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Dear Readers

It’s time again to celebrate our Anniversary with the much-awaited special edition of MGS Architecture. In this issue, we have called upon over 80 architects to share their views on what defines their style, the peculiarities, and the materials that give shape to their unique architectural vision.

Broadly speaking, an architectural style is characterized by features that make a building stand out or be identifiable. Style can be defined by attributes like the building’s shape and form, its façade, method of construction, choice of building materials, its regional character, or any other peculiarity of the architect’s vision such as his or her leanings towards biophilic design, minimalism, or any specific design strategy.

Many architects have a highly individualistic and identifiable style, one that is rooted in Indian culture and ethos, and which strives to retain the regional character of the building they design, while meeting the demand for modernity. To them, we have asked: How has this design approach impacted and influenced the perception of architecture and design in the contemporary India context that is seeing increasing dependence on digital design techniques and technologies, and use of new composite materials?

We hope that you will enjoy reading the views and observations and welcome your feedback on info@mgsarchitecture.in.
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believe that ‘architectural style’ should be a response to the various climatic zones in context of India, to be designed according to clients’ personalities and project needs. Each place has a plethora of creative solutions, that have evolved using local resources and techniques, which constitute the part of our architectural knowledge. It is necessary to achieve a balance between continuity and desirable change, without fossilizing the past, and without making the change incongruent with its contextual surroundings.

Our projects speak of a responsible architecture that evolves through contextualization of various aspects. Conservation of resources ought to be our primary guidelines in projects. We try to bring appropriate design solutions through clarity in identification of problems, selection of the correct tools, and their proper application. The design and construction process ensure freedom for creative inputs at all levels of participation from client to the architectural team and the artisans on site. We believe in designing spaces, which, in their form, space and technology, reflect the continuity of Indian traditions. Since the past four decades, our sustainability-focused practice has attempted to re-establish the relevance of decision-making processes using traditional materials, technologies and crafts in contemporary contexts. Through our works, we try to increase employment generation for the traditional crafts persons and aim to promote traditional knowledge and wisdom. Our every design decision evolves with sustainable designs and built-environments which minimize the use of electrical and mechanical energies for human comfort within the buildings, and maximize use of bio-degradable, long lasting and re-cyclable materials. We look for local solutions to local problems from local resources. At the end, we try to achieve an experiential and healthy space for all our clients. Abhikram is a Sanskrit word for initiation. While exploring the design direction and design process, we aim to make the external and the internal environment, functionally, psychologically, environmentally and spiritually, more contextual, integrated and comfortable for the users.
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MGS magazine
I believe in liberating spaces, not enclosing them. Every space needs to have a good optimum, be it a small sized apartment or large commercial offices. Every good designer analyses the plans from the client perspective, regarding practicality, functionality, and accessibility, before executing it. I don’t believe in confining spaces between four walls, on the contrary, I believe in open spaces, both for the interiors and exteriors.

It takes exemplary quality to reach elusive heights. The vision to rank among the topmost players in the world has fuelled and sustained our drive to deliver those exemplary projects which introduce customers to pioneering benchmarks in design aesthetics. The completion of prestigious projects in overseas markets further bolsters the track record of successes and credibility to deliver top-notch quality on time, every time. My constant endeavour remains to be counted among the topmost architectural firms in the world.

One of the projects that defines our architectural style is 96 Legends Square in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Dedicated to the winners of the 1996 Cricket World Cup, the building facade is designed with a ball balanced between four bats to commemorate the achievements of the Sri Lankan cricketers with a signature residential and an Indoor Cricket Facility, Hall of Fame, Museum, observatory, and a Specialty Restaurant. Though 96 Legends Square appears to be a structure dictated by the form, the base of our design philosophy is focused on functionality. Standing at 383m it is 211m taller than the currently tallest World Trade Center (Colombo), marking Sri Lanka’s presence on the world map of high-rises. 96 Legends Square shall be to Sri Lanka, what the Eiffel Tower is to Paris, and the Pyramids are to Giza. In fact, a visit to Sri Lanka shall remain incomplete without experiencing the magnificence of 96 Legends Square.
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My approach to design is simple and open. I start my design with two guiding factors: the requirements and the site. I would like to see the building grow from the site naturally while fulfilling the requirements. I try to keep it extremely simple and responding to the climate. Integration of nature in the built form is always given importance.

Ar. Geoffrey Bawa’s works have always inspired me. Another aspect which influence my design is the sociological aspect of it. The building which we design should reflect our commitment to society. Architecture has the capability to tell the history of the period it was built to future generations. So, I think it is my responsibility to reflect the correct ethos of design during the period in which it exists.

In my design, I try to use locally available materials as far as possible. I am not fascinated by imported facade cladding materials to enhance the beauty of the building. My approach is to respect the context, and make the structure green and sustainable. I prefer painted surfaces with solids and void spaces, and architectural elements like pergolas, pillars, and limited glass areas, etc. I like to make use of modern technologies and we are also doing pre-engineered buildings (PEBs). My designs aim to bring ‘Happiness through Architecture’ to the ultimate users of the building.
I believe that the language and vocabulary of architecture is not a question about style. Every building is built for a specific purpose, in a particular setting, for a set of audience, and it is therefore intentional that we don’t impose any pre-defined visual form onto a project, rather let things emerge as the project evolves. There is a deliberate attempt to not make specific choices in our design directions.

As a philosophy, we try to work on projects that allow an element of experimentation. We play with form and space. To manifest a program, each form’s existence is validated in isolation and a more complex exploration is done that brings these forms together into closed and open spaces. This amalgamation is almost more important than the obligatory spaces and places.

We play with light and volume. Areas in quantity have always been questioned and argued against volumes in quality. What light can do to enlarge and exaggerate a space has always excited us. We play with materials and their textures. This is where principles of the Indian context and its contemporary interpretations become clear.

With no specific partiality to textures and techniques, the non-vocabulary is perhaps the evolving language. Unconventional materials with identifiable techniques, common substances with unexplored textures, all applied in unexpected yet customized contexts – bring in a degree of fun in functional spaces.

The design process is a negotiation between intuition and reason – the subconscious and the researched. We delay diving into final solutions as much as we can to ensure all constraints and possibilities have been considered holistically.

The architecture in India today follows a typology that is either traditional or just contemporary, irrespective of the Indian context. In such a scenario, we attempt to make our projects examples of inquiries in contemporary Indian architecture - where architecture focuses on the issues of our time, reflects the moment we are building in, and for meeting the aspirations of our modern Indian society.
Ar. Jay Shah Access Architects

Architectural style is characterized by the feature that makes a building structure notable and visibly identifiable. Every architect has a specific style and I would call mine “form follows function” as was the thought of Architect Louis Sullivan. However, my style of architecture is not confined to one kind since every client is different, every project is unique, every plot is diverse, and every functionality brief is exclusive. So, any one style of architecture doesn’t work as the design depends on its usage and function.

Clients usually have a budget which needs to suffice for not just the functionality but also the frills. Today, most clients want a modern structure that must also encompass all the latest amenities and infrastructure, while staying within FSI limits, with ample parking and optimal usage of spaces. But each plot comes with its own challenges. Sometimes the plot is tight but the FSI is high, and the client may want to do a fancy exterior with tall glass windows and open-air podiums, but in this case it wouldn’t work. We would have to design a lean building which is a structural challenge in itself. This said, we would try our best to comply with the brief while designing the structure and work around the obstacles within the parameters coined either by the law of the land and/or the needs of the client.

We believe in treating each project as a separate entity. This includes re-looking at design, aesthetics, as well as management styles for each project, which in turn gives each of our project its own unique style.

I believe that form and function in many ways are one and complement each other. Beginning from within, the form should be the outward appearance of the function within, and the exterior should complement the functionality within.
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My style is versatile. In today’s context, where pace and universal availability of materials supported by technology is the base, it is but imperative to develop designs that are adaptable and go with the times. Around 30 years back, when I started my design practice, local and natural materials were in use, Granite was not less than 75mm thick, walls were minimum 112mm and wood was available in plenty. We did a lot of work in natural brick, stone and wood. Even today, the Mysore Haat designed by us stands tall with purity of material and styling.

Today, all materials have been transformed into their lookalikes. Industrialization, ease of transportation and availability have changed the way we initiate design concepts and at the turn of the century buildings were designed with no relationship to their surroundings. At my firm, our building styles changed to Neo Classical or the Greco Roman. In fact, we designed a combination of styles and gave award-winning projects like the Indus International School in Bangalore, BGS Intl Kumbalgoud etc, each with a regional flavor and identity but with elements of newer materials for the capitols, columns, pedestals and the domes.

The digital era threw out paper and pencil from the studio and conceptualization of design was done on computers. For me, scale became difficult to imagine as the same size of screen was for a small house and/or for a huge campus. Colours came as code numbers and forms were done using computers and the supporting software. Solid geometry and interpenetration of solids became easy with such tools and transformed the thinking ability. My design versatility widened. Our design of buildings like the JSS Science Museum and the Spectra Conventions Centre were styled using such tools and they never compromised on the utility but helped large spans. Such versa styled projects like the Spectra Convention hall got the best façade award.

Restricted timelines have influenced my design style too. Our projects completed in a record 8 to 9 months encouraged us to think of design which would be quick to erect without compromising on stability or functionality and led us to research newer materials and technology. Metal and fabric, combinations with Glass, HDP panels etc brought in a new thought process and led to yet another unique style. Our “Y Boutique Hotel” is a modern building with its design concept borrowed from the Haawa Mahal of Jaipur. As it is said, change is the only constant thing in life, and so is my style.
The designs by our firm have not changed the skyline of cities, but our smaller architectural projects of commercial buildings and bungalows have made a significant design impact, producing architecture that is site specific, sensible and timeless.

