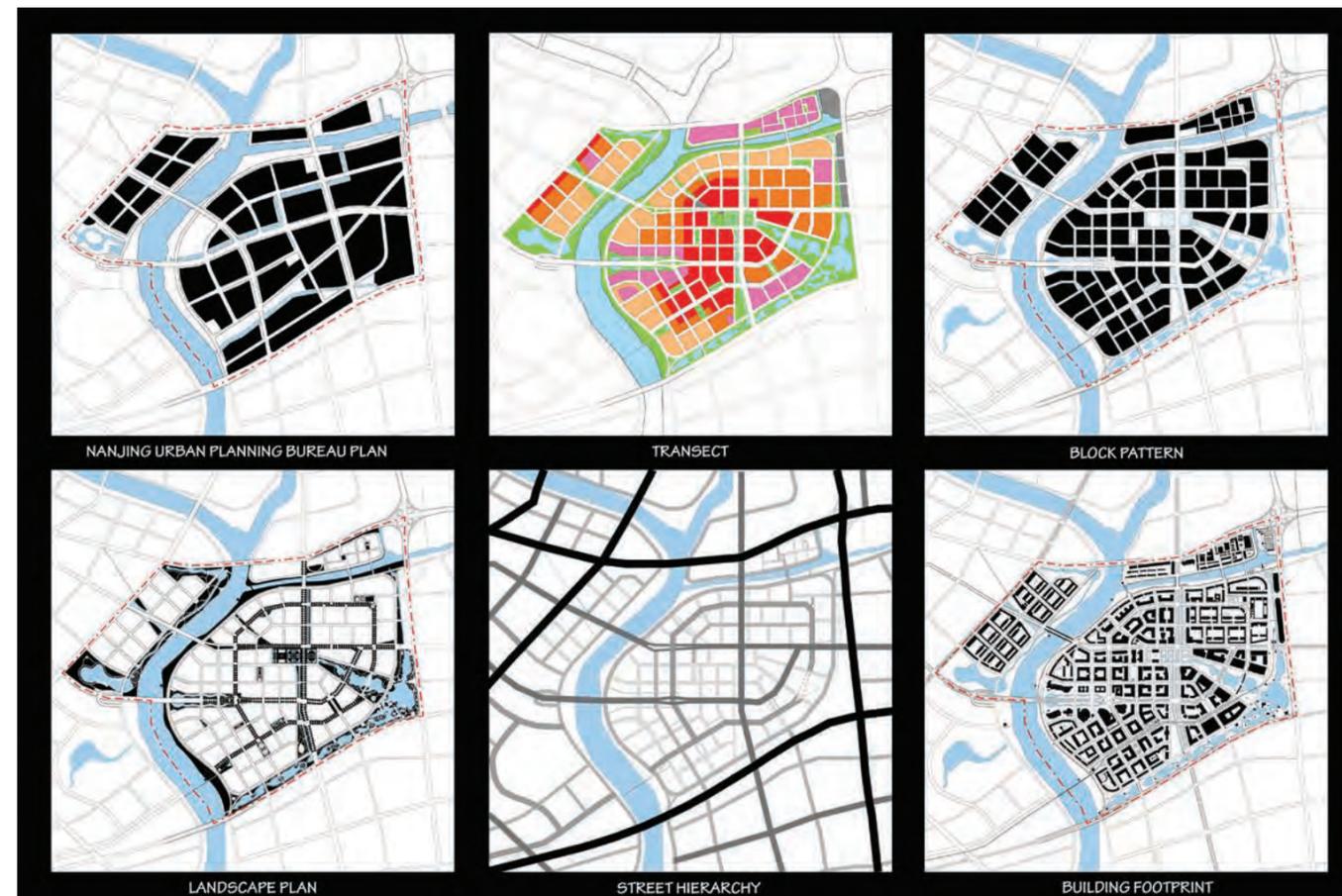
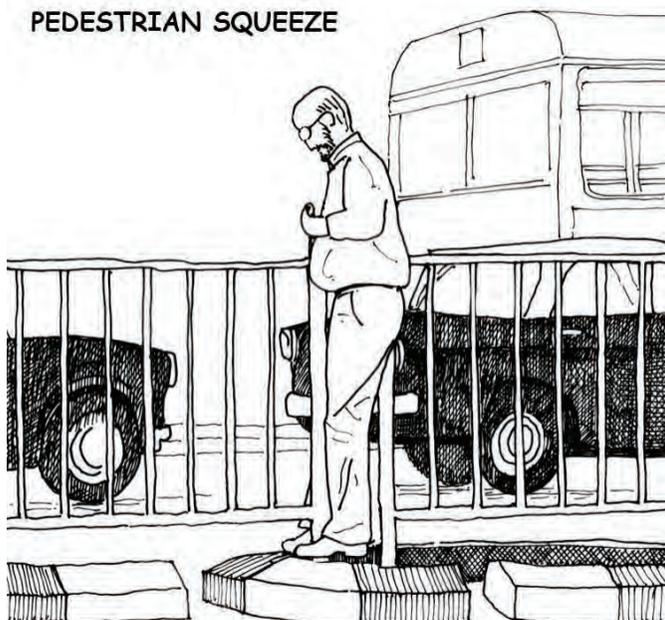
All Illustrations are drawn by *Dhiru A Thadani*



This means mixed-use zoning that permits living above retail and a robust mix of living and work places so jobs and residences are in close proximity.

**Connected** refers to convenient access to transit within 400 meters of each residential building; access to parks, green space and recreation; and connected to cultural and civic institutions.

**PEDESTRIAN SQUEEZE**



Masterplan, Luhe City Centre, China



# RETHINKING URBAN SPACES



IN CONVERSATION WITH **TATJANA SCHNEIDER**

Setting up different ways of looking at buildings and spaces as well as evaluating them, can help to direct attention to the wider field, contends **Architect and academic, Tatjana Schneider, senior lecturer in the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, England and Professor for History and Theory of the City at HafenCity University Hamburg, Germany,** in a frank conversation with **Antarya** on urban spaces. Schneider avers that open, critical and public discussions on the roles of architects and architecture should be first step to establish the framework for future urban development.



**Q. Urbanisation problems stem not only from migration but also the manner in which urban spaces are planned and the design of the buildings that mark this urban scape. What in your view would be the elements that we need to address, especially in a developing country where the ills are likely to be more prominent?**

Open, critical and public discussions about the roles of architects and architecture as well as other spatial and non-spatial disciplines would be one of the first moves to establish frameworks for future development. It is in these frameworks where ambitions, desires and needs can be formulated for what urban spaces can provide and whom they will provide for: do they, for example, only provide for certain activities or segments of society or are they allowing diverse groups of people to use them?

