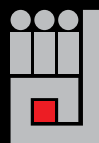


antarya



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DESIGNERS

Bangalore Regional Chapter

GLASS YOUR SPACE

SPECIAL FEATURE
GLASSY SOLUTIONS WITH SAINT-GOBAIN

MASTER STROKES
VIRENDRA KUMAR GIRDHAR

CONVERSATIONS
PROF. ANGELA LM ALESSI & PREM CHANDAVARKAR



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Dear IIID Bangalore members,

Wishing you a happy and meaningful 2014!!!

IIID Bangalore chapter gears up with new ideas with the onset of the New Year and rejuvenates the team with enthusiasm. Working as a team, sharing, being transparent are the key planks of our committee. Relating these key elements to glass seems appropriate. Let us go through this issue of glass with similar light and transparency seeping through.

Design excellence and endorsement of the same by IIID has become a most sought after

recognition by both architects and interior designers. We are currently in the process of finalising this list of excellence for the oncoming Anchor Awards program.

The annual issue on Anchor Awards 2012 is currently on sale. Do book your copy before we run out of stock. The forthcoming annual issue of Antarya will carry 'water as wellness' as its theme. Do share your projects for the best project feature.

Look forward to having a meaningful fellowship with you in the coming months.

BINDI SAOLAPURKAR

Chairperson IIID BRC, 2012 – 14
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ISSUE 04 SEP-OCT 2013



REVIEWS...

"I read through the edition of 'Antarya' you gave me and found everything about it of a national level journal. Great topics, wonderful images, excellent layouts and high quality paper."

Architect Christopher Charles Benninger

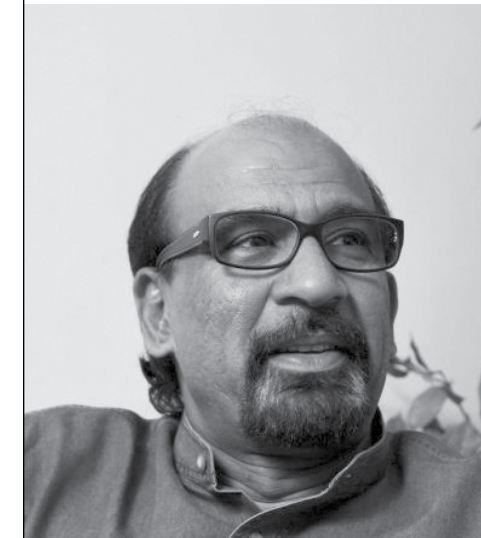
"Congratulations on this excellent magazine. The quality is superb and the content quite informative. Best wishes."

Architect Prof. Jaffer A A Khan

"Good initiative by IIID Karnataka. Well produced. Good to know the works and views of fellow professionals."

Architect Shashi Bhooshan

EDITOR'S NOTE



Year 2013 has been great for Antarya, enabling it to take the new avatar of a magazine from its earlier version of newsletter. Not surprisingly, this new form has been welcomed widely, winning accolades from architects and interior designers across the country.

We continue on our journey to enter into year 2014 with great expectations of bringing across many more interesting features, exploring a greater expanse of subjects, covering more interviews and works of designers. We continuously look towards

expanding our coverage on matters relating to design and invite greater participation in this endeavour from our designer community.

The current issue focusing on Glass as the theme deals with different manifestations of glass in interiors, its multiple properties and decorative elements widely discussed and analysed, with features of projects using it extensively in their interiors.

We are now working on our forthcoming annual issue which is slated for release in April. Fashioned as a coffee table book, the annual issue will be of a larger volume, incorporating a new set of features on a wide range of topics. This issue which will be a collector's edition will have as its theme "Wellness in Design".

We look forward to your continued suggestions, support and participation. Do mail your comments, suggestions to:

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PRINT
Gaptech Press, Bangalore
www.daxgap.com | girish@daxgap.com

PUBLISHED BY
IIID BANGALORE REGIONAL CHAPTER
'Shree', No. 1765, 7th Cross, 18th Main
2nd Phase, JP Nagar, Bangalore 560078
Tel: +91 80 26494159

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Cover Photograph: **Maresh Chadaga**
Imaginative use of glass in the interiors by Architect Leena Kumar

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GLASS YOUR SPACE

Ancient buildings hold a fascination not just for their grand architectural splendour and arresting frescoes; their interiors also house a stunning element called glass that manifest in exquisite varieties as stained glass in windows, doors, and vents in the structure, as exotic chandeliers lighting up the expansive interiors. Glass was equally omnipresent in these spectacular buildings as were sculptures and colourful murals.



Cut to the present and glass continues with its ubiquitous presence not just as decorative elements but as structural features with engineering coming into play to offer toughened and laminated glass to be used in the exterior walls and elevations. With glass processing factories emerging on a significant scale, glass as a structural element has in many ways altered the manner of construction and the façade of a building, with plenty of steel and glass featuring, giving architecture a new dimension in design.

Glass features not only as exterior walls, but as ceilings, floors in interiors, as cantilevered roofs over valleys offering a breath taking view of the same, as glass floors over exotic marine life. The laminated options that are available aplenty, not only provide the safety aspect of preventing the crumbling of the shards of glass but offer interesting features such as kitchen splash backs, bathroom wall cladding, cupboard doors, with the easy to maintain character serving to be a huge attraction.

Glass as a decorative element has likewise seen a sea change in its physical form, with mindboggling varieties of design and forms ornamenting the interiors, each tweaked to address creativity at its peak. Thus, glass today has taken the form of art, the designs and physical representations depicting the extraordinary, with technology aiding the most astonishing creations.

While technology has offered a tangible form to literally unthinkable designs in glass, there however still lies a small section of these varieties where technology has failed to make a dent. Stained glass is one such element. And so is blow glass where the procedure and artistic depictions in the ancient days passed on from one generation to the other continuing to hold its niche in the handmade glass segment.



HANDS STILL RULE

The manner in which stained glass is structured by hand is interesting, the laborious process failing to be replaced by any modern technology. The handmade stained glass still reigns supreme over mass produced reproductions, the end result unmatched by technology. Handmade stained glass goes through an elaborate process of joining pieces of coloured glass together with a copper tape glued to the edges. The pieces are arranged over the diagram of the desired design and the copper tapes soldered together. The technology driven spray coloured glass, stickers and such others however has failed to capture the beauty and authenticity of this tedious process of genuine stained glass.



BLOWING FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

The blow glass technique, like stained glass, has been perfected over centuries, with the method passed from one generation to another, creating totally unique individual pieces that cannot be replicated. Given that they are handmade like stained glass, each piece of glass holds that individuality in terms of design as well as manner of making that cannot be replicated. Originating in Italy and Germany, this technique has now taken an art form, expressing as exotic pieces of glass where each not only speak of mindboggling creativity but pack in a unique story.

glass today has taken the form of art,
the designs and physical
representations depicting the
extraordinary, with technology aiding
the most astonishing creations.

SCULPTURES AND FUSION

Glass sculptures and artefacts find their way into interiors extensively, vying for attention with their sister manifestations of exotic demarcating glass partitions, exquisite back lit glass panels, textured and embossed varieties. Fusion of the most unlikely materials like metal, leaves, feathers to name a few, has become extremely popular, with these materials deftly fused into the glass to become unusual fossils embedded within. Moulding and casting of glass to create striking pieces of art is another popular use of glass as a decorative element in interiors. Exquisite creations of glass serve as arresting coffee tables, lamps, planter holders, fruit bowls, and murals, simulate a waterfall, serve as stunning demarcating structures, each displaying character and design that is totally unique as well as unbelievable in their realistic depiction.



FIRE AND SOLAR SOLUTIONS

An oft levelled complaint against the extensive use of glass in the exteriors is the entailing heat ingress, increasing the quantum of energy required for cooling. This complaint has been actively addressed and circumvented by the new varieties of glass whose surface is treated to control UV radiation and heat transfer. The result is a win-win for all, the glass serving as an expansive source of natural light as well as extending the interiors into the outdoors, lending a large visual expanse of space. The heat ingress is successfully controlled, resulting in energy savings, both in terms of lighting as well as lower levels of cooling. Fire hazards being high on the concern list given the properties of glass, the latest introductions by leading glass manufacturers have been toughened to be fire resistant for a couple of hours, assuring of fire safety standards.



DYNAMIC DIMENSION

Glass is no more a static element in a décor, its character tweaked and its physical presence correlated with the sun movement to create changing dimensions in space based on the time of the day. Glass designers and artists are playing with the textures and chemical compositions of glass used on the exterior walls, windows and doors which enable sunlight to pass through, creating different patterns of light and shadows in the interior based on the movement of the sun through the day. The result is a dynamic interior that alters over the course of the day giving differential effects.





GLAMOUR IT WITH GLASS

Transforming spaces by using glass, giving the interiors not only a feel of seamless expanse and a delicate appeal but also a sense of glamour; this in essence speaks of the spectacular interiors designed by Architect **B K Ganesh Kumar of Studio69**. His expansive spaces use glass in the most innovative way to define as well as lend a difference in visual appeal.



Left: The glass windows open the interior space to the green patch and small patio outside while offering a sunlit nook to relax and unwind. The gorgeous glass drop lights lend glamour to the space, complementing the interestingly designed seating and the glass topped marble filigree work table.



Top: The black marble ensconced glass shutters of the storage area appear to be floating in thin air. The mirrors connecting the shutters serve as a clever design element to achieve this floating feel, turning them into arresting pieces of display.



Top: This sun room is literally structured in glass, be it the large glass windows opening on to the terrace garden or the glass floor, the glass skylight letting in streaming sunlight during midday. While a significant portion of the floor uses frosted glass, a small vent is fitted with clear glass to offer a view of two levels below. The expansive play of glass gives a delicate appeal to the space while merging the outdoors seamlessly with the indoors.



Left: The façade displays a clever use of glass, its expansive use cutting down visually on the vertical extension. The glass manifesting as the compound wall, cantilevered roof, as railings in the balconies and staircase, not to mention the large windows, lends lightness to the structure while adding glamour to the elevation.



SOPHISTICATION WITH GLASS

Interior Designer **Richa Singh of Kuvio Studio** has used glass tastefully in décor, not only to capitalise on its easy maintenance feature but also to lend class and sophistication to the interiors. Her use of glass manifests in hitherto less experienced spaces, bringing in the element of innovation, showcasing their chic presence in not so oft used areas.



Top: The backlit 12mm frosted toughened glass floor gives the feel of a floating bed while the flowing wall paper backdrop accentuates this floating feel besides acting as a vibrant contrast to the plain glass. The backlit lighting further enhances the presence of the glass floor while complementing the low slung bed with its tall vertical wooden posters.



Left: The kitchen breaks away from the traditional tiles, the lacquered glass splash back with the captivating images proving to be arresting as well as exotic yet light on the eye. The easy to clean glass splash back removes the heaviness in the décor even while sporting large cheerful images. The presence of the white open shelves further complements the neat white glass splash back.

Right: The lacquered glass cupboards display the possibilities of replacing heavy wood without explicitly appearing as plain fragile glass with textures. The colours tuned to match with the floor along with their opaque state and cheerful motifs, bring in character to the space just as wood does sans the heavy feel.





ARTISTIC WITH GLASS

Architect **Leena Kumar of Kumar Consultants** infuses art into the décor through use of glass. While her versatile use of glass breaks down the heaviness of stone and wood in the décor, the artistic representation of glass in the form of etchings, bevelling, grooving, stained glass as well glass sculptures lends depth, character and uniqueness, transforming the space into something that is totally classic and enduring.



Right and bottom: The glass railings in the staircase ensconced in wood display intricate detailing in the form of V-grooving that adds depth and design while breaking the heaviness of the large staircase. The exquisite glass chandelier and the accompanying stained glass skylight bring drama into the space, enhanced by the play of light in the décor.



Top: The enchanting glass sculpture serves as a stunning *jaali* that acts as a demarcating element between two functional spaces of the interior. The entrancing glass screen offers privacy to a segment of the interior without totally shutting out the section.

Right: The arched French windows house a delicate set of white stained glass that incorporates fine bevelling. The presence of glass cuts the heaviness of the arched stone entrance while infusing a sense of art into the space.



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SAINT-GOBAIN

GLASSY SOLUTIONS WITH SAINT-GOBAIN

While the prevalence of glass be it in interiors or exteriors, can prove to be in stunning multiple forms, it is also serving as a material used to offer better living and working solutions such as heat control and optimum light while ensuring aesthetics is not sacrificed. Offering such multiple solutions in glass use in buildings is **Saint-Gobain** with its eclectic range of innovative products that feature in interiors and exteriors of a structure.



Even the most imposing interior or a façade of a building can reflect freshness, modernity and charm when glass features extensively. This sense of modernity combined with lightness and aesthetics manifests, with a feel of an expanse of space that covers beyond the interiors, into the outdoors when it features on the outer walls. The interiors too lend an exquisite as well as expansive feel when glass is used fairly extensively in the décor.

Interestingly, glass has moved from its old world avatar of exotic stained glass and arresting chandeliers to prevailing in magnificent as well as multiple forms as partitions, writing boards, kitchen splash backs, simulations of water, ice, serving as air vents either in the form of intricate Jaalis or as creative perforations in cabinets. Glass also serves as walls between rooms, either as a plain seamless view of spaces or even in creative representations where their presence is for the explicit purpose of making a statement.





EVOLVE WITH PLANILAQUE

A special range of lacquered and coloured glass designed to enhance the interiors, Planilaque range comes in a palette of 14 attractive colours that can be mixed and matched to align with specific interiors. Being easy to install and maintain besides being moisture resistant, easy to process, its interplay of light and colours creates an aura of sophistication.