We believe in architecture that is simple and controlled and lacks stylised decoration. With large exposure to interior design, the buildings we design are practical with emphasis on function rather than just form. The designs are constructive, with purity of form and site and the design sensibility is dictated by the Indian environment with a preference for tropical architecture. Our architecture and design solutions are varied, comprehensive, and most importantly, client focused. Every creation aims to integrate a timeless aesthetic with functional design, an objective that has been at the core of the firm’s culture since its inception.
Ar. Ahmed Shaikh Ahmed & Associates

I believe that there is no single style to work on as we try to give multiple options depending on the clients’ requirements. Our style includes contemporary, classical, art deco, and minimalistic, which we can identify by their features. In the classical style, we see symmetry, boldness, and simplified designs. In Roman and Greek architecture, we see huge columns, capitals, cornices, exposed materials, etc. In art deco, the features are linear, with strips of windows on the façade. Art deco is all about stylized decorative elements with geometrical forms, zigzags, chevrons etc. level. Contemporary buildings look solid because of their masses, curves or slant walls.

The choice of material plays an important role in the style of a building, for example, concrete is mainly used in the classical style, exposed materials are used in contemporary architecture, while the modern style uses materials like steel, glass, etc. Architecture is not only about buildings and materials; we have to consider preserving nature. It is the responsibility of the architect to preserve the natural surroundings and to design structures in response to nature, and in harmony with the neighboring buildings.

Architecture is an ever-evolving process and depending on the lifestyle, material availability, weather conditions, and geographical location, we can apply various types of styles. In Mumbai, for instance, we can see contemporary architecture along with classical typology.
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We constantly strive for simplicity of form and design. Our architectural style is a minimalistic interplay of lines, planes and volumes. We believe that beauty lies in the ability of a design to be explained through a few lines. We constantly explore the power of lines and their ability to shape space. We work intuitively to create spaces that are episodal and spatially engaging. The core aspects of scale and proportion in design are constantly debated upon to arrive at spaces that balance function and aesthetic.

The orientation of buildings and their resulting facades closely look at site forces, climatic parameters and tropical influences. We like to dwell in the modern with an eye on tradition and regional contextuality. The interplay of light and shadow in our spaces comes out of a design approach that pursues the inside-outside connect. Blurring of boundaries that separate indoors from the outdoors is a strong part of our architectural vocabulary. A marriage of architecture and landscape is critical to the success of our projects. While we love to explore new materials for architectural expression, the underlying parameters continue to be a sense of restraint and understated elegance. Architectural details are constantly worked upon to achieve a sense of clarity and purity of thought. We believe that the success of design lies in the optimal collaboration between us and the client, to define architectural style and the design language. A good design is the result of a project brief being translated into a building that puts the end-user at the forefront.
We believe that an architect’s signature style should serve more than just being a set of features to identify ‘the architect’. At AW Design, climatic and site response are the essential guides to evolution of our building’s aesthetic language. In case of interiors, it is the purpose, services and available internal volume around which proportions, openings, systems are designed.

Given that most of our work is in the hotter regions of the country, we have developed an unsaid affinity towards the ‘jaali’. We explore different manifestations of it in concrete, brick and in louvres also. Jaalis help lower solar gain inside our buildings, diffuse the harsh light, accelerate the breeze to facilitate greater air flow and, I guess, in turn, they also help our buildings stand out.

For interior projects, we are greatly inspired from cues in life forms and how they manage complicated systems efficiently in fixed volume spaces. An interesting example of this is a parametric ceiling that we executed in an interior design project to conceal large structural members and services, much like a mammal’s rib cage. While our buildings do not look the same, each client benefits from a unique architectural style tailored to his/her needs.
Style & Strategy

Ar. Monish Siripurapu ATT Studio

The nature around us consists of divergent facets that can be aptly fabricated to alter the paradigm of Architecture and Design. Not only is it inspiring in terms of its organic forms but is also helpful in imparting us with a natural know-how of functionality. So, when Ant Studio came into being, I was convinced that we had to create designs that not only celebrated nature but blurred the lines between the built and the un-built. As a result, ‘Biomimicry’ emerged as a style that I wanted to take forward and establish while synchronizing it with the usage of technology.

The ‘Beehive’, one of our first completed endeavors which provided us with the required breakthrough, resonated with the very same philosophy. Highly congruent to the structure of a naturally occurring beehive, the purpose of this installation design was to introduce an eco-friendly alternative for air cooling. Materials used for construction included terracotta pots, which due to their innate quality, resulted in cooling the exhausted air when damped with a flow of water. When incorporated in the Deki Electronics factory in Noida, waste water from the generator set was utilized, and was successful in sustaining a cooler temperature to the area. We took this ideology and created yet another installation in the Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa; this time to act as an air purifier along with cooling! Coral, named after its modular format symbolic of a coral reef, purifies the air through a suction system along with establishing cooler atmospheres.

Aesthetics and art, form a crucial segment in both the above mentioned projects. From having artisans as a part of the studio creating the terracotta pots in-house, to making sure that the structure is aesthetically pleasing; we have always tried to concoct a fine blend out with the three principals of our practice: Art, Nature and Technology.

I believe that a design reaches its zenith: only when it is composed with baroque artistry, efficient algorithm and nature’s vitality; circumscribed around the people who use it and who aid to create it!
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Over the years, we have positioned our efforts around the belief that the best objects of nature are simple, not complicated. Consequently, we try to create buildings with simple forms and facades. This is often achieved, in our case, through the case of sunken windows wherein the building is double skinned and neat. This way, unwanted protrusions get negated and the double layer of the façade provides a better response to climatic extremities.

We have always been fascinated by the virtues of verticality and monumentality. Irrespective of the footprint, our methodology is to perceive these two as experiential qualities and we aim to incorporate them through various spatial elements of architecture. These include double height porches supported by tall columns, double height elevations for windows, especially to combine the ground and first levels.

Our approach is to provide such a form and spatial quality to the building that the finishing of surfaces becomes secondary. We try to envision the structure as a black and white image and attempt to make the space interesting through this lens, because the buildings of our time work with cladded and/or plastered layers which remain undecided until the stage of execution.

Depending on the brief provided, we also accommodate traditional elements in our design. However, our method of realizing these traditional structures into a modern context is to extract their contemporary relevance and simplify them in terms of materiality and form. An exceptional case amongst these, which we regard highly, is the traditional Indian spatial element – the courtyard, which we try to implement through various possibilities whenever the opportunity arises. Lastly, we always try to provide an interesting skyline to the building as a response to the continuity of the landscape that the building fits in. This is achieved by increasing and decreasing the heights of various blocks and plinths, and giving shape to certain elements, etc.

We view architecture as a global sensation that has existed and evolved since thousands of years. Each building, historically, is a testimony of its time and is unique. Our approach is to transcend this uniqueness to each project and to respect the context in which we work – explore materials, experiment forms and adapt to the existent and avoid ‘trademarking’ the building.
Ar. Babu Cherian  Babu Cherian Architects

I believe good architecture is one wherein functionality and aesthetics form a harmonious conglomeration in a way that successfully follows the context of the land and its traditions while exuberating its rich culture. With an unceasing love for Kerala and a thirst for reviving the past, I believe my architecture is in essence a contribution to the future through a tribute to the past. While my professional portfolio consists of a mixture of architectural styles, a majority of my projects are interpretations of traditional Kerala style architecture. I enjoy creating homes that follow traditionalist concepts and detailing while including modernist sensibility; homes that are suited for today’s lifestyle, yet also having a sense of warmth and strong connection to garden and the environs.

Often drawing inspiration from the rural Kerala archetypes - be it the lush green farms and paddy fields, the beautiful backwaters or the seaside villages along the Arabian coast - my architecture is essentially a reflection of my love for Kerala’s rich cultural heritage. With skilfully constructed stable sloping roofs that display a rich craftsmanship combined with a class that is expressed through the incorporation of a rich material palette, I believe my buildings are in a sense modern, combined with the spirit of old-world charm. To sculpt the structure, I use materials that showcase a subtle richness, such as plastered walls and Mangalore pattern tiled roofs, in combination with intricately carved traditional elements that help provide a sense of finesse, creating buildings that are not only a display of elegance, but also a space that is capable of creating memorable experiences.

On completion they portray a feeling of timelessness, leading you to a bygone era, reflecting less the work of an architect but rather the prowess of the craftsman and the tradition of an earlier time, with a perfect harmony of indoor and outdoor spaces achieved through the strategic play of materials and texture.

As we are fast approaching an experimental era where the architect is swamped in new materials and techniques, I believe in looking towards the past to build for the future by drawing from traditional Kerala architecture and reinventing it to suit contemporary needs, thus creating architecture that speaks to its surroundings.
For an architect, the primary function is to create usable spaces for the masses; only with a true understanding of humanity can he or she create the kind of human settlement which is required for a common man. Since the inception of my career in 1970, I have believed that a built form should not be treated as a dead mass of brick and concrete, but as a living organism, allowing it to breathe with nature. Only when one respects the site conditions and existing natural resources, one can build nature-friendly and sustainable buildings.

I’m deeply impressed with great masters like Laurie Baker, Le Corbusier and AP Kanvinde and have tried to learn from their works and ideologies. Today, we are moving not only towards designing buildings with sustainable means and passive strategies, but also moving towards net zero developments – where nothing is imported from outside – from water to electricity to solid waste management – for becoming completely self-reliant.

Mother Earth is the biggest teacher we have. The sun, the wind, water and earth – all the natural elements give us inspiration and influence the way we design and work. So does our history and traditional knowledge systems. Our Indian architecture has all the principles and values and the most powerful influences which inspire me to create designs that speak to the soul.

In the profession, one needs to look beyond architecture. It is not the rituality, but the spirituality which matters, in a religious discipline. Similarly, the romanticism of the profession may be a sincere attitude which converts to the best aptitude. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts into vision and vision becomes reality. This is my mantra to bring authenticity in work.

I have always believed that sustainability is not an ideology but a way of living. Therefore, promoting and designing for a greener architecture is my priority. Use of various passive and active design features is what we have aimed at since the past five decades, and now we are moving towards net zero designs which aim at making any development self-sustainable and efficient.

While designing, the site’s topography, climate, solar and wind movement, the cultural connections, etc, play a major role in the conceptualization of the design. Designing for sustainability is not a challenge but should be an in-built passion to create built forms which are grounded in nature. If our process of thinking and designing is based on principles of nature, it would automatically lead to environment-friendly architecture.
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Architectural design is an expression of an individual’s understanding and comprehension of the client’s need and demand, translating it into design and thereby establishing an individualistic style. This style, over the years, gets imprinted so strongly into the personality of the individual and the team that it gets hard to distinguish the two. The individualistic designs evolve into a statement and are marked as a style. The style of many great architects in the modern era has become the basis of new-age thinking, and having evolved over the years, it has transformed the way we perceive the basic elements that are incorporated into design. The very first approach is always scientific and research based.

