

antarya

★ FINISHING MATTERS



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Chairperson's Foreword



Dear Members,

Thank you for your support through last year! Our achievements so far have been modestly put, laudable!

To name a few we bonded over tree Plantation, celebrated the Installation Ceremony in the presence of our President Pratap Jadhav.

Andrea Milani's presentation at the Master Series event was well received. We extended our experience to the students of various schools of design in Mysuru and Bengaluru where Architect Milani conducted workshops and presentations. We are thankful to our members of Trade Trespa and Hindustan Marbles and Granites for their support.

The 'Pecha Kucha' event at the Global living Emporio was an absolute celebration of our past and the way forward - keeping in line with our theme 'Past Forward'.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the design fraternity of Bengaluru and the other cities in Karnataka for taking part in the IIID Design excellence award – incidentally, we drew the second highest entries pan India!

Parul Zaveri's presentation at the Master series event in November was par

excellence! Their commitment to reviving building craft and using the sustainable route was awe inspiring. We are extremely thankful to Sai Gallerium for the unstinted support, to make this event a huge success!

We launched a couple of projects under our CoDe Studio in our endeavour to taking design to the masses.

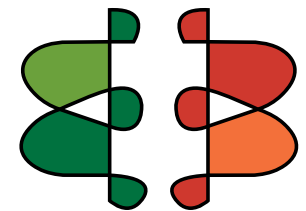
We have revived the IIID calendar in an attempt to reignite the joys of sketching – a skill that is rarely used these days! We thank our trade members for their support in this initiative!

Another year is upon us and we are looking forward to many more milestones to achieve! We are honoured that the first Joint Executive Committee meeting is scheduled to be held, in Bengaluru! On 11th and 12th of January.

Looking forward to your continued support and wishing each of you, a Happy, Healthy, Peaceful and Prosperous 2018!

SHYAMALA PRABHU

Chairperson IIID BRC, 2017-19
aakruti_ad@yahoo.co.in



IIID BANGALORE REGIONAL CHAPTER

**IIID Bangalore
Regional Chapter Emblem**

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



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Editor's Note



In life nothing is complete unless the finishing touches are lent perfect. This holds true in design too and architecture and interiors are not distinct from this. Keeping this in view, this issue deals with finishes in its cover story, delving in depth into nature's own product, wood, the multiple finishes it can be given, each unique and transforming in their manifestation, effectively marking the language of the interiors.

In its constant endeavour to improvise and offer a larger spectrum of design presence, Antarya continues to introduce new features and the Design Spot that we have carried in the last two issues, featuring award winning projects is part of this attempt. We will continue to explore new features in the coming issues, making Antarya not only a comprehensive design magazine but one that stands apart amongst its peers.

The next issue will be dealing with ceramics and tiles and their transforming presence in the interiors. We look forward to continued participation and support from both members and industry to make Antarya a leading national design magazine in the coming years.

DINESH VERMA

Managing Editor
verma@acegrouparchitects.com

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REVIEWS

Congratulations team Antarya for being one of the finest publications of IIID at Chapter level.

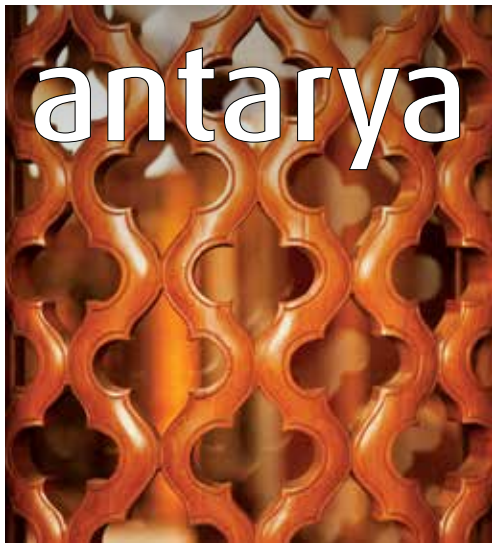
Vishnu Bheda

Interior Designer
NEC Member & Mentor BRC

The last two years I have been reading Antarya regularly, its content and quality of print is very impressive, the articles are varied and informative. It also offers a good insight into the happenings of IIID BRC.

Architect Niranjan Das

N G Associates



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COVER IMAGE

PU clear coat on wood.
Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**.
Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.

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**INSTITUTE
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Bangalore Regional Chapter



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FINISHING MATTERS

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

Irrespective of the material in use, whether a space or a product appears stunning solely depends on the type of final finish lent to the material or the space. Even the most intricate of designs, the arduous hours of labour employed, the skills applied can run the hazard of being ruined if the final finish is not appropriate or well done. The beauty and in turn the value of the product or space can be significantly diluted because of a wrong finish.

This is especially so when it comes to wood, be it as an artefact, product or an element that is used as part of the structure in a space. Many wood finishing techniques prevail, each offering a functional as well as aesthetic characteristic. Besides the enhanced rich appearance, the right type of finish increases the resistance to moisture and other environmental elements, such as sealing pores that may serve as breeding spaces for insects and bacteria.

The type and manner of finish imparted, however requires attention, right choice and execution as the individual properties of the wood could affect the final appearance as well as performance of a finish. Thus, the colour variation between the layers of sapwood and heartwood, the coarse textures that is characteristic of woods such as Oak, ring porous hardwoods, require specific address relevant to the condition of the wood addressed.

Left: Matt-finish melamine polish in ceiling.
Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph
by **Mahesh Chadaga**.



THE BEGINNINGS

Wood finishing dates back to as early as the 17th century though information on the traditional finishing methods is limited. The materials used for finishing during this period were mostly temporary, degradable natural materials like resins, oils. These typically go through oxidative destruction after they are applied, making it difficult to identify. The craftsmen involved in providing the finish to wood, be it on cabinets, floors, did not document the mode of finish nor the materials used for the same.

Besides, the local tastes, availability of materials and the cost of the woodwork played a role in the materials used for finishing. However, the range of materials used remained fairly the same till the mid-19th century, the varnishing and dyeing materials used in the 19th century resembling that used in the 17th century.

FINISHED WITH WAX

A common mode of finishing opted in the 18th and 19th centuries was wax with beeswax being the most sought after wax. The wax being easily available in rural part of England as well as the United States, this mode of finish saved the cost of expensive imported varnishes. Wax was usually polished to a high gloss finish with some methods involving mixing the wax with turpentine to make the wax softer, making the polishing easier.

A SHELLAC FINISH

The 19th century saw the emergence of lac used for finishing wood. Lac is derived from the secretions of the insect *Laccifer Lacca* found in India as well as China. The lac bug lives on trees, sucking the nutrients from the wood sap. It secretes a protective shell that covers the twigs and branches it resides on. These branches are cut off once the deposits are adequate and the resin sourced is processed. The raw material sourced, referred to as sticklac, is crushed and cleaned with water to remove the dirt along with the twigs, the insect carcasses. The finished product is either amber colour with wax or blond with the colour removed as well as dewaxed. The shellac thus obtained is graded based on the tree it is sourced from as well as the time of the year it was harvested, the quantum of wax, the clarity, colour and hardness. Shellac can be used to bring forth a very fine glossy finish where many thin coats of shellac are applied, the process referred to as French polishing.

VARNISHED TO SHINE

Varnish is invariably the final stage of preparation of a wood product and varnish made from turpentine and rosin was

Top: Exterior grade acrylic based PU polish. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.

Left: Antique finish polish on carved wood. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.



commonly used for finishing in the 18th and early 19th century furniture. This was so given that both turpentine and rosin were among the cheapest raw materials and these are also often mentioned finishing materials in the information documented of this period. However there were many kinds of varnish used based on the mode of preparation and raw materials used. For instance alcohol is necessary for manufacturing spirit varnishes with many spirit varnishes calling for use of brandy in their formulas.

THE ALTERNATIVE LACQUER

Coming in as a viable alternative to shellac whose pricing had caused turmoil in the US during the early 20th century, lacquer has as its principal component, cellulose nitrate. Cellulose nitrate is easy to process from the wood pulp and was in abundance during the post war period of this time as 'gun cotton'. Given the dangerous quotient associated with these stockpiles, requiring to be put to something useful, the evolution of lacquer using this was a welcome development. Lacquers also came with the added advantage of being more durable and easier to apply as compared to shellac.

PREPARATORY MODES

While the final finish of the wood would depend on the finishing coat opted and applied, there is a preparation part, getting the

Top: Lacquered finish dining table from Bently. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.

Left: PU medium gloss finish on well seasoned teak wood kitchen shutters. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.



wood ready for finishing. This includes sanding, scraping, filling, staining, bleaching amongst a number of other methods. The wood surface ready for finishing is then subject to coats of wax, shellac, varnish, lacquer, paint, depending on the choice, with each coat followed by sanding.

SAND OUT THE IMPERFECTIONS

Wood surfaces invariably come with imperfections being nature's product, be it scratches, grooves, ridges, discoloration. Appropriate sanding smoothens out the surface, eliminating the defects though larger defects such as gouges cannot be done through this process. The sanding schedule typically begins with sandpaper that is coarse to remove larger defects. This is followed with other grades of sandpaper as appropriate to the wood in use.

While sanding removes defects on the wood surface, it also creates minute scratches and flakes of wood on the surface that spring up, commonly referred to as grain-raising. The grain-raising especially occurs when the sanded wood is accompanied by a water based wood finish. Wetting the surface with water and leaving it to dry and later sanding the wood is a successful way of addressing this problem.

Top: Oil-based clear coating for rough finishes. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.

Left: Spiral staircase in glass and acrylic-based polyurethane clear coat wood finish. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.



Top Left: Antique Chettinad mirror – blue distressed wood finish. Project by **Architect Kavita Sastry**. Photograph by **Arun Koothaduth**.

Above: Matt-finish PU coating on wood with marble inlay. Project by **Architect Leena Kumar**. Photograph by **Mahesh Chadaga**.



UNDO THE STAIN

Stains, both organic and inorganic, can alter the wood surface, the colours at times enhancing the appearance of the wood while in yet others it can prove to be disfiguring. For instance, Oak wood afflicted by beef-steak fungus can result in a deep attractive brown which need not be removed before finish is applied. Yet, stains caused by reaction of iron on wood can prove to be a scar requiring removal. Bleach comes in handy to remove such stains. Bleach is occasionally used to also reduce the colour variation between sapwood and heartwood and within the heartwood itself.

COLOUR IT RIGHT

Staining to alter the natural colour of wood is done to either reduce the colour variation between sapwood and heartwood as well as within heartwood, or to enhance the appearance of dull looking wood and bring in a grand feel akin to ebony, mahogany, walnut. Staining is done through dyes or pigments, many of which may not be part of the natural colour palette of wood. Chemical staining involves exposing the wood to chemicals that react with wood to form coloured compounds, such as ammonia fuming which is used to darken woods such as Oak. However, staining wood is tricky as some sections of the wood absorb more stains than others, leading to blotches of colour.

