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YOUNG'  
designers 09

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PUBLICATIONS



# Young'09 designers

In its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the Young Designer Publication Award continues its quest for offering a platform of introduction to practices who have never been showcased in the media. As an editorial, it allows us to gauge the guiding trends in the market and its potential to sustain young emerging practices across the country. Over the years, the development pattern of the entries has allowed us to harness the carrying of ideas and ideologies, from the various schools of design and salient architectural practices to new locations resulting in the "global" architecture of our times. A typical Charles Correa composition finds its place in a mall at Mangaluru, while a CEPT Studio setting becomes apparent in the setup of an architectural studio in Meghalya's Capital Shillong. For us its an encouragement to share with a readership that is so widespread in variant contexts that make up the world of architecture and design.

This year the contest received 57 entires. Indian Architect & Builder congratulates all the winning designs and thanks all the entries for their participatory spirit and the efforts put into it. It is our pleasure to announce the winners in the following categories -

## ARCHITECTURE

Ar\_Folly

by artha design studio, Pune

Weekend House

by Designedge, Pune

Carved in Concrete

by Aangan Architects, Surat

## INTERIOR DESIGN

As per mutual consent the editorial panel did not award this citation to any project/ practice. Significant projects were used to comment on the trends and practices.

## OUTDOOR ARCHITECTURE (LANDSCAPE DESIGN)

The Young Blossom School premises

by Manoj Bhandari Architects, Nashik

The Swastik Vatika Marriage Party Plot

by Vadodra-based Karmavir Ghatge & Associates

The Crossings Circle

by Oasis Designs Inc., Delhi

# Safe = Good design?



The building bonus of the progressive years ensured that young designers continued to have patronage. Most practices often limited to interiors were able to establish their identities by realising entire edifices to their own credit rather than as apprentices. The Architecture segment to the Young Designer 2009 received a total of 22 entries, 10 were shortlisted and then the final 3 decided by the editorial review panel. The 10 shortlisted entries presented an opportunity to discuss the concepts and ideas that capture the minds of emerging

practices. The discussed practices include AVA, Nilay Patalia Architects, Aangan Architects, artha design studio, Designedge, DPAP Studio, Manoj Bhandari Architects and Morphosis.

This review was based on the notion that there is more to architecture than the construction of a structure. It is a process based on contextual approach and comprehensive understanding of the project. It is not learnt entirely at the academic level and practical knowledge acquired by

experience plays a vital role in the development of the designer. The outcome is clearly visible in projects executed that "young" is no more about inexperience...it is about confident strokes in the landscape whose only hurdle to cross would be the demand for "good design".

## THE SAFETY BELT OF "GOOD DESIGN"

At an academic level, opinions are formed about what 'good' design constitutes. With a lot of practicing architects getting involved

## A review of some selective projects received in the Young Designers '09 - Architecture category, reflects design decisions that are guided by market trends, safe-play and the notion of 'what is good design?'

Text : Hina Nitesh  
 Photographs: Courtesy the architects

Academics today the "young architect", who is offered to the architectural marketplace, thrives with the notions of "safe architecture". The title arrived at by the editorial panel for the diplomacy of the built environments offered by the entries. In this scenario "freshness" of ideation and not the visual outcome became the basis of this interrogation for selecting the winners for "Young Designers 2009".

One of the winners was the entry from artha design studio, headed by Ar. Saurabh Malpani, for the extension to a farmhouse in rural Maharashtra. The project is a very honest and realistic approach towards work. What the firm set out to create as a built structure is a simple core elevated at a height of 2.4m. The strength of the project lies in its attention to details and the architects' ability to experiment and yet keep things simple. The firm ventured into the 'technical' territory and experimented with the systems to make the roof

retractable. They have also detailed out elements in an innovative fashion. Response towards nature in terms of a mechanical pulley for the roof, material used for fenestration and also integration of the form into the surrounding is commendable.

Another winning entry was a weekend house located in Pune by Designedge, led by architects Sunil Humane and Santosh M.P. The design shows a strong influence of Mies Van der Rohe or the now burnt residence designed by the Dutch team of UN Studio, but to the credit of the firm, they knew where to draw the line and not overdo the effect. The building, though very modern in its outlook, does not overpower the natural surrounding and lets the user be impressed with it.

### PRACTICAL TRAINING

The architect-client relationship is extremely sensitive and important for the success of any project. Especially for a young practice, it is the

client who has greater power. It would not be an extreme to equate client with God for it is he who is showing a trust in a yet to be established firm and helping them grow. But the question that arises here is that should a young architect blindly agree to what the client requires or should he use his talents and creativity to find an alternate method which agrees both with the design and the client.