Whether function follows form, or form follows function, is still a point of discussion. At Chaney Architects, we have tried both these principles. We have enjoyed creating forms to carry out the functions, as well as the function that dictates a specific form. In either case, the result is a representation of our philosophy. Whether using an FRP screen facade to reduce the solar heat or provide curtain wall glazing for a clean modern design, our approach to design is a representation of our thought process. We try simple elements that are in harmony with nature. We believe sustainable architecture is and should be an integral part of any good architectural design.

Pristine yet functional elements in our projects are testimony of our design approach. We integrate both outside and inside spaces seamlessly, in fact, our interiors are an extension of the exteriors, thus creating balance. We introduce the theme of nature in our healthcare projects to assist the healing process; this is depicted in the form of prints and colors on wall coverings, etc.

There are challenges in every project. Overcoming them with a good functional design requires a level of integrity and honesty of approach. Although we value the use of technology in our profession and acknowledge the considerable difference it has made, we fear that overuse of technology may cause us to lose out on exchange of ideas. This is because we are subconsciously drawn to pre-formed ideas and ready references. There is tremendous pressure to perform in a limited time frame thereby losing out on individual creativity. This is the biggest barrier to original thinking.
We believe that design is a process and not the end product. It is a journey of discovery, innovation, evolution and eventually, creation. With each project, we aim to “read” and “respond” to the built and un-built contexts of the urban scape. The most important exercise in the design process is to read the silent gestures of forms and spaces, to converse with the natural environment and then translate those gestures into architectural ensembles. We refer to it as “Responsive Architecture” – a philosophy which advocates architecture as a response to the various existing forces and systems like nature, climate, society, technology, economy and culture.

To me, air and water are two essential elements for our survival. And as we look around, we realise that more and more cities across India are very soon going to be unlivable. With this kind of an urban environment, it is imperative that we raise our standards and, with a sense of urgency, rethinking our architectural approach. It is this fate of the environment and the responsibility of our profession, which has made us think hard in pushing the boundaries of excellence in environment-friendly design. Our primary objective today is to create architecture that is a collective of all these blended seamlessly as a physical manifestation with the existing geographical setting and at the same time containing within itself a strong potential to live up to the future developments and urban standards.
We don’t have a style! Fuelled by mass media and instant gratification, architecture/interior start to imitate fashion design, with changing trends. ‘Change and constant flux’ is the ‘new permanence’. How do our works confront this opposite reality of contemporary times?

Early in the practice, we knew the importance of design that transcends time - what we call as ‘Design Life Cycle’. We, at Collaborative, are obsessed with our process, and subscribe the design direction to that process we adhere at the studio.

Radical Innovation shaped most foundational works of the studio and defined the practice in formative years. This approach in early phase also galvanized into a design thinking that helped our practice to step out of program, to create architecture that has deeper meaning and goal that went beyond its functional contingencies, styles and trends.

The notion of ‘Scale’: We do not even call it interiors, for us architecture and interior are the same. Both are results of the same speculative creative process. The notion of change in scale and detail is a misnomer - as a good architect, you should be able to zoom in and zoom out. It is Macro and Micro at the same time, be it architecture or interior spaces you deal in.

Technology is something we are passionate about, and at ease with in our practice; it is not employed for technology’s sake, but for reasons that could lend the project to achieve strategic goals defined by the brief and economics of it. But is technology, the soul and defining element of the architectural enterprise and production? What happens to architecture, when the technology which was central to it, becomes obsolete? Materiality - is it minimalist or maximalist? Where do you draw the line? Our works are results of these enquiries rather than a straightforward programmatic evolution of the brief. Or stylistic!
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An architectural style is a morphological lens that allows components of our built environment to curate a unique connection with the context that are set in. We believe that every project necessitates a bespoke style pertaining to the unique vision of their conception. As an instance, a facility aimed to connect and blend in with a community would have striking visual distinctions with a facility that aspires for iconicity and be a beacon.

We at CDA strongly believe in the communicative ability of architecture, which is essentially the intermingling of innate human senses with the encounter of built environment. Often referred to as semiotics in architecture, this is a realm heavily contributed towards, by theorists De Saussure and Charles Pierce, where they discovered that the science behind the social discourse of architectural styles should be based on a widely agreeable social contract, of plurality of its end-users.

One of the most important steps to realize this vision is to identify the audience and their connect. Every piece of architecture would have distinct end-users which makes their design responses unique. We believe that there are multiple ways a building could emanate its intended meaning, for example, it could be an experience-oriented spatial stimulus wherein the architecture employs tools of light and shadow to convey feelings such as vibrance, darkness or confusion; or it could be the visual allegory wherein a building symbolically relays its intended vision or function to its audience through a symbolic interior or exterior design.

We believe that a successful piece of architecture is definitely the one which its audience accepts and relates to. At CDA, we are always excited to employ our projects as exciting opportunities to create devices of communication which could be received by a wide latitude of its end-users with admiration! (Text by Ravideep Singh)
Architecture has evolved over centuries of experimentation; and in this process it has generated innumerable patterns that are very intrinsic to human beings and their needs. But as these needs (from the built space) constantly change with time, it becomes evident that the built environments also change alongside to support them well and holistically. However, it has to be noted that these changes in the built environments cannot be mistaken with life-giving processes that have developed over the centuries.

So, one should consider these processes while generating any built environment and make use of these ‘traditional and humanistic’ patterns to give life to the structures.

For a better understanding on the subject, one can look at it this way - The core (Traditional Humanistic Patterns) of the system/building structure is made from centuries-old processes and experimentation that generate life. And only the peripheral fringes of this core are kept flexible that change with the time. These peripheral fringes can also be identified as Architectural Styles that are unique to each time period in the history of architectural evolution. But the true core of architecture has remained intact - only slowly evolving with time. This core of architecture comes into the transition of evolution, only when a peripheral pattern is able to bring about a life pattern to the building process. If this peripheral fringe (Architectural Style) is able to generate life in a repeated manner, it eventually becomes part of the core (thus evolving it in the process) and is then transferred to the next time period.

At Chaukor Studio, we strive to generate such patterns and environments that support and revitalize the living processes taking place inside the buildings’ structures. These patterns are thus generated from the core and not through peripheral fringes; so that they have the capacities to evolve into various architectural styles and tend to the various needs of the times.

We call it – Regenerative Architecture.
Designing at the urban scale is a complex undertaking leading to an unknown future. Our cities will shape and influence our lives profoundly and, therefore as custodians of the built environment, we aim for our design interventions to be necessitated in the name of capacity upgradation, perpetuity and resilience.

Central to our ethos is an appetite for contextuality, sustainability and buildability. One of our greatest strengths is our 3-way approach while addressing the challenges of individual projects - enquiry, discovery and understanding. Our perspective to each project comes from an innate desire to address and answer the challenges in the spirit of innovation.

With more than 20 years of experience, we work creatively to execute tasks with a deep sense of optimism and passion. Our current efforts are in the direction of revival of existing conditions, which can be witnessed in our projects ITO Skywalk in Delhi and Dakshineshwar Skywalk at Kolkata that cater to the busiest roads of the two metropolitan cities. Tapping into local ecology, human culture and socio-economic fabric; the design strategy of these projects presents a continuum to city’s heritage and resources, with the employment of advanced engineering and innovation.

Architecture of Conscience. Connection with the past should not be limited to relics but to revitalize historical buildings, retrofitting them for the new generation. Architecture is a source of communicating memories, but architecture of the present should communicate values and a sense of place. The only constant that will connect us to our history is our tangible architectural heritage. Deeply respectful of these principles, the design of our project The Delhi High Court is an expression inspired by the ancient architecture of Lutyen’s Delhi. The design of the annexe respects the imprints of the past – whether in the eaves drawn from old architecture of Rajasthan or in materials like sand blasted Dholpur stone and Red Agra stone that blends with the National Gallery of Modern Art in the vicinity.
I believe that a building structure/elevation must strongly reflect the requirements and thoughts of our clients as per their taste, budget, and timelines. Building elevation must reflect its function as well as the local/regional character along with architectural features. The building front preferably must be symmetrical so that it gives a strong and balanced look. Planning of the building must be as per the requirements, and be Vastu compliant as much as possible, and as per the by-laws. Façade design must be attractive as well as easy to maintain. Method of construction should be modern so as to save time, money and energy. Choice of building materials must be from sustainability/green buildings’ point of view.

I personally prefer focus on maintaining the original character or any other peculiarity, so that a maximum number of people like the building always. For instance, the under-construction Nankana Sahib Public School situated at Gill road in Ludhiana, has spiritual value in the minds of the local people due to its religious significance with the word ‘Nankana’. So, the building elevation is designed to represent Sikh Architecture with elements like domes, chajjas, minarets, bold material finishes, etc. The building layout has been designed as per the composite climate in which the Punjab region falls by incorporating courtyards to regulate the air flow.

The fully completed five-hundred bed Mother and Child Care Hospital at Rajindra Hospital in Patiala, was designed keeping in mind site constraints, building by-laws, hospital services, local materials, and eco-friendliness.
For me, “design is nothing but placing a habitat in nature.” The primary focus of my practice during the last 25 years has been to evolve my own language of architecture that is rooted in the traditional learning, contextual material and sustainable construction methodology, fused with the future-ready technological comforts of modernity. We have thus created our own niche with a style that can be called Organi.Tech.Ture which reflects the core values of sustainability, comfort, art and modernity, all synthesized in the contemporary design forms which are aesthetically pleasing while being organic and technologically advanced at the same time. Organitechture is inspired from the two strong forces of nature and technology. The vision is to create spaces that are exhilarating to experience while being functional and eco-friendly.

My design philosophy is Minimalistic and inspired by Nature. I strongly believe that going green and building zero-energy buildings is the way forward. My firm initiated green projects like Green One, which is the first individual residence in India with a certified 5-star SVAGRIHA rating, and The Nest in Gurgaon which is also the first to receive a IGBC Green Homes Platinum Certificate.