THE FINAL FINISH

The final coat of polishing happens after the wood surface is prepared, stained and the chosen finish, be it wax, shellac, lacquer, varnish, paint, is applied. This final coat involves polishing or buffing using steel wool, pumice, rotten stone or others based on the type of shine opted. To ensure a degree of protection, this is often followed with a final coat of wax.

Top Right: Four poster timber bed in white Duco paint matt finish. Project by **Architect Kavita Sastry**. Photograph by **Arun Koothaduth**.



THE RICHNESS OF WOOD

Wood in an interior brings in not only warmth and beauty, but richness too. **Architects Akshara Verma of ACE Group and Raja Arjun of OCD** evoke this, through old school detailing in the furniture and the robust presence of solid wood in the décor.



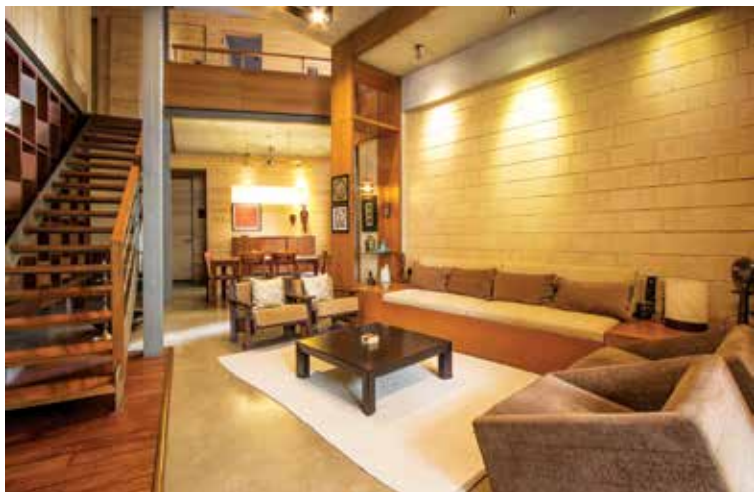
Red Cedar prevails mostly, with a splash of yellow Cedar inlays combined with a variety of finishes to elicit the desired ambience. Natural, walnut and Wenge polish is used to bring forth three contrasting tones and accents to the wood.

The existing wood in the ceiling has been ripped to reveal the original grains and given natural polish to effuse the original sheen.

The custom made curved plywood seating is finished with epoxy paint while the loose furniture made from reclaimed wood is lent Wenge polish.

The wall panelling is designed from strips of solid wood waste and finished with natural polish to reveal the natural grains.





SPEAKING WITH WOOD

It is infusion of nature into the interiors in nature's own material. **Architects Dimple Mittal and Vijay Narnapatti of Maya Praxis** bring forth the unmatched beauty of wood, finished to reveal its natural grains, in these stunning woody interiors



The office, the spa, the residence, the yoga centre have a single thing in common-a copious presence of wood in their interiors. The reused packaging pine wood, present universally in all these spaces, with its matt finish polish reveals the raw beauty of wood in its natural grains. While MDF has been used with the similar eco-friendly water based polish, the plywood in the spaces has been finished with teak veneer, the colours in all kept to its natural state.

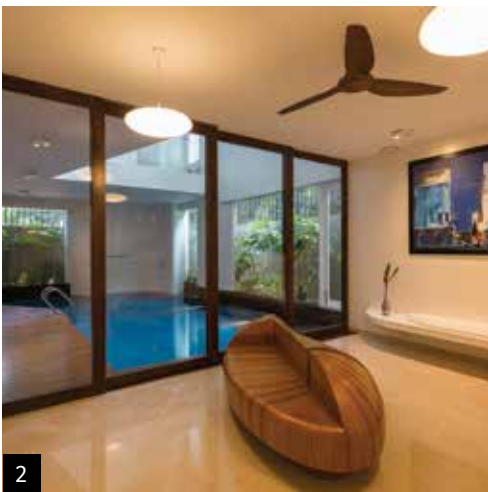


1. The niches reflect wall finish to complement the metallic wall finish in the background and contrast the veneer finish used on the ledges.
2. The reception is decorated in textured MDF covered in gold paint. Veneer features on the ledge of the credenza with the wooden box on its side sandwiched with silk and glass.
3. The wood highlight wall is given a wallpaper finish to infuse character while lacquer finished MDF and PU coated veneer form the wood base.



FINISHING IT RIGHT

The mode of finishing opted in wood makes the difference in the final ambience. **Architect Gunjan Das of NG Associates** infuses the right finish to elicit the desired language in the space.



1. Plywood finished in American walnut veneer clads the metal staircase and serves as seating elements to lend warmth to the neutral decor.
- 2 & 3. Teak wood sliding and collapsible doors open the interiors seamlessly on to the pool and courtyard while the wooden seating complements this infusion of outdoors.

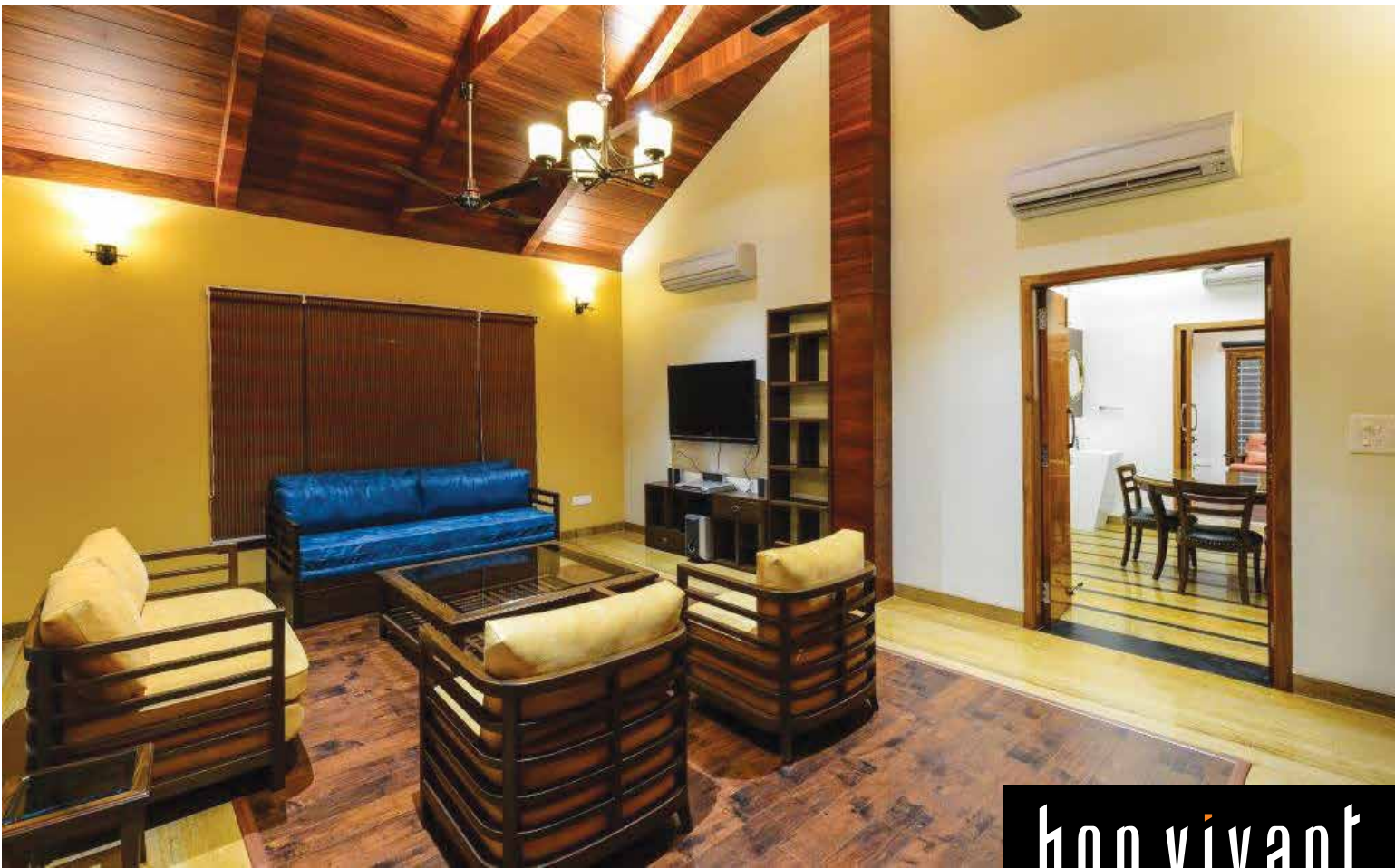


WARMING WITH WOOD

Architects Smaran Mallesh, Vikram Rajashekar, Narendra Pirgal of Cadence Architects use wood to infuse warmth into the predominantly neutral interiors.



Above & Facing page: Bon Vivant Veneer Royale Fummee Tabassco.



veneered with BON VIVANT

The warmth of an interior is invariably accentuated when it sees a copious presence of wood. Irrespective of the type of décor or manner of use, wood, by its mere presence, ushers in life and an indisputable connect with nature. While the mere presence of wood can transform the language of a space, the type of finish imparted to the wood determines the ambience exuded as its ultimate beauty lies in the manner of its display.

Besides protecting the wood surface, the type of finish imparted enhances the appearance, serving to seal and eliminate blemishes, defects that are an invariable part of nature’s product. Offering wood products and a variety of stunning veneers and finishes to deliver a spectacular space for the connoisseur is Archidply with its varied wood solutions.



The router cut Bon Vivant Plywood

WHY BON VIVANT

Veneers are much sought after to lend the desired finish to wood. The range and quality of veneer used is a strong determinant of the final outcome of the finish executed. It is then not surprising that a range of handpicked veneers can serve as the fine difference between an exotic finish and a pedestrian texture.

Bringing in such handpicked solutions from the best range in wood sourced from across the world is the **Bon Vivant** range of wood ply and veneers, a luxury brand wood solution offered by Archidply, where the veneers pack in an inherent originality that defies specification through product number, colour and grain.

The **Bon Vivant** veneer range, coming in an extra thick layer of up to 0.55mm thickness, incidentally covers a range of wood species and grades that cross over 250 in number, in both indigenous and imported varieties.