Most of the architectural entries were accompanied with a rather long list of consultants. Apart from the regular structural consultant, lighting, electrical, plumbing, sanitation have also been outsourced to consultants. This is an indication of the increase in the professional approach to projects. The contractors constitute the other set of people who train the inexperienced architect. Be it the local terminology or the successful practical techniques, it is the contractor who acts as a guide, till the time the architect gains enough experience and then it is he who calls the shots. This is how the all important lessons, overlooked in the academic curriculum, are learnt.

The projects this year were balanced as far as requirements and their treatment was concerned. The practical and the creative aspect seem to be integrated – expressing both – a matured architect and a client.

1. The farmhouse by artha design studio exhibited their honest and realistic approach, via the built form that was raised 2.4m above the ground.

2. Designedge of the Pune weekend house displayed influences of Mies Van der Rohe and UN Studio in its work, but knew where to draw the line as far as impact was concerned.





3 & 5. The Zee Corporate Office in Noida by AVA attracted attention due to its scale and high quality of finish, despite being stereotypical in some respects.

4 & 8. Aslam and Tarannum Kadri attempted to minimise the monumentality of the structure at Ashoka School in Nashik with punctures and planes, but were unable to break out of a regular 'schoolscape' vocabulary.

6 & 7. The use of materials at Raghavan House, Tamil Nadu, designed by Nilay Patalia, such as MS supports for the polycarbonate roof and powder-coated aluminium sections for the glazing, is in total contrast to the traditional architecture of the region.

### SCALE OF THE PROJECT

Design at any scale is a challenge...but the real challenge lies in being able to design a remarkable structure within the constraints. The projects that young practices indulge in are residential, renovation, extension projects. artha design studio, through an extension to the farmhouse, has designed a structure which adds significance to the whole project.

The scale of the project executed speaks a lot for the confidence that a young firm has in its abilities. AVA (Architect Vistasp & Associates

- Vistasp, architects Late DK Asthana, Rav Kant, Anil Nair, Kamal Shayari, Naresh Kausha Perwaiz) a design practice based in Delhi has designed the building as well as the interior for Zee Corporate office in NOIDA. Though it is a stereotype design for an office, the scale and finish of the project attracts attention especially when executed by a young practice.

In contrast to this, was the Ashoka School in Nashik designed by Morphosis, architects Aslam & Tarannum Kadri. At first look it starts as a competent piece of architecture well sculpted



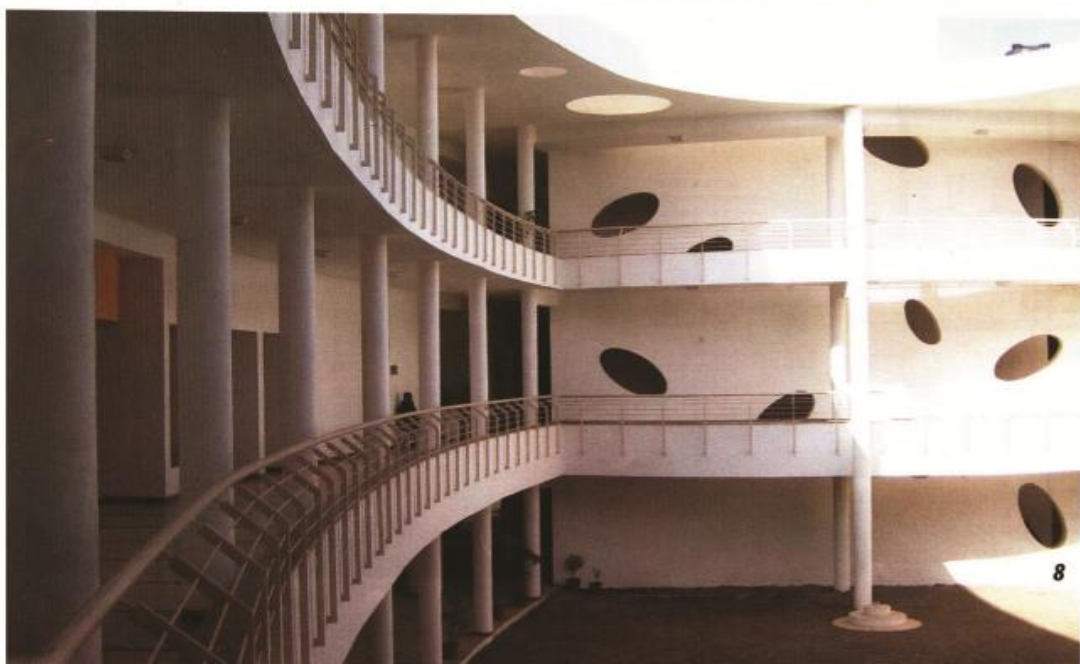
an imaginative mind. However as its little users enter the mind the school seems monumental and the scale seems to get lost inspite of its punctures and planes. On entry these too break down to a very standard "schoolscape".

