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Outside In

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Artistic Vision

Architects embrace modern technology and artificial intelligence while providing beautifully designed spaces using sustainable solutions

Tru To The Client

N Praveen Kumar and N Sandhya co-founded Tru Designs Planners in 2004.

A multifaceted, award-winning architectural design practice, the firm's vast portfolio of work includes residences, corporate offices, commercial spaces and super specialty hospitals.

From a young age, Kumar was intrigued by construction sites, drawn to the intricate process of creating structures from the ground up. This passion and his inclination for sketching and creative expression, further nurtured by family and mentors, motivated him to explore architecture as a career.

With a background in science and a passion for environmental sustainability, Sandhya pursued interior design. Her work seamlessly integrates sustainability with aesthetic brilliance.

At Tru Designs, they strive to create designs that balance innovation with clients' practical needs by integrating energy-efficient solutions using smart materials and employing intelligent building systems. It is imperative to understand the client's requirements, vision, philosophy, and the context of the area, its geography, climate, culture, and environment while creating the designs. The use of technology in design enhances safety, security



N Praveen Kumar

director & principal architect

N Sandhya

director & principal designer
 Tru Designs Planners

and sustainable use of resources.

Kumar and Sandhya are committed to creating sustainable, culturally rooted, and timeless spaces. The Courtyard House, a 20,000-sq-ft independent residence, is a project whose design draws

inspiration from traditional Indian courtyard houses that integrate the five elements of nature. Features like natural ventilation, use of earthy tone and natural materials, and an outdoor treehouse tend to blend the house seamlessly with its surroundings. A crowning glory is Tru Design's office that has been awarded a platinum rating by IGBC for its sustainable and green design.

Kumar and Sandhya believe that advanced tools and systems like AI (artificial intelligence) help create functional and future-ready spaces. AI has the potential to transform architecture by enhancing creativity, efficiency and sustainability. It can analyse data, and speed up time-consuming tasks of drafting and execution, enabling architects to focus on creative thinking and client interactions. They visualise AI as a valuable collaborator, complementing architects' skills and as a tool to connect people globally, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

They envision an evolution of the architecture industry driven by innovations and where creativity, technology and sustainability are seamlessly integrated to enhance functionality and design. Their advice to young architects and designers is to stay consistent, take risks and design with responsibility using a human-centric approach to design. Embracing new technologies is essential, but a strong foundation in design principles remains crucial.

• KAMAYNI

All About Aesthetics

Transforming spaces and creating dreams come true is the maxim Supraja Rao lives by. An accomplished architect, interior designer, art curator and gallerist, Rao is an epitome of creativity, art and design. Under her guidance as the founder and principal designer of Design House, the firm has won numerous awards through its works in various styles, including contemporary, minimalist period and mediterranean.

Initially pursuing other interests, Rao's journey into design began with an internship at an interior design firm, which sparked her creative and artistic side. This accidental start turned out to be a perfect match for her artistic and imaginative nature, leading to a fulfilling career in interior design.

A self-taught interior designer, Rao's creative process is deeply inspired by nature. Nature's bounty, direction of sunlight, changing seasons and even the rain are reminiscent of one's connection with their surroundings. By integrating these elements, Rao strives to design spaces that balance technology and functionality with harmony and grounding, making daily life more fulfilling. The focal point is to maintain the principles and the essence of design, without compromising aesthetics or functions.

Among the various remarkable projects, one project which exemplifies her vision is a 16,500-sq-ft house divided into two distinct wings—private and public separated by a pool. Moving between the spaces means experiencing the outdoors directly, whether its summer heat, light rain or a crisp winter morning. With unique views of the garden from each room to



Supraja Rao, founder and principal designer
Design House

lush courtyards near bathrooms, the house creates a harmonious balance between functionality and visual appeal, offering an immersive and serene living experience.

Rao believes that with the revolution in technology, AI is becoming an indispensable asset, saving time and enabling a sharper focus on creativity. AI plays a transformative role in the interior design industry, enhancing creativity and streamlining workflows. AI tools simplify design processes, enabling quicker visualisation of layouts,

colour schemes, and material options. “AI as a powerful tool to embrace and leverage for innovation,” says Rao.

Looking ahead, Rao envisions a bright future for architecture and design in India. A growing appetite for experimentation and higher standard of living is creating a dynamic landscape for designers.

Her advice to young aspirant designers and architects is to immerse themselves in the joy of creation. Instead of chasing awards or accolades, prioritise making a meaningful impact on people's lives through thoughtful design. True success, she believes, lies in creating spaces that inspire, comfort and connect.

