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INTERIORS

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AWE-INSPIRING
ARCHITECTURE FROM
LALITA THARANI
& MUJIB AHMED

BOLLYWOOD SINGER
SHAAN'S ECLECTIC
HOME INTERIORS

+ B.V. DOSHI | SUDEEP PARAMBATH & SIJI REHANA | ACIPL
IYER & MAHESH ARCHITECTS | RLDA | STUDIO 5

Spread headed by **Lalita Tharani** and **Mujib Ahmed**, **Collaborative Architecture** is an award-winning firm with international repute. The group has been in the forefront of cutting-edge design and innovations in field of architecture and interior design. Based in Mumbai and Calicut, now the firm has expanded its horizons by opening a new office in Ningbo, China.



unconventional DESIGNS

LALITA THARANI AND MUJIB AHMED OF COLLABORATIVE ARCHITECTURE BELIEVE IN PUSHING THE BOUNDRIES OF CREATIVITY WITH EACH PROJECT, AND THIS OVER THE YEARS HAS RESULTED INTO A MIX BAG OF UNCONVENTIONAL PROJECTS.





WEDGE, MUMBAI



MEZBAN, KERALA

After completing her diploma in Interior Architecture (Gold Medalist) from Sophia Polytechnic, Mumbai in 1993, Lalita established Lalita Tharani Associates in 2001. Mujib graduated in Architectural Engineering from National Institute of Technology in the same year and founded Mujib Arkitekture Engineering in Calicut in 1998. They both came together to establish Collaborative Architecture in 2002.

Their firm is driven by innovation and ceaseless pursuit of quality in design to create projects, which are highly sensitive, poetic and contemporary. Every project is an exploration, going beyond the functional brief, creating a symbiosis of people, places, culture, climate, economy and collaborative efforts of related disciplines. Their work includes residential, boutiques, hospitality, educational and corporate projects.



BGRT, BENGALURU



JDT PRIMARY SCHOOL, KERALA



WEDGE, MUMBAI

Here are some of their highly recognized projects that offer an insight into their style of work.

FURNITURE BOUTIQUE, NEW DELHI

Spread over 25,000 sq. ft., Furniture Boutique is a flagship showroom displaying various product lines, catering to mid-segment as well as the hi-end luxury residential and hospitality segments. For this retail space, the client was particular about not wanting the showroom interiors to dominate the products on display. Keeping this in mind, the architects struck the right balance by being 'anonymous' to respect the brief, but at the same time sophisticated to reflect the design direction of the product line displayed. "We consciously and effortlessly stepped back from the forefront to lend the product line a neutral yet classy look," says Lalita.

A striking six-meter long, pristine white suspended reception counter sets the tone and direction for this retail space. The reception area aptly showcases the new arrivals and launches. The other zones have been earmarked as living-dining settings for the customers to have a comprehensive spatial idea of the products. An exclusive area was also carved out to display the office furniture range.



JDT PRIMARY SCHOOL, KERALA

Collaborative Architecture was invited to design a primary school as part of the JDT Islam Orphanage Campus. The challenge for the architects was to tactfully handle the linear leftover track between the existing girl's hostel and an old school building on a 20 acre site. "The aim was to explore new possibilities for educational spaces by creating interactive spaces among students and faculties. We have emphasized on a 'no-regimented' spaces—a complete antithesis to the generally adopted rectilinear block design," informs Lalita.

Moreover, the project was to be executed on a shoe-string budget, in a village with limited manpower skills and resources. "One of the main attributes of designing for children is to maintain an 'intrigue' factor," says Mujib. Taking cues from the building blocks of Lego, the building is designed to create a multitude of sensorial and formal attributes.

Deviating from the stereotypical, monolithic functional blocks; the building comes across as a porous and inviting assemblage of classrooms and interactive spaces, which enlivens not only the spaces within but also drastically changes the quality of architecture on the campus.

**MEZBAN, KERALA**

Mezban, the fine-dine restaurant spread over an area of 3,000 sq. ft., is a part of a business hotel which has been redesigned by the firm as a repositioning exercise. Here, they have created a new identity through interior architecture making it a new dining destination in the city to spur the hotel's business.

Mezban has been rated as one of the best hospitality space designed internationally in 2012, and has won six international awards/shortlists.

Innovative architectural lighting plays a very important role in creating undulating topography that adds character to this space.



WEDGE, MUMBAI

Wedge is an architectonic exploration by the firm in creating projects, which are highly-refined in architectural morphology and yet fulfill the programmatic agenda of the brief. "The architectural intent of this project was to dissect the simple 'shoe box' and manipulate the architectonic character of the box in the most economical way," informs Lalita.

The name Wedge comes from the character of the spaces within the dissected box, which largely are trapezoidal. The space has been organized as centripetal, pinwheel form as the central gathering space which holds the different wedges around its periphery with its undulating volumes and roofline.

The 3,000 sq. ft. Prototype is painted white, including the white flooring to heighten the perception of encounter with the products. The central gathering space has a series of light 'vectors' (1,200 mm long T5 lamps), which forms an enclosing canopy and fuse the space to complete the box.

MAHE RESIDENCE, PONDICHERRY

This residence is one of the smallest projects; the firm has designed recently. It showcases the poetic design sensibilities of the architects. The client offered complete freedom to innovate as long as it fitted within the stipulated budget. The whole project is designed with Corian. The furniture blends in perfectly creating a sense of seamlessness. The wardrobe, bed and the TV unit though stylish in design dissolve into the background, making the 250 sq. ft. bedroom look larger than it is. Adding further insight Lalita adds, "The lighting design is never an afterthought in our design process, but integral to the concept."

The architects selected an all-white palette owing to the tiny size of the bedroom and adopted a reverse palette in the bathroom. Hence, the bathroom is all-black except for the vanity counter which is in white Corian. The counter traverses along the longer side of the bathroom and doubles-up as a seating in the shower area.





TASLEEM RESIDENCE, KERALA

The 6,500 sq. ft. villa was designed for a sophisticated business couple based in North Kerala, who wanted some amount of spatial hierarchy between public and private spaces with fair visual control between them, yet not resulting in a spatially disconnected home. The site is part of a larger compound of their ancestral home, tucked into the far corner, with the old home covering most of the frontage of the new home. The design identifies this disadvantageous site condition and opted for a zig-zag spatial layout, making it an interesting assemblage of volumes dispersed in the landscape. The large reflecting pool serves a dual purpose of being a landscape element as well as a climate-control strategy.



BGRT, BENGALURU

Beary Group that is building India's first Platinum LEED certified IT park wanted an innovative design which pushes the boundaries and sets a benchmark for the 1.3 million sq. ft. project. Collaborative Architecture was assigned the task of designing the main lobby of the IT park.

The architects have designed a multi-purpose lobby space, with adequate lounge area, a large reception, multiple private meeting rooms and some retail interfaces. The custom-designed lounge seating has been designed as clusters, which gives a space-defining character to the vast lobby.

The waffle slab, which is the most dominant part of the space, is left exposed to highlight the structural clarity of the space and has been adapted in the innovative, customized lighting design which has resulted in an extremely dynamic space. Collaborative Architecture was assigned the task of designing the main lobby of the IT park. The nine-meter high lobby space is dominated by a central column and became the axis for spatial orientation.

The collage of projects truly justifies the architect duo claims that 'in each project, they create something new'. With many projects already in the pipeline, very soon we look forward to seeing more of their impressive designs.

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