DECORATING WITH BON VIVANT

The exotic Gurjan trees, a native species of Mayanmar, can grow up to a 100 feet, its cylindrical heartwood displaying a stunning shade that varies from light to dark red brown or simply dark brown, well defined from the sapwood. This hard, durable timber comes at an average density of 740 Kg /cm2, and is considered equivalent to Teak

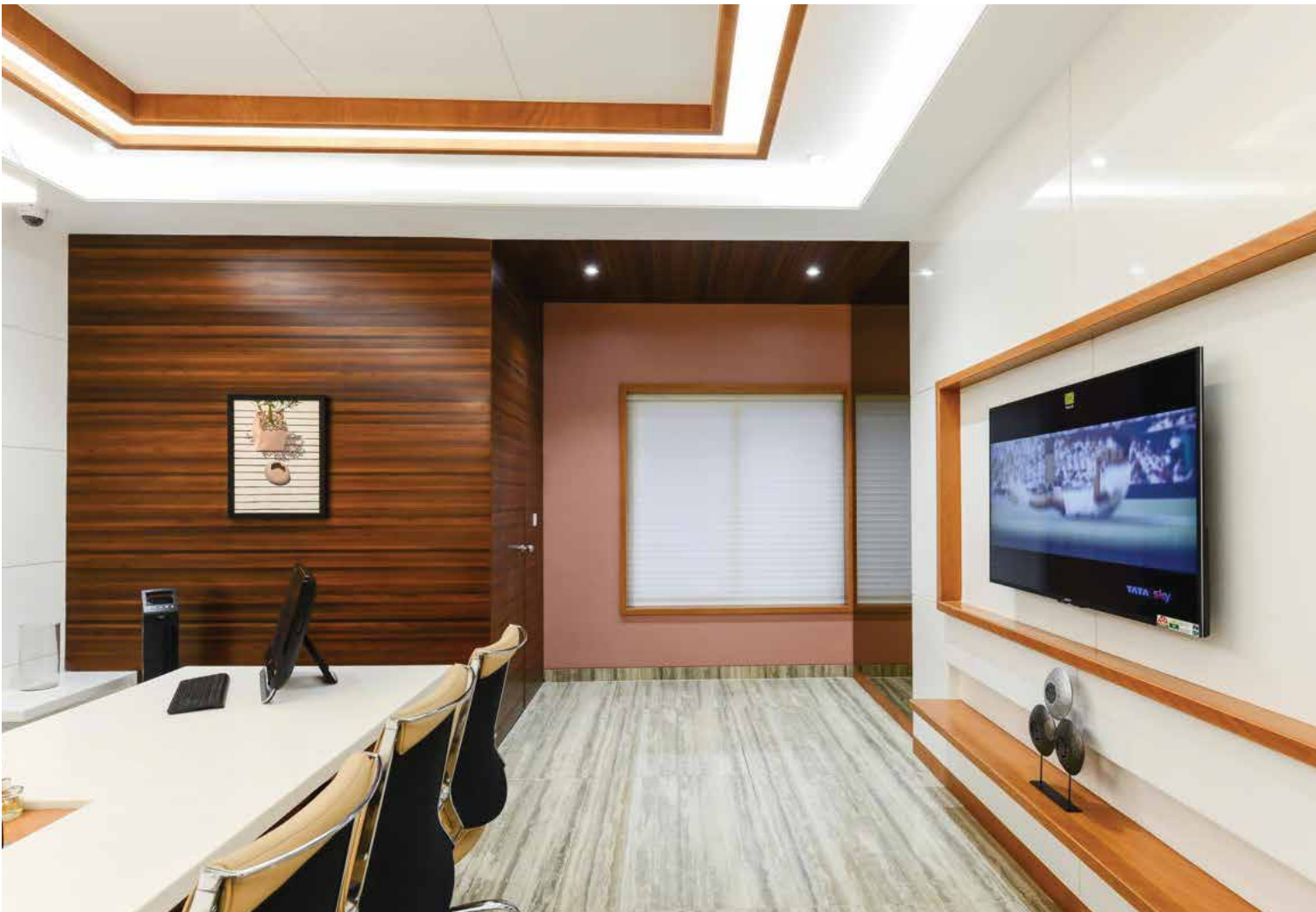
in terms of strength. Given its higher density, the Burmese Gurjan provides plywood that is more dimensionally stable and heavier compared to conventional wood ranges.

The Bon Vivant range of ply is sourced from the Burmese Gurjan, its 19mm, 8x4 plywood weighing 45 Kg as compared to around 40 Kg for conventional wood ply ranges. Being composed in a highly sophisticated machine, the **Bon Vivant** plywood also has zero gaps in its core, thus eliminating any chance of water seepage, attacks by termites, wood borers and other microorganisms.

The panel strength and mode of construction further brings in superior nail holding property, permitting any screw, nail, nut or bolt to be used without the danger of the plywood splitting. The production procedure opted further makes the **Bon Vivant** range of ply heat and water resistant, chemical resistant as well as anti-abrasive.

THE SUSTAINABLE VENEER

Wood is not only versatile but most sustainable given that it is a product of nature. While hardwood is a desired option, the incidence of deforestation can act as a deterrent for its use. Plywood sourced from plantation wood is thus considered as a more sustainable option. Yet, there continues to exist, the desire to bring in the



Bon Vivant Veneer Royale Teak.

presence of exotic species of wood into the spaces. Interestingly, history, dating back to the first experimentation by the Egyptians, witnessed a similar desire and a forthcoming sustainable solution that took the form of thin sheets of wood sawed from tree trunks, later known as veneer.

Veneer became popular during the Renaissance, manifesting in many elegant pieces of furniture. Its industrialised production process later happened in the 19th Century. Be it the exotic varieties sourced from countries in South America, from Europe, Africa or Asia, the veneer range available are many, the leaves thin, yet leaving the indelible stamp of each exquisite species of hardwood it is sawn from. The **Bon Vivant** range of veneers brings in this entire range in full glory, the imprints intact, the grains mesmerising, the final finish astounding.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

The production process of veneer involves multiple stages starting from careful selection of the veneer logs to the different methods of slicing, preparing and finishing the final product. To select the appropriate veneer log, the straightness of the log is tested, the heart and tension cracking, the visible faults such as knots, pin knots, decays that need to be avoided, besides the colour, texture, shape and dimensions of the logs.

The selected logs are then sliced which bring in the different surface effects to veneer such as Quarter Cut (straight line veneer), Flat Cut (Cathedral or crown shape), Rift Cut. These patterns are brought in through a manner of sawing the timber, referred to as flitches.

The slicing machine comes in two types; horizontal and vertical. The flitches are laid perfectly flat on the slicing bed to enable the veneer to arise in the desired thickness. The sliced veneer is then passed through the drier to reduce the moisture content to 10-14 per cent and also flatten the veneer. The emerging veneer is then clipped in a Clipper and is then Spliced or joined in a Splicer or Kuper machine to form a sheet.

The emerging spliced sheet is pressed in mother ply along with water resistant adhesive to get the decorative veneer ply. The final finishing involves passing the pressed veneer on to a wide belt sander machine to obtain the desired finish. The finished veneers are ultimately grouped, marked and checked for quality.

THE BON VIVANT RANGE

Based on the patterns, grains, the finish and species, the range of veneers on offer are varied. Notable ones include Burl, Fiddles, Cluster, Knot, Crotch, Crown cut, Quarter cut veneers.



Bon Vivant Royale Fish Bone Veneer

Burl Veneer

The highly figured Burl wood is known for its unique design and rare beauty, the veneers reflecting unique patterns that are individual to each sheet. The wild grains evident in the Burls further make the wood extremely dense and resistant to splitting, making it a choice option for furniture and interior wood work.

Fiddle Veneer

This name comes from the customary use of this veneer as a surface finishing material for fiddles. Fiddle veneer is easily identified by the regular streaks that run across the grain, its value being directly proportional to the regularity of the streaks. Fiddle veneer is sourced from quarter sawn logs of European Maple, Oak, Angire, Makore and other varieties that sport an even lustre and natural texture.

Cluster Veneer

Highly appreciated for its beauty and distinctive character, the cluster patterns feature in Burl and Pommele varieties of veneer too. The cluster patterns are realised by sawing the veneer sheets from half round logs of Redwood, Oak, Elm, Ash, Madrone, Walnut and similar exotic wood species.

Knot Veneer

Veneers sliced from branches having grains running perpendicular to the actual grain of the trunk, reveal knot patterns in loose as

well as tight formations. The knotted pattern, given its arresting beauty, proves as a favourite pick to bring forth exclusivity in design, especially if the décor is rustic, minimalistic.

Crotch Veneer

The Crotch veneer is sawed from the intersection of the limb or the branch with the main trunk of the tree. The more distinct the curl or the crotch features, the higher is the value assigned to the veneer.

Crown Cut Veneer

The Crown Cut emerges when the log is sliced over the heart of the wood, producing as a result a cathedral structure in the veneer.

Quarter Cut Veneer

Prior to slicing, the log is cut into quarters, enabling the annual growth rings to be bisected. This brings forth a straight grain or ribbon-striped appearance. However, the yield of veneer sheets from this cut is low, resulting in this variety proving to be expensive. The wood sought for is mostly Walnut, Mahogany, Oak, Teak.

AN ARRAY OF EXOTICA

Bon Vivant range includes an array of exotic varieties of veneer that are both rare and unique to suit the connoisseur. Sourced from equally exotic varieties of wood species, each type in this section breathes fine taste and stunning design.



Royale Rio Rosewood

Also known as Brazilian Rosewood, Santos Rosewood and Jacaranda, this variety is sourced from South America, mostly Eastern Brazil. Used popularly in high grade architectural woodwork, the wood features amongst the most expensive varieties. Its irregular markings and variegated streaks are much sought after. While surface treatment is possible, at times the oily content in the pores makes polishing difficult.

Urban Rustic Briccolawood

The variety comes with an irresistible history, sourced from the Oak poles that line the lagoons in the city of Venice. The poles, each 10 to 15 m in height and 35 to 50 cm in diameter, were used to dock the Gondolas. Given the tide changes, the poles become home to microorganisms, revealing corrosion in many places, requiring replacement. The holes and patterns bored by ship worms and salt, makes the wood an extraordinary source of unique design to be featured on floors and furniture.

Royale Macassare

Available mostly in Southeast Asia such as Indonesia, it is sourced from the exotic species of Macassar, Ebony, Marblewood,

Amara, and comes in shades of reddish black. Macassar logs are rare to come by and are also small in diameter, the wood coming in shades of dark grey to black, peppered with regular and irregular streaks, its surface emitting a silky lustre.

Royale Pulp Tree

Commonly referred to as Eucalyptus, Eucalipto, Eucalyptus Globulus, the species originates from Australia and New Zealand and is cultivated in northern parts of Spain, East Africa, South America. Reaching a height of 110m, it is one of the tallest trees in the world. Coming in colours ranging from light grey to yellow, it comes in three varieties of plain, pommel and figured.

Royale Zericote

Better known as Siricote, Ciricote, Zircote and Ziracote, this wood species is confined to a limited region of Southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize. Going up to 10 to 20m in height, Zircote is 2 to 3 feet in diameter and heaviest in the group comprising over 250 different species of Cordia. While its sapwood is white yellow in colour, the hardwood varies from medium to dark brown with an irregular deep black zone. The elegant wood is easy on surface treatments, permitting a polished surface finish.



Bon Vivant Veneer Royale Teak.



Classics Colors (LEMA)

COATING THE WOOD

While veneers bring in the flavours of exotic species and alter the ambience of a space, wood coating can prove to be equally transformative, infusing a different language to a space besides effectively protecting the wood. Interestingly, over a decade back, share of protective wood coating was merely 2 per cent when compared to the total consumption of paint. However, this figure has increased to 20 per cent currently, the growth having picked up remarkably over the last four to five years.