My office is designed as a green workspace with interlocked levels set around a green courtyard, creating a collage of local materials fused with contemporary design incorporating principles of green architecture. The earthy workspace atmosphere with well-lit multilevel spaces blend into each other and break the monolithic image of a workspace with a striking yet organic visual appeal.
An architecture style is what shapes our lives - something we participate in every day, and yet it is something rarely noticed. I believe that architecture lies at the intersection of art and science - bringing together primal needs and high tech. The process of architecture requires a passionate involvement and commitment to bring out creative solutions for complex issues.

The current state of architectural design is trending many contemporary ideas of what defines unique and unusual, but with visually and spiritually inspiring geometry supported by strong computer software. I believe in this experimentation but within the realms to explore purposeful architecture through various techniques, delivering meaningful buildings that exhibit a message of cultural relevancy.

All buildings, in my opinion, must firstly be designed to provide shelter from the elements and to keep the right temperature. Everything else should be a special effect that energizes the people inhabiting the space and provide a purpose to further the needs of the site.

Buildings should be relatable to the average inhabitant, be cohesive with ideas, and be inherently performance-oriented. I do not believe in judging a building on its uniqueness, or departure from the past – even though these may be of good qualities. But an architect must rely on its efficacy of form and material usage with reference to context and human occupation, which, according to me, is a more purposeful architecture.

I would also like to add here that sketching is the first step in starting a project and something every architect should do, as sketching lets an architect help breathe life into a project. A sketch is a powerful tool as it is the seed of the thought behind the whole concept that ultimately transforms into a building. In fact, designers in all fields that require something to be created afresh, will find sketching a very handy tool. The wonderful part of sketching is that one is not required to be an artist. Sketching is a skill – not a gift – and with time and practice, anyone can become proficient enough at it.

My sketching technique has evolved over the years with practice. Relying more on this tool, I now have a style that I believe may be recognizable as my own – and that is exhilarating to me. I also admire digital technology. After all, that is how we get our concepts approved from clients.
What an architect builds and how he does so is to a great extent influenced by what he sees, experiences and records. My practice in vernacular architecture is inextricably bound with my entire childhood spent in a village. Since the last six years, my Ahmedabad-based d6thD design studio promotes the use of locally available materials, traditional building techniques, and culturally and climatically relevant building design. A retrospective of my work in various regions of Gujarat reflects my perseverance in designing with an overt principle of vernacular architecture.

I understood vernacular by some of the fundamental attributes and characteristics that it brings. One characteristic attribute is that it has evolved out of the conditions of the place locally and the second attribute is that it has continued to evolve over time. Thus implying, the particularity to place as well as evolution of time. Hence, vernacular is not about grandmother’s nostalgia or the reverence for the old; and so I call it ‘the new vernacular architecture’.

I always ask myself, what does ‘modern’ means? Can’t we go back to the past and carry on with that wonderful history of research and development by applying twentieth century knowledge, and show love and respect for all that has gone before us? And so here I am trying to be a so-called modern by using the research work done by our forefathers.

My design with honesty and truth in the choice of materials and the method of using them is the result of my inspiration from Indian villages. Simple life patterns with the values of village people who are content and happy even with the very few material possessions, left an indelible impression on my mind. My design, therefore, is always based on cost reduction techniques shown by vernacular architecture which gives better quality and an Indian identity. I strongly believe that Vernacular Architecture is not merely a style but it is an attitude, which carries with it a holistic lifestyle.
Ar. Pranav Iyer  

**Ground 11**

Architecture, over the millennia, has evolved as a response to physical, social and political discourse. It is, in essence, an organic evolution of form and function and how they meet. Over time, the design and architecture of a place are a sum total of an experiential memory.

My style has also evolved as an organic and fluid collection of principles and elements, which together guide my design. Having started with a deep and abiding respect for the international masters, where each element of design comes together to fashion a symphony, my formative years were heavily influenced by a vocabulary of brick and concrete in their purest forms, unadorned and honest in their expression. Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and B V Doshi were the principal conductors of that symphony.

Over the past few years, influenced by advancements in not only material science, but also the functional and physical perceptions of space, I have allowed my style to become softer, and more inclusive in every sense of the word. I would define it at this time as being global in its physical form yet striving to be local in how it is perceived. Every project is designed within varied climates, for different communities, and in different materials, which presents a challenge where it may be easy to lose one’s identity by reflexively and blindly embracing local streams or rejecting pre-conceived notions without weighing them objectively.

I have striven, through design, to design functionally and communally meaningful spaces, with a degree of innovation that can be physical or meta-physical, where the physical vocabulary of the building serves as a mere tool to convey the idea of what it wants to be and what it wants to mean to its inhabitants.

I also find myself being drawn to the materials that I grew up with, their textures and their flaws, their sheer simplicity yet their relevance across scales. Once we walk away from a set of guidelines that would be perceived as a ‘style’, a whole universe of design opens up, freeing me to respond to what talks to me in a project, and try to reply to it in its own language, with all its nuances and grammar. In conclusion, my style could perhaps be most aptly described as ‘contemporary sensitive’ or perhaps an architecture of Futures Past.'
In the last several years, there’s been a significant shift of focus in design that has emphasized human wellness and betterment. These are the core values that form the foundation of Ivpartners and a re-imagining of design to make the space better for the humans that occupy or use it. My architectural style has always been contemporary to curate a modernist design language. The intent is contextual and the use of distinct materials to create a different design language for every project is the ethos of my firm. All the projects we initiate are a representation of a brand-new story both in terms of design and its implementation. For me, it is imperative to begin with a concept and never tread the path of a generic idea.

Today, creating an experience is more important than ever before. I, thus, strive towards creating a rigorous engagement and emotional connection to the design. This quest requires an in-depth analysis of how people will interact with space which is then evaluated and enumerated to evolve a brief. A few standard elements that ensure an instant association with the users are signage, decor, and lighting that strongly align with the brand message.

Since, experiential design revolves around the culmination of elements to form a recall and maximize footfall, more and more businesses and institutions are seeking experiential designers. With a surge of development in materials and technology in the past three decades, the manifestation of grandeur in design has successfully been conceptualized, improvised on and perfected over innumerable realms. A play of varied elements from ancient buildings is the usual principle that is witnessed in such design approaches. Since a consistent yet ever-evolving brand base is the major deliverable in such cases, a common demand amongst the fraternity is a dramatic and statement aesthetic, which creates an exception and gives the user a sense of belonging in an exclusive context. Exclusive grandeur has thus gradually become a sort of a mandate in such spaces.

Ar. Ishvinder Kaur  Ivpartners
The context is subject to space and time, not just Indian or even global. Architecture identifies itself in the space to the context of time. The history and content get spiritually immersed into it; these occur with explorations of the space. When nature flows around you and the space becomes one with nature, it becomes timeless, and a part of the culture of the place. Architecture creates with sensitivity - creating without becoming an obstruction. The space should slowly smile and say 'I am here', without screaming for attention. This, I believe, is space, time and continuum.
I have an avid interest in achieving the desired aesthetics while consuming minimal resources. My architectural style is largely influenced by the Japanese philosophy of Wabi Sabi - accepting the world as imperfect, unfinished, and transient, and then going deeper and celebrating that reality. Wabi is defined as rustic simplicity or understated elegance and Sabi is translated to taking pleasure in the imperfect. I believe that this approach fits perfectly in a scenario like India where a Wabi-Sabi way of life can help embrace natural materials, reduce costs, increase efficiency in construction and cater to larger demographics.

In 2013 I was invited to Italy for a program on Urban Acupuncture & Neuroergonomics under the mentorship of architect Marco Casagrande and bio-urbanist Stefano Serafini where I established a broader vision of built human environment, which tied into social consciousness and environmental awareness.

As a firm, we believe in visualising multiple design approaches to the same problem and designing projects which positively affect the surroundings as well as users of the space. Our primary philosophy is research-based intuitive design. We believe in creating a sense of belonging among all users of the building such that they use the space in a sensible, efficient, environment friendly and socially profitable way, and yet each building has a story to tell. The design of a building should reflect the essence and character of the client/organisation. This quality of making spaces experiential and story based is reflected keenly in the Punjab State War Heroes Memorial and Museum in Amritsar which showcases nearly 500 years of history. Here, our design approach represents a shift from a curatorial-driven to a visitor-focused experience. The story is deeply passionate and inspirational and enables the visitors to create personal and emotional bonds. The Development Management Institute in Patna is built with natural materials and locally available materials like clay jaali’s and Indian stone.
Ar. Kanhai Gandhi, Ar. Neemesh Shah, Ar. Shresht Kashyap **KNS Architects**

A design is a manifestation of one’s thoughts. Architecture is one of the many ways in which one can express thoughts. There are many ways to approach a design idea and we believe in looking at each project/design/architecture with a fresh perspective, a fact that finds resonance in our belief in creating vibrant, out-of-the-box solutions that strike the right note between practicality and aesthetics; constraints and aspirations.

We do not follow a particular style as we believe in delivering diversity through our work. Every design needs a different designing idea or a solution. It has to be contextual and relevant to the site and surroundings while satisfying the need of the client. Contextual is a set of values that gets incorporated in the design. In the architectural context, it gives meaning to the building by reference of its surroundings.

We believe in looking at different projects in altered ways and providing unique solutions to each design.

Architecture is not just about cosmetic treatment to the facade; but how it benefits the building. There has to be a spatial connection between the interior and the exterior as well as between the structure and its surroundings. Apart from having a spatial connect, it should also relate on a personal front. My Space, Your space, and Our space is an ideology that we follow while designing. My space is the architect’s thought and intent behind the approach. Your space refers to the need of the client, a wish list. Our space is the cumulative output for the design, keeping the client’s need and context of the site in mind.

Architectural design with futuristic thinking that rests on a traditional philosophy and the core of a contextual, responsible and resourceful architecture, is what we keep in mind when approaching a design.
O ur projects are conceived through a research-oriented approach to policy, planning, design, technology, passive and low energy design. Every design is conceived through the lens of *SOUl - Sustainability, Optimisation, Uniqueness and Livability. These four aspects are central to all our design processes.

Our endeavour is to design in a manner that reduces consumption of resources and energy while increasing the number of habitable hours with minimum reliance on mechanical means. This has resulted in buildings that consume upto 50-70% lesser energy than certified Green building benchmarks through passive design and microclimate creation, proven through post-occupancy evaluation.