Architects, because of the way they are appointed, have a direct duty of care to their clients – who are often, however, the financial beneficiaries of a development but not the direct users of the buildings and spaces they are commissioning. This brings

with it particular problems because, in this process, architects are translating the ideas of their clients into space rather than the desires of the users.

In a time when cities (especially inner cities) are envisaged around a limited set of ideas that specify what a city should look like and the roles it should perform – tidy, orderly, efficient, modern, smart – designing spaces that have a wider remit is increasingly difficult. In the process of achieving these ambitions and the urban functions that come along with them, the things and people that do not fit into these new imaginaries that photograph well for architecture and urban design magazines are not considered.

It seems to me, therefore, that we need to look carefully at who our clients are and who the majority of our users will be. Designing spaces that will only cater to and for a small group of people, the 1per cent, will not be able to tackle any of the challenges that urbanisation brings – wherever we are on the globe.

**Q. As you rightly pointed, buildings invariably are designed more as objects in isolation instead of representing their context. How can architects be made to be more context sensitive instead of adopting architecture that opt a global image, the local scenario almost irrelevant?**

Education plays an important role in making students more aware of the consequences of any built intervention. In schools or architecture, tasks given to students set up certain expectations of what architectural practice will and ought to be. More often than not, however, these briefs ask for the development of a house, a museum or office building on specific and clearly demarcated sites. Changing the way educators approach and set these tasks by, for example, recalibrating what we value, what we train to design and whom we will work with once in practice will go some way to change this perception.

At the same time, the architectural press and prize systems hold another crucial part in the discussion around buildings as commodities rather than buildings that

are looked at in terms of their use and use value. Setting up different ways of looking at buildings and spaces as well as evaluating them, can help to direct attention to the wider field – spatial, social, cultural, political – which architecture is affected by and also affects. But, even this is not necessarily sufficient. This becomes most apparent when looking at the whole range of practices that have been emerging over the past decade that claim to operate exactly within this complex field of networks and relations. Even if focus does seem to shift ever so slightly, the social and spatial needs to be further embedded in economic discourses and actions.

**Q. Besides being contextually relevant, how can the urban structures be designed to be also socially sensitive, where the diverse as well as the constantly changing needs and lifestyles are addressed and accommodated?**

Often, buildings and spaces are designed to accommodate a specific set of functions that then have to be performed in a certain manner. This is particularly so in housing where plans determine and preconfigure a certain idea of inhabiting or using a space. Establishing knowledge on the variety of ways in which spaces are used and the activities that take place would support a contextual approach in the social realm – but also beyond. And yet, there is often little interest (from the perspective of the investor or developer) in commissioning spaces that can be adapted over time. Obsolescence in buildings – as much as in technical appliances – creates the need for a new building or space.

If, for example, the users of a house cannot adapt what they have, they will have to move to a different place. This also goes for the perspective of the architect who, often, designs buildings as finished object rather than process. There are notable examples that have attempted to negotiate time through the separation of structural elements of a building and those elements that should best be decided by their users.



And yet, this is by no means common practice. It seems that the thinking of space in time – space as something that can constantly change and is easily changeable at the same time – needs to be linked to discussions around resource use for instance so that incentives can be created for the wider implementation of knowledge that, in fact, is already there.

**Q. How can we rethink architecture to move from its predominant address of the elite and focus on bringing in equitable development and social justice through its designs? Where, not only the socially underprivileged segments are addressed but community participation in the ensuing urban spaces is actively encouraged.**

Here, I want to highlight again the role of education. If what you call predominant elite is the beneficiary of the projects we do in schools of architecture, it is not a big surprise when this elite is seen as the sole group of people that will serve as clients. Reformulating the notion of the ‘client’ and replacing it with a more emancipatory concept is here quite necessary.

Now, I’ve mentioned before the upsurge in recent years of practices that have begun to address topics such as social justice and community participation in their work. This is driven, in parts, by a desire to operate in more ‘meaningful’ ways by acting against or countering growing global inequities through situated ways of working with communities on issues ranging from housing, education, upgrading of facilities to infrastructural interventions.

While this is laudable, and at the very least shows design’s ability to work in different ways, ways need to be found to move these project-by-project interventions into the realm of a more systemic approach to planning. In other words, it is encouraging to see how so many practitioners have begun to work within this field, yet, shifting the predominant focus requires more effort.

I believe that equitable development – which does not necessarily mean participation – needs socio-spatial justice imaginaries that shift emphasis to larger scales. Education, or indeed practice, cannot simply shift its focus to



the development of ‘socially engaged’ or ‘socially relevant’ scenarios. This would simply be replacing the object focus with a process focus but without understanding the wider networks.

**Q. What elements in your opinion need to be brought into public spaces to prompt coalition between the privileged and underprivileged segments in urban areas?**

There needs to be acceptance of growing inequalities to begin with along with an acknowledgement from planners, architects and politicians, that certain forms of development are not in the best interest of all. This recognition needs to form the basis for planning that addresses development in different ways – through, amongst other things – transparency about decision making processes, engagement, data on land cost, salary cost as well as profit margins.

All this ought to be made public – in various forms (image and text) – so that everyone is enabled to participate in these discussions. The most important elements might however prove the most difficult to do: a willingness to listen to others and especially those normally considered ‘non-experts’, trust, and a willingness to be proven wrong.



# PURSUING A PASSION

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

Design was undoubtedly his passion. Yet, after taking up architecture, he was not sure if he actually wanted to design just buildings. If design was his soul call and yet if he was not inclined towards buildings, what would be his true passion? What kind of design really excited him?

These were queries **Saif Fazal**, a student of RV college of Architecture, was already battling with. If he was disillusioned about laying out the spaces and pursuing the most possible way of carrying out his passion as offered by the course he had chosen, what angle of design should he look at? Industrial design was the immediate answer that he

came up with. On probing deeper, he realised, indeed therein lay his calling. This realisation also explained why he had pursued automobile design as a first choice but had later chosen not to.

His initial foray into product design started while in college studying architecture. "There was a FORMULA SAE racing team

from the mechanical department in our college where students from the best universities around the world participated, presented their design and later proved its roadworthiness on the race tracks. The team I worked with participated in events in Australia, Italy, Germany", says Saif, pointing to his first tryst with design that was distinct from buildings.

Interestingly, on completing his architecture course, Saif did not pursue automobile design as he felt it was too narrow in its reach. "Product design covers an entire gamut of items and that is where I wanted to be."

Having experimented with quite a few product designs even as a student, Saif soon came up with a lamp inspired by 'Star Wars' along with a string table that worked on the flexibility principle where the table collapses by tugging at the string. "The Godrej Design Lab to which I sent this design, selected it and displayed the same at the Elle Deco India Design 2015." Saif also landed with the rights to develop and design it for the company. Year 2015 also saw him cornering the Elle Deco International Design Award for his 'Blub Vide Poche' and another in 2016 for 'Poise Lamp'.