The environment friendly Planilaque has a wide range of applications starting from wall panels, writing boards, pillars, doors, partitions to furniture, lift lobbies and other spaces. Its application as writing boards in children's room is extremely popular given the creative expression that it opens up in them.

For instance, colourful wall panels can be used to decorate living rooms, bedrooms while the writing boards serve as excellent spaces for children to express their creativity in a kid's room. The humidity resistant property permits its wide use in kitchens as splash-backs and cabinet doors and in bathrooms as wall panels.

The kitchen splash backs are especially sought after with their easy maintenance feature combined with the cheerful aura and character lent to the space. Its wide range of energetic colours like Mint Green, Solar Yellow, Oprah Red, Extra White, Ivory and Fusion Orange serves as glamour quotient for wardrobes and cabinets in dining spaces and bedrooms.

This vibrant range of colours prove to be truly energising and inviting when used in lobby areas in office spaces, pillars and partitions. The same holds true for the hospitality industry too where the colourful Planilaque lends character and cheer in hotel lobbies, table tops as well as wardrobes in the guest rooms. Entertainment areas like the bowling alley, bar, salon and spa are again spaces that turn to be refreshing with Planilaque's burst of colours.

As for commercial spaces, be it showrooms or malls, Planilaque brings them alive, aiding the brands to connect visually with the customers. Planilaque in the common areas, as well as pillars and walls not only transforms these spaces into elegant segments but also offers a sporty, trendy look that is inviting and cheerful.



SECURE IT RIGHT

Beauty and security are both sought when making a choice and Planilaque Safe provides both. Tested under extreme conditions and internationally certified, this new version of Planilaque comes with both sides laminated in elegant colours, offering cheer, character and complete safety on either side of the partition. Planilaque Safe which is popular for use in individual rooms, interior doors, sliding doors, privacy screens, furniture, can be effectively incorporated into office as well as commercial spaces, in meeting rooms, workstations, fitting rooms, changing rooms, washrooms to list a few.

Featuring in colours of black, white and flame red, Planilaque Safe also offers the property of no shattering into fragments when broken, the fine filament forming the laminate holding the broken shards of glass together. Planilaque Safe also packs in acoustic properties, making it a sought after choice in spaces where acoustics require address.



Saint-Gobain PRIVA-LITE switching from translucent in the top image to transparent in the bottom image simply by the use of electricity

DYNAMIC DEMARCATION

Glass, through its physical features, offers a demarcation without cutting down on the open communicative feel. Where privacy is needed, the same glass with appropriate laminating can provide the required cover. Saint-Gobain PRIVA-LITE is a unique solution in space management in corporate as well as commercial ventures which offers privacy, transparency as well as communication through innovative glass partitions.

PRIVA-LITE is an active glass that switches from translucent to transparent with no alteration of light transmission, simply by the use of electricity. In its translucent state, PRIVA-LITE comes with an ideal back projection screen. This dynamic back projection screen offers the choice of projecting videos and images turning the partitions into communicative features while affording privacy and confidentiality to spaces that are covered. When openness and transparency is desired, these automatically alter with the touch of a button.

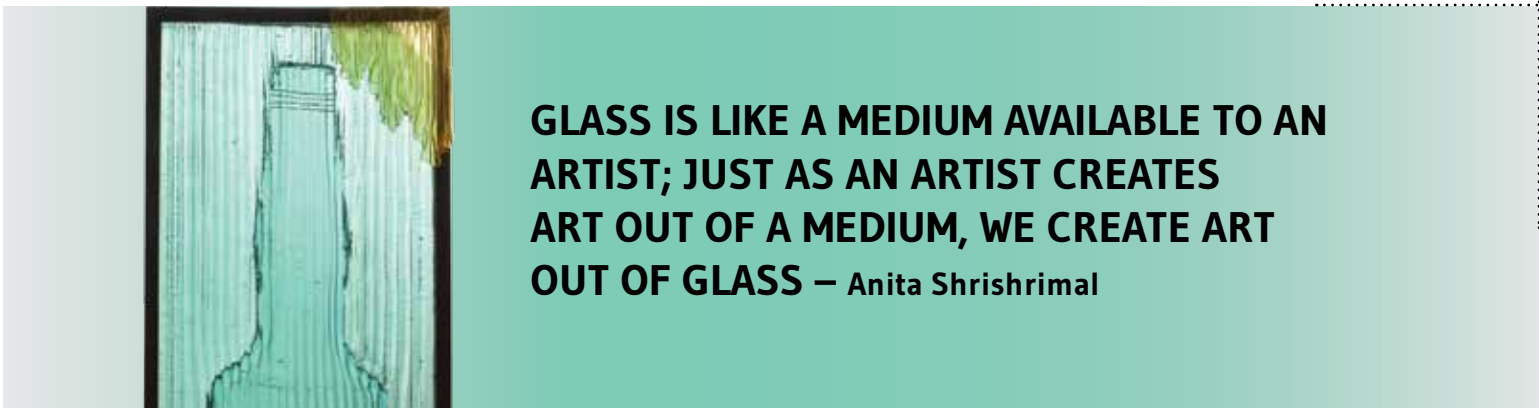
PRIVA-LITE applications are multiple and can be used not only in interior spaces as partitions but also in exteriors in the form of windows, doors, shop-front, exterior glazing, glass floors, projection screens to name a few. Its durability has been tested over years while coming with special features such as unparalleled level of transparency as well as light transmission, protection against intruder attack, low power consumption, simple commands eliciting an instant change in its state. PRIVA-LITE also comes with European production + CE certification.



GLASSIC EXOTICA

The boundaries of an exotic interior are drawn only by the extent of your creativity and imaginative ornamentation. Artistic representation in an interior is expressed in multiple ways using a varied range of designs and materials, the colours and patterns enhancing this creative statement. Be it stone, wood, clay, crystal, porcelain, glass, each material and its manner of depiction has its own individuality, transforming the interior in accordance. While materials like wood, stone have been used in plenty in an interior, glass has been viewed more as a fragile element that needs limited representation. Interestingly, this outlook is changing widely, with glass finding not only a significant presence in the décor but also manifesting in exotic designs and features that can be totally arresting.

Presenting some incredible designs and exquisite pieces of art in glass is retail firm **Glassics**, proposing a myriad ways of its use in interiors, for both functional features as well as artistic elements that can totally transform the way an interior appears.



GLASS IS LIKE A MEDIUM AVAILABLE TO AN ARTIST; JUST AS AN ARTIST CREATES ART OUT OF A MEDIUM, WE CREATE ART OUT OF GLASS – Anita Shrishrimal

PLATTER YOUR WALLS

Glassics' latest collection of wall platter proves as a stunning addition to an interior, each an exquisite creation of glass plate evolved in astonishing shapes and patterns, the blow glass method giving the colourful fusion of the platter a depth that appears almost fathomless. The free flowing shapes lend a totally different dimension to the wall when displayed in a cluster, forming a glass mural that becomes the focal point of the interior.

The light flowing through it gives a refractive effect, the coloured rays dispersing on the wall, creating an eclectic pattern and shadows. The effect of light on the colourful platter is even more intense when it is natural light, the sun's rays creating forms that alter based on the time of the day and angle of the rays.

These vibrant free flowing platters also serve as exquisite table tops and arresting planter holders. Blow glass sculptures can be equally breath-taking, becoming the highlight of an interior. They can also feature as free flowing water or melting ice, their visual form literally taking the appearance of the physical form represented.

Some of them shaped as an exotic sea shell serve as gorgeous vases to hold a bunch of fresh flowers. These spectacular free flowing blow glass forms also feature as striking lanterns, the colours fused in dispersing into the room when lit to forming a kaleidoscope of colours and patterns.



LAMINATE WITH GLASS

A laminated glass interestingly serves to be more than just an exotic piece of décor element. The thin film inside provides safety by preventing the glass debris from crumbling when a laminated piece is broken. Laminated glass besides offering striking designs and at times authentically replicating marble, granite amongst others, is easy to install and very easy to maintain. Popularly used as splash backs in kitchens, wall panelling in washrooms, demarcating elements in the shower areas, these add individuality and character to the room with their patterns and colours.

Glassics offers a range of laminates, from simple paper laminates to fabric, even feathers that are sandwiched between two layers of glasses. Given the possibility of multiple varieties of elements and designs that can be layered within two units of glass, the varieties offered are immense, each more captivating than the other.





CAST IT WITH GLASS

Casted glass lend the feel of glass bricks, their volume being sizable with a fossil of multiple elements ranging from coins, metal strips, leaves to glass noodles. Creativity reigns supreme in the manner of their casting and the elements cast into the glass brick to create that individuality. Given their three dimensional shape, these have multiple applications, starting from featuring as unusual lighting to glass walls and glass sculptures on display. Classics offers an extensive range in casted glass, be it as part of a wooden frame to serve as an arresting feature, forming charming partitions, as exotic lamp features, glass sculptures or merely as small demarcating frames.



A PERFECT FUSION

While casting offers brick like forms in glass, fusion brings out fascinating two dimensional glass forms that can feature as wall art, wall panelling, partitions, or merely as display pieces to make a statement. Fusing in various materials and colours adds to the internal dimensions while making the end result an astounding piece of art. Classics houses a spectacular range of fused glass, each unique in representation while displaying amazing creativity.



Glass Designer **Anita Shrishrimal** has been designing glass structures for her retail firm Classics for nearly two decades. In a chat with Antarya, she talks about her long journey through this delicate yet spectacular material which has seen a sea change both in use and representation.

You have been designing glass for interiors over two decades. How has its use and representation transformed during this period?

What began as a simple plain glass with colours added and patterned aesthetically has now transformed into exquisite creations that display tremendous creativity.

The journey over last two decades has been extremely interesting and rich in creativity. The simple coloured glass that underwent usage of chemicals to create textures and patterns now goes through chamfering, painting, cutting, gluing to fit into the exotica that it is expected to transform into.

To what extent has technology played in popularising glass use in interiors?

Glass is no more viewed as fragile but as tough and durable with its added quality of easy maintenance. This view is purely because of technology coming into play, transforming the usage of glass as well as its physical composition. Today glass features on floors, roofs, balcony railings, stairway steps, exterior walls, as elevation for buildings.

Currently, technology provides many options such as lacquered opaque glass in multiple colours, glass that is ceramic quoted. Technology also permits glass to be bent to accommodate different shapes, meet different dimensions, making its use versatile.

To get the best benefit out of glass as a designer, it is important to pick the right kind of glass for the specific purpose. It could be toughened, laminated or both but it needs to meet the required criteria of use.

Is there a change in perception of the usage of glass? How do you view the future of glass?

Glass is the material of the decade. It certainly has a future as designers across the world are working on creating designs, textures, lighting effects to elicit effects from completely transparent glass to totally opaque, from clear to textures. We use glass as a basic element and work our designs around it. For this, a fine sense of proportion, colour and interior blends is required. If any of these are missing, the ensuing product can turn to be a disaster. Hence it is not just technology but the blend of art and technology which is the future of glass.

ADDRESSING THE EVOLVING CHANGE

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR



Soft spoken, almost self-effacing in demeanour; playing down his substantial achievements over the last half century, preferring his structures to speak for him. Etching a special place in the architectural arena with his unique designs that have evolved with time tuned to meet the constantly changing perceptions and expectations. His designs are never replicated; for he believes the validity of a design is for a specific time, place, person. Ask him if he believes in any ISMs and his reply is yes, I believe in Non-ISM. That is Architect **Virendra Kumar Girdhar**, an architect who firmly believes in using the ever changing perceptions and requirements of the clients to evolve and reinvent his ideology.



AR Bors by the lake (top) Universal Textile Mills (bottom)

Each design flowing out of his master strokes is distinctive, incorporating changing lifestyles, sensitivities, aspirations and dreams of his clients. Each structure he has designed over the last five decades display this unique element and thought process. His latest project SJR Retreat and SJR Fiesta are examples of his interpretations of perceptions of the new generation.

Girdhar moved into the garden city in 1980 to leave his indelible stamp on the city scape through his designs over the next three decades. Prior to this he practiced in the United States where his designs won the honour award of the American Institute of Architects. His projects have been exhibited in museum of modern art New York and Whitney museum New York. He has also worked on other overseas projects, notably in Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Thailand.

Girdhar emphasises the need to reinvent design to address the dynamic changes in perceptions and lifestyles. He cites the

changing dimension of office spaces in the current work scenario to stress his point. "Offices no more appear as structured wall spaces but as larger flexible well lit and wired areas", he says.

"Similar transformation can be seen in residences where walls have disappeared between dining, living and kitchen spaces as also between bathroom and bedroom. Future apartments are likely to be merely a flexible space with the power and water points, the space free flowing to accommodate ever changing individual inclinations of demarcations", he adds.

Talking about his five decade experience in designing and dealing with client requirements, Girdhar contends that the most difficult aspect in architecture is educating the client. "Finally your design can be only as creative as the acceptance level of the client", he says adding that some of the traditional modes of design and construction methodologies were not only very creative



Padodes' residence

but also ingeniously addressed local climatic conditions and sustainability.

To elaborate his point, he draws attention to the mode of construction used in a potter's hut in the deserts of Rajasthan. "Here the potter's hut used a row of clay pots to erect the walls where the pots opened inside. These clay pots were used alternatively to store grain and water where the grains served as insulation against heat while the water provided cooling through evaporation." The result, this imaginative design brought down inside temperature in these huts to 25 degree Celsius while the outside temperature raged at 43.