We understand that we are often working in an environment with limited resources. Our approach ensures integrated project delivery with spatial, structural, façade and MEP optimisation resulting in a significant reduction in the capital and operational cost.

Architecturally, we celebrate identity and diversity versus visual homogeneity. We think of our buildings and cities as bazaars, places of human interaction along with being places of human habitation. This ensures that all our projects are unique, whilst responding to the client, climate, context, and the end-users.

The end-user always sits at the centre of our design process in our approach to building smart environments. We consider mobility, security, outdoor comfort, technology, health and well-being, ease of facility management and disaster readiness to create spaces that work equally well for all users. These parameters define the enquiry process that shapes the architecture of Morphogenesis. We believe that Architecture, Design and Urbanism as processes must be in step with the forces of urbanisation, globalisation and technology. It is this bridge between tradition and modernity where the work of the practice is positioned.
My designs are inspired by nature and the wisdom of the past. I believe in egoless frontiers in design, where design merges with nature. Form, Shape and Style of buildings since centuries have undergone transformations and history interprets the life and culture of the past by studying these timeless buildings and documenting them to understand how our ancestors lived. Timelessness in design was a great attribute and common to many of the landmark designs. This timelessness happened because of wisdom, sensitivity, durability and simplicity of forms. My style of architecture attempts to interpret the timelessness of past to create buildings of future.

For me, a quality space is a smooth fusion of exterior form and simplistic and pragmatic interior spaces. I would call my architectural style people-centric and dynamic. People-centric because it respects the aspirations of the end-users in terms of theme of design; and dynamic because I constantly challenge myself through experimentaiton. My body of work is an interesting mix of Fusion, Colonial and Contemporary and do not follow a style or pattern. This gives me a feeling of liberation as I am not bound by a style, so every project is a challenge, a learning curve, and like a revolt that shouts: don’t try to stamp it!

Ar. Geoffrey Bawa’s Kandalama project has deeply influenced me. It was a design in which the ego of the design and designer bows down to the ultimate designer (nature itself). My own home is enveloped with green leaves and yellow flowers leaving no space for any architectural style.

We have used tilted glass façade (anti-gravity) in offices that face north. The façade is anchored with RCC structure and is made with special high performance DGU glass with spider fittings. The beauty is that the tilted façade reflects the green of the surrounding landscape. Quite often we have used tall, splendid recessed windows in residences that bring in a lot of light, while cavity walls keep the home protected from extremes of nature.

We love to play with natural clay bricks from chimneys measuring 8x4x2” and are cut at site by experienced masons in two pieces. The resulting size is 8x2x2” and extremely affordable. This indigenous style has resulted in some lovely buildings. I also like the natural travertine marble with all its holes and voids, which we have filled with transparent resin to create Italian style villas. All of Rome, since medieval times, is built with this material. In one of our projects, we have fused Mangalore tiles on wooden beams, Gwalior Mint stone (Indian) and a vibrant color to create a building in a 122-year-old Sports Club.
I believe that design of a building should revolve around the end-users and the design should develop through their day to day needs. So, we take care that during the course of designing, the end-users do not get obliterated. I believe that introduction of spaces and their positioning are driven by various overlapping layers of tangible and intangible aspects of the user. Especially when working on residences, the design must cater to the habitants with their different personalities, age groups, and needs.

We also highlight regional traditionalism in our design. Taking the soul of traditional architecture and transfiguring it with a modern touch, we address the needs of both the present and future generation, thereby creating a connection between them through the forms, spaces, materials and elements. Infusing spaces like a Thinnai area (landscape with flora, fauna etc), courtyards etc, takes the spirit of traditional architecture to the future with a newness in it. Such spaces also bring social togetherness spatially, creating a psychological impact that fosters human relations.

Through design, we encourage living in harmony with nature. By incorporating elements that bring in natural light, greenery, and induce natural airflow, such as water bodies, lily ponds, etc, we add a visual treat to the senses, while earthiness is highlighted with use of materials that bring a pleasing warmth through their connection with regional roots.
I believe that our design style is characterized by its objective to enhance the way people work. By creating high-performing, nurturing work environments, we can improve people’s lives at work and enable clients to achieve their business objectives. We are designing workplaces that are flexible and scalable, prioritising talent attraction and retention, adapting to the local culture, and creating spaces that are sustainable and human-centric. For instance, at PayPal - a collaborative hub for incubation and innovation in Bangalore, our work takes inspiration from its cultural surroundings and exemplifies an entrepreneurial workplace culture to attract and retain tech talent. Titan’s Bangalore headquarters speaks to the highest global standards of innovation and sustainability. It pushes the boundaries of intelligent, human-centric design to set a benchmark in India and beyond.

There is no single design style, neither is there a ‘one size fits all’ approach. In order to create something impactful for our clients, we must deeply understand the business and its needs. Each new project starts on a blank canvas with some objective-based ideas that we can develop to create unique, transformative solutions.

My own preference is for minimalism – there’s a lot of thought that goes into achieving that level of simplicity. When we think of our favourite devices; phones and laptops, their technological complexity is simplified through a carefully considered and highly usable interface. The same holds true for buildings.

We also need to consider sustainability and the use of natural resources. My generation grew up in a time of plenty, but this is no longer the case. The next generation will need to think harder and smarter about their design solutions. I believe building technologies have the capability to help us use our remaining resources much more efficiently. Most importantly, I remain positive. Positive that humans can overcome challenges and develop great design solutions that have the ability to improve lives in the workplace and beyond.
I believe in an ‘Architecture of Responsibility’ - a resolve that we undertake not to produce or work on projects of frivolity, of waste, but only those that help this world, humanity, and the environment at large. We launched a new research cell that will integrate technology at the highest level, to research and resolve every problem related to climate, people and environment by analysing millions of real time data and integrating it back into the design.

The last two decades have underlined the significance of technology in design. From parametric form building in the first decade, to the systems integration in the second, we have stepped into the next phase which integrates the complex intuitive poetics of our minds with hundreds of layers that one negotiates, over innumerable data points, which are organically generated but logically vetted.

Design is not a singular idea or a statement but rather a bodiless fluid cloud, trying to negotiate its identity constantly, with its multiple contexts. The contexts in this case are not limited to just the physical space but also, cultural, economic, political contexts and many more that are undefined and unpredictable. This constant negotiation is like balancing of equations done by a student of chemistry or matching of accounts by a financial apprentice, where the variables change constantly, but the intent is well defined. It is this negotiation between the idea and the context that results in an enriching experience right from the designer to the people executing it and further to the users as an embedded history within the DNA of a particular design. At that point, the design is no longer needed to be explained in words, it becomes an experience with multiple interpretations imperative for its growth and adaptations to the ever-changing context.
My architectural style can be best described as a blend of natural and modern. At Midori, we strive to make our buildings as sustainable as possible without compromising on client’s requirements or our architectural vision. We employ computational design (algorithms and simulations) to arrive at the best possible design by considering the natural topography and climate. We believe in design that aims to protect the environment and natural resources, recreating urban areas and buildings that are designed to fully cover their energy requirements without inducing environmental damage. This organic process results in buildings that are futuristic and green.

Whenever we design a building, we try to blur the lines between the inside and the outside. It is this delicate balance that is enhanced by the aesthetics and energy efficiency at its core. We also integrate renewable energy systems into our buildings that aims at reducing the building’s carbon footprint. In short, our architectural style can be described as daring, futuristic forms, inspired, powered by clean energy, and generated by employing the biophilic approach that is driven by climate responsive design strategies.

Aero Hive in Hong Kong, for instance, aims to challenge the common belief that contemporary tall buildings cannot be ventilated naturally due to their height and offer pause from the typical hermetically sealed glass-boxes, serving as a model of sustainability. Aero Hive is a breathing entity; the breath transpires through vertical diaphragms in the form of green sky. Aerodynamic architectural design is realized by taking into consideration building orientation, position, form, and plan variations. The wind flow to the indoor spaces is carried using wind-scooping and the ‘venturi’ effect through the traversing green diaphragms.

We are committed to using advanced technology and simulation techniques to produce architecturally pleasing work while pushing the boundaries of performative design.
Ar. Milind Pai  

**Milind Pai Architects**

In nature we see a balance of design, ecosystem and aesthetical beauty. My design philosophy is a simple extension of form follows function. The spaces we design are based on comprehensive design solutions that blend into the cultural, physical and emotional needs of the occupants. Today, we largely work in the contemporary style.

It is fashionable to discuss trends in our industry. Materials keep shifting continuously, colors keep changing, new ideas, new forms, and new geometry keep emerging. We see changing trends in technology like home automation, lighting and even the sophisticated 3D printers that are leading us into future ideas and trends.
As a multi-disciplinary practice, we emphasize on style as a process that evokes meaning. Architecture is a language... a medium of expression. Like every language, architecture also has syntax to express the architect’s vision. The spatial composition of functions and the experience created is also the syntax that expresses the sense of architecture.

We do not limit our vocabulary in terms of architectural styles be it modern minimalist, contemporary, industrial, or ornate classical. All components when put together in any style should have meaning. This meaning may be defined by purpose, personality of the user, or their lifestyle. It is this projected interpretation that gives meaning to our projects.

Our style is our process that is the reflection of our end-user – who could be a single person or an intellectual public group. To understand, interpret and reflect their personality is what embeds meaning to the built form. Our buildings do not contradict the personality of its user, unless we desire a contradiction. Hence, our emphasis is on the spatial arrangement/planning and the research to adopt any particular architectural style that can express the interpreted meaning to our built form.

The style is not a part of our process but the research that leads to it. Therefore, as an end-product, all our buildings are distinctly different from one another. This is the result of our process that understands the aesthetic required for a highly educated, non-flamboyant person as being very different from that of an elderly, cultivated person. But the building’s dissection unveils the projected personality of its user, which is the common unifying factor.
My architectural style is based on philosophies borne out of my learnings as an architect, those of Responsiveness. Sustainability. Innovations. Individuality. The architectural style is responsiveness to the context. A contemporary take built on the foundations of Indian traditional practices. Of sustainability measures and resultant innovations. Remaining true to the essence of materials. Of natural light and ventilation. The interior-exterior dialogue. Low maintenance materials and details. Of textures, both visual and tactile. Wealth out of waste. This architectural style pervades all my works, irrespective of their nature or place of being.