Studies also reveal a greater inclination of users to opt for wood coating as compared to paint, especially when expensive timber is in use. Melamine and NC which was popular earlier has now been replaced with PU. This new trend has pushed up the growth of wood coating by ten times over the last decade. This is further expected to grow at 30 per cent per year over the next five years, especially with increasing awareness dawning on users.

COLLABORATING WITH IVE

Recognising the significance of this emerging trend, **Bon Vivant** Coating Services, in collaboration with IVE, ensures the wood has the right finish coated on it. IVE is the Brand of LECHLER Group specialising in the habitat sector. With over 70 years of experience developed in Brianza, a place renowned for its excellence in interior design and Italian furniture, IVE, through its collaboration with **Bon Vivant** Coating Services, also offers complete painting solutions for



Patinated Gold (REFLEX)

Interior walls, Exterior walls, Doors, Windows, Metals, Grills, Textures and assistance of any kind in painting.

IVE is popular for UV cycles which is a much sought after requirement of the furniture industry, along with wax polyester solution where it currently offers the best achievable high-gloss finish. Year 2013 also saw IVE having a privileged access to further technology as well as the widest colour possibilities in the market.

WOOD FINISHING BASICS

Traditionally the finish of the wood in the form of polish was done by local painters using French polish. This in many cases resulted in improper finishing as proper practices was lacking and the dependence for execution was on local carpenters and painters. Wood coating goes through many stages before the final finish is achieved.

Staining Wood

A pigment or dye is used in water or solvents, the stain applied directly to sanded raw wood to alter the colour of the wood without sacrificing the natural grains. These stains can be transparent or semi-transparent, the pigments permissible for dilution in water alone or solvent alone or in both based on their individual compositions.

Wood Isolator

Isolator is used on wood to avoid the extractives of the wood such as tannino from damaging the layers of coating. Isolators are

commonly used on exotic species of wood. At times they are also used on MDF to improve the polyester performance.

Base Coat: Sealer/Primer

A sandable layer of varnish, the base coat provides the required pore filling to the painted wood. Base coats are chosen based on the transparency, pore definition, sandability, verticability, levelling of the wood in question. PU base coats come in yellow with good filling power and are also competitively priced.

Top Coat

This serves as the final layer lacquer providing the desired finish to the painted wood. Top coats are selected based on the levelling, gloss, coverage, chemical and mechanical resistance of the wood used. Yellow in shade, the PU top coats provide the best aesthetically pleasing finish.

Coating in Acrylic

Serving as the best choice for open-pore and matt furniture, acrylic are more used on light wood or to prepare light opaque colours because of their non-yellowing properties. However, acrylic is more expensive than PU.



Coloured top-coat from Color Trend Habitat: Grey

Coating with Polyester

Polyester serves as the best way to prepare a close-pore base coat. It is apt for a varied range of finishes, be it matt or glossy, transparent or coloured. The polyester coating comes in either paraffin polyesters or polyester base coats that are either white or transparent. The paraffin polyesters are self-sealers that need to be applied in several layers and later sanded and polished to the final finish. They serve as the perfect way to prepare a smooth base on any type of wood.

Water Based Coating

This serves as the only solution for customers having VOC limits in their plant. Water based coating is tougher to use compared to a solvent coating. It also requires a longer drying process along with a warm well ventilated drying environment. While their performance is close to solvents, many are reluctant to use it.

TARGET REGION

The polishing and coating offered by **Bon Vivant** Coating Services will cover not merely Floors, wardrobes, doors, panels and furniture but all segments of the interior spaces, that include skirting, frames and even decorative glass. The coatings offered are tuned to the specific budget ranging from mid-segment to luxury.



Open Pore Wood (BONTEMPI)





IT IS ALL ABOUT THE **SOUL** SANJAY MOHE

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR





His demeanour is totally self-effacing, the affectionate smile welcoming you, belying the peak he has reached in design. He could be easily mistaken for an absent minded artist who spends most of his waking hours poring over his sketches, evoking life in his myriad creations, the spaces breathing life even before they are inhabited. His unruly long hair and flowing beard add to this impression, but only until he opens up to speak about his work. A total transformation then prevails, the passion and dedication unmistakable, the genius in him holding the listener spell bound.

Architect Sanjay Mohe of Mindspace Architects did not take up architecture by chance. Inspired from childhood, he was almost ‘brainwashed’ into the profession from as tender an age as five while in Montessori. His entry into JJ School of Architecture was thus not a surprise but one that was expected, almost preordained.



Above & Facing page: Care College
Previous page: Aurigene Discovery Technologies





Above & Facing page: Karunashraya, home for the terminally ill cancer patients



The academic rigour in JJ School was intense, says Mohe. “I was barely into the first week in college when our seniors remarked that good designers never failed to attract a crowd of the fairer sex. This inspired me to design even better”, he chuckles. It is a different matter he chose to remain a sworn bachelor later on.

While his brief stint in Saudi Arabia soon after graduating proved to be an immense learning curve, his move to Bengaluru marked the beginning of a new chapter in his design career. “Unlike Mumbai, Bengaluru was more slow-paced, giving more time to exercise ones creativity.” The city being equally warm and welcoming, not surprisingly Mohe decided to make Bengaluru his home and began his two decade career with CnT Architects in the eighties.

That is where he met his partners, Architects Vasuki Prakash and Suryanarayan with whom he started Mindspace Architects in 2004. Currently Mindspace Architects is

led by Mohe, Suryanarayan and Architect Medappa who joined the team later. “CnT Architects was a place of learning, with everyone totally inspired and working late voluntarily and this continues in Mindspace”, he says.

More of the intellectual that he is, it is not surprising that Mohe was part of the Base Group that was formed by a small group of architects in the eighties, where the members explored, debated, travelled, criticised, together reaching the pinnacle that each of its participants currently resides in. Adds Mohe, “It is not just raw talent but attitude, passion, combined with hard work that makes the difference in design.”

Given his belief of keeping things simple, where architecture is not compromised to suit specific living styles, his structures reveal minimalism. “It is about the soul of the structure, not the skin and our structures start from there, searching for the context instead of focusing on the wrapper. Sometimes this inner focus is so

intense to the point of us losing focus on the façade. But the façade should reflect the inner beauty”, contends Mohe.

As intense as the focus on the soul of the building, is his inclination to make nature as part of the interiors. “The intermediate space prevailing between the enclosed and open areas are most important and we fuse this to the point where the demarcation of where the indoors end and outdoors begin is effectively blurred.”

He adds, “Since the outdoor space is used through the day, imbibing nature into the interiors brings forth positive energy besides enabling the building to breathe by itself. Sustainability is about how you use forces of nature effectively, be it natural light, ventilation, where the quantum received is just right, keeping in perspective both the functional and emotional quotient.” Pointing to the movement of the sun through the day, he says, “The spaces need to be crafted according to the light and activity.”

*Sai Temple*

For Mohe, the structure has to unfold like a story, each node packing in a surprise, the sequence of elements as the structure unfolds marking the experience of the space, addressing effectively the emotional quotient along with functionality. “It is like our ancient temples, the path as you walk in through the multiple layers, the closing and opening of spaces giving a different experience, the scale changing in accordance.”

Besides displaying a total absence of ornamentation, his structures reveal an extensive use of local materials. “Till the nineties we used plenty of the local granite but given the labour intensive process involved in construction of stone walls, it was later used more as cladding.” His buildings invariably lean towards exposed concrete and white plastered walls. “Initially we used a lot of colours but once the structures were repainted, the ambience altered. White and grey are timeless as you do not tire of natural colours.”

The Digital Library built in IISC campus amply reflects this design inclination. The site, home to a cluster of big trees and a pit, posed a question before the team; is a building required at this spot? With the objective of preserving the serenity of the site, a central courtyard was built around the existing trees, with varied spaces created under the structure to suit different modes of reading, along with steps akin to a temple tank leading to a water body.

“Some would like to be seated under the trees, some next to a window, some under a high roof, yet others under a low roof, some would like to plant their feet in water while they pore over the books. The structure and seating elements were designed to accommodate all the varied requirements and possibilities”, explains Mohe.

The façade, which is mostly a composition of blank walls, is to retain and enclose the serene atmosphere of the inside, the double height interiors housing a variety of seating arrangements, the pergolas over the trees and the open corridors overlooking the trees connecting seamlessly the indoor and outdoor spaces.

Karunashraya, home for the terminally ill cancer patients reflects similar vocabulary in structure. “The last days need to be spent in a serene meditative ambience and water is a medium that offers this tranquillity”, says Mohe. Different moods have been created by using the water element, the individual rooms overlooking the water body. The building housing 70 beds, constructed fully in granite stone, mingle seamlessly with the trees and water bodies, connected functionally to the nursing quarters while the prayer room and morgue is sensitively kept out of this circulation.

“The rooms open on to the rising sun, the east orientation done to address the symbolic aspect of the condition of the inpatients. The

*IISC Digital Library, Bengaluru*



Rohan Mithila

west is sealed, not only keeping the harsh sunlight out but also keeping out symbolically the negative undertones of a setting sun on a terminally ill patient.”

The project Dr Reddy’s Research Lab packs in both a regimental design on one side and flexible spaces on the other. A discovery trail with open to sky spaces leads one through sunlit, curved and tapering pathways culminating in a fleet of steps, the route marking many a surprise element, the focal points and ever altering sunlight patterns encompassing the dining, library and admin areas in this flexible portion of the building. The learning and recreational centre opens on to the amphitheatre that is housed with trees and water bodies.

The geometrical spaces use cutting edge technology in the structure, the floors and walls revealing the same colour and texture to give the illusion at night of a space carved out in a cave while day time is marked with an interesting shadow play from the altering patterns of the streaming sunlight.

Their project Sai Temple reveals a contemporary visualisation of our erstwhile temple structures. While retaining the sacred areas of the temple, Mohe and team were asked to redesign the temple. The spaces were opened up to accommodate over 300 devotees while introducing a modern vocabulary to the structure.

“The traditional Shikara form was retained but this was layered from outside. The traditional Kalasha is housed on the glass pyramid, which is a small crystal with the multiple layers of Shiakara forming around it. The gaps between the layers were sealed with glass and the layers were grounded through connecting beams, tying up the structure. Sunlight filters through the glass, leaving patterns in the interiors.”

The half acre size of the site along with its existing trees that needed to be retained and connecting the multiple layers in this structure proved to be a challenge, says Mohe. Given the desired black hue for the structure, black granite was used for cladding the concrete walls and black mosaic tiles for the shell layers of the façade.

The Care College Trichy is built right next to a lake, the language of the built space again totally different from a conventional engineering institute. The structure was visualised and started from the core spaces housing the common classrooms during the first year of the course. A covered circulation path around this core structure leads to individual disciplines of engineering which once again lead thence to individual labs. The entire structure thus reflects a series of courtyards connecting to individual work rooms, the open areas on both sides of the classrooms permitting unhindered flow of air and light.