Spending most of his holidays in a farming village at his grandfather's place, where frugality is a virtue, Saif had earlier come up with the concept of flexible architecture for his graduating thesis in college, which permitted the materials to be salvaged and reused. His design, 'Flexible and adaptable urban habitat' was nominated for BE OPENfuture awards 2012 in the category 'City' and exhibited at 100 % Design London.

This inclination to salvage and also revive art forms that were dying and lend them a contemporary twist, brought Saif to the exquisite Bidri work done in silver. "The



Bidriware – Snowflake Coasters



Leggera GT – Lounge Chair & Foot Stool

use of silver makes this art form expensive and out of reach of common man. The use of alloy in place of silver and introducing innovative contemporary designs can infuse fresh life into this dying art", says Saif.

Calling the technique that he opted as selective oxidisation where part of the zinc alloy is oxidised using a special mud to bring in the colour variant and patterns, Saif developed a method where the deft craftsmanship passed down generations could be kept alive, yet feature in many household items starting from tea coasters to table tops to various decorative pieces. Thus, his Qaiser series comes up with unique snowflake and zillij patterns.

Recently he developed a technique which he coined – FUSE-casting using two metals of Zinc alloy and brass where the zinc alloy



Bidriware – Qaiser Series



candle Stand

is oxidised. "The patterns that emerge too are unique as in sand casting the final product is evident only on completion of the casting", he says.

The products designed by Saif fall into a wide range, starting from fruit bowls to lamps that cater to multiple functionalities with their flexible structure, to tables and seating. "The objective should be to live with technology harmoniously like the Scandinavians do", he adds. His designs thus not only follow the philosophy of flexibility and respect for nature, they also have science as their firm foundation; such as the Ammu Lamp that uses total internal reflection based on Snell's law, the light articulated where required.

Saif has also worked plenty with recyclable plastic that brought down production cost.



Bidriware – Fuse casting



Bracket Tray



Loup Fruit Bowl

"Over 30 odd products have been designed so far besides the Bidriware and all rest on the plank of flexibility and sustainability." Pointing to his furniture designs, Saif adds, "There needs to be dynamism in furniture designing while the end product is not too loud. The designs need to be poetic and functional."

One of his remarkable designs is the bracket tray which represents the accent on functionality while revealing extreme simplicity in the design approach. Shaped merely like a paperclip, this bracket tray permits the placement of fruits, stack eggs while cooking or use it for holding varied items or merely use it as a mirror stand. Incidentally, OTHR, an innovative 3D printing brand from New York, selected his design and started producing it in 3D Printed porcelain, with each edition numbered.



Ammu Lamp



Bidriware – Lunation

# VEERING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR



It is normal to seek placement in a firm on completion of the five year course and certified as an architect. It is normal to even decide to enter the field of academia or pursue a related field in architecture. It is even more normal to branch out and start a firm to take further the design inclinations in totality. But it is not so normal to initiate a system that will focus purely on filling the lacunae currently existing in the academic field.

Yet, young **Vinay Varanasi** chose to do just that, soon after graduating from Ramaiah College of Architecture in year 2015. After a year's internship Vinay realised the deep disconnect that academics has with practical learning. "The architect firm I interned with was spending time in getting me trained in the practical application of what I learnt. This I felt should not be the case."

This experience set Vinay thinking on how to bridge this gap, offer a module that would set the process to look beyond the pedagogy of academic institutions. This musing and deliberation with like-

minded friends set the foundation stone for **Unbind**. As the name suggests, the purpose was to offer a mode of learning through workshops and practical applications that would bring in the missing link between theory and actual practice.

"A series of workshops have been conducted so far, each designed keeping in mind the specific requirements and areas of address", says Vinay. The initiative was started first with an online publication where students had opportunity to generate and upload content. "But this again was information and not experience. So we changed our model where we offer an experience on things that students do not have access to."

A workshop was then conducted that specifically focused on overcoming the mind blocks while designing. "Here the design problem was split into parts with each group doing a part of it and passing it on to the next group. You eventually come back to the section that you started with and can see the differential approach taken by other groups to solve the same problem", says Vinay.

This exercise, which incidentally was their first workshop, opened up greater possibilities, with Unbind coming up with EventX, a two day makerspace festival which focused on six areas of architecture that students are drawn to but have little practical experience. Over 200 architecture students from different colleges in and out of Bengaluru participated in the festival which happened to be first of its kind in the design field.



The first module of the event, Behind the Scenes involved interacting with theatre groups and coming up with an appropriate design for the sets to suit their plays. "Some of these groups were opting for zero waste events which involved designs using no plastic, use of waste such as discarded fabric, PVC pipes, collapsible sets", says Vinay.

The second module, Design Hackathon enables to view design from a broader spectrum where, when a problem is sighted, a design solution as well as a business solution is sought and offered. "This exposes one to the aspects of functionality and pricing, bringing in practical aspects of design as well as its actual potential."

Invariably the individual members of a team working on a design for an organisation

do not get credit for initiating and completing the design process. "They are the Unsung Heroes. This prompted us to approach CEPT which is offering tremendous support to crafts that are a dying art. The workshop brought in potters from Kutch who interacted with participants, making them see the reality of what can be contributed by each individual", explains Vinay.

The module Design Nature recognises that each architect has a signature style but every one of them has a time constraint. Within this time constraint, offering a magnificent design would be a challenge. This elicited collaboration with design firm Ethos which focused on an organic approach to the students, where "we create the right environment and they learn."

Beyond design is installation and the module Render Me Awesome focuses on how installation works, how it is actually built. "The participants get the experience of actually building a life-size model which is different from the small sized models normally built for academic purposes. This opens up a new dimension, understanding and knowledge", claims Vinay.

The two day workshop also incorporated one more module which was not directly connected to design and practical learning but one that was close to many an architect's heart. "Photography, especially related to architecture, is something that every architect wants to be skilled in but unfortunately the actual potential of architectural photography is deeply misunderstood", avers Vinay.

Going forward, Unbind, which initially started with a three member team in 2015 and currently grown to include seven, hopes to include architectural journalism too into its fold, making the series of workshops held more comprehensive.



# ROLE OF IIA IN ACADEMIA

BY PROF. JAFFER AA KHAN

The Indian Institute of Architects (IIA) is hundred years old. What started as the Architectural Student's Association in 1917, the Institute is today one of the oldest architecture institutes and has come a long way in the past century, nurturing the architecture profession through its various initiatives and to some extent regulating the profession until the Council of Architecture (CoA) was formed under the purview of the Architects Act of 1972.

Presently almost side lined in many ways by the CoA, the Institute has just become a spectator to the various changes that have happened in the architecture education sector which is completely handled by the CoA. It is time IIA relooks at its existence as a body that can contribute and support the development of architectural education in the country.