• KAMAYNI

City (High)lights



Hundredhands Designs is a multidisciplinary and internationally-recognised design studio founded in 2003 by Sunitha Kondur and Bijoy Ramachandran. With over two decades of experience in various design and architectural projects in the US and India, Kondur and Ramachandran have steered their firm to win numerous awards and accolades, providing contextually appropriate solutions.

A natural inclination for creative arts throughout school made architecture a fitting career choice for Kondur. For Ramachandran, it was the advice and encouragement from his boarding school warden that inspired him to pursue architecture. Both partners, Kondur & Ramachandran, alumni of Bangalore University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have a singular focus to make each of their works contextually relevant, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable.

Ramachandran views each project as an opportunity to craft spaces for well-being, seeking moments for pause, celebration and reflection. For Kondur, functionality and sustainability are paramount while creating spaces that are energy-efficient, thereby enriching the senses and leaving a lasting impact. Their shared philosophy embraces AI as a great tool for architecture rather than a threat. AI is a powerful aid in the design

Sunitha Kondur, partner
Bijoy Ramachandran, partner
 Hundredhands Designs

process and data generation required for planning and sustainability.

Alila, a boutique hotel and apartment unit, is a project close to Kondur's heart. Its holistic design with integrated architecture, interiors, landscape and art curation reflects a unified vision in every detail from furniture to accessories. Another milestone project is The Bangalore International Centre, a thriving public institution. As per Ramachandran, the project

is a testament to the value of collaboration, benefiting both from a carefully considered architectural expression and inspired stewardship and curation.

Kondur and Ramachandran emphasise the need for the architectural community to innovate and evolve, addressing environmental, technological, and social factors to create sustainable and inclusive designs. They encourage young aspiring architects to meaningfully engage with the present moment with all the overwhelming complexities while learning from the past.

• KAMAYNI

Standing Tall

Sanjay Singh, director at ARCOP Associates Pvt Ltd, has an impressive career spanning more than three decades designing state-of-the-art buildings in almost all disciplines. A distinguished figure in the field of architecture, Singh has been conferred with numerous accolades for his designs.

Growing up in Delhi, Singh was intrigued by the built environment around him. The intricately carved wooden doors of his childhood home, visits to Delhi's historical monuments, their inscriptions, patterns and the sheer grandeur sparked an early fascination and admiration for design. Observing his elder brother pursue architecture further ignited the spark in him to make a career in a field that thrives on innovation rather than repetition. Architecture gave him the opportunity to observe and reinterpret in a new way every time.

With each new project, Singh is filled with excitement and curiosity like a child exploring a world of endless possibilities while solving a puzzle. Early mentorship under esteemed architect Ramesh Khosla instilled a strong ability to envision designs even before the client finished the brief. The initial stages involve understanding the project in relation to personal experiences and imaginative interpretations. Once the vision has crystallised, functional layers are added, followed by meticulous detailing that brings space to life. Each architectural element draws inspiration from small anecdotes of life that manifest themselves into defining elements of the end product.

Among the many projects that embody Singh's vision of simplicity



Sanjay Singh

director
ARCOP Associates Pvt Ltd

and functionality, Jaypee University at Noida is an impressive example. The university has been designed in a simple straight-line architecture with exposed bricks, exposed concrete and Kota stone, reflecting cost-effective sustainable design. The integration and blurring of lines—transitioning from outdoor to indoor—have resulted in a project that was awarded the Governor General of Canada Gold Medal for Excellence in Architecture in 2008.

Singh believes in the

transformative and positive power of AI. “AI can be exploited to create quick solutions to a problem that is defined and controlled by design professionals,” he says.

Architecture plays a crucial role in sustainability. Creating energy-efficient designs intertwined with new-age technologies and newer materials are imperative to address environment issues and reduce carbon footprint of the built environment. Singh's advice for young architects is to work hard, be self-critical and sensitive to their surroundings and context. Reading, travelling and engaging with diverse experiences can provide invaluable inspiration to create amazing designs.

● KAMAYNI

Curious Mind

A formidable name in architecture and urban design, Ravindra Kumar has won numerous accolades in a career that has lasted more than 30 years. He is the founder and principal architect of Pragrup Architects, and a partner and design chair at Venkataramanan Associates. Under his mentorship, Pragrup has completed more than 285 national and international projects since its inception in 1999.

A passion for art and graphic design led Kumar to a diploma in fine arts and introduced him to architects who collaborated with him on portfolios, ideas and project designs. This exposure sparked a curiosity to learn more about the architectural field, leading him to study architecture at Bangalore University.

During his formative years in architecture school, Kumar gained practical experience and exposure engaging with architects and facing real-life challenges.