While the structure connects and opens on to the lake with the labs facing the water body, the steps and wind tunnels that exist between the core classrooms permit a glimpse of the water from within. “The design is akin to our temple architecture which has multiple layers. The classrooms open on to courtyards similar to the multiple open and enclosed spaces of the temple Mantap.”

The 13 acre Rohan Mithila, an apartment complex, brings in the effective play of greenery, waterbodies amidst an overlooking vertical structure. While the landscape spine with its water bodies serves as the central serene space, the voluminous gap between each block is akin to wind tunnel for the twin dynamic seven storeys white structure overlooking it. The twin individual buildings are functionally linked internally with a pedestrian pathway that features in the midst.

The central landscape spine is surrounded by a green wall that aesthetically conceals the basement featuring on all the sides. The spine culminates in the club house which is an assembly of multiple cuboids with 7 to 8m cantilevered roofs covering the intermittent open areas. Each cuboid houses a specific activity in the club house.



DINESH VERMA

ACE GROUP ARCHITECTS

PROJECT
Red Bridge Academy, Bengaluru

DESIGN TEAM
Ar. Dinesh Verma, Ar. Viji Daniel
Interiors: Shwetha Gotawat & Chetan L
(Ace Group Architects)
Landscape: Malik Z (MDS – Malik Design Studio)

AWARDS
Berg Award for Innovation in Institutional
Architecture 2015 Singapore

PICTURE CREDITS
Raju A K

ALTERING
THE LANGUAGE

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

Learning has undergone a sea change over the last century and more so in the last few decades. The educational institutions not surprisingly reflect this altered approach to learning in the design of their structures, facilitating the execution of this new perspective to education. Interestingly, this altered perspective to learning borrows a leaf out of the past, the concept of Gurukul occurring in the open expanse amidst nature, where learning is more experiential.

The closed classrooms are fast becoming a feature of the past in this new age learning, the individual units opening visually as well as physically into courtyards while many classrooms are designed totally in open to sky spaces. The classrooms are thus pared down to two walls, the other two opening out to bring in nature.

Initiating this change in these new age institutions is

Architect Dinesh Verma of ACE Group Architects, bringing home recognition and awards in the process. His award winning Red Bridge Academy in Bengaluru is a case in point where these altered sentiments and experiential learning have been incorporated in full measure.



Since the maximum impact of the new age concept of learning can occur in the fresh young minds, the design to suit these altered modes of learning is more pronounced in the primary section. The design is approached from the psychology of the young user of these spaces, bringing forth an unrestricted ambience where children can explore and experience.

Says Verma, “There has been a sea change in the approach to learning and this is reflected in the design of the new educational institutions. A subject like science is no more taught as theory in the classroom and later as practical in the laboratory. It is now more experiential where the metamorphosis of a tadpole to a frog is shown not in the lab but in the pond built explicitly to reveal the live evolution of tadpoles into frogs.”

Typically each classroom in the primary section in the 1,10,000 Sq ft Red Bridge Academy opens on to a courtyard, the individual rooms reflecting all the colours of the rainbow while the courtyard brings to the experience of the young learner the various textures of nature, be it gravel, grass, pebbles, sand. The textures make their presence in the built segment too in the form of natural flat stones, ceramic tiles, rubberised floors. The terracotta block walls further add to these varied textures.

The individual 650 sq ft rectangle classrooms have two sides opening on to the courtyard, permitting the children to step out and play when they fancy while the remaining two walls are covered with a wide variety of graphics that inspire the young mind, tell a story. The graphics are tuned to speak the language

of the young learner, the lion appearing as a cuddly animal rather than ferocious.

Given the age of the students and their needs, the classrooms come with adjacent restrooms and sleeping areas, designed to offer all the requirements without having to step out of the classroom. The lower segment of the walls serves as writing boards for children to scribble, with even the shape of the boards tuned to suit the mind of the young learner. A wall of honour prevails amidst this where students get recognised for their achievements.

The colours on the flooring further define the route to the classroom as well as the functional spaces within the classroom while the walls in the ensuing corridors accommodate seating

which also double up as art display spaces. The seating spaces work to convert the corridors into semi-indoor play areas, offering thus activity centres for the young children on merely stepping out of the classrooms.

The outdoor play area is more regularised with an external perforated wall which also serves as a shield from the harsh western sun for the windows underneath while the intervening gap creates an interesting walkway. The concrete bands of the walls double up as display bands for various streams of study, be it science, literature, social sciences. Coloured columns, red staircases, coloured steel rods serving as pergolas, further add to the riot of colours that is evident in the entire primary section of the institution.





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AJIT JAIN | GOPA MENON |
RAJIV MAJUMDER

PRAXIS INC.

PROJECT

The 'Un' – Office

DESIGN TEAM

Architects Rajiv Majumdar, Neha Sapre (Partner in Charge), Marian Kumar, Jubin Johnson (Associates)

AWARDS

NDTV Award – Interior Design (Winner, Office Space)
IIID South Zone Award – Interior Design (Runner Up – Large Office Space)

PICTURE CREDITS

IDEOGRAM, Mallikarjun Katakol

A COLLABORATIVE WORKSPACE

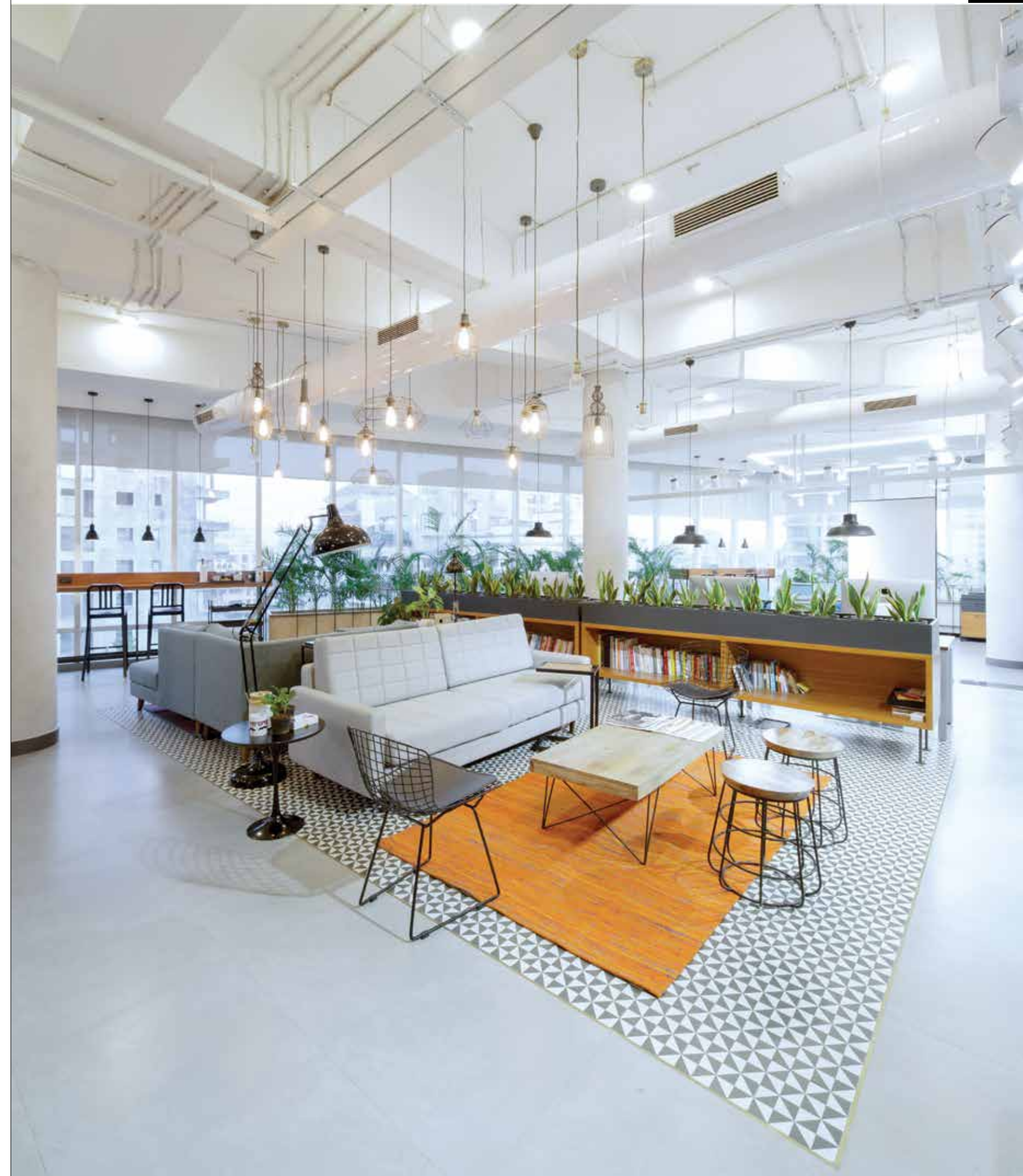
BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

An office customarily comes with individual cubicles, segmented work areas to offer an individual private space for every employee. The intent is to provide an undisturbed work space, however small it may be, which permits focus and deliverance.

But how about an entire office laid open, the free flowing interactive spaces designed more as an informal living area rather than a straight jacketed office? Sounds incomprehensible? Perhaps not. And certainly so if the award winning 'Un'-Office, designed by Praxis Inc. is to be taken as the trendsetter.



The 4m high 3000 Sq ft office, where the work focus is pure design, has been conceptualized as a free flowing interactive space without the constraining presence of cubicles and cabins. Even the three individual cabins featuring in the office have moveable partitions that can be slid aside while the cabin is not in use.





DESIGN CONCEPT

The office has been designed to be collaborative, with the warm feel of a home to lend a more informal touch to the ambience. Keeping with this design intent, the central space is conceptualised as twin living areas that overlook a workspace fashioned on the lines of

a bar. The idea being to create an ambience which facilitates free thinking and exchange of ideas, not over stiff desks and workspaces, but in a space that is devoid of work pressure and instead exudes warmth, informality and cheer.





The twin 'living areas' have been further segmented with a floor carpet of handmade painted mosaic tiles. A row of planter boxes mounted on shelves form a green demarcating wall between the 'living rooms' and the open workspaces which essentially are a bunch of working desks. The green wall also serves as an oxygen replenishing unit, given the plant varieties chosen, areca palm, mother-in-law tongue and money plant. "These have been planted in the specific ratio of 4:6:2, to increase the oxygen content in the work space", says Architect Gopa Menon of Praxis.

Three cubicles, with two incorporating a closed phone booth, feature around the central space or the living area. The cubicles come with moveable shutters which can be opened to lend the open seamless spaces to the office. The moveable shutters are mounted on brass finished u-channels on the floor while brass finished MS Rods form the track above. These channels also serve as support systems to prop the light weight black foam boards that the design teams use for posting their thoughts or exchanging ideas. "The black foam boards were specifically designed to permit easy shifting, to be placed where required as the team desires", adds Gopa.