While the professional practice aspects are monitored by the CoA; its architectural education responsibilities could be shared more effectively with the IIA. Presently the CoA has five IIA representing members; five from the education sector and the rest are the ones who represent the respective State Governments and the others from engineering bodies. The employed architects and not the practitioners are in majority, dominating the CoA.

These members do not have any exposure to education and take least interest in improving the standards of education. The practice sector is least represented; though the Council has more than 60000 listed in its register. The erstwhile body has been in the news recently with regard to the minimum standards in education and it had to revert to the 1983 rules as per the directions of the Court, because of the fact that these rules are the only gazetted ones by the Government of India.

In the last two decades the education sector had grown exponentially and the CoA is simply not able to handle the increased number to validate or revalidate them on a periodical basis. The Act and the rules specify that the validating team should visit once in 5 years. But one could see that these visits have become more often than the specified time and in some cases almost every year. One does not understand the frequency of these visits which are basically non-productive and quite cumbersome.

The IIA and the CoA have been at loggerheads for a long time and now that the tussle between the two is settled for good, these two



premier and the only organisations for the profession of architecture should join to make education more meaningful and effective. The first major change should be that the membership to these organisations should go parallel. While the council mandates that a person aspiring to be an academic should be a registered architect with the Council, they should also stress that he is a member of the IIA.

If you look at the statistics the membership of IIA is just one third of the CoA which is quite unfortunate for a hundred year old Institute which has a wide network and a democratic set up through its Chapters all over India and this should be taken as an advantage to collaborate together for the benefit of any young aspirant into architecture.

In the US there are three organisations that involve in education and the profession. The American Institute of Architects (AIA), The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). The NCARB is a non-profit organization made up of the architectural licensing boards of 54 states and territories. While each jurisdiction is responsible for regulating the practice of architecture within its borders, NCARB develops and administers national programs for licensure candidates and architects to ensure they have the mobility to go wherever their career takes them.

In India the CoA undertakes the work of both NAAB and NCARB. If the CoA remains only to protect the title "Architect", then the validating of the architecture program within the country can be handled by IIA and CoA together forming a new national body that could only take care of the education of architecture and provide the necessary accreditation. This can go a long way in involving the profession and enriching architecture education in the country.

# MY YATRA

BY PROF. K JAISIM



Light & Life Academy, Ooty. Photo Credit: www.llicademy.org

**The beginning:** It was year 1970 August when I stepped into the world of private professional practice. The path was very difficult as I cut the thorny bushes and 'moved on', The Fountainhead helped to steady the journey, it evaluated every step and I never compromised.

**Inspirations:** An adventure with stone starts from the very first glimpse of its existence, in the most significant form it confronts the human imagination first by its presence as a range of mountains. The sheer drop of a cliff thrills. You step back in awe and fear; respect follows. You then walk the mountain springs, the rivulets, the streams, and the river which then plays tango with the water fall. It may be the sound of water that fascinates at first, but that music is the result of the presence of stone. Oh, what an orchestra! Rustling through the soft pebbles, to the crashing cymbals of the water falls, to the beat of drums as it rushes amidst the canyons.

Mud, the first use of it in a very definitive manner was in Anthem. While the outer layer bearing the brunt of the weather was of well-burnt bricks, the inner layer consisted of un-burnt bricks, thus saving a lot of energy and cost. History smiles knowingly at every modern step to metamorphose mud into its various avatars. The Hourdi avatar is not only lighter but creates from one volume of brick nine or more times the volume. This epitomizes our present philosophy and objective that the future is better, lighter. The Magic of Houdini happens!

The environment makes architecture come alive. Spaces dance, the mind sings, material and structure have a symbiotic relationship and nature rejoices. An honesty of integration, life becomes meaningful.

Imagination and Innovation fired by inspiration is the very basis of a creative approach. It is to question and seek not mere solutions but definite answers that make the journey alive and kicking. Emotions do have a sway but reason strains them before accepting them as part of Leela.

**Realisation:** Every project is an 'only child' They need personal care. Realising the potential is the objective. It is a continuum. The art and science of building was limited to known methods and practices. Thus was born the trinity- the architect, the builder and the client, the A B C roles very clearly identified.

The future of architectural practice goes back a cycle when he was the master builder. He gets the opportunity to express his innermost dreams at a price of performance. The Mahabharata unfolds in its myriad expressions. "The result of architecture is in the realization of the design and not just floating ideas in the wilderness of the mind."

One must achieve; he shall not only master the many nuances of the profession but also that of time and money. Mies said God lives in the details. Value is hidden; it is wise to remember that all of architecture concerns the human. It is man that appreciates and it is only by appreciation that values make sense.

**Tomorrow:** Today one does because one loves to do. One accepts every client and project as a challenge. Not just the project but also the client. They must be heard and in turn made to listen.

In this music there suddenly comes a lot of discord. They come in the form of wrap architecture, nostalgic and historic architecture. These are strange days; architecturally there is no role to play. One becomes a tool of convenience.

Popular architecture has pervaded the scene and is choking the profession. Individuality and a manner of self-expression are disappearing. To set a meaningful style takes a lot of one's self interest and conviction. Imagination the very definition of man is gone. Great architecture cannot be everywhere and anywhere, they have a place and a space.

We are at a unique age and time of history. Communication has become one to one. The age of information has influenced every aspect of our lives. It has affected architecture at its very foundations. We must wake up to this task. Otherwise the pace of the system will take off without architecture. We must address these facts with a realistic approach. I hope and trust that the great profession of architecture will gear up to this task.

# A LANGUAGE OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS

A REPORT BY ARCHITECT PRITI KALRA



Exactly a century ago, Frank Lloyd Wright designed a new office building for the Larkin Company in Buffalo, New York. Pioneers in the rapidly expanding mail order business, the clients' brief demanded a technologically advanced construction that would reinvent the wheel of office architecture and enhance their chances of commercial success.

