

SARIKA SHETTY

SENIOR ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT, SJK ARCHITECTS, MUMBAI



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The formative years at KR VIA, Mumbai, where Sarika Shetty was completing her B.Arch, allowed for self-expression in design while being assisted and guided by great mentors. After her thesis, she joined SJK Architects as a trainee in 2001, and has remained there under the guidance of the principal Shimul Javeri Kadri. In fact, in her very first month of training, she was trusted with her first independent project – a bungalow for an ayurvedic doctor couple. “There has been no looking back since, an enriching 15 years of experience cutting across various scales, genres, building typologies, diverse sites and clients,” she states proudly.

People, civilization and nature inspire her, and so it makes sense when she says, “(At SJK) we absolutely revel in what the site has to offer; what is the cultural, historic and climatic context of the locality. We respect and adapt to the natural flora-fauna and available resources – be it materials, skilled manpower or crafts of the region.”

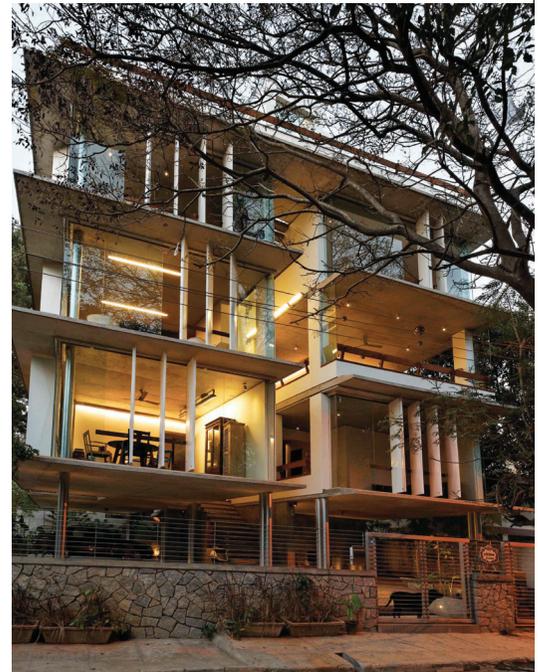
Shetty is also inspired by the works of Charles Correa, Laurie Baker, Daniel Libeskind, Geoffrey Bawa, and anonymous architects/craftpersons who have given us heritage structures and temples.

In her work, there is an emphasis on structural honesty. “One of the key contributors to our design is the material honesty that we expect our structural and services systems to bring in. We do not believe in cladding or false ceilings as far as possible. We like our spatial volumes to be expressed with a light and well-sized structural systems,” she explains.

The challenge, however, is finding the right collaborators to implement the envisaged design. Given the unorganised set of skilled/unskilled contracting teams, finding the right project execution team is rare. “We are constantly questioning the representational method of producing drawings to make it easier for that end

doer, who is often uneducated. Physical models and three-dimensional drawings are few of the ways we attempt to bridge this gap,” states the 37-year-old.

Restrictions never prevent this architect and her team from innovating. The project ‘Out of the Box’, an office building for Nirvana Films in Bengaluru, was riddled with many site complications and imposing bye-laws. The unfortunate situation of the corner plot, open along its south and west faces, was reversed by adopting a design core – the N-S connector staircase that slices through the building with a huge skylight above. “The resulting typology overturns all norms – using almost no electricity – for light or ventilation,” points out Shetty. “It is a contemporary building that ignores any ‘isms’ and stands for innovation and sustainability.”



PROJECT
Out of the Box, Bengaluru



SAURABH MALPANI

CO-FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL, ARTHA STUDIO, PUNE

When an architect says that “the taste for innovation” led him to the profession, you know that he truly belongs in this illustrious iGen list.

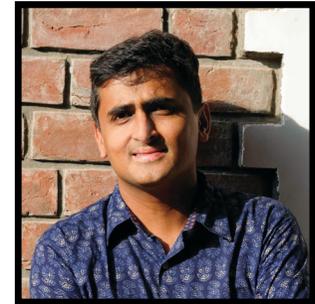
Saurabh Malpani’s drive for innovation can be seen in the way he approaches his work and the projects he has to his credit. However, for this 38-year-old architect, creating something new doesn’t come at the cost of sacrificing traditional wisdom. From “the usage of reclaimed wood and cow dung for Farmer’s Abode, to planning of Nouveau Wada based on traditional wadas, to shutter screen and hanging table on rails” for his new office, innovation here takes the form of resurrection – of ancient design sensibilities wrapped in new skin.

Malpani lists Alvar Aalto, Carlo Scarpa, Luis Barragan, Geoffrey Bawa and Alvaro Siza Vieira as his favourites, with the privilege of having worked with Bawa and Siza early on in his career. “The one thing that is common among all of them, is their respect for vernacular architecture and local traditions. They captured the essence of native and designed buildings with respect to the context,” he states. When it comes to formal training, this

alumnus of CEPT University (Ahmedabad) has studied at Technical University of Delft, The Netherlands and trained further at Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto, Portugal.

Since 2008, this vast experience and exposure is channelled into his work at the Artha Studio, which he co-founded along with Ashika Naik. The firm is founded on the conviction of “the evolving social patterns, alternating hybrid character and culture of the society around,” with their motto promising: we design the meaningful. The studio’s work doesn’t revolve around any fixed design aesthetics; “it will be too boring to eat bread and butter for breakfast, lunch and dinner for 365 days,” says the architect. The influencers here are context, culture, climate and people. “We derive aesthetic (through) design development,” he states. This working model has proven successful with recognition from awards by IIID, IIA, AESA and others.

Farmer’s Abode, located in the quaint Umbri Balapur village in Ahmednagar, is a good example of Artha’s design philosophy. Built on a modest budget of Rs.45 lakh, this house on a farm is “born from conserving and re-purposing materials, while invigorating local economies, employing vernacular technologies and reviving time-tested sensitivities.” The result from reclaimed bricks, tiles and wood, basalt stones from a local quarry, cow dung as the primary flooring material, salvaged and restored furniture, has revealed to the community its rich and mostly forgotten traditions of building. As Malpani describes, “This timeless design is a sincere testament that esteems what the past has preserved and echoes what the future could foster.”



“Sustainable design is not a style, but a sensibility which evokes simple and feasible solutions.”



PROJECT
Farmer’s Abode, Ahmednagar