Cooling by evaporation is also achieved through courtyards, central or otherwise in traditional Indian Architecture. This principle has been used by Girdhar in residential and institutional architecture.

His philosophy of designs does not confine to just being sensitive to traditional sensibilities and unconventional modes of addressing



Padodes' residence pool view

environmental conditions. Social aspects too wield a significant influence as can be seen in his design of the Minnesota prison where he interacted with all concerned before starting the design process. Inputs of all potential users starting from prisoners, arresting officers, jailors, judges, social workers were taken and used as basis for the design.

The result was a spectacular structure built into a cliff with a view of the Mississippi river from every room with a tunnel connecting the prison to the Court House. Not surprisingly the project won Honour award of the American Institute of Architects. "This project was one where I could exercise my creativity fully, unhindered", adds Girdhar with a smile. In his project Brigade MM where he was faced with the challenge of camouflaging the ugly aesthetics of an existing industrial area, he came up with a design that served as a wall that not only covered this space but also served as a catalyst for development of a once neglected locality.

When faced with the demands of a corporate space from the aeronautical office Aeronautical Development Agency where the requirement was rows of rooms and cabins with a corridor running in between, Girdhar again rose to the challenge in his inimitable style.

Thus emerged a circular structure with a charming inner courtyard, the ground floor reserved for conference rooms while the upper floors offered the desired set of rooms with a corridor in between. "The circular structure took away the monotonous heavy feel that the visual effect of rows of endless rooms and a long linear corridor in between has", says Girdhar.

Not only are his designs conceived to address challenges of client perceptions, his structures also incorporate unique shapes that not only appear aesthetically arresting but also address environmental considerations in an equally unique manner. His Universal Textile Mills is one such project where the arresting kite shaped roof is used to direct rainwater collected over 45000 Sq ft of roof area towards an artificial lake, specifically designed to recharge aquifers and rejuvenate dry bore wells.



Aeronautical Development Authority



Jail- St. Paul Minnesota



Residence Girdhar



SJR Fiesta



SJR Retreat



Universal Textile Mills

While his various villa projects are specifically oriented to step away from the busy streets and instead view the serene backyards, the challenge of building residences in narrow elongated sites have been dealt with equal aplomb, laying his distinctive stamp on the design. Thus, his own house which needed to be designed on a long thin strip of land was done with effortless ease, the challenges countered by incorporating a sunlit courtyard, split level spaces and principle of cooling by evaporation.

Given the varied approach of his designs in each project, it is certainly not surprising that there is no specific style or similarity reflected between each. Each stands as a unique representation of his creative genius.



KARAN SHETTY

He is all of 25 years. What marks him in a class apart is his unquenchable enthusiasm not just to deliver the best and the most innovative but also to be present on the scene even before he is expected. Meet Architect Karan Shetty from the prestigious institute RV College of Engineering who chose to branch off on his own to lay his stamp in the design world after interning for just a year in Thomas Associates.

Over the last two years since he started his own practice, Third Eye Design Studio, Karan has under his creative belt, over 20 projects, some of which have already left their indelible mark in the design industry. His projects include corporate, hotel and hospital interiors, apartment complexes and residences. He is currently involved in executing the design of one of the tallest residential apartments in the city and incidentally also happens to be the youngest skyscraper architect in the city.

Interestingly, his design ideology that is chiefly contemporary inclined, focuses on cutting down on curves to ensure interior spaces are more effective. “The curves manifest more on the elevation as the accent in the interiors is on functionally and efficient usage of space without sacrificing aesthetics”, he avers.

His 27 floor residential project R J Lake Gardenia features a pool in the sky with an expansive five storey height clearing to give it a dramatic feel. “This pool is exclusively for the use of villas which again feature in the sky”, says Karan with a smile. Each of the villas come with a large individual terrace garden that affords all the privacy of a ground floor bungalow.

Interestingly, focus though he has on ensuring efficiency of internal spaces with the functionality and convenience effectively addressed, Karan has also managed to weave in Vaastu into the individual units without sacrificing his philosophy. Arresting dimensions also feature in the structure in the form of vents and punctures in the façade where these bring in structural stability by letting wind pass through.

Incidentally, the apartment complex with its exotic club house, complete with a charming pool and jogging track at ground level foyer, has also bagged a Gold LEED rating for its green compliance.

His project, Tally Solutions, involving corporate interiors, served to transform stunningly the prevailing internal work atmosphere. “The space offered was too closed and compartmentalised with very limited play of natural light. This was clashing with the philosophy of the corporate house on openness and free interaction”, says Karan.

And change this ambience he certainly did, by opening up spaces, bringing in the play of glass to offer privacy yet retain the open interactive visual feel. Abundant natural light was brought in by transforming a service area into an interactive amphitheatre which could also be used by staff as a quiet nook to do serious work.

The Dr. Shetty Skin Clinic is yet another project which addressed functionality and aesthetics while altering yet another closed space into a charming yet utilitarian design. Designed as a peel of skin to mark the theme of the clinic, Karan introduced segregated spaces that ensured confidentiality during consultation yet offered a spa feel to the ambience where the spaces did not appear as confined boxes.

A circular space with multiple treatment pods was created with individual private zones. The handicap of not too high a ceiling was addressed and circumvented by opening up the vertical space to include the air conditioned ducts. To add interest as well



Narayana Hrudayalaya Mother and Child

as take the eye away from the utility aspect of the omnipresent large ducts, these were painted an interesting green to appear as a novel part of the décor.

His project Narayana Hrudayalaya Corporate Office had long corridors without light which needed to be altered. Karan addressed this drawback by opening up spaces and creating punctures in gypsum board partitions that brought in light yet provided the much needed privacy. The interiors were also painted white to reflect light.

Cost being a factor in the project, he was faced with the challenge of reducing the air-conditioning as well as artificial lighting. This was achieved by creating a tunnel from East to West that brought in natural light as well as ventilation. Further, interest to an otherwise mundane medical arena was created by opting for a large graphic that spanned an entire wall, depicting heart beats, in tune with the speciality of the hospital.

His Mother and Child Speciality Hospital project likewise created in its decor the aura of a new born, bringing in the mystic, beauty and positivity associated with birth.



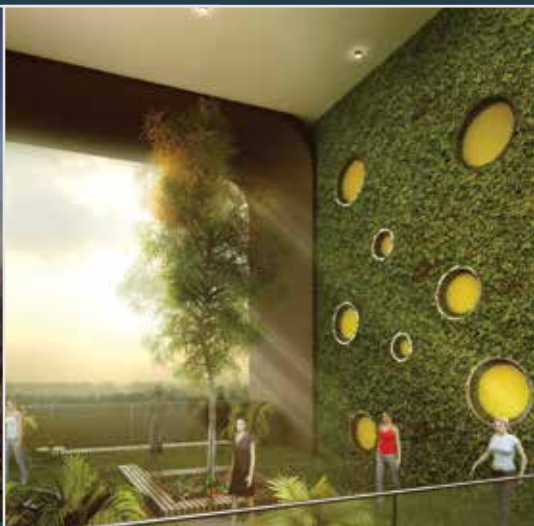
Dr. Shetty's Clinic



Narayana Hrudayalaya Mother and Child



RJ Lake Gardenia



RJ Lake Gardenia



Narayana Hrudayalaya Corporate Office



Narayana Hrudayalaya Corporate Office



Tally Office



Tally Office



DESIGNING BEYOND THE CONVENTIONAL

WEBE DESIGN LAB

It is a group of 8, a large number certainly but what sets them apart is their decision to branch out together into the field of design soon after passing out of School of Architecture and Planning in the city of Chennai. Thus was born their design firm Webe Design Lab in year 2008 and since then the team has taken on close to 50 projects, most of which are residential while retail and hospitality too have been addressed.

The team is also the recipient of awards, notable amongst them being IDF awards 2013, for landscape category and A+D architecture Cera award 2013, a commendation for Innovative interior design. Interestingly, the team believes in focusing on an 'Idea centric approach' that is supported by a strong research and collaborative practice, which will result in a unique solution to meet individual requirements.

Given the large size of the team, there is a strong likelihood of clash of opinions with individual members being denied the satisfaction of having their design thoughts being implemented in totality. The team has cleverly circumvented such a situation by ensuring that each project is handled by a team of two members. “This way we have the liberty to express our creativity and hand-hold the project to completion”, says Architect Malli Saravanan.

Interestingly the designs of the team do not conform to any specific style or inclination. “The site, surrounding context, the inspiration derived at that point of time are elements that dictate the design, besides addressing the clients requirements”, says Architect Madhumitha, one of the eight members of the team.

Thus the award winning D Stijl Garden aligns deftly the functional spaces of the residence with the landscape where there is a play of both natural and architectural elements with the specific usages of the spaces. The circulation path leads to charming water bodies with the flora specifically selected to offer privacy. Lily ponds adjoin jogging tracks, again combining charm with functionality

while rugged exposed concrete walls lend a rustic theme to the space. While porous shell walls provide privacy, there is an interesting play of light and shadows through the presence of pergolas.

The weekend home designed as the Wood House, yet another award winning project, showcases a totally different element of design. Rough wooden logs and stones sourced from the site feature aplenty in the residence. To impart a woody feel to the interior, the logs have been sliced and nailed on to the walls. To further enhance the natural feel of the décor, the interiors have been skilfully blended with the landscape.

Incidentally the presence of logs is extended to outdoors too while the blue oxide and graphics on walls bring in character to the space. The presence of jaali work over the lighting gives two different effects based on whether it is day or night by creating patterns.

The Anora Beach Resort is a totally climate and activity driven design with the individual rooms placed in a semi-circular pattern facing the event space. A charming water body prevails around the events arena, offering every room a view of the same. The visual as well as the physical feel of water body for the rooms gives the illusion of a beach, especially with the floor slab designed on the basis of a catamaran.

The Colours International School likewise is designed from the angle of a child's perception as well as usage of the spaces. Thus, free flowing spaces, abundant natural light and ventilation with a picturesque central courtyard complete with Jaalis to provide the shade



D Stijl

prevail. The varied levels make the activity spaces easily accessible, while the Jaalis, façade projections and landscape keep the interiors cool. Plenty of colours come into play in the façade of the building while each classroom comes with a green space.

“The idea was to ensure that the façade of the building ties in effectively with the theme as well as the name of the school”, says Architect Sangeetha Patrick. While landscape prevails at the different levels offering also the potential for an outdoor classroom, there is also visual connectivity between the levels.

The Vaastu Series uses the science of Vaastu effectively in the design without sacrificing aesthetics, convenience and functionality. One of the residences designed under this series has private spaces manifesting on the edges with a courtyard featuring in between. Essentially it is an introverted design with all the spaces looking inwards. In contrast, a farmhouse falling into this design category has each of the private spaces overlooking a lush green landscape, with one of them even having a picturesque hill view.

In yet another which is located in a hot place near Salem in Tamil Nadu, the design veers away from the traditional, boasting of steel clad shera boards. While a cantilevered roof brings in a different dimension to the structure, the Vaastu features are used effectively to let in chilled breeze in abundance into the interiors to cut down on the heat.

D Stijl



Wood House

Wood House



Vastu Series House

Anora Deck View



Colours International School

Sustainability is common sense

In conversation with

Prof. Angela Lm Alessi

Architect Prof. Angela Lm Alessi, Environmental Design Consultant, Ecosustainable Group talks at length to Antarya on matters of sustainability and ways of measuring it. Insisting that affordability is a chief criteria to be used to judge sustainability of a development, she suggests taking a peek into traditional modes of design and construction where some of these could be tapped and tweaked to address evolving criteria, translating into sustainable structures.



What is your perception of sustainable architecture and how has this evolved over the years?

Sustainability should first be affordable. Luxury apartments with bioclimatic technologies would not amount to sustainability even though it would earn them a green tag. Sustainability goes beyond bioclimatic design like putting a solar panel on top of the roof. It embraces parameters such as ethical, economic, political, social and cultural and to understand this, there needs to be a massive re-education of both the professionals and the general public through universities and research centres. While a sustainable building should have eco-friendly features that address energy, water and waste, the design should not only be affordable and adaptable for majority of people but also should contribute to a sustainable economy.

