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*As years go by, one
realises that in life,
everything is design,
and it cannot be isolated.*

B.V. Doshi

IFJ SALUTES AR. B.V. DOSHI, WINNER : PRITZKER PRIZE, 2018.

GROUP DCA

ar. amit aurora and ar. rahul bansal

sustainable design and client satisfaction are the driving forces behind this firm, which prides itself on working with local craftsmen and materials



“We do not design according to current trends, but design for longevity.” With this one sentence, Ar. Rahul Bansal and Ar. Amit Aurora, Principal Architects and Partners at groupDCA, New Delhi, sum up their approach, which steered them to start their own firm. After they graduated with a B.Arch. degree from the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, Bansal and Aurora went on to work for different firms. “But we eventually realized that we had a larger, common vision, driven by similar design values, and that is how groupDCA was conceived in 1996,” explains Ar. Bansal.

Their two-decade sojourn in the industry has given the duo a unique perspective. Ar. Aurora explains, “We have witnessed a paradigm shift in the design and décor of spaces. Our journey has been fruitful in the fact that our work has been recognized in the national and international arenas; we have made a mark across India, South Asia, Africa and the Middle East.”

Experiences from their early influences have contributed in paving the way for groupDCA to establish a sustainable design practice, which is the cornerstone of their design philosophy. Ar. Bansal says, “The three most powerful influences for us have been that: bigger is not better, instead of using mass-produced products, we should use products produced by the masses, and finally, the appropriateness of all activities with regard to local cultures. Working with local people is the need of the hour. With time, there has been a decline in this aspect and a move towards adopting newer technology and trends. However, we cannot ignore this completely, as then we will only consume and not produce. Today, the

need is to move towards a sustainable lifestyle. Adopting local materials, craft will ensure this.”

Ar. Aurora adds, “Given the current constraints of the Indian economy, we at groupDCA try and integrate this philosophy with design, making sure that human beings, their relationships, craft and the environment lie at the heart of our working methodology. Our solutions are driven by a distinct focus on delivering design excellence and innovation, rooted within an appropriate local response. Also, for us, client satisfaction assumes paramount importance.”

Both Ar. Bansal and Ar. Aurora have a definite method when it comes to executing their projects. “Each project must be treated individually, with an approach that is most appropriate to the project’s identity, vision, business format, target clientele, code of ethics, site location and budget,” says Ar. Bansal, adding, “Solutions are, therefore, not cookie-cutter, but context-appropriate and designed to meet specific needs that create an exclusive, yet

relevant product.” Ar. Aurora adds, “The accurate and appropriate use of technology can be seen as playing a crucial role in the creation of perfect and flawless buildings and designs. Finally, architecture and design is increasingly redefined in light of climate change, shifts in ecosystem structure and function, water scarcity, human rights violations as well as the complexity of building technology.”

Their assertion of being focused on customer satisfaction is not an empty one. Ar. Bansal explains, “For example, when we design a restaurant, we design for the client but it has to be experienced by the public at large. It is often said that you eat with your eyes first, and that is exactly what we wish to deliver. We integrate form with function in all spaces.”

And what advice would the duo like to pass on to future architects? “Be a Seeker; always keep learning,” sums up Ar. Bansal. “The learning never ends,” adds Ar. Aurora.



Akbarallys Store

Location:

Mumbai, India

Concept:

The store was planned to fit into the modern retail design space, keeping in mind the brand's rich heritage.

Design Elements:

- Space planning and enhancement was crucial to the design intent; most of the store was therefore painted white in order to visually maximize the available space.
- Sub-mezzanine levels were created in order to obtain better clearances and clear circulation patterns.
- The store now flaunts its rich legacy; it has been in business for over 118 years.





Residence at Sainik Farm

Location:

New Delhi, India

Concept:

The architects shaped the residence with the inspiration of the unconventional artistic taste of the client.

Design Elements:

- The house is richly detailed with color selections done as per the mood of the space. The aesthetics present a fusion of multiple design elements that merge into one space while celebrating each object.
- The home abounds with an array of textures, colors and materials; the creative use of MS sheets, unfinished and raw wood in most of the furniture pieces, and rough textured white paint in the study, are all elements that create a vintage yet eclectic ambience.
- The client sums up the experience of this striking residence saying: "It is the cultivation of many thoughts which is fused to form one story."





Townhall Khan Market

Location:
NCR, India

Concept:

The brief presented us with an interesting opportunity of exploring the largest area in the center of Khan Market, and designing a place for the community amidst an existing structure.

Design Elements:

- The main hall was developed as a community space for the purpose of interactions and casual meetings.
- The old style of the structure was restored and enhanced to fulfill the present requirements with the whole space being divided into different zones.
- The patterns and textures adopted are very classical in order to give an authentic character to the space, along with a 1950s charm.
- The restaurant design is a quaint mix of colonial and the inherent spirit of that era modified and tweaked with a contemporary edge.



Primarc

Location:

West Bengal, India

Concept:

The brief was to create a dynamic and dramatic office space for a new division of a company with varied business interests. The client requested a minimum investment on fixed interiors and a maximum focus on portable design elements.

Design Elements:

- The site features a very basic and minimalistic treatment of the walls, ceiling and services.
- The site is endowed with two long windows along the two opposite faces of the premises. The layout thus evolved along these walls; all areas such as the reception, cafeteria, workstations and the director's office were placed along these windows.
- Fixed partitions were paneled with recycled deal wood and gypsum painted in a striking dark gray (all paints are low VOC). This is further complemented by furniture accents: the reception counter, director's table, conference room table and in the meeting rooms.
- The workstations and filing cabinetry were built in eco-friendly particleboard and laminate. Care was taken to optimize the use of task lights, (strategically placed) decorative lights and energy-efficient LED lamps.
- The resultant office is a very dynamic space that functions with minimum use of artificial light during the day. ifj