Kumar finds himself fortunate to associate with esteemed architects and institutes across the world either through academia or practical projects in his formative years, providing inspiration and fuelling innovation. While studying under Lucho at Permissa, he learnt about the technology of building and innovation. Further learning about large-scale building and urban design came through an exchange programme for a short-term master's course at CEPT. Associations with architects such as Paulo Soleri, Glen Market, Vecchia, Philip Cox and others reinforced the belief that architecture is an evolving



Ravindra Kumar

principal architect and design chair Pragrup, Venkataramanan Associates

discipline, requiring continuous exploration and refinement.

For Kumar, extensive travel, being in new places, and meeting new people are a source of great inspiration for his designs. Observing heritage, vernacular and contemporary architecture, and associating with architects provided first-hand knowledge and learnings from their experiences. His approach to design is rooted in a balance between functionality and technology. His fascination with drawing as a language of architecture

extended into construction detailing, ensuring every project was grounded in practicality and feasibility.

The office of Pragrup is an excellent example of Kumar's commitment to creating technology-based sustainable designs. The office is built with the idea of a composite structure using re-engineered and recycled timber and recycled steel. On a larger scale, projects like building a 24-acre Nirlon campus over a period of 20 years presented the challenge of maintaining architectural consistency while incorporating cutting-edge sustainability practices. One of Kumar's earlier endeavours, Lupin Laboratories, is the most exciting experience which focussed on transparency, daylight maximisation and seamless integration with the landscape.

Looking ahead, Kumar iterates that AI can be used as a useful tool to enhance efficiency in data processing, modelling and visualisation, but it lacks the intuitive, emotional, and context-driven aspects of human creativity. The nuances of architecture, tied to memory, history, and spatial experience, cannot be entirely replicated by AI.

Kumar believes that architecture is an ever-evolving field that thrives on learning from the past while envisioning the future. The greatest lesson remains the importance of curiosity, exploration and continuous refinement. He advises young architects and designers to embrace this journey with an open mind that will lead to endless possibilities in shaping the built environment.

● KAMAYNI

The Architect Activist



PK Das (left) and Samarth Das

PK Das, popularly known as the architect-activist, founded PKDA Architects (formerly known as PK Das & Associates) in 1980, nurturing it as a forerunner in the world of architectural and social design. Under his leadership as the principal architect, along with Samarth Das, the design lead, the studio has a diverse portfolio spanning architecture, interiors, urban designs, planning and environment-related projects.

An ace student, PK Das excelled in art and technology at his school, which led his mother to suggest he pursue studies in architecture, a field that perfectly combined his interests. This, in turn, inspired him to pursue a bachelor's in architecture from the Sir JJ School of Architecture. On the other hand, Samarth Das's inspiration stemmed from an early exposure to building design influenced by his father's professional work. Witnessing

PK Das

principal architect
Samarth Das
design lead
PKDA Architects

the deficiencies in the city's built environment and wanting to improve the quality of life, he saw architecture as a powerful tool to reshape cities and create a better future. After completing his bachelor's in architecture, he pursued a master's in urban design and architecture from Columbia University.

While designing spaces, PK Das is inspired by a multitude of influences driven by social, environmental and shared space considerations. There are constant efforts to sensitise clients and their designs to the local context where they are situated. Globalisation has led to a proliferation of standardised

designs, but their design approach is towards more sustainable and responsible practices, rooted in local context and materials.

Most of PKDA's projects are socio-environmental initiatives often reflecting larger public interests. Their work is targeted towards expanding public spaces, restoration and re-invigoration of the natural ecology, and integrating buildings with nature. Some of their iconic projects that reflect their vision include waterfront promenades of Bandra Bandstand, Carter Road, the Land's End Amphitheatre in Bandra, Juhu Beach, and the Gateway of India precinct among others. These endeavours blur the boundaries between mainstream architecture and socio-environmental activism.

Samath Das is sceptical about the evolution of AI in architecture, acknowledging its potential to disrupt traditional practices. While AI can generate designs with depth and detail, it cannot replace the intuitive and iterative thought processes that a designer can bring to his craft. Despite its growing influence, he believes that AI cannot replace the tactile and intuitive aspects of architectural design.

PK Das emphasises the need for architects to develop innovative and responsive solutions to climate crisis—rising temperatures, unpredictable weather, and rising sea levels that are critically affecting the health and well-being of people. Architects now, and in the future, should evolve new ways through architectural engagements and endeavours to mitigate these challenges and contribute to planetary well-being.