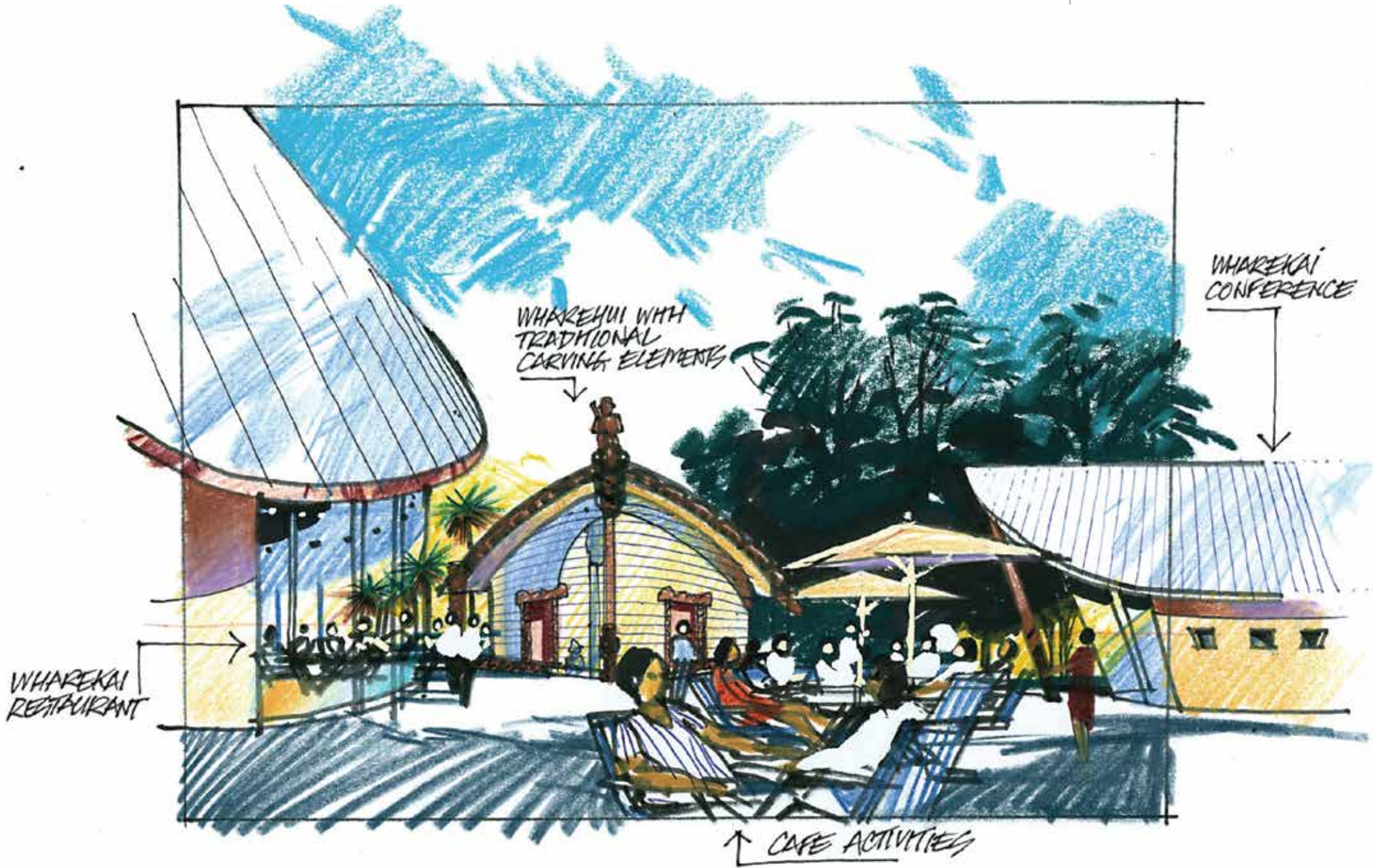
The perception of sustainability has changed over the years. Earlier, sustainability was only associated to recycling, that is no more the case now. There is however a return or profit angle that does need address while speaking of sustainability, a triple bottom line that relates to social, environmental and financial aspects.

What principles and criteria would you assign to gauge sustainability?

Any country that has a deep history should relate to it, study the context and design a structure that is not too much in contrast to this old tradition which was referred as 'ecological architecture'. A healthier environment using materials that are not toxic should be created. Not only the buildings should be sustainable but also social aspects like the travel distance of the development should be addressed. This would involve creating a micro enterprise where work, leisure, and living happen within a short distance.

Q. Are there differences in perception of sustainability across countries and continents?

Anglo Saxons are very passionate about quantifying, organizing, analysing and their attention is chiefly on energy savings. Europeans, apart from quantification, opt for a more holistic approach where the philosophy of a building is more comprehensively addressed. Indians have a more social conscious approach to



THE PLAZA
LOOKING TOWARDS THE WHAREHUI.

sustainability where building a better society becomes the main objective.

Are current leanings towards sustainability making a difference and not merely seeking a tag?

A lot of independent people have sustainable leanings that are not just for making a profit or to seek a tag. But to make sustainability meaningful and make a difference, policy making should be made sustainable. Individual initiatives alone will not work. But interestingly there is a significant surge in consciousness towards sustainability. Sustainability in essence is a way of being, thinking, with the community appreciating it.

What is the biggest problem in gauging sustainability?

Measuring sustainability using both quantitative and qualitative tools. We need both. While the American quantitative tools are effective provided they are tweaked to address Indian conditions, qualitative criteria can be gauged through social, environmental and financial impact. Likewise, post occupancy evaluation is not practiced though this should be one of the criteria used for the qualitative tools adopted to measure sustainability.

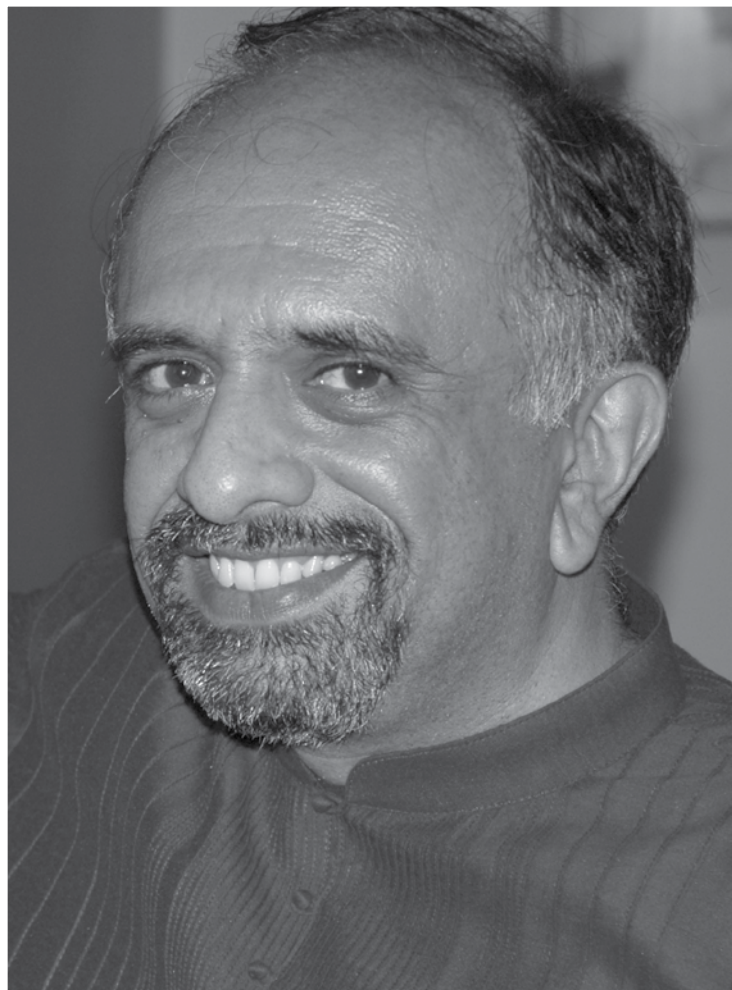
Traditional buildings were based on local sensitivities and availability of resources, making them naturally and effortlessly sustainable. Should we dip into these sensibilities and adapt to evolving demographic, lifestyle and resource changes?

Architects should have bigger say in development and design. Vedic scriptures talk about becoming an architect only on turning 40 as it is considered a holistic, super specialized field of work. Some of the beautiful pieces of architecture in India continue to remain hidden and away from limelight because of lack political will to bring these to the fore. However, not everything that is vernacular can be stated to be sustainable. There is need to get the bigger picture with a more thoughtful way of looking at the environment.

It is essential to make buildings breathe. Stone is a natural breathing material, keeping the interiors naturally cool. Similarly, thatched roofs and mud houses kept the interiors cool even during very hot summers. Sustainability

in essence is not only organic but also common sense. The organic aspect tends to make a positive visual impact on the environment. We are currently adopting sustainable practices based on certain criteria without knowing the essence. We have immense knowledge in this area which should rightfully be tapped and translated into sustainable structures.

“
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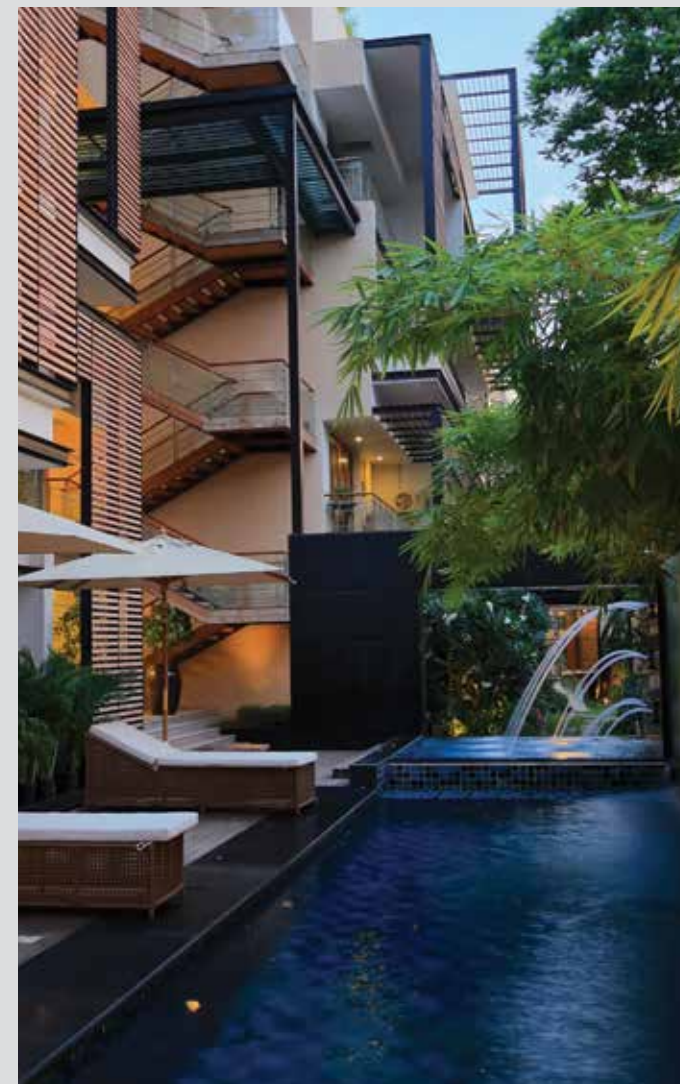


Buildings should speak for themselves

In conversation with

Prem Chandavarkar

Architect Prem Chandavarkar of CnT Architects speaks at length on designs and design philosophy in a chat with Antarya, delving on aspects of sustainability. Discussing the academic methodologies followed in the Indian design schools, he calls for a change in approach where not only students but the faculty too is on a continuous learning curve.



What in your view encompasses a good design?

A good design speaks for itself even when the designer is removed from the scene. It is not about being iconic or creating a 'Wow' factor. It is about the user carrying the memory of stay within the building, where the presence is recalled with a sense of nostalgia. This nostalgia happens when the design interactively breeds comfort, warmth, and aspiration, and is also certainly functional. A good design encompasses all of this. A point to be noted here is there is no inherent conflict between functionality and aesthetics in a good design.

How do you perceive the presence of technology in current day's design?

We are in an age where we are flooded with images, thanks to the presence of internet. This raises a tendency to make snap judgements without paying adequate attention. The presence of software aided designs too has its setbacks as a sense of human scale

tends to get disturbed by the zooming in and out methodology used while working on a computer. Historical buildings provoke a sense of nostalgia and this is not just because of their design features but also because they addressed their designs to human scale, something that current day designs are failing to do. For instance, they would not have a single material like glass stretching up to 20 floors the way a modern building often does.

The presence of software has resulted in some mindboggling designs taking a tangible form, serving to become iconic buildings in their respective skylines. Do you think this is a right direction for design to proceed?

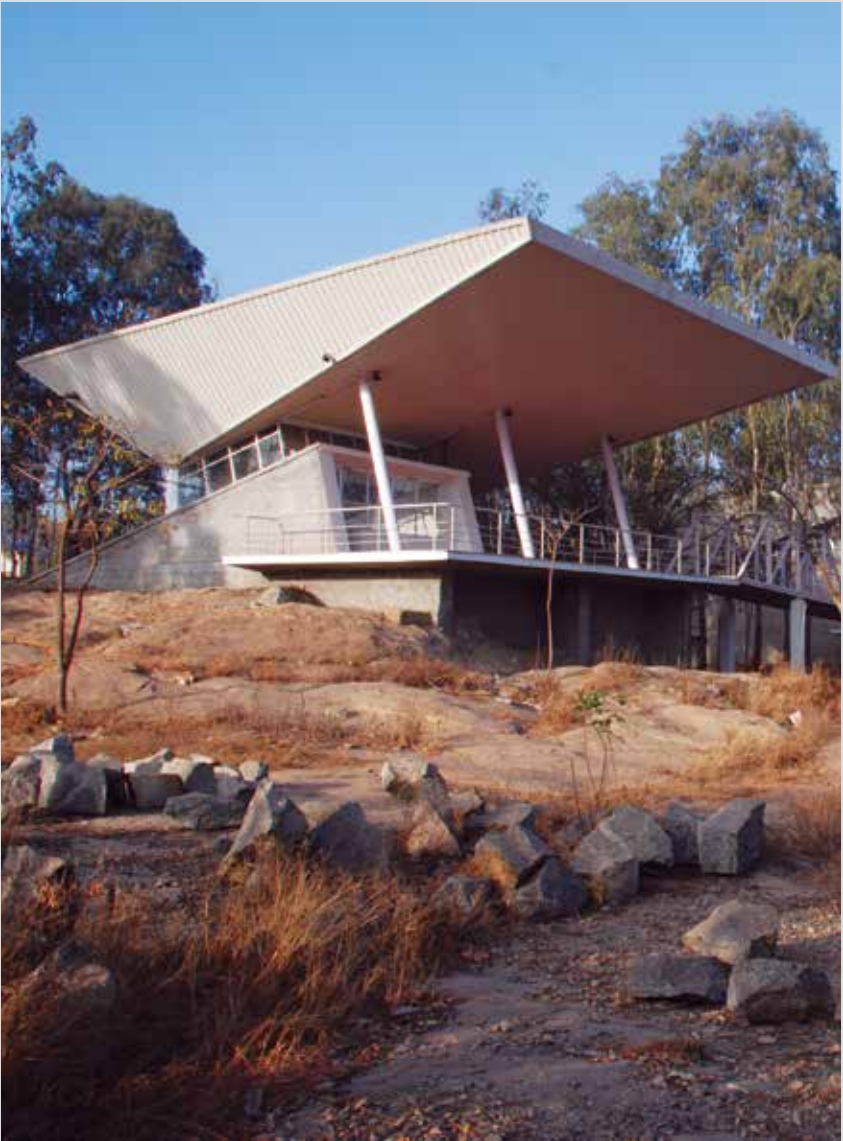
The seductiveness of computer imagery breeds a tendency to evaluate based on first impression. But what makes a design truly iconic would be its appreciation over a longer period where it is recalled with interest and admiration. This time tested appreciation rests more on the intangible elements which cannot be measured or validated at first sight.