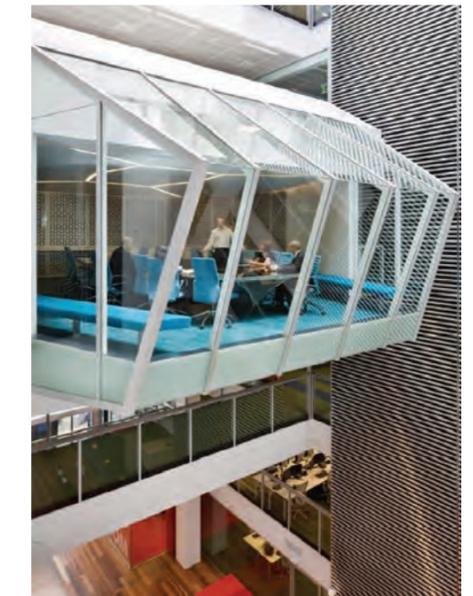
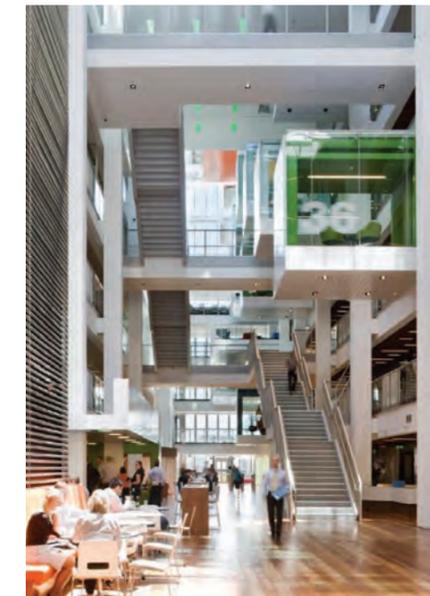
The building, with its austere atrium, powerful imagery, inclusive plan, innovative systems, as well as physical, visual and notional connectivity, was as much a Larkin achievement as it was a Wright. The egoistic yet clever architect played a deft role within a carefully orchestrated managerial programme. As a result, each detail in the architecture of the building served a business purpose, be it commercial strategizing, broadcasting of company values or the accommodation of inventive processes.

This leaflet from the pages of architectural history brings us to a pertinent question – why aren't all office buildings today as

purposeful as Larkin's? Further, what questions, relevant to the 21st century, should the office architecture of today be answering?

In the words of Dilbert, the protagonist in Scott Adams' famous comic strip, the experience of working in the cubicles and labyrinthine interiors of modern offices is symbolic of the frustration that bureaucrats are plagued with. Moreover, taking a keen look at the construction industry over the recent decades, it is easy to deduce that the most hard-hitting concern of architects today is the question of sustainability. The design of One Shelley Street, the office of Macquarie Bank in Sydney, Australia strives to address these very concerns.

The brief that Clive Wilkinson Architects received was to implement a fit-out that would complement their newly instated collaborative style – Activity-Based Working (ABW). Developed by Dutch consultant Veldhoen & Co., the flexible work platform was intended to increase the productivity and well-being of employees, which in turn would



translate to better returns. This calls to mind a throwback to the brief that Larkin gave to Wright – an intriguing occasion of history repeating itself. The atrium, the interconnectedness, the inclusivity and the sustainable systems of One Shelley Street corroborate the feeling of déjà vu.

The central concept of the project was to activate – or enliven, so to speak – the ten-storey atrium with 26 'meeting pods'. This gesture enabled unhindered visual connectivity between the different business functions as well as represented a celebration of the idea of collaboration. Within adaptable 'neighbourhoods', numerous work zones surrounded the atrium. Each had the capacity to seat a hundred employees.

A grand arterial staircase was designed to act as a space for meeting – the 'meeting tree'. Here, the architecture of the building became emblematic of Macquarie's relationships with its clients. Communal areas including a cafe and event space were concentrated along the 'main street' on Level one. On the office floors, 'plazas' were modelled after the idea of collaboration. Orchestrating spontaneous encounters between the different departments of the company became integral to the design.

Revolutionary technologies such as harbour water cooling, chilled beams and zone controlled lighting that have reduced overall energy

consumption by 50 per cent lent One Shelley Street the highest of LEED ratings. The arterial staircase encouraged employees to avoid using elevators. By keeping almost all documentation digital, paper storage reduced by 78 per cent and printing needs by 53 per cent. Further, ABW presented a key business benefit – it reduced the running costs of redefining spaces and moving groups.

An initial investment in Activity-Based Working ensures long-term savings and offers employees an unmatched quality of life. In turn, the client, the investor, the shareholder and, of course, the environment, reap the rewards. Like any new movement or initiative, though, ABW faced its due share of opposition. Over time, however, the acceptance level among Macquarie employees rose well beyond initial anticipation. Today, over 75 per cent are in favour of the freedom to change your workspace on a daily basis. Slowly, other companies are beginning to abandon stale building practices that breed complacency. One Shelley Street is being considered the pioneer of the new global sustainable office building.

IMAGE & INFORMATION CREDITS

<http://www.archdaily.com/54544/macquarie-bank-clive-wilkinson-architects>

# AN EXPERIENCE AMIDST GREENS

A CRITIQUE BY ARCHITECT YAMINI KUMAR



How do you make a strong statement in a totally vertical city? Certainly not by making it vertical;

Billie Tsien, co-founder of her firm, Tod Williams Billie Tsien, was very clear on this during a panel discussion held on the first day of public programming at the new Asia Society Hong Kong Centre, back in February, 2012. The Asia Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting understanding of the countries and cultures of Asia, and strengthening partnerships with Asia and the United States.

The Asia Society was established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders. Its new centre opened in 2012, in Admiralty at the former Explosives Magazine of the old Victoria Barracks. The site, which had been expanded by the Royal Navy, remained abandoned till the 1990s when the Hong Kong government granted it to the Asia Society.

The 65000 Sft. site was however rather challenging with its steep slopes, dense tree cover that comprised two separate sites, the upper and lower, with a nalah in between. The site had four military buildings built by the British Army in the mid-19th century for explosives, ammunition production, and storage.

On seeing the site at first, Tsien wondered what can possibly be done. Williams however was thrilled by the challenges the site posed. Through a combination of preservation, adaptive reuse, and new construction, the formerly derelict site was transformed into a vibrant cultural centre. The project now sits in a rainforest, running parallel to the ground, surrounded by rest of Hong Kong that defies gravity. Visiting this cultural centre that embraces nature serves as a refreshing change from the blinding retail Hong Kong is full of.

While driving up Justice Drive, the building looks simple and understated. The first thing visible is the 1940s structure restored for office space, and a small staircase leading to it. The project's scale is just not visible. At the end and topmost part of the road, is the overhang of the main entrance, drawing one inside. The lobby forms part of a new two-storey pavilion building on the lower site, clad in dark green stone sourced from southern China. It holds a multi-function hall, visitor amenities, gift shop, and a restaurant called AMMO. The entrance gives no hint as to what is about to unfold.

#### IMAGE & INFORMATION CREDITS

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AMMO, slang for ammunition, also an acronym for Asia, Modern, Museum, and Original, has a unique character. Luxurious, yet industrial, it is set amidst a rainforest. The interiors are designed by Joyce Wang of Wang Studios, using copper to reference the building's industrial past, yet giving it a sophisticated, high-end feel.