My creations portray simplicity and elegance, which manifest in simple clean lines and in the respectful use of materials, and in a way that make design timeless in its appeal. I attach great importance to maintaining a connect with Nature, be it a commercial or an institutional place, an office or a residence. Under the umbrella of a guiding style, each project takes on a distinctive character, and through innovations borne out of adoption of regional materials. Extensive use of materials in their raw form, colours and textures, displays both a boldness and a reverence for materials. Learning from time-tested practices of a region’s traditional architecture and adopting them in a modern way, displays a maturity and intelligence.

I believe that Architecture must give expression to the life for which it is intended. Not only must it fully and competently satisfy the requirements of the program, but its form should resonate with the diverse spaces and activities it contains.
Ar. Ponni M Concessao Oscar & Ponni Architects

Architecture is a synergy of various disciplines such as art, engineering and philosophy. The creative process of lasting building edifices is a joy like none other. An architect is literally a nation builder and game changer. My firm specializes in Urban design, Architecture and Interior Design stressing on Green Building norms and sustainable architectural design. I draw inspiration from Nature, site conditions as well as contextual factors. In fact, I strongly believe in contextual architecture. I also believe in technologically allied design and combine it with elements of our Indian heritage, sustainability and contextual factors while designing.

The style of the buildings and townships that we design vary from new-age contemporary to traditional classical style of architecture. The variance in style is because of the adherence to the client’s brief and context of the site which is unique from one project to another, especially when it comes to typologies. We do not have a cookie cutter design and prefer experimenting in different styles and we constantly switch gears in designing buildings, which makes them unique.

Our IT parks which vary from 4 to 40 lakh sqft have a similar design vocabulary as the project typology dictates contemporary style, elevation design, selection of glass which is often times blue or aqua and horizontal or vertical movement, depending on site dynamics. The same goes with our academic buildings, for instance, the Jeeva Velu International School has pyramids in the sky, echoing the holy Arunachala hills which form a dramatic backdrop to the building, and which clearly reflect the site context.

The leaning towards monumentality and architectural magnificence is attained by imbibing classical architecture as in the case of GRT Institute of Technology, Tiruttani, which blossomed into a neo-classical set of buildings. The necklace design in PGP Institute in Namakkal also evokes a classical style. A more contemporary style is evident in the Lawrence School in Ooty but with traditional materials. Another award-winning design is the Jiva Chaitanya Life Sciences building which emulates the DNA as concept. Our hotel projects lean more towards contextual architecture be it the neo-classical French style in the Accord Puducherry, contemporary design in the Le Meridien Coimbatore, and the completely ethnic style in Sandy Waves Resort in Havelock Island, Andamans.

A truly contemporary style is echoed in the Raghavan Building in Chennai using the typical Indian courtyard concept at the third floor surrounded by living areas with the inner envelope being sheer glass. Stone was the dominating material. A stark contrast is felt in the large palatial home of Dato Dr Ameen in Kaula Lampaur, Malaysia, where the style was Indian Chettinad with an Islamic flavor.

The Strip Mall in Chengelpet is a courtyard design with water bodies and traditional highlights such as gazebos. We have also been involved in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana project and have built noon-meal centers, toilets for underprivileged girl students, and schools for leprosy-afflicted patients’ children.
My philosophy has always been to keep my designs simple and non-acrobatic – this way not only are my creations liked by a vast majority; they also live by the decades of their existence without looking out of fashion. So, if one calls ‘Simple & Functional’ as my style – so be it, as I feel making anything simple is the most difficult and complex thing to do. Simple is not easy and maintaining simplicity can be very confusing at times, thus, it needs a lot of clarity of mind and a lot more passion for architecture – and that is what I am blessed with!

Indian Architecture goes a long way – it is, by far, the best architectural philosophy and has a lot of science behind it. Indian architecture since the Indus Valley civilization has been very functional and suiting to the local needs and promoting sustainable living.

At a very early stage of my 50+ years of professional practice, I realized that as an Architect, I need to foresee the future; I need to plan for another 50–70 years, and my designs need to last the test of time. So, my designs have surely evolved with time; with the changing needs, through innovations and new materials being available. However, the core design philosophy remains more-or-less unchanged with all my projects being self-sustaining and as eco-friendly as possible. Be it the high-end villa or a large residential township, a commercial tower or an IT Park, a Hotel or a Mall, a Multiplex, School or Temple – all my designs have maintained their regional architectural character, yet have used the latest materials and technology inculcated within the design. And this is what has given me many landmark projects - from the first-ever Revolving Restaurant – Ambassador Hotel, Mumbai, India’s first ever Health Spa & Body Rejuvenation Centre designed for World Resorts at Golden Palm Resorts in Bangalore; the First Multiplex-Mall in the country - Fame Adlabs at Citimall, Andheri in Mumbai, which was a trendsetter for all other multiplexes that followed. The country’s first fast-track I.T. Building was designed, executed and handed over to Morgan & Stanley of USA. The first Semiconductor Plant - Meltron Semiconductors at Nashik - an Indo-French collaboration; India’s first Gold-graded Township for HP-Mittal Energy Limited in Punjab - which also won the HUDCO Design Award for Green Architecture; India’s first Platinum-rated School – Cygnus World School at Vadodara in Gujarat; the Smart Tower at GIFT Smart City in Gujarat for State Bank of India; and so on.

My designs have surely made a difference in the Indian Architecture and I’m sure has added to a positive influence on the younger generation.
At Pentaspace Design Studio, a single elegant stroke, a singular idea or a diagram on a page doesn’t define design. A set of ideas come together as musical notes to produce harmony and balance. Strong concepts underpin our projects; this could be region specific, neighborhood, material, cultural, social and more. Every project is seen with various lens and then multiple layers come together to form the final architectural design.

A series of questions, various surveys and a detailed study of the brief sets our design process. The resultant data sets the program for the project. The planning process once initiated takes into account all micro and macro factors of the site with respect to environment, orientation, neighborhood study etc. The elevation is simultaneously visualized incorporating the necessary details in the plan, so it works like the left and right hand on a piano setting the right tone.

In Aroha, one of our residential projects in Mumbai, we have got in cave architecture and features from the Buddhist caves in the neighborhood, which became the driving force behind the design philosophy. For Rainforest, another residential housing project in Mumbai, our design was influenced by the rainforest trees surrounding the sites. These manifest into the elevation and the entire micro-environment from the lobbies and the landscape to the drop-off canopies. In another commercial project in Hyderabad, we have retained a granite boulder inside the building and designed spaces around the stone, making it a central feature. Moreover, only locally available granite was used in the design material palette of the project.

For us, every design is a new challenge to push the envelope and to add more lens to refine the designing process all over again. Change is the only constant in our design inspiration and process.
Our approach to design is to achieve the client’s goals through the process of research and design solutions which generate an environment that surpasses trends and fads by offering a more enriching spatial experience. Style is defined as a particular way of doing something, which makes it identifiable. While we do agree that it is characteristic to have a defined style, which helps identify a person, or, in this case, a practice or a studio, but we at reD prefer to work against that mindset. We believe that each project is unique. So, whether designing a hinge for a door to enhance its operation or planning an urban layout for an educational campus, equal attention is given in decoding the client brief and analyzing the various parameters that need to be considered, while being creative with such varied scales. Sometimes, a project needs a top down approach, while others need a bottom up, and some just need thought to flow rhizomatically. Confucius once said: 'Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.' This is clearly our motto. Given that we are a practice of 4 individuals, each bringing their own skill set to the table, it is simply our recipe for a successful and healthy collaboration, which is, most importantly, a ton of fun! We would like to think of ourselves as ever evolving, dynamic and pushing boundaries to stay relevant. Maybe that in itself is our architectural style!
Ar. Sanjay Arora & Ar. Sanchit Arora Renesa Architects

Architecture is not simply a question of providing a place to live or occupy but a vocabulary that’s developed and shared through design that projects our ideals as well as the client’s needs. For this reason, it’s important to create your own niche, a reflectance of your design that resonates with the firm.

Renesa as a firm strives to enhance the sense of perception and experience to the physical spaces we inhabit through our work. Our architectural style is to combine traditional aesthetics with modern design which is done through creating and editing a selective and reflective thought process. From the initial stages, itself, we aim to strip away all that is unnecessary; from our first sketch we are already on our way to defining the structure once complete. A holistic approach in each design stage, is what gives depth to our approach.

The process of design development is not about defining the black or white spaces, but rather making the grey area stand out and highlighting the evolution of the design in its simplest form. Depending on the typology of design required and the client’s vision, we try to employ indigenous materials every step of the way. This involves developing sufficient research into the context and surroundings for the team’s work to respond to its social, economic and natural context. We want architecture to be a conscious extension of where it is placed; establishing a clear dialogue with users, and allow us to innovate spaces that remain useful and valuable in the future.
What if you went to a well-known fashion designer and asked for a dress for your best friend’s wedding, and he designed a little black dress for the occasion? Great style but absolutely wrong for the occasion!

When an architect becomes a prisoner to a particular signature style, he/she may fall into an abyss where adhering to style takes supremacy over what the project needs to be. It may end up like a highly stylised K Jo movie without a gripping storyline. It may appeal for a fleeting moment but will certainly not stand the test of time.

At RLDA, we don’t have an official style for this reason. This doesn’t mean that we don’t believe in stylisation, but that we do not subscribe to a one size (or in this case one style) fits all theory. When approaching a new design project, we try not to judge; and we try not to bring my own predispositions to the project. We don’t believe in what’s in and what’s not.

It’s more important for us to understand the essence of the project; what the space really needs to be. After we have asked ourselves that question, it allows for an easy translation into the built space without resorting to individual whims or current trends. The style required for a hill resort nestled in a virgin mountain-scape has to be very different from a hip city hotel. A home library should be stylistically nuanced quite differently from a trendy salon.

We believe architecture is a spatial art which constantly engages with its inhabitants. In this engagement, moments get created - moments, whether they are Spatial, Material or Visual - dictate a project’s style.

