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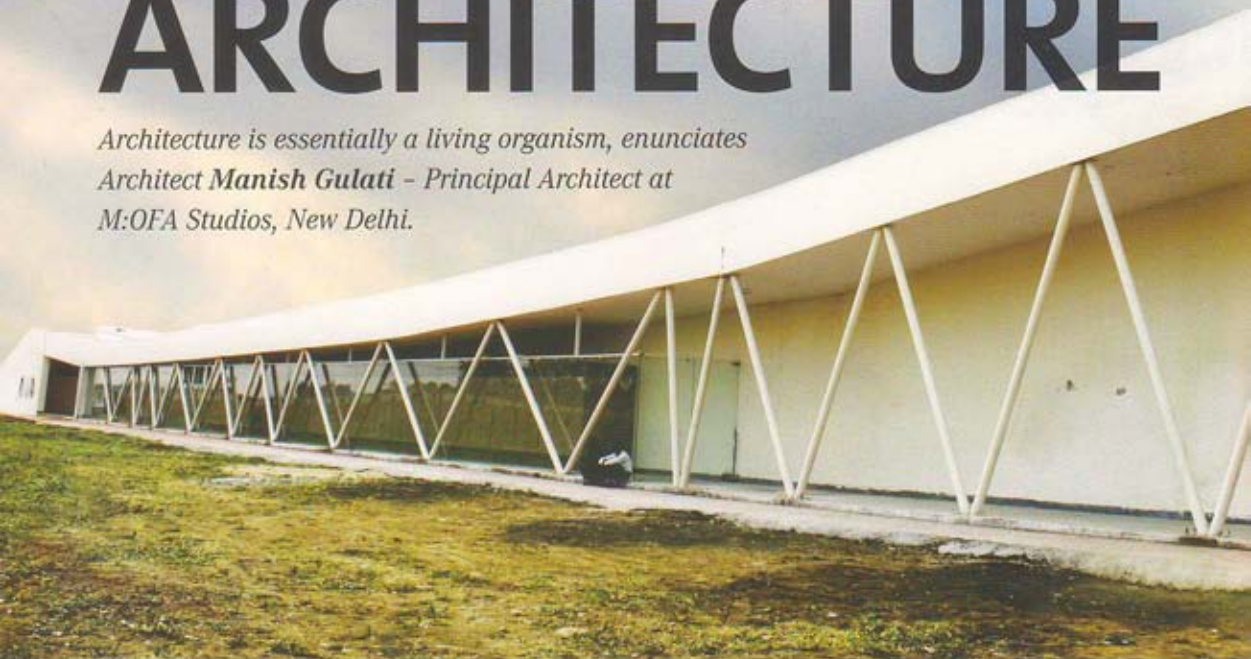
DESIGNED
in INDIA

Jasleen Bindra pg 32 | Photographed by Neetika Devgan

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FLUID ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is essentially a living organism, enunciates Architect Manish Gulati - Principal Architect at M:OFA Studios, New Delhi.



The terms 'Design' and 'Architecture' usually find specific definitions with every established designer and architect. How would you define them?

MG: Design is just about anything created with consciousness, awareness and purpose. Architecture is this confluence taking place in a space. An architect is a combination of an artist, a scientist and a philosopher. Each is individually propelled to question and create changes in the society. All together this creates a new tomorrow.

When did you make the conscious decision to take up architecture as a career?

MG: That decision was made in high school itself, considering that my mind has always had a creative bend. I took great joy in creating cities made of clay (despite not knowing who an 'architect' is or what it is that he does), model making, soap carving, painting, and the likes. Hence the choice was pretty clear.



**NATIONAL SHOOTING
ACADEMY, BHOPAL**

CLIENT : Directorate of
Sports and Youth Welfare,
Govt. of Madhya Pradesh

CONCEPT : It was
derived from the
dynamics of undulating
site and the functionality.
Instead of creating
oblivious blocks for
various ranges, a flow
of dynamic forms were
created, which merge,
shootout and explode,
thereby creating a flow
that recreates the force
field created by a shooting
bullet from the pistol to
the target.