Attention to detail in this building is noteworthy. One side of the lobby opens onto a landing, where a staircase leads to the Joseph Lau and Josephine Lau roof garden, which enjoys magnificent views of Hong Kong's skyline. At the base of this stair is a water body, lit in such a way that the reflection of the water is seen on the ceiling.

This landing is also where the two storey footbridge arises, connecting the new pavilion to the heritage buildings on the upper site. The bridge zigzags through the site, built in an effort to save as much foliage as possible. It is more than a bridge though- it is a walk amidst treetops, offering an experience of its own.

The upper site comprises of three existing heritage buildings, separated by two large stone-walled earth berms made to deter explosions. Magazine A, built in 1860, was restored to house the Asia Society Gallery. The Old Laboratory, also built then, has been restored to house administrative offices. Magazine B, built in 1905, has been re-developed into The Miller Theater, with a 100 seats.

Another interesting detail to note is at the walkway leading past the Gallery, towards the administrative buildings and the Miller Theater. Weaving around the stone berms, the walls have openings for tropical plants, appearing to be fitted in a frame.

One cannot get enough of this building. The attention to detail throughout the whole project brings it together and unifies its various elements. Unlike the other 'iconic' buildings in Hong Kong designed by architects from the West, this building has its own iconic flavour. Its complexity has been dealt with elegance and sophistication, giving it a subliminal feel. Indeed, the only overall view of the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre is an aerial one. Its scale and multiple layers cannot be seen altogether, but can only be experienced.



# WHAT IS GREEN

A REPORT BY ARCHITECT VINAY VARANASI



Photographs by Mahesh Chadaga

When words like ‘green’, ‘sustainable’ and ‘environmental friendly’ are thrown around like confetti, one cannot help explore just what these terminologies really are. What exactly is Green? How do you define or determine it? This takes me back to a recent conversation.

“I do not remember the first time I was introduced to the concept of environment”, stated Devi, a resident of a village near Bengaluru. A self-taught vernacular ‘architect’ so to speak, she researches on climate contextual architecture and constructs homes adhering to those philosophies. We are here to learn, grow and give back to mother earth, she added.

Devi’s story is not unique. It stems from an objective where the earth is respected. There is no particular need to justify it as a choice or a way of life. This in totality is how anybody who has experienced the beauty of earth and related architecture to it can venture to describe. You might come across fancy labels and comparisons, but in reality none of these can do justice to the idea of experiencing the benevolence of earth architecture in person.

For technical thinkers, it is about reduced carbon footprint, for emotional feelers it is about the vibes it gives. Each of us takes something back from this kind of dwelling because of what it symbolizes.

So what is this benevolence all about? Three quintessential ideas come up.

### THE SPIRIT OF GIVING:

When in architecture school, we are constantly taught about efficiency of materials, their core qualities, what they represent. But questions we do not ask are; how much is this taking from the environment, from future generations and from the source whose roots we are busy cutting out.

Here is where the benevolence of earth architecture truly stands out. It resonates so well with what nature is all about- the spirit of giving;

where it continues to give without filling the taker with the guilt of taking. Consider this- the energy required for the production of one bag of cement is equal to that required to drive a small car over a distance of 550km. And how many bags of cement go into the making of one cement wall? Compare and contrast this to a mud wall, and the ensuing calculations of carbon saved will make you smile.

### THE IDEA OF RETURNING

In a world where the shelf life of buildings is less than that of our own, returning is a problem. The cement bags we spoke about, nobody can use them after breaking down that cement wall, rendering them useless forever. This doesn’t augur well for the giver or taker, explaining why all the debris land up in landfills. When the question of returning comes, less than 15 per cent of vernacular construction is non-reusable, or put reversely, more than 85 per cent of vernacular construction is in compliance with the idea of returning to where elements came from: the earth.

### THE ESSENCE OF HUMANITY

From moving skins to conditioned air flow, modern technology has it all figured or so it claims. But can it vouch for the idea of letting the building breathe? Can it substantiate the idea that architecture is as much about the dwelling as it is about the dweller? Where it falls flat, buildings of a bygone era speak of traditional construction methodologies that are by nature so climate sensitive that it puzzles conventional wisdom. With an understanding of traditional climate changing patterns and sun movement pathways, our traditional architecture established passive heating and cooling techniques that allowed the idea of letting the elements in, treating the built form with as much respect as the builder himself.

This in short is more than a style of construction, as we know it. It is an understanding and establishment of a system; a system that speaks of an idea, a spirit, and an action: encompassing the spirit of humanity.



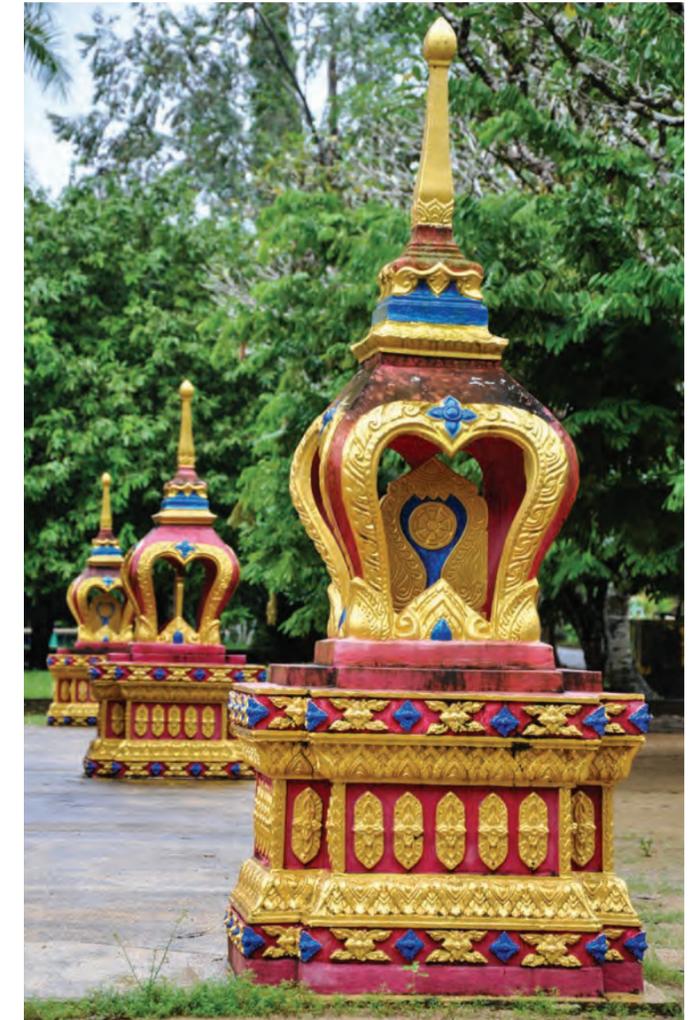
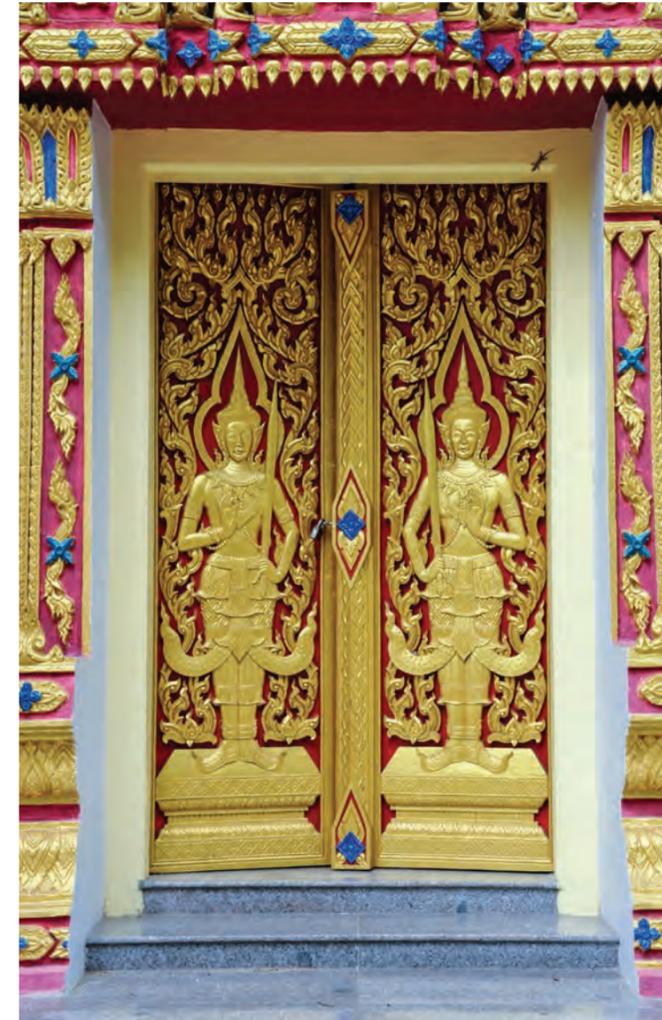
# MAJESTIC GRANDEUR OF **OLD PHUKET**