Since volume plays an important role in giving the visual feel of expanse, the 4m height of the space was retained without opting

for a false ceiling to conceal the utilities. The ceiling, the ducts and other utilities have been intentionally painted white as this aids in removing the visual prominence of the utilities. The white reflects light, making the space appear larger and better lit.

Since an office, however open and collaborative the design intent as well as the work culture may be, requires a formal conference table, one such is accommodated in the 'Un'-Office too, featuring quietly aside the central space, serving as the sole formal feature in this open collaborative office.



DELVING INTO THE ROOTS



IN CONVERSATION WITH **NEELKANTH CHHAYA**

A proficient practitioner or an academic, the architect is a participant in the society, shaping future destiny. Either as an inspiring teacher or as a professional fascinated by the happenings around where the world is the primary source of emotional and intellectual energy, the architect has to be what a good architect has always been, irrespective of time period, says **Professor Architect Neelkanth Chhaya** in a lengthy chat with **Antarya**. Professor Chhaya is former Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT, where he taught for over two decades.

Q. You are a renowned professor and have dealt with students and the pedagogy of our architecture colleges over decades. Do you think there is something missing in our current approach, the manner in which leading schools teach architecture? If so, how would you address and alter this?

The schools of course teach how to be a proficient practitioner in the profession of architecture. This is necessary. Some schools do this very well, others do this inadequately. Also most of what is to be taught is defined by the current or recent or past conventions and routines of the profession. So, on the one hand, wherever it is necessary, the capacity to teach this should be built up. It ought to be borne in mind, however, that the profession tends to be conservative, tied to the status quo. Also, the architect is not only a professional who fulfils the tasks entrusted to her, but is equally a participant in society, a shaper of future destiny like other citizens.

Therefore the school is a kind of mirror to the profession, not its tool. It ought to challenge given notions and imagine alternatives. The profession cannot do this. The school ought to be a place of great

diversity and continuous dialogue. Very few schools are of this kind and this is one more aspect to work on.

Thirdly, the school is not a system (though some elements of systematisation are needed). The school is rather the hotbed of thinking and feeling individuals, often disagreeing. The teacher is the most important stimulus for this. Teachers who are passionately interested, who are energetic and visibly active, who through their activities inspire a thirst for understanding, who listen carefully and observe keenly – such teachers can inspire confidence and generate student energies. This is the one aspect that is increasingly neglected – to create an environment of keen thinkers who share with their students the journey of knowledge. Instead we increasingly find systems of administration becoming more and more cumbersome, sapping the teacher's energy, and preventing the flowering of individual directions that is essential for a place of thought. This perhaps is the most important thing to work on.

Q. You are a vociferous supporter of sustainable architecture and reviving our lost crafts and skills. Your association with

Hunnarshala Foundation is a reflection of this ardent stance. What can be done to ensure that this type of inclination is not restricted to a few but permeates amongst all architects in the country.

I am neither vociferous nor a supporter of any label of thought!

However, I do believe that Architecture reaches a high level when it is appropriate and proportionate. It should not be wasteful and it should do the least damage to the world. Also I believe that we have a great storehouse of skills and knowledge in our indigenous practices. We ought to partner with these knowledge practices instead of denigrating them as obsolete or backward.

For this we should question the received notions of what a professional is. The professional came into being in hierarchically divided societies. The professional used status to command the worker who was considered as lacking in knowledge and wisdom. We see that this is not true if we look carefully and objectively.

So we need to redefine the profession and the practice of making places. And



Khamir Crafts Resource Centre, Kutch



Above & Facing page: Architects Own Weekend House near Ahmedabad

the schools should engage the student in working with those people who have such skills, on projects that are not simply cerebral but engage the whole person. Then we might see a new version of architect.

Q. The architect in general tends to concentrate more on the object or the equipment needed for things to happen rather than the happening as is the case for those who operate from the streets. Do you feel this approach acts as a hindrance to design?

Yes. Architecture is inhabited. And everyday practices show ways in which we live and dwell and inhabit our world. Only concentrating on well-made objects would be a hindrance. This is not to say that we should not make well, but we should equally immerse ourselves in everyday and ordinary practices in the process of designing.

Q. A study of the ordinary processes and happenings in the street opens up several interesting insights and learning. Would you advocate architects to observe and reflect on these ordinary processes and self-made settlements?

This should be self-evident and I would certainly advocate that.

Q. Invariably the current architectural inclinations veer around generalisation, be it geographic, cultural, eliminating the diversity, a lack of acceptance of the differences that prevail, propagating that only one approach to design is correct, irrespective of the city, building. How can we alter this?

By forgetting our personas and letting the vitality of life take over. If one is fascinated by what goes on around us, or one is angry about it, or one is wonderstruck by it, then this happens. The world should be our primary source of emotional and intellectual energy, and not a “problem” that depresses us!

Q. Do you feel this current approach is more an offshoot of a lack acceptance of simplicity, a willingness to share and bear discomfort?

I think one does not “accept” simplicity, one is simple! It is necessary to have life

experiences that may create discomfort. It is also necessary to learn sharing as one grows up. The entire apparatus of a market society tries to seduce us away from this. So our architecture can attempt to give deep and satisfying experience rather than novelty.

Q. In your view, what should the 21st Century architect be like?

This is a very big question!

The 21st Century architect should be like what a good architect has always been, irrespective of time period! Observant, compassionate, skilled, responsive and always moving forward. This is difficult but satisfying to attempt.

Societal conditions are different, so we will need to be aware of this. Violence, domination, degradation and destruction of environments; boring and soulless and incessant work, excessive speed, restlessness and anxiety – all these are endemic. The architect can work at ameliorating these conditions, and as citizen-participant she/he can also work at bringing about a better pattern.





FOR A SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

BY PROF DR AJAI CHANDRAN C K
DEAN, BGS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

So you have probably come to sit with a steaming cup of tea, reading the morning newspaper and as the morning light filters through the windows, there is a subtle unison between you and your surroundings in the most tranquil way. What you might not realize perhaps, is how the window was probably built at a height just right to heighten this experience, or how this same window might have been angled in the right direction to receive that right amount of mid-day breeze later in the day.



It is safe to say we have come a long way from the days of our predecessors whose primary concern regarding habitat was to find a dwelling and shelter from predators amongst other primitive needs. Architecture is a unique field where we are constantly asked to demonstrate why design matters to everyone, all the time and with reason. It can shape society, but scholars and highbrows alike agree that along with social sustainability is the need to preserve ecological integrity. There is an architectural solution to you needing you to hold your bladder till you get home; there is an architectural solution to you needing air conditioning to sleep in Bengaluru all of a sudden.

The work of an architect is quite the journey. You imagine things that are not there, and continually realize them until they are a reality. You can see how the world changes because of it and even imagine how the world will change without it. There are a few who are romantics, believing that even their relatively insignificant changes to the built environment create the aspiration for a better society.

To others, it is inconceivable, the impact their work can create on people whilst hunching over a drafting table with a dirty mug of something caffeinated to drink in the wee hours of the night. But nevertheless your work does create a lingering

impact on the common man; your job hence is in essence not to design buildings, but to design lives; to create and enrich the human experience by providing a beautiful context to life's drama.

It is all the more important that as student architects we have an understanding of the role we play in connecting worlds within different strata and to have an invested interest in preserving them. BGS School of Architecture and Planning, Bengaluru is trying to make a difference by making sustainable development as part of their students' foundation.

We have often heard buildings labelled as sustainable, but do we truly understand it? True sustainability is the ability of something to be maintained at a certain rate or level. For architects, it broadly means to reduce the ill effect our creations have on the natural environment. Envisioning a future under the current and crumbling division of pollution and population makes little sense unless we approach design as not only an architect but also as a philosopher, a poet, scientist, an artist, engineer and most of all as an individual of the general populace.

In India, architects are more than often viewed as a rich man's fancy rather than as instigators for an all-round improvement of the society as a whole. The fact that, as a developing country with over a billion people, India has currently only around 80,000 architects makes it all the more imperative of the need for architects to design a sustainable lifestyle for the common people, as we cannot undermine its importance to newer generations.

BGSSAP realizes the skill it takes to teach a student what cannot be taught but must rather be experienced, felt and discovered. That skill is the most sought-after requirement amongst its teaching faculty. To be able to instil a sense of responsibility amongst the students in preserving a viable future is not only a duty but also a priority. Hence BGS School of Architecture and Planning strives to manifest not only thoughts and ideas into structures but also the idea of a well-learned society into the tangible world.



INITIATING **STUDIO** **CULTURE** POLICY

BY PROF. JAFFER AA KHAN

I have often lamented about the growth of numerous schools over the last decade and compared them with the growing fertility clinics in the country. Schools of architecture today face tremendous challenge as the Council of Architecture (CoA) is overburdened and stressed without trained manpower to monitor the institutions and their quality.

CoA through its website lays the basic guidelines for the course which is broad based and allows schools to develop their own curriculum through a university structure or independent curriculum which covers the overall guidelines set by it, yet these are not mandatory. The detailed content of each of the courses is hardly determined and its delivery becomes extremely uninspiring to students.

For instance, mathematics or structural engineering is forgotten after the relevant exams and becomes meaningless to students who spend time to pass and achieve the required grades. Both subjects are an exciting part of architecture, but never inspired to be taught as applied subjects and in context with architectural studio. There are too many courses that can be deleted to focus more on studio based learning-by-doing projects.

As founder of one of the schools in Chennai in 2011, I was able to bring this culture to the studio programs which enriched students' creativity and ability to handle materials and their capacity to reinforce their ideas. I have always stressed on my students becoming leaders of design but not subservient to forces that compel them to become merely professionals, forgetting their responsibility towards society, culture and environment.

In this context I recommend CoA to develop a strong framework to develop "Studio Culture Policy" (SCP) by individual schools to



Jury at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

strengthen ability to adapt to new challenges, adopt technologies that make architecture programs exciting.

In a posthumous 1990 essay "A Black Box: The Secret Profession of Architecture", warned of architecture's corrosive trend towards insulating itself from discussions outside the discipline. Decades later, architecture finds itself in a more dire state. Despite a transformed global context, the same paternalistic model of studio culture that has existed since the Beaux Arts remains in place. "Studio Culture", as currently practiced, promotes an outdated and parochial understanding of how design knowledge is produced, valuing expertise over synthesis and image over process and practice.¹

So, what is "Studio Culture"? How can this develop intensity, energy and exhilaration in the design studio?

"Studio" is the heart of an architecture school. Its health and vibrancy are the indicators of a good school. The policy needs to reflect on socio-cultural, environmental and technological concerns supporting creativity and invention, respect and collaboration, health and safety, ecology and sustainability and inculcate optimism about the role of a designer in a larger cultural context for a pluralistic society within the democratic framework.



Students at work VIT University.