Even today, all creative fields interest, influence and excite me. Be it music, philosophy, food, art, sculpture, graphics, dance forms - they all abstract into creation or the origin. It's often the subtleties and reverberations of these forms, along with the many memories and emotions, that create spaces - and in effect - Architecture.

Is M:OFA a reflection of a particular design philosophy?

MG: M:OFA or 'Manifestation of Fluid Architecture' is the realization of a design theory where architectural realms are redefined beyond the rules of regularized grids, dimensions and principles. Architecture, in this context, becomes a more fluid expression - continuously throbbing with vibrations of life. Here, the walls bend, column grids twist and the floors rise up and fall, responding to the ever changing energy fields created by the life forms it houses. Architectural box melts into a fluid, leaving a void to adjust the continuous paradoxes of the modern lifestyle. At M:OFA, architecture is treated as a living



organism that changes, adapts itself and responds to every change around it. The architectural organism is a store house of energy where the energy resources are conserved and recycled to sustain itself.

How do you approach a project at M:OFA? Is it more 'research-reliant', or does 'innovation' take top priority?

MG: The key lies in 'Intuition backed by research'. Courageous concepts, bold ideas are given precedence, along with encouragement to venture into the unknown without fear - be it the field of technology or material. Innovation by itself plays a tremendous part in the design process. Every design opportunity is a chance to explore and create something which hasn't been done before, or maybe take it to the next level by exploring a different aspect not attempted before.

To be precise, the idea is to always support 'Innovation' with enough 'Research'.

What are the expectations from your team when a project is undertaken?

MG: Ideation, Research, Documentation, Innovation, financial management and drafting the timeline of a project are some basic expectations from the team. We try and look into various aspects of design in a project and make it happen. With our experience, we advice on the pressure points and steer the project towards completion.

How do you provide cultural perspective to your projects while designing an environment or a space?

MG: 'Adaptive Response' is of prime importance in any project. Factors

like 'where', 'for whom' and 'for what' in the construction of a project completely changes its manifestation. Time period and people shape the project. 'Adaptive response' is delivered by actually interacting with the micro and the macro factors which include people, climate, culture, craft, heritage, art, nature. Any or many can become the focal point and eventually an environment is created.

What has been your inspiration in the field of Architecture- in person and otherwise?

MG: There are many sources of inspiration in the field of Architecture. At the top of the list would be my Alma Mater – CEPT- and its brilliant faculty, including Prof. B.V.Doshi, Late Prof. Kurula Varkey, Prof. N.H. Chhaya, Ar. Leo Pereira , Ar. Gurjit Singh Matharoo and Prof. Lavingia, who encouraged , questioned and taught us Architecture - not as a subject - but as a philosophy. I can never thank them enough.

I greatly admire Le Corbusier for his tremendous contribution to Architecture, and for creating an illustrious body of work that continues to inspire generations of architects.



PROJECT THE GOLDEN TUSK RESORT, JIM CORBETT, RAMNAGAR

CLIENT : Ivory Destinations Pvt. Ltd.

CONCEPT : A true Agro Resort -The design intent was to give a firsthand experience of countryside living to the urban travelers and sensitize them to the idea of living with nature, effectively utilizing resources and minimizing waste, apart from being amidst nature in the cottages that resonate the local materials expressed in a contemporary design.





TONI & GUY SALON

CLIENT : TONI & GUY

CONCEPT : It was evolved from the 'hair and comb' relationship which is representative of the parent company. The interaction between hair and comb – as it runs through the mane, is lifted, tied, falls in cascades and waves across the forehead and then reveals a shy glimpse on the edge, a sliver of the neck and back to the abundant silkiness and gloss of hair- manifests itself as the Toni and Guy, Gurgaon.



What is your advice to the new-generation architects and designers? How would you direct them in the current design scenario?

MG: Every upcoming architect and designer needs to inculcate more focus, commitment and passion for designing. Having patience is a big must! It is important to understand that architecture does not happen overnight. In fact, all good things in life take time.

What lies in the coming future for you and M:OFA?

MG: Design and more design! We have an insatiable appetite for design, and the future will see us take up more projects based on bold & smart ideas that will actually make a difference to the quality of life of an individual and the society as a whole.

In essence, we are looking to get influenced by life and influencing it right back!

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