Phuket has its own fascinating history and a visit to the spectacular old temples here can leave one speechless, the majestic grandeur of the structures and art forms astounding, making an indelible mark. Phuket has 29 Buddhist temples spread across the island.

**Interior Designer Mahesh Chadaga**

journeys through these great Buddhist and Chinese shrines, capturing their captivating beauty and art through his discerning lenses.

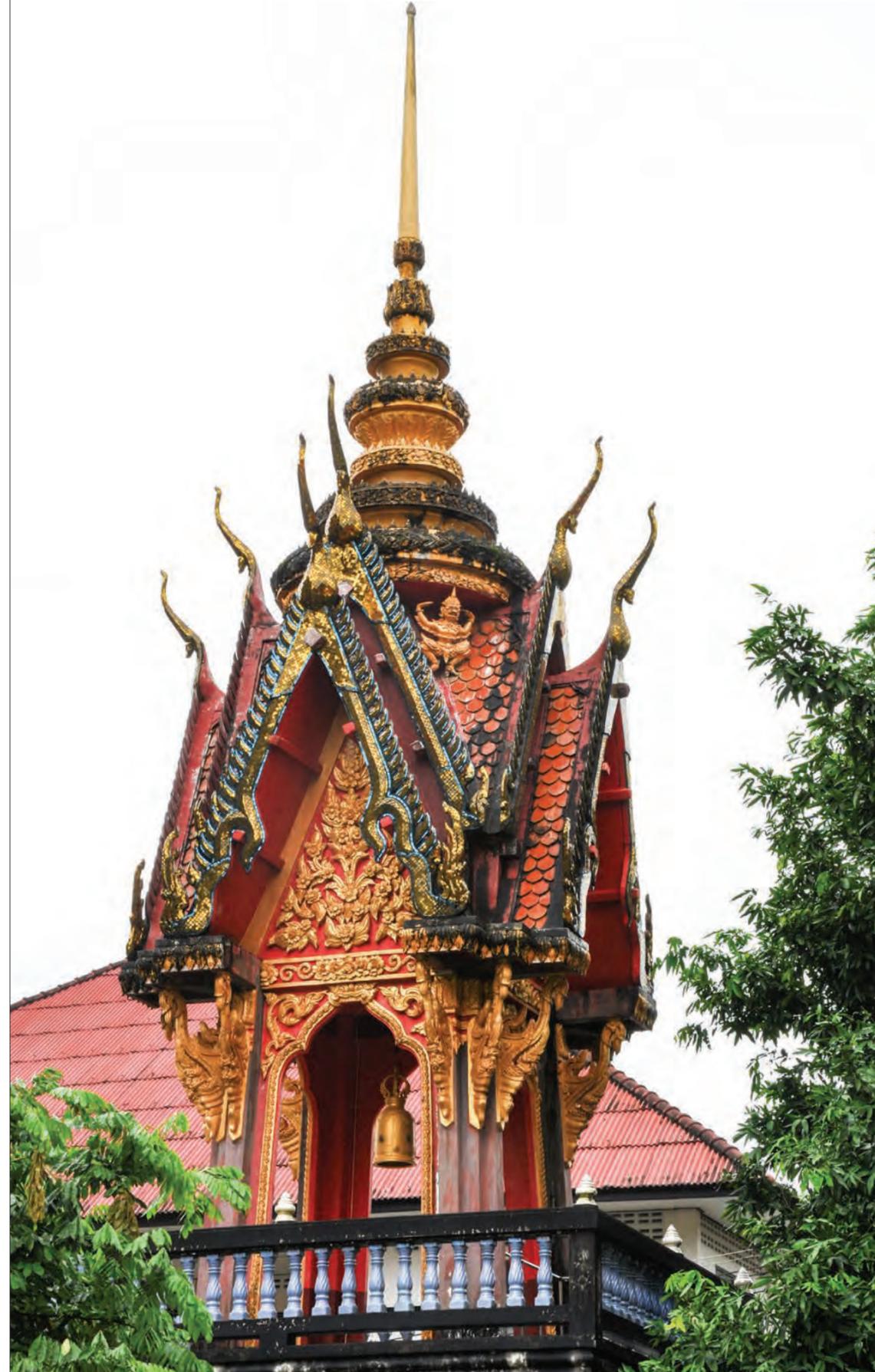




Wat Phra Thong is a famous temple in Phuket, housing a half-buried golden Buddha statue known as Luang Poh Phra in its premises. It is believed to be one of the oldest temples in the island. The Wat Chalong temple is another very old temple in Phuket, being over a century old. Wats are amongst the most important symbols in Thailand, with majority of Thais being Buddhist. The Grand Pagoda that dominates the temple is said to contain a splinter of Lord Buddha's bone. Wall paintings decorate the pagoda, speaking about the life and time of Lord Buddha.



