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SPECIALIST: STUDIO CAST GLASS

MY SPACE: DIPEN GADA ASSOCIATES

HOME REVIEW

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UNMASKING GRANDEUR
ASHIESH SHAH

IN AND AROUND THE TREES
MODO DESIGNS



ARTROVERT

AN AMALGAMATION OF CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES BY ANAGRAM ARCHITECTS

WINDOWS ROOFINGS AND FACADES REDEFINING INNOVATIONS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Albert Einstein once quoted, *'The only source of knowledge is experience.'* For designer and architect Dipen Gada this certainly rings true. A civil engineer by education, Dipen honed his skills through intensive self-learning and progressively developed a deeper sense of aesthetics.

Dipen Gada & Associates was established in Vadodara in 1993 and has steadily evolved to become one of the leading interior design and architectural firms in the country. Adhering to the dictat 'Less is more', the firm consciously focuses on making it look effortless. Though his work screams minimalism it is deeply rooted in traditional local practices. Their work strives to strike a balance between functionality and aesthetics with a perfect juxtaposition of art, landscape and architecture - as is seen in their recent project, a riverside retreat 'Nirant'.

Dipen shares with us snippets about his 24 year long journey, his ideologies, and interests.



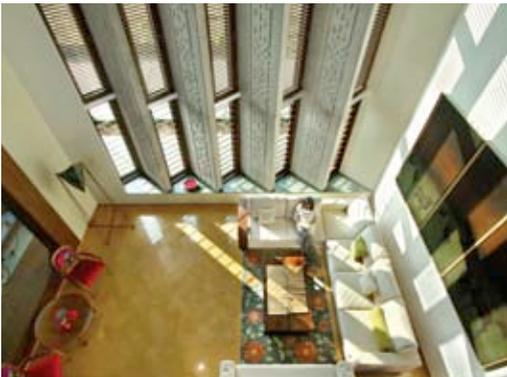
DIPEN GADA ASSOCIATES

Interview By Shweta Salvi

From securing a degree in civil engineering to choosing architecture as your vocation, it's been an interesting journey. Please walk us through it.

I have always sought knowledge and exposure which boarded me on a path of self-learning. Intense travelling, study and seminars helped me to create a niche identity for my practice. I have implemented the learning and experiences to take definitive steps towards achieving perfection and have worked towards implementing micro-level changes in my design with each progressive project.

My first opportunity came in the form of my cousin's project after my graduation, which became the turning point of my career and professional life.



What according to you is the foundation of good design?

It is important in the first stage of any design process to carry out a meticulous research of the site, and identify its spirit and context. Deliberate efforts must be made to create structures that along with being aesthetically appealing also blend subtly with the context and respond to the environment. Functionality should be the core of any design, and aesthetics should cohesively merge with it. This, I think is the key to timeless design.

Any guiding principle that you follow during the ideation process?

"SAHAJ"- effortless environment is my design motto. Although, we take great efforts to attain the final result, I believe in making it look effortless. 'Less is more' is strongly reflected in all our designs. The designs have simple, basic form reflecting minimalism, achieved with application of basic materials that create a strong statement.



With changing trends, occasional fanciful patrons and ever evolving design perceptions, how does an architect manage to maintain his individuality in their designs?

As architects, it is our responsibility to build sensitively. The society and by-extension the environment should benefit. Our firm believes in creating thoughtful spaces for living, livelihood, entertainment and community, thereby creating sustainable living eco-systems. We believe in keeping things simple, but we do love experimenting with materials and exploring them in each project differently. Concrete is our current favourite.

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It is said 'God is in the details', and this reflects in most of your projects. Tell us about the significance of art, landscape and natural elements that are harmoniously incorporated in your work.

I believe natural materials should be treated with reverence and we must retain the uniqueness of each. I like to explore the qualities of each element - natural or otherwise - and adapt it to our client's brief. We consider each project as a milestone project and therefore each needs and gets our best. All our designs maintain a balance between aesthetics and functionality while seamlessly amalgamating architecture, art and landscape. I love to incorporate art in its basic form with the structure and that reflects in many of our works.



An architect whose work has inspired you deeply... and why?

Tadao Ando and Geoffrey Bawa's work is always worth experiencing and learning from. The purity and boldness of Ando's work and the meditative experience in Bawa's work have struck a chord with me. There are many more mentors, great designers and philosophers who have inspired my design journey.

A project that is very close to your heart...

Nirant is a project which is very close to my heart. It is a single-storey residence built on a naturally curved land. The brief of the project was to design a riverside retreat with two bedrooms, home theatre and a pool, to unwind and escape the city routine. We created an environment that surrenders to the nature and provides a meditative space that the owner requested for. The house with its bold minimalist expression pays ode to nature, art and architecture. Overall, the house offers contemporary interiors with a subtle vernacular twist.



When one starts off with a new practice there is an energy rush to achieve certain goals, 25 years down the line is there something that you still look forward to doing?

There is no satisfaction in our field unless you are actively working. I want to leave behind my design footprints, and therefore I work towards raising the bar by bettering my own work. I want to create a body of work which would be essentially recognised for its impact on the society, hence with the evolving and changing facets, we as architects need to adapt and evolve too.

What are you currently working on?

There are many ongoing projects, which are lined up - right from residential, commercial, hospitality and several other categories.

When out of your creative space what do you enjoy doing the most?

I totally love zoning out. Just relax, enjoy some secluded time with myself. It feels good to just feel the vibration of the nature around or listen to some meditative Sufi music, and yes, escape from the routine.

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