● KAMAYNI

Where Art Meets Architecture



pursuit of learning and design includes exploring traditional and modern architecture to enhance functionality by prioritising climate-responsive and energy-efficient designs. “Our goal is to design spaces that foster a dialogue between art and architecture, where daylight playfully interacts with raw textures, evoking a variety of emotions throughout the day,” she says.

An ongoing project which embodies this philosophy is for a Hyderabad real estate firm where they have utilised active construction waste from nearby sites as its primary building material, reflecting their innovative and sustainable approach. Another standout project is a home, Forest House, designed to reflect a deeper integration of nature and architecture. With retractable roofs and a layout that immerses living and working with vegetation and trees, the design provides sanctuary to not only inhabitants but also plants.

Modi anticipates the revolution of various industries, including architecture and design through the use of AI. By embracing AI, she and her team have not only enhanced their design presentations but also gained more time for creative exploration.

Modi envisions the future of architecture being driven by cutting-edge technology along with a focus on innovation and sustainability. She foresees a greater emphasis on sustainable and energy-efficient building practices.

She is a role model for young architects and designers, and advises them to work hard and pursue their dreams while enjoying the process of bringing their designs to life.

● KAMAYNI

58

With a career spanning more than two decades in the US and India, Kanan Modi, founder and principal architect of Kanan Modi Associates, is a force to reckon with. Under her able leadership, the firm has won numerous awards and created projects in high-end corporates, retail, health care, hospitality, education, and luxury homes to product designs, exclusive surfaces and bespoke furniture.

Modi’s passion for architecture was ignited at 16, when walking down Peddar Road in Mumbai, she

Kanan Modi

founder & principal architect
 Kanan Modi Associates

would stop to admire the design of the Kanchanjunga building by renowned architect Charles Correa. This marked the beginning of a lifelong love for architecture.

An avid traveller, Modi draws inspiration from villages around the world and aims to create architecture that blurs the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces. Her relentless

Husna Rahaman, founder and principal designer of Fulcrum Studio, describes herself as an adventurer who uses the world to educate her insatiable spirit. Since its inception two decades ago, the firm has grown into a multi-award-winning practice providing architectural, interior design, landscape design, and product design services.

“Architecture is an amalgamation of arts and science, philosophy and structure, literature and culture,” she says. Living alone and studying design in London, she realised that art is inseparable from life. It was an uncharted realm without a handbook but with limitless possibilities. She further enhanced her skills in New York before returning to India to establish her own firm.

At the heart of Rahaman’s creative process lies an unwavering focus on experience, creating functional and technology-driven spaces. The intent is to craft spaces that uplift human behaviour, foster surprise and ignite curiosity—intangible moments that leave lasting impressions.

Among many distinguished projects, Hira is a deeply personal project for Rahaman. She conceived it as a journey of self-discovery, to strip away preconceived notions and embrace new perspectives. This project creates a nexus between the architecture and interior, the sky and earth, the vertical and horizontal axis, the trees and the bridges to them, the angular geometry between rectangular structures, the layers stacked and spun and making the finite mostly infinite. It is not merely a space, it is where Rahaman lives, works, and creates a reflection of her essence.

As industry evolves, AI presents an intriguing horizon. While it accelerates processes and drives systems and innovations, it cannot replicate instinct and intuition, or the originality of human creativity. Rahaman stresses the

Of Limitless Possibilities



Husna Rahaman

founder & principal designer
Fulcrum Studio

indispensable need for human touch—mind, body and soul. While AI may assist, architecture will always need human connection to resonate deeply with people.

Rahaman envisions the future of architecture to be intertwined with humanity’s broader challenges. With buildings contributing 37 percent toward greenhouse gases, the industry needs intent to innovate

and take vigorous action. As the unambiguous and divisive times test us, architecture must embrace the entire spectrum of challenges. While it seeks new technologies to combat climate change and urbanisation, places must be conceived as inclusive spaces, of personal and intimate comfort that create belonging. Rahaman advises the next generation of architects to embrace creativity, act with purpose, and remember that cities are built not of stone, but of spirit. “Our actions today shape the legacy we leave behind.”

• KAMAYNI

Being In Sync

Arun Balan and Arjun Nambisan, later joined by Nilanjana Roy, laid the foundation for Balan and Nambisan Architects (BNA) in 2012. The firm has a rich palette of boutique designs of small-format architecture like homes, F&B, and retail as well as planning of larger-format spaces like apartments, communities, and urban intervention.

Passionate about creativity and problem-solving, Balan was drawn to architecture as a medium that transforms spaces and impacts people's lives on a social, physical, and emotional level. Architecture as a career was an extension of Nambisan's passion for problem-solving, bringing order to chaos, and translating clients' needs into tangible designs. Roy's fascination for history and ancient architecture drives her desire to create spaces that merge heritage with contemporary functionality.