The Chinese shrines, Taoist temples are equally striking and important, especially in Phuket given the large Chinese community residing there. There are as many Chinese shrines as Wats in Phuket, breath-taking in their colourful grandeur and artistic splendour for the tourists, while serving as a divine abode for the locals.



## HAPPENINGS IN BRC

### JANUARY TO AUGUST 2017



#### PRESENTATION: DESIGNING WITH WASTE

Are cities sustainable? Is the direction we are building correct? Do you know that 30 to 40 per cent of waste reaching landfills comes from construction debris and construction accounts for 40 per cent of total global use of raw materials? These and many other concerns were raised by Architect Dr Singh Intrachooto, Head of creative centre for Eco-design, Founder of Scrap Lab, in an enthralling presentation to the members of IIID BRC.

During the presentation, Intrachooto expounded various options and manner in which waste can be effectively salvaged and reused in the building industry. Intrachooto and his team have been instrumental in converting industrial and construction waste into designer materials that have also been used in his projects, adding beauty and novelty while retaining the functionality of the spaces. Be it stone scrap, broken or discarded glass, aluminium scrap, ceramic pieces, plywood scrap, textile remnants, agro waste, Intrachooto and his team have converted them into products that can be reused in construction.



#### PRESENTATION: A CREATIVE INSPIRATION

It was a star studded event at St Celestine, attended by stars like Sanjana from the Kannada film industry. The occasion hosted an intimate fete a tree with Architect Arun Balan from Balan & Nambisan Architects (BNA), with Balan sharing his design philosophy through a slideshow with IIID BRC members.

Balan's love for design in all forms finds its match in his passion for travel. Show him a museum of modern art or a building that towers over its context in poetic elegance and you will find him in divine documentary behind a camera lens.



#### ACADEMIA: AN INSPIRING WORKSHOP

An inspiring workshop was held in BMS College of Architecture by IIID BRC in collaboration with CUSP-India, a Centre based in Jaipur for Studying, Identifying, Conceiving & Promoting Best Design Practices. The workshop was conducted by Prof. Sanjeev Vidyarthi from University of Illinois, Chicago and others associated with CUSP.

## NEW COMMITTEE TAKES OVER...

The month of August saw the beginning of a new term for IIID BRC, with Architect Shyamala Prabhu taking over the reins from Architect Gayathri Shetty as Chairperson. Architect Gunjan Das took charge as Treasurer, IIID BRC.



### GAYATHRI SHETTY

IPC > EDUCATION

Gayathri's Dynamic and positive approach is something which we have experienced in the last term. Her energy is contagious. We are proud that she is part of NEC and look forward to working closely with HO.



### RAVINDRA KUMAR

HON. SECRETARY > ADMINISTRATION

Ravee is very accomplished in the profession with a variety of projects under his belt. He is very knowledgeable and resourceful. His passion for architecture and music is the guiding force behind all his accomplishments. He very enthusiastically lends all of these to the activities of our team.



### ANSHUL CHODHA

MEDIA

Anshul, our very own rockstar, exudes life and fun into the team. He is an accomplished professional at a very young age and is capable of taking on a lot of responsibilities. His out of the box approach and problem solving capabilities make him a real asset to our committee.



### VINAY AGARWAL

MEMBERSHIP

Vinay has a very youthful enthusiasm which seeps into everyone who is around him. He is very humble and respectful and ready to take on any challenge thrown at him. He approaches every job with sincerity and gives it his all.



### SHYAMALA PRABHU

C M > CURRENT AFFAIRS

Shyamala shows dedication in whatever she takes up. Her long tenure with IIID has honed up her leadership skills. Her eye for detail and patience while dealing with people will benefit the team at large.



### KAVITA SASTRY

JOINT SECRETARY > CODE

Kavita is passion driven in all her projects. Community design projects are very close to her heart and she takes the responsibility to see them through from inception to completion. She is very good at organising events and gets into every detail. A great asset, she gives all her time and effort in whatever she undertakes.



### ASHWIN RAMAN

EDUCATION

Ashwin, our power bank, permeates energy into the whole group. He is very dependable, a great moderator and is very good with media and communication. His team spirit and youthfulness has added a very fresh vibe to the working of the committee.



### N RAJEEV

ADVISOR

Rajeev's sense of humour is infectious but behind all the laughs and light hearted banter lies a very Solid guy. His support for BRC is always appreciated.



### DINESH VERMA

C E > TAKING DESIGN TO THE MASSES

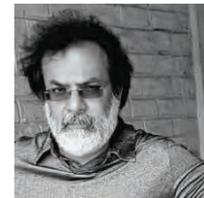
Dinesh, figuratively and literally is our tallest member, his stature in the fraternity brings in contacts and his experience brings in the wisdom. Just as he did with Antarya, we know he will put in all his efforts to take BRC to another level.



### GUNJAN DAS

HON. TREASURER > SWAP

Gunjan is very dedicated and thorough in all that she pursues in life. She is very organised and meticulous in her work. Community work interests her a lot and she dedicates time to her projects. She always completes what she takes on and has shown good leadership skills.



### P V VIJAYKUMAR

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Vijay is a real hero and a thorough entertainer. His creativity spills into every aspect of his life, he is excellent in sketching and has a very good understanding of the profession. He is a great asset and injects a lot of energy to the team.



### LEENA KUMAR

ADVISOR

Leena comes with a lot of experience both as Chairperson IIID and Chairperson IIA. Very calm and with tremendous good will in the fraternity, her advice is always welcome.



### M NIRAJ BORIKAR

VICE CHAIRMAN > ARREARS

Niraj Borikar has been associated with FunderMax India from past 4+ years and held different senior executive roles in Sales and Marketing. He would bring all the experience on board as a representative of corporate/trade community. He is extremely dependable and has some innovative ideas to share with the team.



### MAHESH CHADAGA

DOCUMENTATION

Mahesh's contribution to Antarya is well known. His passion for photography will be of immense value to the team in documentation of all our future endeavours.

FELICITATION: ANCHOR AWARDS

The IIID BRC member winners of the IIID-Anchor Awards, 2016, were felicitated in a charming function held at ARKETIPO, sponsored by Living Art Interiors that also saw the renowned architect Prof Jaisim Krishna Rao, releasing his book. It was an evening of fun, celebration and acknowledgement of the spectacular work of the winners as well as a salute to the incredible work done by Architect Jaisim over the last five decades.



designer Gabriele Centazzo



# Master of Class

# Master of Class

Beatrice Venezi, Conductor, and the Genius Loci kitchen.

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