But most of the students find the studio boring and un-inspirational. Hence most studios are empty and full only when submissions are due. Some schools compel students to be at the studio, which only brings a feeling of compulsion. So is it the studio environment or the studio master who should inspire? This question remains.

Having conducted studios in several countries, I realised it is the studio environment, studio culture policy and studio instructor that make it an exhilarating place to learn. The CoA must recognise this and take student organisations like NASA (National Association of Students of Architecture) on board to develop a strong and robust studio culture policy.

In year 2005, National Architectural Accrediting Board, USA (NAAB) in consultation with American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) created the new requirement that all schools need to address these concerns through a written policy on studio and learning culture. It is time CoA considers this seriously and practitioners and academics like the author himself who have gained wide international exposure will be more than keen to develop this policy for a better 21st century architecture education.

¹ <https://www.archdaily.com/515146/7-ways-to-transform-studio-culture-and-bring-it-into-the-21st-century>

POWER OF THE **SUBCONSCIOUS**

BY PROF. K JAISIM



Illustration by Prachi Prabhu

In this article I have been given time but not enough space to attempt to communicate the significance of the mind over matter in architectural design. How the mind thinks and acts. When a subject is posed before the designer with all the aspects to be considered, from concept to detail to create a designed space, the mind undergoes a sublime transformation.

In the creative process there are two aspects that influence. The first is the conscious, one to one aspect that delves with reality as it comprehends from the day to day world influence by factors that are present. The other is the subconscious one that is not hindered by what is, but dives deep into the mind and opens up all aspects of the brain cells that make the individual. It is a fascinating journey.

The power of the subconscious is a myriad times more powerful than the conscious. But the only black out is the black out. From hidden memories that have created the design, one must in a manner of speaking, deliver life from a dream to a reality, imagination to innovation. This is the most challenging aspect of divining an absolutely imaginative design.

Especially interior design, the choices are a myriad possibilities to any specific space. But when one wakes up the drama becomes

stage specific. One is by habit forced to the script. That is a directed, stage managed theatre approach. The dreams are shattered.

Here is the challenge. How to grasp the dream drama and make it a reality? How to put it down as a freeze and work upon the specifics later in the awakened scenario of real life with real clients and contractors?

Eureka! Yes it is possible. As the subconscious thrives and one has observed the unfolding theatre of design, one must be able to get up totally awake and hold it. It does happen that when one suddenly awakes, the dream freezes and takes a transformation to the conscious brain.

Here again do not delay as this has a fading and questionable path. Just freeze! Nightmares may fog you but gain the confidence to hold on. This is how great creative designs are born. There is no observed logic in the beginning but as one takes a step forward a whole new pathway breaks open.

The journey is absolute. Learn to dream. Unshackle your brain beyond fear. Confidence takes over and the goals are realised. The surprise elements are fascinating. One can proudly laugh and make others also enjoy a new space in time.

POETRY OF ART



Pyramid of Exiled Poets



Baroni



Students Biennale

As preparations begin for the 2018 Kochi-Muziris

Biennale, **Architect Bhavana Rao** looks back on the

2016 extravaganza.

A tinge of salt in the air welcomes you to the coastal town of Kochi, the location of India's only large-scale international contemporary art exhibition. Roads dotted with tropical trees and colonial Portuguese architecture create a magical setting for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, which saw the end of its third edition this March.

The event is spread across multiple venues, strung together by visual cues hand-painted on the city walls, telling the story of blind Venezuelan artist Rafaela Baroni. They spring up in nooks and corners of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry Jewish town, giving a disjointed yet evocative narrative.

The journey begins at the largest venue: Aspinwall House. Grabbing instant attention is the *Pyramid of Exiled Poets* by Slovenian artist Aleš Šteger. Dominating the central courtyard, this pyramid is about 16' tall, concealing a maze. A diminutive entrance leads to a twisting path peppered with diffused lights. Eerie, guttural sounds and incoherent speech accost you from unexpected corners, leading thence to a blind turn into inky darkness; the objective of the artist being to knock you off the comfort zone to experience his art.

Continuing the journey to experience his art requires suspension of judgement and unquestioned trust. Feeling your way through the walls, bumping and stumbling and finally reaching the light at the end of the tunnel is exhilarating. This immersive installation leaves a powerful impact, opening your mind to new ways of looking at art.

Across the courtyard, in a long warehouse concealing a shallow pool of seawater is indisputably the most moving work at Aspinwall House. I had never experienced a poetry installation, and was astounded by the Chilean poet Raúl Zurita's *In the sea of pain*.

The poems of Zurita are to be seen and felt, not just read. Not surprisingly, he immerses you knee-deep in sea water where you read the words no longer as an observer, but participant. The words call out to you "*can you hear me?*" from across "*the sea of pain*". In the poem Zurita talks of a photograph. Of three year old Alan Kurdi's body washed up on foreign shores, which became an iconic image of the refugee crisis. No one mourned the death of his brother who died in the sea the same day, of whom there are no pictures.

Wading past these tall walls and their echoing words, the grief of these refugees is more real. What does it mean to be driven from your homeland and seek sanctuary in unknown lands? Your feet trace a slower trajectory back across this sea of pain, where thousands have drowned in their desperate quest for a better life.



Sea of Pain



Threshold of Affinity



Anand Warehouse



TKM Warehouse

The Biennale has several such installations that reach out and touch your mind. Aspinwall House is one of eight venues, each a treasure to discover. From Aspinwall is the delightful Pepper House, a heritage building with a cafe and library. It was here I experienced experimental filmmaker Leighton Pierce's *Threshold of Affinity* which to me was the most eye-opening piece at the Biennale.

Art happens in that moment inside the mind of each beholder when dots are connected, eliciting an emotional response. Mine was influenced by a book I had been reading- Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, a lyrical exploration of phenomenology.

Blurry video on multiple screens and accompanying surround sound create the *moment* that is this work of art. The abstract images and sounds of city, sky, stars and whizzing lights come together to recreate a memory that could be yours or mine and hence universal. You have an image of streetlights in the rain, taste of earth in your memory, smell of your mother's cooking or the sea; this piece reaches inside for the commonality in all our experiences. The artist, instead of giving his experience or his version, immerses you in a space that evokes your own.

Threshold of Affinity is a work of art difficult to explain. It attempts to communicate

what comes *before* articulation, *before* forming of words and poetry; the experience of beauty at the fringes of vision, in the heartbeat at your throat, in the intake and expulsion of breath; that moment when you are completely alone in the rain and pause to feel "I am alive, and this is beautiful". Leighton Pierce captures that moment in the installation.

Words are not enough. The Kochi-Muziris Biennale staggers you with its sheer variety of mediums- sound, water, film, texture, text, canvas- all expressing some dint of humanity and its existential angst. You move, pause, absorb, breathe in the sea and walk away with a galaxy in your mind.



Photograph by Shine Parsana



WHEN WALLS COME ALIVE

Is it an interior overlooking the Amazon forests, wonders

Nandhini Sundar as she walks through the artworks

of **Mural Artist Yamini Reddy**

It is a rainforest, the thick vegetation harbouring many a life within, be it the gentle dragon flies, the Hummingbird, the stunning Toucan or the magnificent Macaw, the lush greenery bringing in freshness and euphoria into the stark urban interiors. The strokes are strong, confident, the grains so fine as to evoke the feather touch feel, the image life-like except for the absence of colour in a significant portion.



The large mural on the 20 foot high wall stares down at you as you enter the office space, the massive colourful Macaws checking you out curiously, the sharp eyes not leaving your face while the hummingbird peaks through the leaves to lend a chirpy feel and make you feel more warm and welcome. The sheer size of the mural, the dense leaves and vegetation, the overpowering connect to nature that it affords, leaves you wondering if you have accidentally stepped into a small corner of the Amazon forests.

Wall mural artist Yamini Reddy believes in speaking her language through art and her art takes the form of nature. Invariably her nature connects to the rainforests where the flora is so dense, the fauna so lavishly captivating, the presence of one's roots to earth so intense as to leave the viewer almost speechless by the sheer magnitude of the visual.



Photograph by Shine Parsana

Yamini's murals, essentially in water colours, are predominantly black and white, the dash of colour coming in to highlight the most arresting section of the art piece, as the vibrant Macaws amidst a dense black and white vegetation. The detailing of the elements in the artwork is so fine as to elicit the feeling of actually being present amidst the scene depicted.

Be it the fine lines on the lacy wings of the dragon fly, the soft feathers on the wings of the majestic Macaws, the intricate grains on the leaves and petals of the flowers, the detailing prompts the viewer to extend a hand to touch the mural in the mistaken impression that the softness of the feathers can be physically felt, the fragile lacy wings of the dragon flies can be tangibly held.

Says Yamini, "The black and white representation was deliberately sought as the detailing and impact on the eye is more pronounced than in a coloured depiction. Colours overpower, absorbing the fine detailing. But a splash of colours in the midst serves as a contrast, evoking better appreciation as well as observation. Besides, a flood of colours over such a large expanse would be overwhelming visually, robbing the art of its innate beauty."

The mural, which essentially comes to life with brush pens, permanent ink, water colours after the initial sketch is done, takes shape based on the size of the wall, the room it overlooks, the colours and furnishings opted, states Yamini. "The background wall colour requires a matt finish, the colour ivory. Pure white wall is not a suitable space to work the mural."



Above: Photograph by Shine Parsana



To ensure the water colours do not run because of accidental contact with water, as well as the mural is preserved in its original state, Yamini gives a coating of epoxy on completion of her work. “The dust on the mural can then be merely wiped clean with a dry cloth or duster and the artwork should last over a couple of decades if maintained well.”

It all started when Yamini visited Chitrakala Parishath as a young student and realised the yearning she had for painting. While the yearning remained to become a professional artist during her decade long sojourn in UK where she worked digitally across various media excepting art, she did not take steps to realise it. The irrevocable calling however came when she became faculty at Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology after her return from the UK. Her very first mural, which she experimented with in her own house, took six months. “Since it was my own space, I took my own time, experimenting and evolving in the process”, she smiles.

So far her work has revolved around experimenting with foliage that is tropical. “The future works too will have nature as the central theme, the rest worked around depending on the inclinations of the user”, she says.



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FROM MAIZE TO MUSEUM

A REPORT BY ARCHITECT YAMINI KUMAR



The Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA), which opened in September 2017, is located at the Victoria and Albert Waterfront in Cape Town and is the world's largest museum dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. The waterfront has been developed to be a bustling 300 acre mixed-use district attracting up to 100,000 people a day, but also continues to be South Africa's oldest working harbour.

The project is the result of the re-development of the grain silo, which was the tallest building in South Africa at 57m when it was opened in 1924. The complex comprising 42 tubes once housed massive amounts of maize where it was exported from or distributed inland. It was disused since 1990 and closed in 2001 after nearly 80 years.

The Grain Silo was later declared a national monument, which helped prevent its demolition. The building had been forgotten and had blended in with the fabric



of Cape Town's harbour, until Jochen Zeitz, then CEO of Puma, along with curator Mark Coetzee decided to set up a museum of international repute. The building, costing \$38 million, has been designed by the Heatherwick Studio, London. It is Thomas Heatherwick's first project in Africa and also the first museum he has designed.