The partners adopt a holistic approach to design, where creativity, function and sustainability intersect, integrating aesthetics, utility and technological advancement while designing spaces.

Among the plethora of projects at BNA, Balan specifically reminisces about a small house he designed 25 years ago, which came with significant constraints. The project taught him the value of minimalism and innovation, creating space that evoked emotions. For Nambisan, Vaishnavi Rhapsody, a multi-dwelling unit designed around 20 trees, embodies his vision that architecture can coexist harmoniously with nature. By using LiDAR technology and hybrid construction methods, the project achieved a seamless balance between nature and urban living. The House of Stone and Screens



From left:
 Arun Balan,
 Nilanjana Roy and
 Arjun Nambisan

Arun Balan, partner architect
Arjun Nambisan, partner architect
Nilanjana Ro, partner architect
 Balan and Nambisan Architects

epitomises Roy's commitment to sustainable, innovative, functional and contextually harmonious design. The LEED-certified residence integrates solar panels, a striking four-level elliptical staircase, verdant landscapes, and wooden louvers.

Balan, Nambisan and Roy envision AI as a transformative and revolutionising force in shaping the future of architecture and design. By automating repetitive tasks, organising complex datasets, optimising workflows, managing multiple design variations, reducing risks, and streamlining construction management, AI can help optimise efficiency. AI has the potential to create digital twins—virtual replicas of physical structures that can monitor and analyse real-time building performance.

Balan foresees a future driven by sustainable and resilient architecture. With challenges like climate change and depleting resources, buildings must evolve into net-zero energy structures, and nature-based designs will be at the forefront. He advises young architects to stay curious, embrace learning, and develop strong observational and social skills. Nambisan envisions the future of architecture to be defined by adaptability, functionality, and a deeper understanding of building and structure rather than just its aesthetic appeal. He encourages young professionals to prioritise research, functionality, and adaptability while cultivating strategic communication skills. Roy envisions an interdisciplinary future where architecture integrates insights from technology, sociology and environmental science. She urges young architects to broaden their knowledge, think critically, and design with empathy and sustainability in mind.

• KAMAYNI

Akshay Lakhanpal is the CEO-India of Space Matrix Design Consultants, a global design consultancy specialising in workplace design. In a career spanning over two decades, he has won numerous awards for his designs, which focus on sustainability and innovation.

“Architecture is a fascinating convergence of art, science, mathematics, sociology and psychology, and offers the unique ability to shape human lives through the built environment,” he says. For Lakhanpal, this ability of design to influence emotions, behaviours and productivity was a compelling force that led him to pursue architecture as a career. Inspired by *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand and guided by his father, he found his calling in architecture, which stemmed from its unique blend of disciplines.

At Space Matrix, Lakhanpal’s team’s mission is to create workspaces that are a positive catalyst for people’s empowerment, business growth and sustainability. By embracing ‘Design Thinking’ as their guiding principle, they create bespoke solutions tailored to each client’s needs and aspirations. Beyond functionality, they strive to create spaces that evoke emotions, embody corporate culture, and enhance user experience.

Lakhanpal’s philosophy of aligning workplace designs with the organisation’s DNA of values, culture, workstyles and aspirations is evident in several projects. The Nestle India project exemplifies this vision where the design has various spaces catering to diverse workstyles fostering a culture of trust and innovation. Another example is the BoAt project, where creating functional and inspiring spaces helped the company reinforce its brand identity and foster a culture of innovation and creativity. Other significant projects like HCA and

Design At Work



Akshay Lakhanpal

CEO, India
Space Matrix Design Consultants

Kyndril demonstrate how workplace design can be leveraged to attract top talent, build brand identity and cultivate a sense of belonging.

Lakhanpal envisions AI revolutionising the workplace design industry by offering personalised workplaces, predictive design, enhanced sustainability, data-driven decision-making, and automation of repetitive tasks. However, he stresses that AI should augment and not replace human creativity and expertise.

With ethical and responsible implementation, AI can contribute to smarter, more sustainable, and human-centric environments.

With the world facing challenges like climate change and urbanisation, architects need to provide human-centric, data-driven, and technology-enabled solutions. Lakhanpal advises architects and designers to embrace interdisciplinary collaborations, use technology responsibly and ethically, and prioritise human well-being while providing solutions. He implores them to cultivate a lifelong learning mindset, stay abreast of the latest technologies and trends, and continuously seek opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills. 

• KAMAYNI