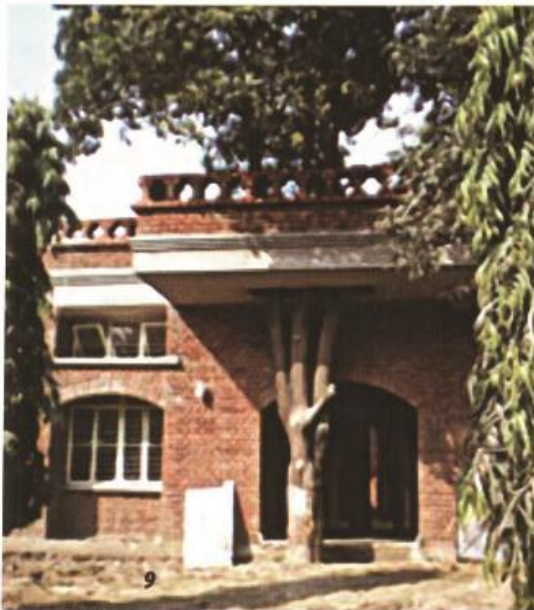
## CONTEXT

The Ashoka school reasserts the need for context when designing. Context is the environment or situation in which something exists or occurs. Architecturally, context played an important role in design – be it in the planning of spaces or the use of material or technology. Context is both the end user and the location of the project. With more and more designers trying to go universal the context gets diluted.

The refurbishment of Raghavan House by Ar. Nilay Patalia was done using steel sections as structural members, polycarbonate sheets for roofing and powder coated aluminium sections for glazing. The clay tile flooring was replaced by granite in the interiors. The choice of material palette is in total contrast both to the existing traditional manglore tile courtyard house and to the location of the house – in the small village of Bagalur in Tamil Nadu.

However, the school for children of industrial workers in Mawana, Deependra Prasad and Associates (DPAP Studio) is deeply rooted in its context. The structure's cliché of the exposed





9 & 10. The exposed brick used at the school at Mawana, designed by DPAP Studio, helps develop an energy-efficient footprint for the building.

11. The entrance of the residence at Surat, by Aangan Architects, has elements of exposed concrete, with graphics in relief.

12. Punctures such as these echo the idea of the building being carved in concrete.

13. Aangan Architects have used form-finished concrete as the main building material at the residence.

14. The timber clad staircase at Aangan's Surat residence is offset by the questionable nature of the skewed railing.

brick work becomes most acceptable when seen in connotation of welcoming the humble backgrounds of its students and not overpower by architectural drama.

## RESPONSIBILITY

The Mawana school by DPAP Studio also scores as it works around its limited budget to offer responsible

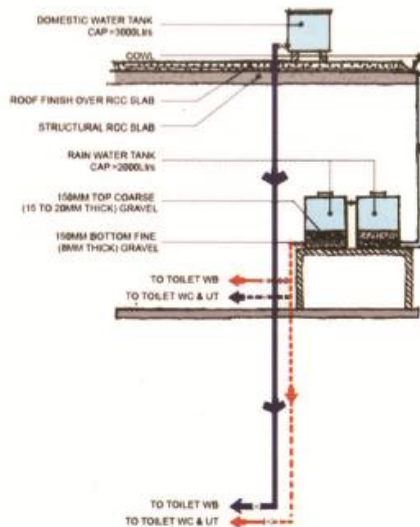
lessons in energy-efficient lessons an ecological footprint. Endorsing that architects have a responsibility towards the society ...and if not watched out for the very act of construction is anti-nature. This is where green building practices come to the fore and architect has a crucial role to play in maintaining the balance between nature and structure. It is indeed heartening to note that young practices today have taken their role seriously and included green concepts in their designs.