The building has two parts – the six storeyed elevator tower, where The Silo Hotel is located, which facilitated the mechanical bulk handling of grain, and the actual storage silos themselves, where the Zeitz MOCAA is located, occupying nine floors. The building was stripped of its paint, to expose its raw concrete structure, which



Heatherwick punctuated with convex geodesic windows, giving the building a more current flavour.

These windows, apart from the steel, industrial looking entrance pavilion, were one of the few new additions to the exterior of the building, which looks as though the entire structure has been kept intact. At first glance, the unusual combination of this raw concrete structure with glitzy extruding windows certainly piques one's curiosity.

On entering the building though, one discovers that the structure on the inside has not been kept intact, but has had large chunks of it carved out, to give way to the spaces necessary for the museum. The architect has however, tried to conserve as much of the structure and machinery as possible.

There is an element of surprise as one enters the building- a visitor walks straight into the 88 foot atrium that has been carved out of the centre of the silos, as though the concrete was simply like mouldable clay. Conceived from an enlarged digitally scanned grain that was found at the site, the space was realized by using industrial-diamond cable to cut into the concrete silos, which were recast in added concrete. The atrium exposes the cross-section of the building, making it the most dramatic space in the museum.

From the atrium, one can look down into the basement area where some of the machinery has been retained.



The elevators in the space are circular, to match with the silo walls. It opened to the public with the display of a giant flying dragon made from rubber tyres. This display, coupled with the daylight streaming in from the glass roof above and the bass toned music that sounded like spiritual chanting playing in the atrium gave it an overpowering, unreal feel.

The museum has approximately 105,000 Sq feet of programmable space, of which around 65,000 Sq feet is divided into traditional white cube galleries and exhibition areas, a rooftop sculpture garden on top of the atrium, storage and conservation areas, a bookshop, a restaurant, bar, and reading rooms. The museum will also house Centres for a Costume Institute, Photography, Curatorial Excellence, the Moving Image, Performative Practice and Art Education.

The rooftop, which has a glass floor that allows light into the atrium, enables one to look right into the space. It is bounded by large frames of convex glass just like the windows in the hotel rooms, but forming the walls here. It offers sweeping views of the ocean and the iconic Table Mountain.

The Silo Hotel above the museum has 28 rooms, all with magnificent views seen through the gently inflated windows, which transform the building into a glowing beacon on the harbour at night. The interiors of the hotel have been designed by Liz Biden, co-founder of The Royal Portfolio group of luxury hotels that this hotel belongs to. Her style is one of opulence and luxury and has juxtaposed the modern and industrial building with an eclectic mix of furniture, chandeliers and bold colours.

According to Architectural Digest, Heatherwick's one regret was that it was not possible to preserve parts of the building that were carved out of the main structure to keep next to the museum on the square, so that people could then understand the positive and negative spaces. The way this building has been restored is fascinating- equally, if not more fascinating than the art in the museum itself.

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THE CHETTINAD HERITAGE

The Chettinad mansions are known for their grandeur and intricate work, each a silent testimony to the architectural magnificence and skilled craftsmanship that prevailed in the erstwhile Chettiar lands. **Interior Designer Mahesh Chadaga** captures the glory of the Chettinad heritage through his astute lenses, walking the reader through the fascinating corridors of the Chettiar mansions.

It is a row of stone pillars that greets you as you enter the grand mansion of the opulent Chettiers. The rows of pillars defining the pathway to the arresting lobby, take you further into the lavish living room, encrusted with intricate carvings and paintings on the walls and ceiling. Porcelain tiles, Italian marble, Belgium mirrors, European crystals and chandeliers vie for attention with the exquisitely carved Burmese Teak columns and doors in the expansive living room which forms the formal reception area of the Chettiar family. The sheer magnificence of the rooms gives a peek into the magnitude of wealth that the past families of Chettinad abounded in.

The massive exotically carved Burmese Teak doors lead into an enormous sunlit courtyard flanked by rows of stone columns that border the large open verandas enclosing the space. Arresting handmade Athangudi tiles, that Chettinad is famous for, cover the flowing verandas, lending colour and art through their captivating patterns.

Carved Teak doors dot these verandas in equal intervals on either side of the sunlit courtyard. The charming wooden doors lead to quaint little rooms which serve as store areas, prayer rooms, even as guest rooms when required, for the wealthy Chettiers. The stored items in these rooms could be anything, from ordinary household items to jewellery, silver and other household wealth.

The courtyard leads further into an extensively long dining area that can accommodate over a hundred diners at a time. The dining space opens

on to similar storage rooms on one side while a row of windows line the other.

While the sleeping quarters typically feature on the first and second level of the house, the Chettinaad mansions invariably housed multiple courtyards, each with a specific function based on their position. For instance the courtyard adjoining the kitchen would serve as an open expanse for cooking during festivities to feed the large numbers who frequented the household.

The grandeur of the Chettinad mansions can be truly breath-taking, in their detailing, craftsmanship as well as architecture; yet a feature that beholds the traveller on visiting Chettinad is the presence of rows and rows of mansions that remain locked up and left in disrepair, with a sizeable number lying in ruins, the structure and walls serving as fertile grounds for various types of vegetation to sprout.

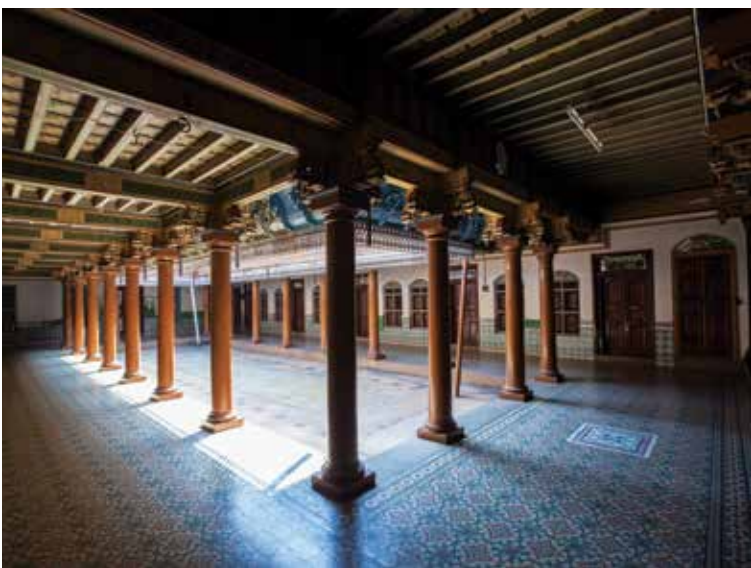




Top, Above & Facing page: The grand entrance to mansion marked by captivating Athangudi tiles, the spectacular line of columns leading the path to the lobby, the stained glass arches accentuating the beauty.



The expansive verandas that surround the sunlit courtyards.



The inner courtyard lined with rooms that are used for prayer, storage and any other needs.



The formal living room with its massive Teak wood columns and intricate wood carvings..



Above: Sunlit courtyard that opens out from kitchen and used as add on space for cooking during festivities. The plain Athangudi tiles covering the veranda reveal their timeless beauty.



The expansive dining area with rooms on either side.



A typical carved door of Chettinad.



Massive Teak wood columns hold the intricately carved beams and ceiling, revealing exquisite craftsmanship.



Top & Above: Façade of Chettinad mansions that line the quaint streets of Athangudi village, some well-maintained, others falling into disrepair.

HAPPENINGS IN BRC

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2017



USHERING IN THE NEW TEAM

September was a special month for IIID BRC, the new team with Architect Shyamala Prabhu as the Chairperson, Architect Ravindra Kumar as Secretary, Architect Gunjan Das as the Treasurer, and the rest of the Committee being sworn in during a gala ceremony which also saw the hosting of the Master Series event.



A GREEN START

The new team decided to have as the first program of its tenure, a green initiative, planting 100 trees in the government school in Athibele. Incidentally the government school building is also a century old heritage structure which was sensitively restored by Architect Sridhar. The green initiative by IIID BRC was undertaken jointly with FunderMax India and Rotary and Inner Wheel Bengaluru, South Athibele Sarjapur Club.

PECHA

Aparna Narasimhan

Girish Dariyav Karnawat

Rajesh Shivaram

Smaran Mallesh

Nisha Mathew Ghosh

20X20

KUCHA

DATE : 13.10.2017 | TIME : 6pm
VENUE : Global Living Emporio,
Electronic City



A SCINTILLATING POTPOURRI

The evening saw five leading architects in the city present their works in relation to the topic 'Reinventing tradition in the contemporary context'. Architects Girish Dariyav Karnawal, Aparna Narasimhan, Smaran Mallesh, Nisha Mathew Ghosh, Rajesh Shivaram participated in the presentations in the Pecha Kucha event hosted by IIID BRC. Interesting features such as the traditional technique of using marble powder in the wall plastering in the contemporary context was explained in one of the presentations made by Architect Karnawal.



ARCHITECT PRESENTATION: RETAINING HISTORY

When the location you work in is dedicated to conserving history in totality, design can pose a challenge and so would be bringing in one's unique creativity. In the Master Series event hosted by IIID BRC, Architect Andrea Milani of Studio Milani presented his designs where he was faced with similar challenges in his projects in the city of Siena in Italy. He spoke of how the contemporary designs were fused into the interiors of the conserved structures while the exteriors remained untouched.



ARCHITECT PRESENTATION: REVIVING HERITAGE

A factor that is becoming increasingly pronounced is the missing out on the sustainable solutions that prevail in our heritage architecture, the solutions natural, focused on individual locations and available materials. One has to merely dig back into history to find the construction methodology, the designs and materials used to come up with naturally sustainable built environments even in the contemporary context. Speaking on this, on the craftsmen and their special skills that are becoming fast extinct was Architect Parul Zaveri of Abhikram at the Master Series event hosted by IIID BRC.





Montage student Event at the HMG Orientation Centre



Continues Education Programme (CEP) at Chancery Pavilion



ACADEMIA: MONTAGE STUDENT EVENT

The upcoming young architects define the path of future architecture and IIID BRC firmly believes in conducting meaningful workshops for the students to disseminate knowledge and practical experience. Under the Montage Student event which addresses this explicitly, a student workshop was held at the Hindustan Marble and Granite orientation centre and also at the Wadiyar Centre for Architecture, Mysuru, for students from various schools of design and architecture. The two hour workshop was conducted by Architects Andrea Milani of Studio Milani and Ravindra Kumar of Pragrup.

TRAINING CONTINUES

Learning never stops and IIID BRC firmly believes so. Continues Education Program (CEP) which holds workshops periodically for architects, conducted a Philips workshop on lighting, organised by IIID BRC.



Left & Above: Student Event at the Wadiyar Centre for Architecture Mysuru



Orientation workshop for IIID Anchor Awards



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