We strive for an honesty – a directness with which our spaces communicate with their inhabitants. In that directness should lie an honesty towards one’s engagement with both the materials of construction and the manifestation of their expression. That for us is our ‘House Style’
My learnings in design go almost five decades. While technology, materials, resources, typologies and scale of the built environment have changed, I find that the fundamental principles that guide the philosophy of design have not changed at all. Responding to context and time has been very fundamental to successful design in my experience. The translation of these responses into physical environments for people is architectural design.

When you believe in this philosophy of design, you automatically weave the intricacies of the design with culture and ethos that is predominant in that specific location where the design has to be executed. It is the location and community that we are building for, that delineate the design. The timing of the design, however, governs the priorities and choices with respect to materials used, technology, budget allocations, and resource availability – which influence the detailing of the design. So, my architectural designs have been a continuation of a theme, which is Reciprocity.
Architecture, like civilizations, is dynamic and evolving. While exciting architecture is being built all over the world and thus expanding the vocabulary of contemporary architecture, we architects in India have to find our balance in design enabling us to be part of the new and creative experiments ahead as well as be part of what has gone before. Our studio SNK works with the belief that ‘Creativity’ flourishes when new ways of looking at the same problem are brought together, such as when people with different backgrounds, training and experiences bring together their perspectives.

In a country like India, which is complex, not at all homogenous, and so disparate, with a multiplicity of everything – be it religion, ethnicity, languages, culture or the arts. I don’t think I can separate India and the “Indianess” from within me. With over four decades of practice in a country like India my buildings speak for themselves about my beliefs and ideas of sustainable practice – I am an Indian, and all what I am comes from my heritage. It is an intrinsic part of my being and will naturally reflect in my work in many ways.

The diversity of my work is what I have enjoyed the most. I have built from the Himalayas to the south of India, from Bengal to Kutch and through the central plains and heart of our country, from Jharkhand to Indore and from Uttarakhand to Kodagu. The building types have included reconstruction of villages to hi-tech campuses, from orphanages and animal hospitals to state-of-the-art corporate headquarters, from the village school to the most elite schools in Mumbai, and from conserving iconic heritage buildings to converting garbage dumps into parks. Moreover, our involvement has ranged from the upgradation of slums to large corporate and public buildings, from low income housing to the restoration of magnificent vernacular and colonial buildings. Exciting and fulfilling tasks that span our careers take us from being hi-tech professionals, catering to the needs of modern-day world, to barefoot architects.

In order to achieve this, we need designers who can plan, design and implement new developments, working interactively with the community at large. If we follow the role of the traditional architects, we cannot meet this need. I believe this can be done without compromising on creativity, innovation, or quality of design.

Looking at architecture from the Indian context, I feel that India is rapidly changing. The scale of projects is changing with more ambitious and bigger projects. Lifestyles are changing, people have higher and unique aspirations. Educational campuses are coming up, IT campuses, institutional buildings, recreational buildings, shopping, hospitals and an enormous need of low-cost housing. Therefore, I see huge opportunity for young architects. Sensitivity to the environment, availability of materials, effective land use, urban issues, and, of course, architectural vocabulary are all important determinants of good architecture and design.
As an Architect, I try to create spaces that stand out or be identifiable for the user who is living in it and not to serve as just another photogenic space. My ‘area of interests’ ranges from Mathematics, Cybernetics to music and earth construction, so ‘style’ for me is an external ornament that doesn’t serve a purpose in a wholesome manner; for varied projects that we undertake. Instead, I base my designs on four fundamental questions: I name them as RISE – Resilience (can this withstand future shocks?), Identity (whom does this belong to?), Sufficiency (how much is enough?), Equity (does anyone get excluded?). These help us to arrive at a stage where we can answer whether the proposed structure is sustainable or not; this has been my ground of design for the past 35 years.

We always try to challenge ourselves and explore this particular type of architectural practice from various perspectives. For the Mati Ghar project built for IGNCA, we tried to show the timeless quality of earth, to represent the concept of the exhibit entitled ‘Kaal’ which means time. During its construction, we shattered the myths around mud being a weak material and established that it can be used successfully and practically. Whereas with our upcoming project the Bamboo Research and Training Centre in Maharashtra, we are trying to empower the tribal communities, by modifying their traditional skills set to a professional craft and its manufacture.

While we tested low embodied energy materials in the above large-scale projects, we have put our energy conscious sensibility, in use for Residential Architecture as well. HKS (Hari ki Sarai) is a contemporary house in Gurgaon, where we have modified vernacular techniques, which are considered slow and costly, with our engineering processes.

It is satisfying as designers; to observe how symbolism, harmony and expression can emerge from an Integrated Design Process. Thus, we believe in creating lifestyles rather than just styling buildings. So, we don’t categorize ourselves as ‘Green Architects’ or even ‘Architects’, but as sustainable community lifestyle visualizers!
Architecture is all around us. As Jeremy Melvin, architectural historian puts it, ‘Architecture impacts our lives in ways that are both profound and subtle, evoking powerful memories, feelings, ideas and associations’. It’s only when we experience all the profound and subtle strokes, all the things visible and invisible, that we truly experience good architecture.

At SSA Architects, we create spaces and buildings that are both beautiful and functional. And simplicity underpins all our work. Strip things down to their essential, core purpose and one gets the most fundamental and simplified version. The more ‘essential’ we make a product, the ‘less designed’ we make it appear — and simpler it is for people to experience. The office building in Assam is a simple yet striking example where we came up with an idea of two simple rectangular blocks juxtaposed at 90 degrees to each another. The projecting upper floor protects the wide glass expanse of the entrance lobby from heavy rains during monsoons while generating two open terraces on the first floor.

As Charles Correa would say, ‘throughout human history, the sky has earned a profound and sacred meaning.’ In dry and hot North India, ‘open to sky space’ with interlocking built form has always been an integral element in the expression of architecture. All our projects are built around one or multiple open spaces with habitable spaces around, enabling the important link between inside and outside and encouraging varied activities during different part of the day and seasons. For instance, our design of the Skill Development Centre in rural Uttar Pradesh has evolved around a ‘open to sky space’ a popular hang-out for the students. At the North-Cap University in Gurgaon and at a corporate office in Haryana, the ‘open to sky’ spaces take a different form with a sky-lit atrium that remains at the core of the buildings.

Richness of local materials, method of construction and craft is evident in each of our projects. An essential element of ‘Sustainable Design’ the beauty of using local material is complemented by the benefit of generating employment opportunities for the local artisans, brick layers, skilled stone masons, weavers etc. giving the much-needed visual reliefs in an otherwise harsh landscape.

Use of colour is an essential part of our design style, be it the exterior or the interior. Our choice of palette is bold and uninhibited, calming large planes of reds and brown to windowsills and jambs of purples and azure blues – colours that evoke an emotional response.
We believe in a collaborative, communicative and contextual design approach that transcends use, purpose, aesthetic and function to create meaningful architecture. The art of architecture is storytelling and the science of it is innovation. Our design philosophy takes root in this wisdom. Creativity has no bounds and technology further gives wings to ideas. In present times, we are seeing a surge of technologies, materials, techniques which are supplementing our thought processes and approach to design. Creativity, to offer experiential environments, is challenging the senses to engage beyond and imagine art, science and technology to design out-of-the-box solutions. We are currently in an era of flirtatious experimentation, if I may call it, where architects are creating designs that behold the future of our visual world, yet in a sustainable mode.

K.I.A is always work in progress. We conform to no particular architectural style, though designing contextually aesthetic and functional environments is what we believe in. Principles of design vary for each project in our studio, and we continue to seek inspiration and innovate. Each project is uniquely different and reflective of its siting and location, function and purpose. Thereafter, the ideation is a cumulative effort of the experience, expertise and excellence of the studio team which has been built through inspiration, vision and leadership.
My architectural design style can be described as Indo-Centric Sustainability - a design aesthetic that is a blend of Indian-ness and is People & Planet friendly. It is a blend of traditional construction techniques, ornamentation, usage of materials, inspiration from crafts & weaves, and Indian philosophy with principles of holistic sustainability – that include socio-economic sustainability, resource and energy efficiency, passive architectural techniques, support of local economy and know-how, and hybrid/renewable energy-based mechanical systems for living comfort.

There are many questions I had to answer to myself during my architectural education and early practise that helped clarify the thinking of my design direction. After spending almost a decade away from India, the rediscovery of what makes Indian architecture truly unique became an obsession for me. The value of Indian-ness and all things that are culturally rooted in our daily lives became more apparent. Preserving and incorporating crafts as part of our contemporary architectural experiences made sense from a cultural sustainability point of view. Coming back with International sensibilities gave me the ability to adopt unique ideas that were culturally relevant. Things that worked for projects in Chicago, would not work for projects in Chennai – even though technically they were possible in both places. The unique geography and culture of people ensured that planning and detailing of architecture too would be unique.

Then began the quest to try and marry these two aspects of my experience. The question became – how do you change the approach to ‘traditional Indian design’ – find a way to work with tradition while being world-class and relevant? While this challenged the architectural landscape in India, which was driven solely by a ‘maximize site potential’ type of approach, the application of the sustainability filter helped shift the focus of the typical Indian project.

As we’ve seen in recent years, the focus on profits (above all else) has led to the destruction of natural resources and has had devastating effects across the world on vulnerable populations and wildlife. Climate change is the single largest demonstration of how much can go wrong when the pursuit of profits takes precedence. In most cases, clients are not willingly causing harm to people or the planet; while most of them generally care about the earth they seem stuck within a broken system. They are only trying within their constraints to minimize their negative environmental impacts and optimize their positive social impacts.

The focus on a triple bottom-line instead of the conventional bottom-line can help reshape this thinking. With sustainability being the over-arching element of my architecture style, I work to shift the focus onto People, Planet and Profits through every design decision that we are posed with. And through an integrated design approach it is possible to deliver projects at a lower capital expenditure and at lower lifecycle costs – making Indo-centric sustainability a holistically profitable solution!
Architecture is all about visual appeal and I learnt this from my father, who, in turn, learnt from Le Corbusier that ‘architecture must appeal to the senses’. My style is influenced by and an adaptation of the ethos of modernism as seen in the planning and architecture of Chandigarh city that signified the revolutionary change which took place in India and the world several decades ago.