One has to transcend technology or software to realise this.

Another temptation to be resisted is the peer review system of design awards as the dominant mode of validation of one's work for it can lead to a self-referential culture of an architect's architecture. To resist this one must make the rigorous effort of staying connected to the fundamentals of human experience, and that is another reason why one must keep technology at a distance. Through this distance one can utilise the full benefits of software and technology while at the same time keeping them within context.

Sustainability is becoming a fashion for some, a market for a few while the rest embrace it with a passion, their designs speaking loudly of its presence. Would not a good design naturally be sustainable without wearing a tag or working explicitly towards it?

Yes, a good design would naturally incorporate sustainable features. It is one that is always



practical and aesthetic. Being sustainable is being in harmony with your environment, be it social, cultural or natural factors. Absence of this means the absence of a good design. Being sustainable for marketing or for sporting a label would certainly be a wrong approach. The current rating systems do add value in terms of convincing people to think on these lines and adopt measures that make their buildings green. But the limitation of rating systems is that they are based on those factors that are easily comparable across projects, and therefore have a bias towards systems, products and technologies. They find it difficult to incorporate what is unique to a project. Given that design is all about adding unique value to each project, and design is the level at which one can make the most difference, one realises that rating systems, while useful, also have limits.

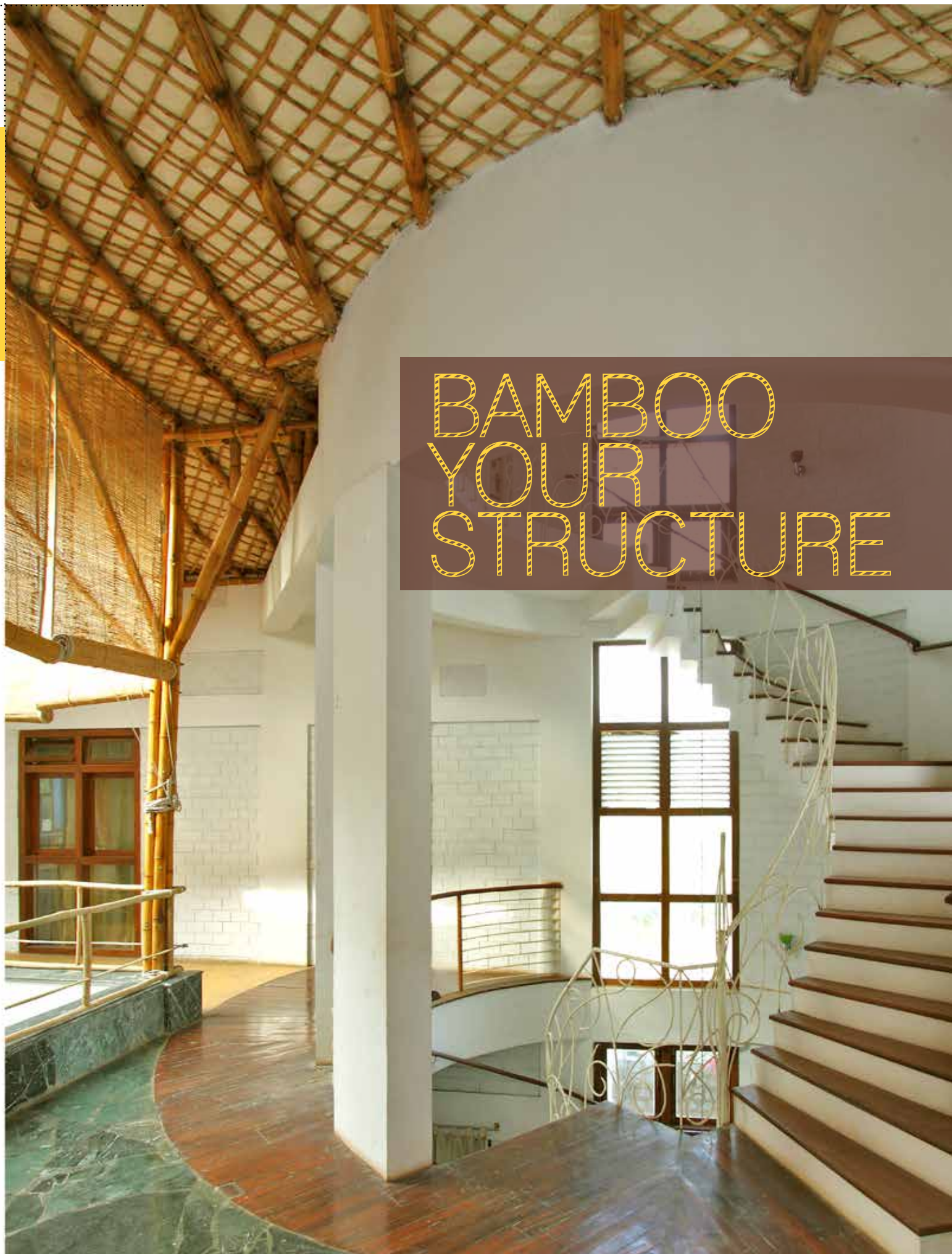
How do you rate the current methods of teaching in design schools in India as compared to those abroad?
The method of approach in India is more vocational than academic. Skills have the most value when they serve deep propositions

about life, and we need a system that trains students to think at this critical and propositional level. The quality of faculty too is often abysmal and the continued development of faculty capabilities is rarely insisted upon as a requirement. Design schools overseas have a totally different approach where it is required that faculty do not just teach but must visibly be at a cutting edge of learning that meets the standard of rigorous peer review, either through published research or through award winning practice.

A researcher is a learner and faculty should be involved in research. Unfortunately Indian design schools consider only students as learners and not the faculty. This is a fallacy. You need to be a learner yourself if you have to drive the students to learn.

“
Yes, a good design would naturally incorporate sustainable features. It is one that is always practical and aesthetic. Being sustainable is being in harmony with your environment, be it social, cultural or natural factors. Absence of this means the absence of a good design.”





BAMBOO YOUR STRUCTURE



It is all about green architecture, being sustainable, close to nature, housing elements that breathe the landscape. It is all about lending a taste of the traditional peppered with a bit of rustic, a bit of wilderness that speaks of the irresistible unmatched outdoors. It is all about dipping into older methodologies of construction, using time tested materials and design sensibilities and fusing it with latest technology to take them to the next level. It is all about saying it, building it with bamboo.

Meet Architect **Neelam Manjunath of Manasaram Architects**, who has been building it green with this most flexible traditional material, used down the ages when some of the first permanent weather worthy structures came up in the tropical regions. The use of bamboo in construction is as old as shelters themselves, their easy adaptability and durability in use as structural elements serving to make them a common material in buildings.



Winner of multiple awards for her sustained and spectacular work in use of bamboo along with other natural materials in construction over the last two decades, Neelam has literally established herself as a champion of this widely prevalent and magnificent material that is however yet to capture wide local as well as global interest. But Neelam has been doing her fair share in espousing its virtues in the national and international forums through lectures and workshops on the methodologies of its use in construction.

Her projects ranging from commercial to residential, using bamboo in place of steel and wood, speak for themselves, the varied designs and aesthetics standing testimonial to the multiple possibilities that bamboo can offer both in structure and design.

Having moved into Bangalore in 1994 from Delhi, Neelam was influenced a lot by the principles of Vaastu and what it entailed for a structure. Having perused through the translations of 8 volumes of Vaastu Maanasarams which dealt systematically with science and climatology, Neelam found its influence percolating into her designs. Thus the placement of the windows, doors, sky light zones to facilitate natural light and ventilation reflected a deep influence of these texts. Her very first project in bamboo way back in '99 was in Raj Bhavan where a 100 year old structure had to be dismantled and replaced by a bamboo structure. Her next project in bamboo was a two bedroom prototype in Indian Plywood Industry Research & Training Institute built to induce people to adopt

bamboo in construction.

Neelam incidentally also had a prefab bamboo prototype built in Rome, with all the elements in bamboo shipped by her. Yet another prototype of hers found its way into the cyclone ravaged Andamans. Her project Navodya School which incidentally served to be an award recipient saw the use of alternative materials like terracotta while waste materials were also deftly used in the structure.

While multiple small projects like these with their integrated solar passive principles served as little beacons of alternative modes of construction using bamboo in lieu of steel, her office building as well as her house of five elements feature as spectacular pieces of not just creativity but also as fine models of what bamboo can do to a structure in terms of load bearing as well as aesthetics.

Her office is a spectacular depiction of how bamboo can be used as a structural element, as columns and beams, supporting the variously sloped freeform concrete roof. The mostly open office with the presence of boulders and lotus filled swamp in their natural wild state deftly fuses in the mud block walls and random rubble with the bamboo poles that are essentially structural support elements for the building.

The use of conventional concrete with the bamboo poles in place of steel rods in the floating roof further affirms the tensile strength of bamboo. "If two people can run over the



beams of your roof, then you deem it totally strong and safe”, smiles Neelam when queried about the roof giving way if people foisted themselves atop it. She further adds that this thumb rule could be used in remote regions using bamboo as a structural element where there is absence of structural engineer to gauge the strength.

The option of a floating roof also avails much less bamboo than otherwise while the bamboo proves to be more efficient and strong when structured in a slanting form as well as when used in a network. Even the furniture in the interiors are incidentally bamboo based starting from the table requirements to the artefacts used.

Interestingly, the vastly open interiors of her office is designed so adroitly that the orientation prevents heat ingress as well as rainwater in case of a storm, yet, ensures natural light prevails till twilight. “I do not like to work under artificial lighting. Providing the right orientation ensures natural light and ventilation till sunset”, adds Neelam.

Besides the use of bamboo in structure and solar passive elements integrated, the lotus swamp in its natural wild state also serves as a natural rainwater harvesting space. The presence of water in the swamp

also provides moisture for the bamboo, preventing it from splitting.

Her project, House of Five Elements, exotic both in design and structure, reflects the play of water, natural light and ventilation with the presence of earth in the sunlit courtyard, all of which have been fused in with the enchanting play of bamboo that is omnipresent in the interiors.

Says Neelam, “A bamboo column gives a totally different vibration to the space as compared to steel. There is an aura of peace that is totally de-stressing. This automatically happens when in touch with the five elements of nature; bamboo, mud and stone contribute to this.”

She further adds that the tensile strength of bamboo is twice as steel, making it stronger than this oft sought after material. Unlike steel, they can be cut, processed and used easily without the need for high tech machines, making them suitable even in remote places. “Besides, bamboo is only harvested and their period of maturity is four years before harvesting can take place. Their local availability also provides minimum transportation cost. It is more stable than wood as the exterior is hard while retaining the softness inside. Given its energy balance at 30 Mj/m³, it offers high energy efficiency”, she says.

Bamboo incidentally is the best material for earthquake prone regions according to Neelam. “Given its flexibility as compared to steel, aesthetically too it has an edge over it as concrete can be literally made to flow like fabric if the structural element used is bamboo instead of steel. Architects need to understand the superior benefits of bamboo and promote its use.”

While she actively encourages architects to understand and experiment with bamboo, a look at her exquisitely designed projects makes it clear that no such encouragement is required to induce one to convert to bamboo. A view of the projects is encouragement enough to enlist willingly converted clients.

This article delves with a subtle restraint into the created built spaces exploring and examining the explanations that beholds the journey. K JAISIM

EDGES OF FREEDOM

Interior design is a passenger in the vehicle of architecture. But, like little kids going for a ride, they are often taken for a ride. Let us take a look at the designed environment around us, every day, from the moment one shakes of slumber to the time when the mind attempts to close – the eyes are already tired and blanked – the rushes that happen to all our senses is bewildering.

Décor, the word haunts, from the tooth brush holder, the towel hanger to the coffee cup, Design matters, especially to the young of today. The older lot may linger in their memories fondly and forget the present and live the day and sleep the night. But, now is a different world.

Matching under wears matter! Yes, translated into a home, the innards of a house demand and need more attention than the exterior. The architects smirk as their deeply thought of edifices are simply brushed aside by brushes of color and texture or envelopes of hoardings and very often clothes on a line with all the colors and textures of the world.

Again, as you walk the interiors of these very spaces, individually controlled by pride and ownership, what a difference! From the door mat to the sofa cushions and the lamp shades, a frothy care takes on a metamorphic indulgence. Here intelligence is not to question the indulgence. Politeness and a sense of sensitivity evaporate. Time and again flip the magazines of interior design, what gapes at us from these flipping pages is an imagery of excited colors and textures violent and demanding an ephemeral attention, like a sweet meat shop. No tasting allowed. Media drowns critical appraisal.