Artha design studio uses a pulley for openable roof to conserve energy and knitted bamboo strips for window shutters in its project

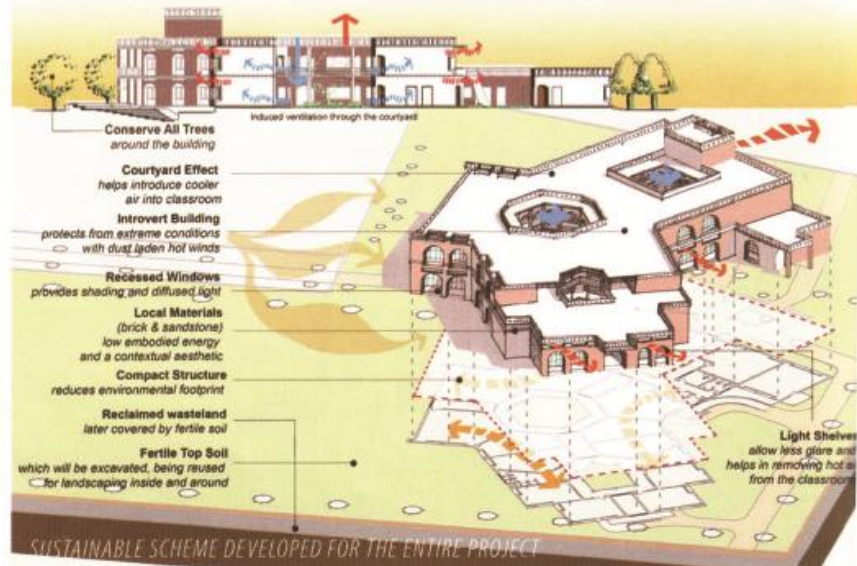
Ar\_Folly. "Designedge" in the weekend house in Pune has placed the structure on the contoured site with minimum excavation and least interference with the seasonal drainage pattern.

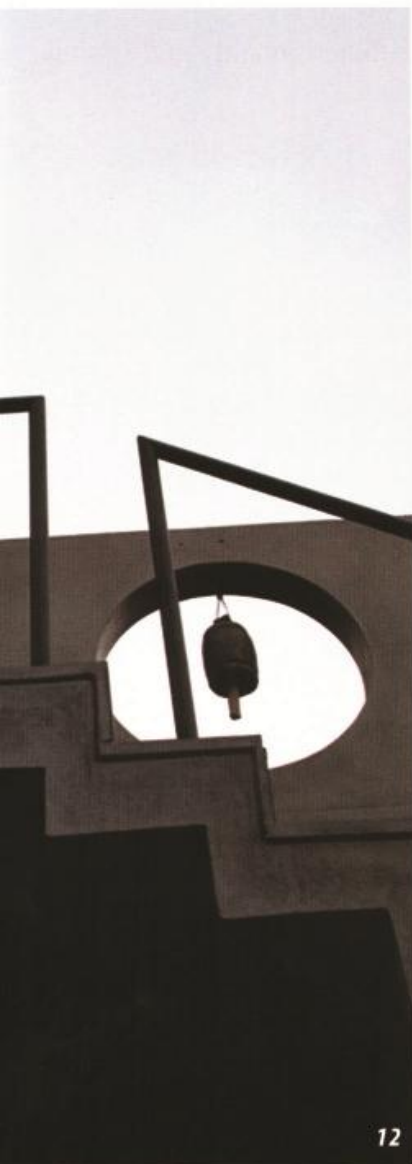
## MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

Innovative approach in the use of material and technology is a means of bringing about a feeling of individuality. It is but natural, for an inexperienced practice, to want to use a variety range of materials and elements in the initial projects. The material palette in the project received this year showed a certain maturity. Aangan Architects (Vishal Shah, Vishal Desai)



DETAIL OF WATER RECYCLING SYSTEM





used form finished exposed concrete in one of their residences and DPAP Studio used exposed brick work for the school. Both the firms experimented with materials in their purest forms. The weekend house by Designedge is finished in regular plastered brickwork. It became interesting to see that the winning designs were anchored in the reality of function and form in their offering to their clients rather than the overt use of inventive material palettes that the market has to offer.

### SAFE DESIGN

Youth is associated with freshness and a rebellious spirit which leads to exploration and



innovation. The entries for young designers are expected to have questioned the regular norms and identify solutions which are different from the regular perception. But the trend that seems to be existing is the creation of 'safe' buildings - safe in terms of design and material usage.

In doing so, the design becomes a stereotypical response. The residences in Bangalore for instance have a typical language which one has started associating with the city. The Zee Corporate office with its glazed façade and modular interiors is another orthodox response to an office, a trap which even the most senior of practices seem to fall into.

Though it is only after years of practice that an architect or a firm is able to define a style and be associated with it. And realistically speaking, one does not expect an entire new style or design language from a young practice, but does expect to see a hint of experimentation - an attempt to do something different. The trend to be judged from this years entries is that architects find it easier or that it is most acceptable for them and the client to go the 'safe way'. The experimentation/ exploration part of the profession has taken a back seat. To give an architect the benefit of doubt, maybe that is the way a practice is established and becomes experienced. ■