Design and architecture are all about meaningful expression of fine art that works - meaning that though aesthetics may dominate the design intent, but it should revolve around human comfort and convenience. Therefore, all elements of a building should be derived from the climatic conditions of the region. I use passive architecture and incorporate elements in my building component so that there is less dependence on technology. I ensure minimum extravagance on materials and focus on creating valuable spaces that will enhance human existence in the built spaces.

The expression of my buildings is never opulent, as I prefer bare concrete and bricks in their exposed quality. I believe in adopting sustainability in the order of purity of form, un-wasteful spaces, and essential living. My style surely incorporates green areas inside and outside as I have learnt that Nature should be a part and parcel of a building’s architecture. My approach towards sustainability and eco-friendliness are project-oriented and reflect in the buildings I design. The form is dominant and, as the aesthetic appeal is creatively vital, the form expresses it all.
My approach is to create Architecture, Design and Engineering in response to the site’s and project’s specific context with reference to its place, people, climate, culture, history, geography, nature, environment, land, locality, economy, cost and time budget constraints, local building regulations, sustainability, arts & crafts, integrating digital techniques, material sciences, codes, regulations, systems, processes, emotions and multiple disciplines in a bold, sensitive and eloquent way at all scales.

Each layer contributes varyingly, weaving complex yet a united whole, forming its unique character that expresses local or universal ideas. So, my architectural design solution of every project is custom designed and distinct, based on systematic process, research, analysis, interesting ideas and exploration of genius loci of the place. Architecture gives me an incredible opportunity to address various contemporary issues like habitat in urban and non-urban contexts, sustainability, cultural continuity, diversity, etc. and produces new ideas, interpretations, futures and expressions.

Architecture is very place and people specific and my architectural design responds to this aspect. Unlike other art forms like music, sculpture, literature, fine arts or motion pictures, it is distinct in its expression and physical form which is inseparable from its locale, context and landscape.
Ar. Kunal Khandelwal & Ar. Khushboo

Studio Design Inc

Architecture, along with all facets of design, should be timeless. This defines our idea of architectural style. As Frank Gehry said “Architecture should speak of its time and place but yearn for timelessness.” We don’t adhere to any specific genre or style in design, but believe that design should be able to transcend boundaries of time and place.

Function, place, aspirations, stories and people are the most important and simplest tenets to define the style of a building and what separates it from another. These define the core idea of the design, which then translates into the various elements of design: form, space, construction and material, to evolve into its own style. The aesthetics of a project are never defined at the beginning but grow within this core idea with a larger picture in mind and the style evolves to have its own strong characteristics which will give the space its identity.

As Buckminster Fuller once said: “When I’m working on a problem, I never think about beauty. But when I’ve finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it’s wrong.” We feel that this process is very important as it lends each space, each person, and each building its own distinct character, its peculiarities, its culture and style thereby telling the story of the project, evolving and being able to withstand the test of time.
Studio Meraki has been envisioned on the core principles of perceiving the emotional values in design. I may not necessarily focus on any particular form/morphology primarily as the building blocks of my design methodology, but certainly on the emotions they generate in us. I rely heavily on the principles of Cognitive Architecture and Biophilic design for building happy and healthy habitats, while paying attention to the dwellers’ psychological and physiological comfort, hence generating less distress in society.

Alongside, it would be very apt to mention my tryst with the concept of genius loci by acclaimed educator and architect Ar. Shweta Kaw Norberg Schulz during my research and my subsequent lifelong love affair with it. In Roman mythology, Genius loci was the protective spirit of a place. In contemporary usage, it usually refers to a location’s distinctive atmosphere, or the spirit of the place. The concept has been discussed in modern architecture, but still is much underestimated. It states that ‘a house needs to be protective; a church needs to be solemn’. This has been the guiding wave in my approach and philosophy wherein I try to establish the same spirit/soul in the spaces that I create or recreate.

According to the latest studies in Neuroscience and Psychiatry, there is a tremendous psychological cost attached to buildings and health and well-being of the occupants, who are scientifically proven to be affected by the quality of the inhabited spaces. So more than building a marvel, it is imperative to study the wiring of the human brain, its instincts and responses to spaces to be able to design for the average human and its mindfulness in an already stressed-out society.

Garnering clues from studies on Cognitive Architecture and Biophilic design, we step into the picture and try to usher our way through the project. The word ‘Meraki’ is derived from the Greek word that means doing something with soul, creativity, or love; when you put ‘something of yourself’ into whatever you’re doing.
My architecture/design style is concerned with the method and attitudes of development, disengaging from the visual outcome of the final built product. It flourishes out of shifting balances to maintain integration of three agendas: upholding ambitions of people who envision it, cultural continuity of where it is built, innovating with and enabling people building it.

Creating new forms having relevant associations with client’s spirit and respecting the local context, not to be self-referential within themselves. In markets like India, where material and labour contribute almost evenly to building-economy, the idea is to serve an approach, instead of creating a display of new materials or to serve the craft. To be able to reinterpret it, continually renewing it to be able to personalise and adapt it. These developments in form and techniques are an endeavour to societally empower us to have new possibilities, extend collective wisdom and associations of society and not to create shocks and stirs. It progresses slowly step by step, strongly relying on itself to work with current skills and know-how of workers.

Within our domain of developing space and drawing boundaries for materials to reside, the intent is to integrate and overlap the three systems: spatial, structural and climatic all within the same limits. To be able to work competently to serve architecture with interests of comfort, environment sensitivity, and economy, to achieve balance and, thereby, beauty.
Our design philosophy is based on balancing the clients’ requirements along with an innate keenness to create a socially relevant and an environmentally responsible architecture. Our architecture style is clean, no-nonsense architecture that’s climate responsive at best. We don’t really advocate ostentatious designs for the heck of it. Value for money is important. Value of resources is important. Wastefulness in any form today is to be reviewed and discouraged. Good architecture is creativity in using the right resources in the best manner. Quality and low-maintenance are the most essential and on-top-of-the-list ingredients of our style quotient. Great designs fare pathetically if they are high-maintenance and not maintained in the long run. Same goes for good designs on paper that are executed with poor quality. ‘Doing less is more’ is really the most suitable where maintenance is a challenge in the best of projects. Since budgets are always defined for any project, where to spend and how to spend is an important part of the architectural design process. Improvement on quality and specifications is far more important than to add some unnecessary elements that would just add unnecessary cost.

‘Beauty is subject to choice but virtuous design is impartially beautiful’. Going by this belief, we try to be true to the context of design. Windows without any shading devices may look great and work great on a facade in a particular climate, but they would fail miserably in a sunny climate where shading is critical. We would like each project of ours to be different than the other, so having an architectural style, so to say, one that deprives us of thriving on variety and having a fresh perspective for each project, is no agenda for us. We prefer well-balanced designs. Having too many elements vying for attention is chaotic design for us, wherein a well-balanced design with rightful focal points is pleasing to our design sensibilities. We also love to use colour for its charm. In today’s times, most of our private clients are very well-read on design trends, thanks to pinterest, instagram etc; they know what they are looking for in terms of aesthetic expression of their personal style. If they let us surprise them with some new and fresh design ideas, we consider ourselves fortunate!
A
n architectural style is a deliberate introduction of the building. It is essential since it relates straightforwardly to human experience. While designing any premises we have always tried to comprehend the example of how an individual consumes that space and uses it. Indian Architecture has consistently been charmed because of its benevolence and flaunting creation.

I feel architecture has always distinguished itself from other art forms because it plays a functional as well as an aesthetic role, offering shelter, of course, but also shaping our daily experiences. I believe that ‘simple is always sophisticated and the greatest adornment of art’. Be it attire, personality or building, one can never be bored of simplicity. This is what Modern Architecture emphasizes.

I find that ‘less is more’ and very relatable as this refers to the minimalistic approach to a building, with no excessive ornamentation or excessive use of elements, and the design driven by function and aesthetics. Modern design ethics say that minimal, cluster free buildings, help in igniting the feeling of simplicity, peace, and a stress-free environment.

Creating a design that clients will approve is a bit tricky. Factors like material, form of building, style of building, culture, etc. come into play. I believe in catering to human behaviour in such a way that the intention of design is almost invisible to the client because the architecture falls naturally to one’s experience and almost becomes a backdrop. Structure, material, and surroundings play a vital role while designing a building facade. I try to use the most distinctive, and innovative architectural phenomena around to create spaces that manipulate forms and surfaces.
Every project has a main protagonist who takes the lead in shaping the form for that built space. Our ongoing museum project situated in Bijapur, experiences torrid weather conditions, where dust rises up to a great height. Conscious about the climatic conditions, we have designed an envelope wall around the main building with slits in the wall and roof to create a comfortable habitat and maintain a pronounced identity for the museum.

In IIM Bangalore library revitalization project, user experience was given prime importance by designing a technologically competent library responding to the current needs entwined with the existing library fabric facilitating flexible functions and catalysing interactions.

Project specific research aided initial concept is the start to any project to be able to evolve a character for the built form—which helps generations relate to it, while still valuing the existing architecture and, conserving its distinct identity. For me, an architectural style is an amalgamation of climatic response, regional aspirations, context, end-user requirements, construction innovations, local materials, and budget to name a few.
As designers, we understand that design has the inherent power to transform our behaviours and to shape our culture. We make sure that the structures that are built today are well designed assets for the city. Also, space is an essential commodity and is probably ‘always never enough’.

Contemporary Architecture is something that we really connect with; inspirations can be from all relevant times, styles and periods, but our approach has always been to be true and relevant to the current scenario. Technology and efficiencies of building construction are always being pushed in all the projects that we build.

It is necessary to be conscious of energy-efficient design during the initial ideation of a project, including lighting, facade systems and fenestrations. It is key for projects to harness as much of natural light as possible and the correct rating of the glass specified. The typology of the system is key to make the project work as desired. One needs to rationalize choice driven by the absolute essential and also be open to the ever-changing complexities in projects both as a functional aspect and an aesthetic one.

Our expertise in the use of materials, attention to detail, and interpretation of contemporary trends translate into spaces that are essentially timeless. Permanence is easily attributed to stone and we love using stone extensively both as an architectural and interior element in all our projects. The range and diversity of the material also is very exciting. This spirit not only guides the firm but enables it to maintain its position in a highly competitive and fast-changing industry.
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