Opportunity, it is always there. How does one not just grasp it, but also make a positive intrusion and create meaningful value based interiors. Interaction amongst the living and the beholden is crucial. Silence envelopes sensitivity and invasive thunder of glitzy décor tsunamis in. To keep the blast away and hold firm with fundamentals, disregarding the technological circuses that flirt design, one must with conviction and confidence open the arrays of art and fuse. Yes, fusion is not confusion; it demands imagination with an intelligent approach to make spaces come alive beyond the necessities. They should metamorphose into a realm that makes dance out of a stride, music out of sound. Every fabric or plane one touches, start a conversation.

A meaning starts filling the envelope. It is a love letter, but the envelope must signal its arrival. The conversation dreams a dialog, a dialog that breathes a euphoric romanticism.

Now, comes that touching point. Then why the title, edges of freedom. An interior is an expression given by the designer to add a reflected or integrated value to content and context of a space by defining it with restrained décor. But very often these are only trims, the main body is an ogre that somehow fills space. Cost and delivery always are a sham that over ride. The fringes cannot explore the depth. But they do bring in the masses which are in despair for anything that is different and catches the immediate senses. The media hype mainly wins. Hidden truths always are a buried treasure.



Rachel Armstrong is an architect who innovates and designs sustainable solutions for built and natural environment using an advance technology called Synthetic Biology. She believes that we need to outgrow architecture made of inert materials, which in time degrade and adversely change the environment and instead make architecture with elements that actually grow over time.

ARCHITECT MANALI VASANTH

INNOVATING NATURALLY

Plenty has been written on sustainable design and architecture to the point of it becoming almost a fashion to sport a green tag. Certifications such as LEED rating have become extensively popular and sought after by architects and developers. Buildings are rated based on their energy consumption, savings achieved with right orientation and material use, recyclable content, to name a few. The ensuing carbon footprint is gauged in accordance and rating, be it Gold, Platinum, is given. While such rating systems have contributed sizably to promoting green thinking and ventures amongst architects and builders alike, most professionals would agree that a lot more needs to be done to ensure a truly environment friendly development.

Currently, a new breed is emerging - architects who are in part designers and in part biologists and chemists. Rachel Armstrong is one such architect who innovates and designs sustainable solutions for built and natural environment using an advance technology called Synthetic

Biology. She believes that we need to outgrow architecture made of inert materials, which in time degrade and adversely change the environment and instead make architecture with elements that actually grow over time.

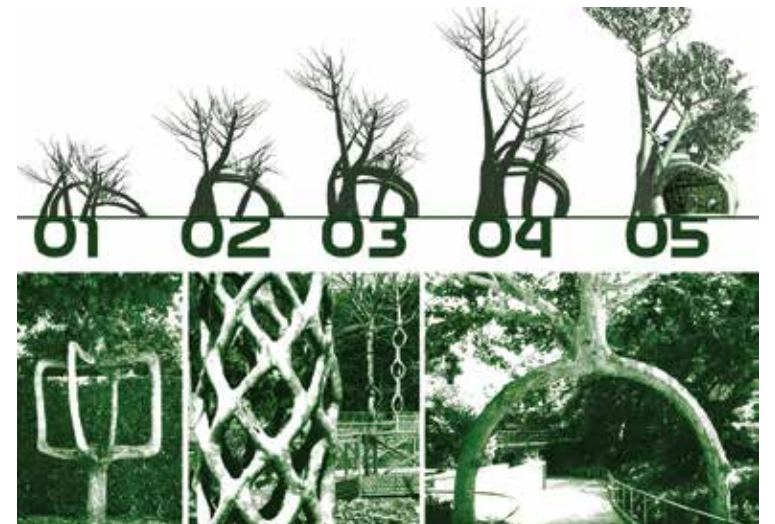
The integration of nature and architecture is not a new idea, with precedents like the living bridges in Cherrapunji, where the locals learned to "drive" the roots of the Ficus elastica tree to build bridges that can support the weight of 50 people and reach 30 meters in length. What is important here is what can architects of the 21st century learn from these dynamic systems and how can this be applied to urban areas. Rachel Armstrong is attempting to learn the 'technology' nature uses to achieve certain geological structures seen in algal blooms and algal structures, and use the same to create built environments that have completely different outcomes and impacts on the environment to those we associate with the industrial age.

She and her team have developed a unit called the protocell which is essentially a bag with a chemical battery and no DNA. This 'cell' reacts to its environment in a way that a living organism would. It follows chemical gradients and performs complex reactions; Reactions that are architectural. In effect, they are trying to push this technology towards creating bottom-up construction approaches for architecture, which contrast the Victorian, top-down methods which impose structure upon matter.

An example of where this technology would be a good solution is in addressing Venice's problem of sinking. The wooden piles on which the buildings in Venice were built are slowly giving away with age. The synthetic biology approach would be to create a support system for the most worn out piles by using the protocells, effectively bolstering the foundation in the areas needed most. This would result in a huge carbon dioxide sink and would attract local marine ecology, who will find space to cohabit within this architecture.

Yet another architect innovating in this natural zone is Mitchell Joachim who is the pioneer of the Fab Tree Hab. What his team does is to take a fully grown tree and use an ancient gardening practice called pleaching which grafts inosculate matter into one contiguous, vascular system. They use CNC to make the designed scaffolding to train plants into a specific geometry that makes a home which in effect is the Fab Tree Hab. It is essentially the environment and the landscape. His team have also put together a molecular biology lab where they experiment with regenerative tissue and cell engineering, with the highly ambitious intent of marrying architecture and biology.

Of course, none of these technologies are even close to being used on a large scale. But when they along with many other supporting systems are perfected, it will connect the built environment to the natural environment in a very direct and immediate way; one that will be truly sustainable because it pushes us back to being with nature, not insulated from it.



Information on Rachel Armstrong sourced from www.ted.com, www.nextnature.net, fora.tv

Information on Mitchell Joanchim sourced from www.ted.com, en.wikipedia.org, www.archinode.com

Images sourced from en.wikipedia.org, www.tree-nation.com, www.designboom.com, inhabitableorganism.blogspot.in

MOVING TOWARDS A FOURTH ARCHITECTURE



BY ARCHITECT VIKRANT CHANDRAGIRI

If the recently concluded World Architecture Festival 2013 in Singapore has anything more to offer, it is that the latest breed of architecture produced in the world can no longer simply be classified under hard driven categories or genres. Arguments and debates over what project can be classified where, are taking heated turns in architecture classrooms and offices everywhere. The jury's views on awarding FJMT+Archimedia's Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki the World Building Award 2013, aptly describe the nature of today's architecture.

"The winning project transcended category types. You could say it is about new and old, or civic and community, or display. It contrasts the manmade and the natural, and the relationship between art and science... Balancing many different elements, the resulting design is a rich complex of built ideas."

What stands out though, observing all projects that were showcased, is how they all take only very subtle design cues from their environments on purpose. From responding harshly to their environment to taking cues from the way the building will be used, architects are now using more than just immediate environmental visuals to approach their designs. As architecture in the 20th century progressed from Modernism to the current amalgamation of styles in the 21st century, architects with projects in dramatic environs chose to saddle their design with the visual scene of the site. Earlier this year, when Curtis Wayne released his controversial new booklet about what he regards as the "Fourth Architecture" he argued that architecture needs to return to "shapes that work" and respond to real environmental, economic and social forces.

As much as the online architectural community finds Wayne's opinions jarring, the winning projects at Singapore's WAF highlighted the fact that more architects are now looking less to build icons as the "starchitects" do, but focus instead on the actual considerations of the programme, site conditions and users.

FJMT+Archimedia's design for the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, beat such heavy contenders as Zaha Hadid, Mecanoo and Wilkinson Eyre Architects and in the design-rich category of Culture. FJMT's proposal wove in the site's demands and respected its context, taking cues from the organic natural forms of the landscape, and the architectural order of neighbouring heritage buildings. Characterised by 'hovering tree-like' canopies that define and cover the forecourt, atrium and gallery areas, bringing to mind the image of an overhanging

Pohutukawa tree canopy that is central to New Zealand's Christmas tradition. The detail and proportion of the architectural forms draw from the old gallery's architecture, while materials and alignments blend them together in harmony.

The winner of the next design-rich category of Hotel/Leisure, CitizenM London, by the Dutch firm Concrete Architectural Associates, takes its cues from the central concept of a landmark hotel chain in the cultural heart of the UK. Fashioned for the hip and modelled after the comfort of travelling in a space that caters to a new breed of metro travellers, Concrete provides several spaces that they call "living rooms" instead of the usual lobby areas. Concrete also takes a cue from the traveller himself, and provides rooms that they call "creating rooms" for "a new type of worker: those who aren't bound by offices or office conventions and do business wherever the connectivity is good and the coffee fresh."

Kontum Indochina Cafe in Vietnam by Vo Trong Nghia Architects, characterised by abundant use of local materials and building technique took its cues from the shapes of typical Vietnamese fishing baskets, inverse cone shaped bamboo pillars that support a massive bamboo ceiling. The architects claim

the shape of the pillars allow for easy ventilation during hot weather, while resisting harsh storms during the monsoon. The use of bamboo gives the impression of being in one of Vietnam's rich bamboo forests, while also hinting at the size of the mountains that can be seen from the cafe.

While both these projects took their cues from their location, and historical context, the Wanangkura Stadium by ARM Architecture in a remote town in Australia, took its design cues from the experience of the Australian outback. A pixelated cluster of blue and black cubes make up its exterior and on approach the building seems to waver like a mirage.

Architecture seems to be moving away from merely mimicking a visual metaphor as its design cue, and toward imbibing the experience or imagination of the user to hint at the subtle expressions of the design. Forty years after the opening of the iconic Sydney Opera House, where Jorn Utzon took his cues from the sails of the yachts in the harbour, architects today are looking beyond the visual to the experiential to take cues to their designs and inspire the public's imagination. Maybe we really are moving toward a Fourth Architecture.

Architecture seems to be moving away from merely mimicking a visual metaphor as its design cue, and toward imbibing the experience or imagination of the user to hint at the subtle expressions of the design.

Information sourced from
www.archdaily.com, www.fjmt.com, www.worldbuildingsdirectory.com
www.dezeen.com, www.worldarchitecturefestival.com



DOING IS LEARNING

BY ARCHITECT CHANDRA SABNANI
Associate Professor, Department of Architecture & Planning
VNIT, Nagpur



On stepping inside any school of architecture, the first thing that strikes the student besides the unending volume of work is a flurry of questions with top of the list being the duration of the course and the grading system based on examinations. Some of these queries are totally valid meriting a reply, clarification or even redress in the absence of which students can face disillusionment.

Essentially, the prescribed syllabus for architecture and also the design topics are selected based on the primary fact that in architecture it is easy to lose focus. This is because architectural education rests on a plank of technology, art and humanities and these need to be brought in the right mix. Opting for a prescribed syllabus aids in keeping the focus of education on track without becoming lopsided. Yet, a syllabus cannot become overly prescriptive as this impacts innovative teaching besides raising opportunities for the syllabi not being covered in totality. At best this prescription can serve as a thick guideline to keep the teaching in the designated path while permitting use of innovative tools and teaching methodologies

as well as the expanse of knowledge imparted open and unhindered.

Interestingly, the design topics selected in any school of architecture is based on the level of complexity commensurate with or in keeping with theoretical inputs provided at each level through subjects like construction, structures, services, materials to name a few. In practice often the timing of scheduling and chronology do not match ending up with a situation where design precedes theory. These then spell bad patches for both teacher and student.

Would then a national level syllabus be a preferred option? Not really. A syllabus of a professional course is based on course objectives where the objectives are framed to develop certain competencies and abilities to address design challenges that are unique to local and regional contexts. This could be climate, technology, materials, culture, topography, even history and geology. Opting for a national level syllabus would defeat this purpose besides neglecting the regional flavours. This is especially pertinent to a



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country like India with its varied topography, climate, multi-cultural and linguistic inclinations.

However a factor that is universally lacking in all design institutes across the country is the lack of emphasis on developing communication skills and incorporating this as a specific subject in the syllabi. As important as it is to sharpen the design skills and train budding architects keeping in mind local sensitivities, communication is vital for an architect to take his design ideas successfully across to his client.

Should this designated syllabus be linked to examinations and more so, a stringent grading system? Do high grades signify the emergence of an excellent architect? These are indeed tricky questions. There is certainly no established correlation between grades and designing ability. Yet, the presence of grades serves as a platform to compete and excel, prompting the student to utilize the creative potential to the maximum, to innovate, experiment, make mistakes and learn more in the process; ingredients vital to become an outstanding designer.

But a factor that remains undisputed is learning best by doing. Learning is done best through actual performance, through practical experience, getting your hands soiled and seeing the efforts of the toil manifest in tangible form.

This brings us to the next question, should the architecture course run over five long years or should it be cut short to accommodate practical training? The answer to this would be design is a lifelong learning process. Spending five years in a design institute is only touching the tip of the iceberg of this learning process. Yet, this period gives ample time to make a beginning and learn enough about the nuances of design to be able to start practicing in the real world. Besides, the exacting nature of the course, with students often complaining about losing out on sleep to perfect their designs and finish the unending tasks assigned, also prepares for meeting the challenging demands of this profession.



PLAZA WITH A VIEW

A REVIEW BY ARCHITECT PRITI KALRA

Winner of the New and Old Category Award as well as the Director’s Award in World Architecture Festival 2012, the Sacred Museum and Plaza España in Adeje designed by Fernando Menis has successfully demonstrated that a subtle architectural gesture can have a meaningful urban implication. Located in Adeje, it is built along the western edge of a deep ravine called Barranco del Infierno. Plaza España on Grande Street is situated on a difficult topography with the Town Council to its south and Church of Saint Ursula, a protected heritage building, to its north. Though intended as a city centre, local geographical conditions prevented its expansion in the easterly direction. The presence of two rather monotonously designed houses along the eastern edge, besides eclipsing the remarkable views of the ravine, made the plaza too small for large gatherings. Tourist complexes nearby contributed further to displacing the town’s economic centre.

A competition hosted by the Town Council in 2006 aimed to revive the plaza by adding new public facilities. The objective was to make it as an

identity for the people by catalysing a relationship between the town and landscape, with the presence of a museum to house a collection of the sacred art, some of which dated back to the middle ages. These were previously displayed in the church of the old convent of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Council proposed for a scheme to enlarge the plaza, opening it up to the views of the Barranco del Infierno, an infallible way to generate cultural tourism.

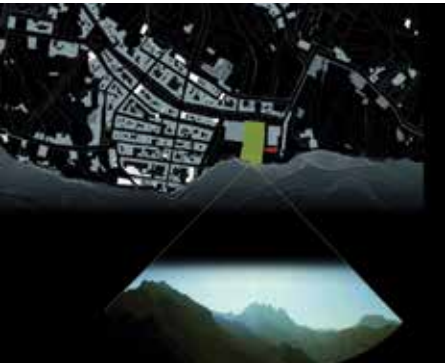
Menis’ intervention achieved the Council’s goals. After demolishing the two houses on the east, the plaza was extended to the edge of the precipice creating a permanent stage and backdrop. The main structure of the museum exists at subterranean levels. The only elements above ground are a bell tower and café, neatly tucked away towards the Church without obstructing the view. Paved with slabs of black basalt, the square currently is two and half times in size and offers panoramic views of the ravine. The square is also better accessed with a relationship created between each of its limiting boundaries.

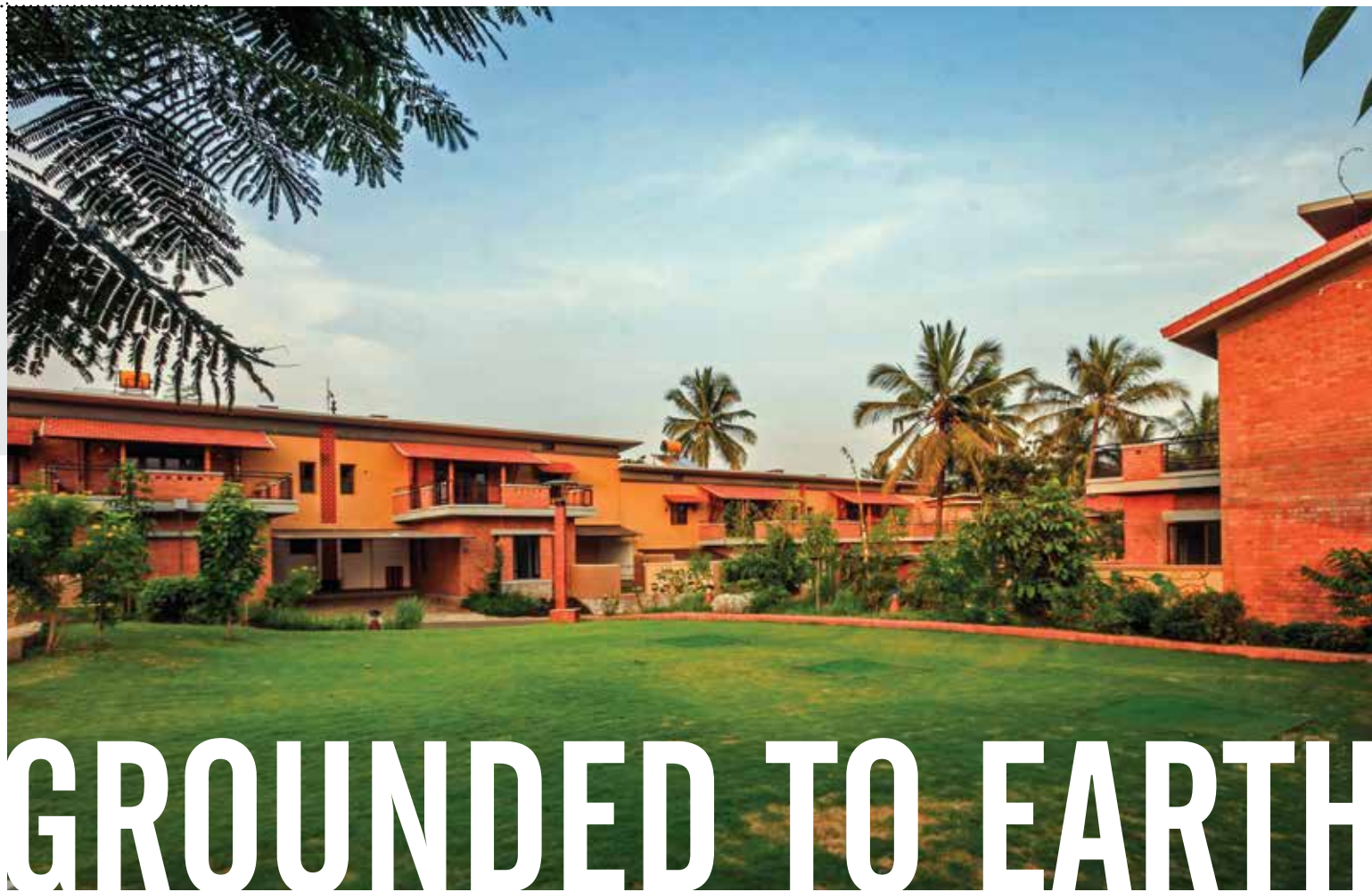
The walk through the museum feels like a walk through an underground cave, where the inherent coolness of the earth can be felt. The design intends to evoke a spiritual response from the visitor.

A wide stairway crops out of the floor on the north, leading to the facade of the Church. To the east, the plaza steps down along the slope of the gorge, eliminating the need for a parapet. To the south, steps parallel to the Council’s facade direct the visitor to a pathway along the gradient of the ravine where a cafeteria is situated. A vestibule formed by a covered slab guides you to the museum below, while framing a picturesque view of the landscape above. The tower, terrace slab, roof of the cafeteria and the series of steps create a surreal composition of rough and polished concrete surfaces which seem to emerge from earth. The museum beneath is lit by two light wells, the first being a staircase within the bell tower and the second a large crevice left in the northern side of the building. The walk through the museum feels like a walk through an underground cave, where the inherent coolness of the earth can be felt. The design intends to evoke a spiritual response from the visitor.

The plaza together with the museum gives to the public of Adeje a space to indulge, play, interact, relax and contemplate. But as fate has it, reality

creeps in, the delayed funds holding up the completion of the exhibition spaces. The pieces of the art collection are currently stored in municipal buildings. The plaza, however, has accomplished its objective as an urban insert, its expansive spaces holding fairs, markets, concerts and other cultural events, an epicentre and the eyes through which Adeje gazes at the arresting view of Hell’s Canyon.





GROUNDNED TO EARTH

Keeping the development close to earth, the elements incorporated totally earthy, natural and tuned to nature, be it design, materials or environment sensitivities; that in essence is the project guidelines of **GoodEarth**, a company promoted by a team of architects with the objective of building sustainable communities. Be it villas or apartment units, the projects are explicitly developed on the sustainability plank, the individual units incorporating in abundance solar passive elements, the orientation and design assuring abundant source of natural light and ventilation.

Not only are the structures built green but the green element pervades into the nature of landscape too, the presence of a large number of trees and plants lending the woody aura where time literally comes to a standstill in the serene natural ambience. The villas nestling amidst the thick set of trees and vegetation in GoodEarth Orchard is a classic example of the manifestation of nature in an organised gated community. Interestingly the individual villas retain their distinctive identity, each integrating design and material elements that are different from the rest. Thus, identity is imparted in the exterior structure in the form of presence of varied elevations, verandas, columns, the design of an exterior landscape or courtyard, the use of stone or bricks or even wood. Even simple elements like the type of windows and doors used can bring in this distinct individual character.

For instance, a particular villa would garner its individuality by merely having the presence of small old world wooden windows, terracotta jaalis and a matching wooden door designed on the lines of the Kerala Padipura leading to the outer courtyard. Complemented with

part brick walls and mud colour plastered walls, the wooden columns flanking the open verandas can take one effortlessly back in time.

Each villa has either an inner courtyard or a skylight which not only brings in plenty of natural light and ventilation but also serves to address energy savings. Incidentally, every house has a large green backyard that is open yet enclosed vertically to offer privacy. The presence of these external courtyards enhances the naturally lit and ventilated interiors while also offering the old world pattern of having enclosed courtyards to relax and unwind.

While the sloped roofs of the individual villas aid in collecting and channelling rainwater into the designated pits to recharge the ground water, the presence of swales crisscrossing the development further adds to this effective collection and channelling.

Interestingly, the swimming pool in the development too follows natural lines, being a natural pool developed based on a hybrid of

ideas drawn from the wells of the country side and the conventional swimming pool. Instead of using a mechanical treatment plant as in an artificial pool, a natural process of treatment is adopted.

The concept of circulation is used at the design stage with the introduction of a pump at the bottom of the pool that mimics the concept of springs in a natural pool. The pool is divided into two areas, the pool area and the regeneration area. The regeneration area comprises a planted reed bed which is separated from the pool area by a perforated wall. The nitrates and phosphates from the impure water are consumed as nutrients by the plants in the reed bed. The purified water is then pumped back into the pool.

The sewage treatment used is also based on a natural organic process. The sewage water, as a primary treatment, first runs through a series of bio filters to remove the solid waste. It is then passed through a planted reed bed for secondary treatment and finally treated by a sand filter and carbon filter for removing

odour. This treated water is used for landscaping in the development.

Talking about the emphasis laid on sustainability in all their projects and designs, Architect and Director, GoodEarth, Natasha Iype says, "You cannot talk about design without addressing sustainability. This involves also addressing and planning in accordance how the space is to be used, how interactive and community oriented it is as this too breeds sustainability."

She further adds, "In spite of the villas packing in a unique character and individuality, they all have a common interactive space as the planning is based on a cluster concept where there are common spaces and private spaces. The materials used are natural, the design practical, integrating both traditional and contemporary elements."

Interestingly, true to its name and green spirit, the landscape in the sprawling development houses over 500 species of plants that include the traditional medicinal plants, offering a rich biodiversity for the inmates to live amidst.



ADITHI HOMESTAY: A RETREAT PARED FROM DISCARDS

The first thing that strikes you when you step into Sanjay Kulkarni's Adithi Home Stay in the city of Belgaum is the expansive greenery and the picturesque water body housing an equally charming villa fashioned on the lines of the boathouses of Kashmir. The strikingly attractive environs belie the fact that the oasis currently evident rests on an erstwhile abandoned stone quarry.

Even less evident is the nature of the materials used in erecting the eight villas dotting this homestay resort. For nothing but discards and waste materials from demolished sites has formed the basis of these structures, each reflecting a unique individuality in design and form based on elements used.

Discarded timber, tiles, bricks, stones, windows, doors, wooden planks and whatever else could be salvaged, find their way into the structures, all deftly used to create attractive villas, cafeteria as well as a conference hall. The varied designs, styles, be it tiled roof or grass roof tops, still fuse into unison given their common strain being their harmony with nature, reflecting a green mode of construction.

Even the room built on the banks of the lagoon, serving as a step back in time, given its quaint windows, inclined wooden walls, tiled roofs and rugged wooden staircases, sits in total accord with the rest of the structures around the lagoon.

A twenty foot surface water well that was the result of continuous water seepage from rocks in the site offers yet another uniquely designed room built over it, the structure styled to suit its differential locational elements.

Being one with nature and resting in nature's lap can not only be rejuvenating but also be a totally novel experience if the encounter is first made in inky darkness. And if some of the structures are raised from sheer waste, the encounter can prove to be stunning too. Nandhini Sundar explores two resorts in Belgaum district, one situated in the city and another on the periphery, only to come back exhilarated.



While explicitly raised using waste materials, the twin rooms overlooking the water body from their patio, have tailor birds endlessly building their nests in the trees growing out of rocks flanking the surface water well. Ceaseless chatter of the birds fills the air while one relaxes in the old world charm seating housed in the patio. Needless to mention, the seating has been fashioned out of discarded old doors and windows. The charming sight of birds is however not confined to these two rooms alone, with a variety of them ranging from the Great Horned Owl, white throated kingfisher, spot billed ducks, water hens to even peacocks making this retreat a must visit place on their agenda. Reptiles too serve as eager visitors while a few jackals, black napped hare, mongoose have also been active guests.



The cafeteria serves as another interesting piece of design, innovative use of waste again finding its way effortlessly into its structure. Cement floors and bamboo thatched roof mark the interiors, crowned by an old world Chula and Chimney made from discarded bricks featuring in the open kitchen. The seating too are made from discarded tiles, the tables emerging from discarded wooden planks, logs, doors and frames. Interestingly, not only are the structures raised using thrown away materials, the picturesque lagoon too is a product of the water channelled from the constantly seeping rocks surrounding the resort. A part of the same water is filtered and diverted to the natural swimming pool.

Incidentally, the resort, brainchild of Kiran Thakur and Sanjay Kulkarni, was built sans assistance from an architect. Sanjay Kulkarni, the man behind the concept as well as the design and structure decided to use the tool of innovation to fashion a resort purely from salvaged materials from demolished sites. "It seemed fit to do so as the original site is an abandoned quarry with the deep abyss filled by construction debris brought in hundreds of truck loads", he says.

While serenity marks the entire resort, a totally natural meditation centre amidst a thick set of teak trees lies besides the sprawling lawns, beckoning one to indulge in resting the tired mind. Crowning this resort carved from waste is a quaint tree house that allows you to sit back and view the environs from a vantage spot with your feet luxuriously stretched in comfort.

Totally in tune with nature in its rustic uncorrupted state, the resort stands testimony to what can be achieved by simply recycling waste innovatively, while adding a bit of creativity to the entire process.



WILDERNEST: SUBMERGE IN WILDERNESS

It is nothing but total darkness that greets our party as we make our way gingerly up the stone paved pathways and narrow steps with only ropes for railings to our respective rooms. Nocturnal insects eagerly greet us on our way up as well as inside our rooms as we place our bags. It is total silence except for the sound of the faint drizzle and rustle of leaves with the twittering of insects serving as cheerful background chatter.

Fond though I am of wilderness, I certainly share a negative partiality towards insects, especially of the flying kind. I look nervously at my partner hoping to see similar sentiments. Certainly disappointing to see an unruffled face focused on getting ready for the night cap. Consoling myself that under the covers they are unlikely to fly in, I tuck in dutifully along.

The first ray of sunshine wakes me up with a jolt. My companion is still fast asleep. Sunshine is my best friend as it keeps the uncomfortable nocturnal encounters at bay. I quickly change and eagerly step out to see what the resort, the structures built totally of wood to be in tune with nature, has to offer.

As I step out, I see more clearly the steep steps with the rope railing I climbed up the previous night. I notice that the hills have been minimally cleared merely to accommodate the rooms and the pathways. I could as well have pitched a tent in a wild hilly forest. That thick and undisturbed is the vegetation. The rains of the night have left drops of water on the leaves, sprinkling them on you as you go close to the plants, something that you can't always avoid.

I hear the water falls faintly and make my way purposefully in that direction. Half way through the winding narrow pathways, I am greeted by a party warning me not to venture further in my thin slippers as early in the morning leeches are fond of taking their walk and incidentally after the rains, there were many who had decided to indulge their fancy.

I turn away disappointed and make my way to the restaurant. A fabulous woody space, the structure expertly designed to offer an old world charm while the design, materials and ambience are in tune with its location. But what captures my eye and my ears more is the spectacular valley view and the waterfalls a few miles away. Captivated, I pull up my chair and armed with a cup of steaming coffee, I decide to soak in the beauty of this uncorrupted space.

Time seems to have come to a standstill. What mattered was the view, the fresh nip in the morning air and the silence broken only by the cheerful chirping of the birds. This is certainly heaven, I thought. And even for the less romantic, it was indisputably an undisturbed haven to relax, rejuvenate.



After a while, the serenity literally seeping into my bones, I found myself slipping into a meditative mode. I was thus sitting, my eyes closed when one of the members of our party jerked me to reality, loudly wondering how I could fall asleep, in such a fabulous location, with the air so fresh.

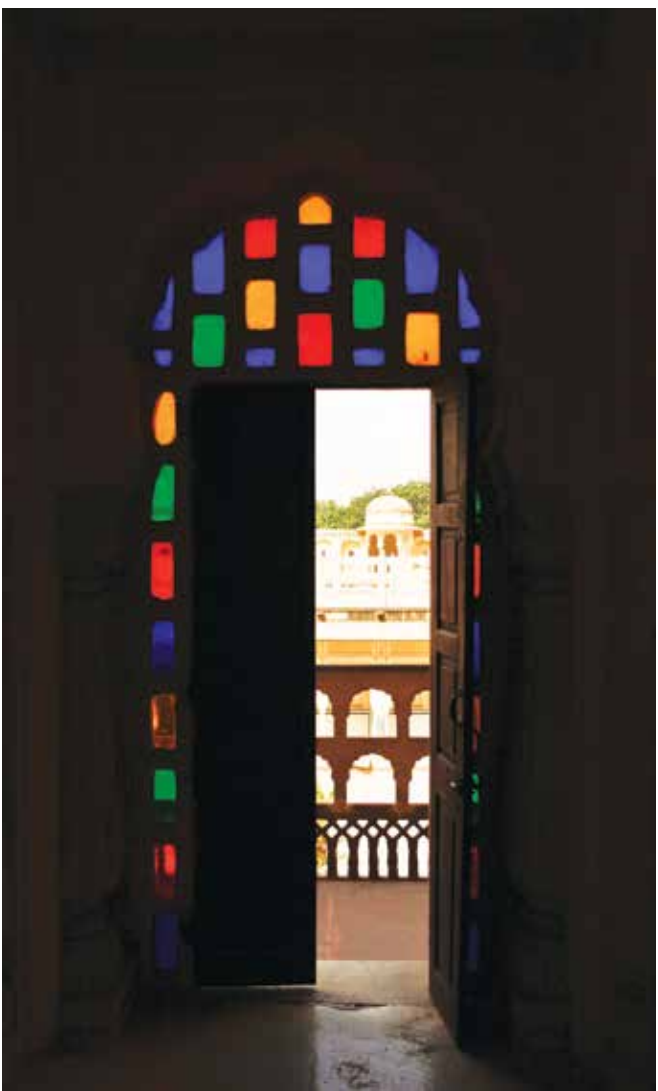
Incidentally there was another spot where the pool prevailed, structured in a manner where it gives an illusion of flowing into the valley and disappearing into the deep abyss. I marched down with my friend to view this spectacle. And there it was, the water in the pool ending at the sheer drop, giving you the feel of swimming into nothingness. As for the view, exquisite would be putting it mildly.

Now if you thought, views and nature are the only things offered on the plate, wait till you dip into the mouth-watering local cuisine offered at the restaurant. Captain Nitin Dhond, the man behind the resort as well as one who gave the wilderness concept a tangible form after battling

with locational and structural hurdles, says, "The cuisine has been deliberately kept totally local. Even the mode of serving in clay pots is in keeping with the forest ambience."

He further adds, "When we first chose this space, we had a difficult time in locating the boundaries of the resort. Army style expeditions and explorations had to be undertaken to earmark them. The place, being uninhabited, was frequented by leopards, bison, along with plenty of other fauna. Snakes abounded in the hills with pythons and cobras spotted on multiple occasions. The delicate ecology of the hills had to be preserved and the resort had to be structured to bring in least disturbance to the same."

A tall order, definitely not easy to execute. But being himself from the armed forces and serving currently in Merchant Navy, Dhond handled the issues with élan, solving each problem with effortless ease. The result of that exercise is for all to see, a resort which is rightly called Wilderndest.



FROM THE DESERTS OF RAJASTHAN TO THE EXOTIC EGYPT, INTERIOR DESIGNER **MAHESH CHADAGA** SHOWCASES EXQUISITE ELEMENTS IN GLASS RANGING FROM FABULOUS BOTTLES TO DROP LIGHTS BESIDES THEIR VIBRANT USE IN STRUCTURES LENDING UNIQUE CHARACTER AND COLOUR TO THE SPACES.

The Hawa Mahal built in 1799 was designed with a unique five storey exterior that resembles a honeycomb. The exterior wall houses a spectacular skin of intricate lattice work with 953 small windows or Jharokhas, featured to let in not only a gush of cool air into the interiors during the sweltering summer months but also serve as an observatory for the royal ladies under ‘purdah’ where they could view the happenings on the streets without revealing themselves.

The Mahal recently underwent extensive restoration, part of which was sealing the lattice with coloured Belgian glass. While the colours have certainly added a rich tone and vibrancy to the interiors, they have shut the Hawa out of the Mahal. Experts also contend that the original building did not have these colourful delicate pieces as part of the structure as Belgian glass became popular only after the 1880s, almost a century after the Mahal was built.

FRAGILE YET SPECTACULAR



Aswan in Egypt is famous for not only the fascinating views of the Nile and its bazaars selling baskets, handmade scarves, wall hangings and spices but also the perfumes and the magnificent bottles they are housed in. These blow glass bottles in their exquisite shapes can be seen while being made, each incorporating arresting structures and features. Equally popular are the colourful glass drop lights made in similar fashion.





FUNDERMAX MAX YOUR EXTERIORS

It is customary to see glass ensconced steel structures serving as iconic retail and office spaces, each packing in a unique design where the fragile material appears no more delicate, but imposing on the façade. While the appearance can be imposing, the fact that the material is glass and is easily breakable is not altered. Yet, glass is preferred because of its other qualities of permitting natural light, its clean attractive surface making it a sought after material.

While glass is certainly a preferred material for facades because of its various characteristics, using a laminate that affords equal beauty and clean surface, yet dispenses with the fragile element, can certainly be an attractive option. Offering such a laminate is FunderMax, with its eclectic range of products that pack in gloss, matt finish, vibrant colours, exquisite patterns, exciting finishes like metallic, wood grains, stone, even customised digital prints to reflect a theme.

Each of these laminates, besides coming in a range of patterns, designs and customisations, are also sensitive to the environment, besides being of high quality, long lasting, cost effective as well as affording easy maintenance. These not only decorate the façade of a building, lending individuality and character, they are suitable for use in balconies, as perforated structures that replace the traditional jaalis as well as the modern louvers, for door fencing, in ceilings and cubicles in the interiors.

Coming in a range of thickness, the FunderMax laminates consist of lengths of natural fibre and synthetic resins which are melted at high pressure and temperature and hardened irreversibly. Its precise and controlled production techniques are environment friendly with a total absence of asbestos, wood preservatives as well as compounds that appear in PVC. The panels, being highly resistant to abrasions, harsh weather such as frost and heat, double hardened to resist impact, are also ideal for use in outdoor furniture, as fences, awnings and sun protection shields.

FunderMax has recently come up with another innovative leap in its production with the introduction of Glossy Range of decors designed to add extra sophistication. The Glossy Range of laminates have both sides reflecting a glossy surface, giving freedom to designers to conceptualise and implement their designs effortlessly. With the thickness of this range starting from 8mm onwards, these laminates permit use in all weather conditions while retaining their environment friendly sustainable features.



Events in BRC: November to December 2013



Dandeli: Going back to the roots

The year was 1972. A small band of visionaries, designers all of them undoubtedly, decided to get together in an idyllic location called Dandeli to start a forum of professionals later the same year, December 22nd to be precise, a forum that was to be christened as the Indian Institute of Interior Designers. What was unique here was the coming together for the first time in the history of professional institutions, of not just the designers per se, but designers and industry, the trade members thus forming an equally integral part of this forum.

What thus started four decades ago, has grown in leaps and bounds, with Chapters and Centres spread across the country, the Institute serving as an inspiration to many a business house about the value of bringing together layers of different strengths to enrich the product or service.

It seemed only natural, four decades later to visit this birth place of IIID, pay homage to the very soil where the seeds were first sown and celebrate the forty successful years of completion. Thus happened the fortieth anniversary meet at Dandeli, of the Executive Committee, a few

past Presidents and the Managing Committee from Bangalore Regional Chapter which hosted the event.

Thoughts and ideas were generously shared amongst the participants on how to give back the community of Dandeli which generously hosted its origin. How could we repay this small town for the generosity of contributing what was a few square feet of space four decades back to bring to life a group that today reaches out to millions of square feet of space. Would this be an exercise by way of Social Responsibility or would it be a recognition and support of heritage values. Could we extend our gratitude and commitment in the form of informal training of the youth of the Dandeli Community? Ideas abounded and were freely shared.

Going back to the roots, revisiting the birth place was certainly an exercise in understanding and rediscovering the motivation behind the founding of this organisation that now extends to bring under its large umbrella, traders, manufacturers, students, teachers along with the designers to make the mark of an institute of significant stature. It is now way forward, to take it to greater heights and reach the golden year mark.



CEP Workshop on Surfaces

As part of the Continuing Education Program (CEP) that is designed to facilitate practicing professionals to have access to emerging concepts, innovative technologies and master new techniques that would address the changing requirements of design, IIID Bangalore Regional Chapter in collaboration with VISTAAR conducted a weeklong exhibition and workshop on “Surfaces” for over 40 participants. Architect Vivin Agarwal, former faculty of NID was the mentor, guiding the participants through the emerging techniques. While the exhibition displayed a variety of materials from different brands, the workshop highlighted designers’ perspective in handling surfaces.

The workshop was held at Vistaar, Hubtown, Ulsoor, Bangalore.



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imagination...

Malleable, versatile, seamless...that is Luxor.



Luxor solid surfaces are non-porous, homogeneous surfacing material composed of acrylic resin and natural minerals. Luxor provides limitless opportunities to the designers through its unmatched aesthetic appeal, remarkable functionality and impressive range of colours. Extremely durable, designed to withstand daily wear and tear, hygienic being non-porous, stain resistant, easy to clean and maintain, Luxor solid surfaces can be used for any thinkable interior and exterior applications. Furthermore, It's seamlessness and ability to be shaped, carved or embossed opens up a whole new world of creative opportunities.

Go ahead...experience the versatile virtuosity of this futuristic material and convert your ideas into stunning reality.

Seamless | Colourful | Solid | Malleable |
Renewable | Thermoformable | Hygienic | Non-toxic

Exterior Cladding | **Bathroom:** Vanity Counter | Wall Cladding | Bath Tub | **Kitchen:** Kitchen Counter Top | Sink Bowls | Dado Wall | **Office:** Reception Desk | Wall Partition | Working Counters | Conference Table **Retail:** Display Units | Display Counters | Designer/Customized Wall Panels **Healthcare:** OT Walls | OT Door Jams | Laboratory Tops | Lab Counter Top



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