



SANGEETA MERCHANT & SANJEEV PANJABI

Sangeeta Merchant and Sanjeev Panjabi run their firm, SPASM Design Architects in a personal, controlled manner, just as they run their projects. They practice in India and East Africa, focusing on aspects like honesty, sensibility, humility, longevity and relevance. The firm was set up in 1995, and is largely recognised by its affinity for open and interactive spaces tied to nature. The firm covers everything from high-end residences to resorts and commercial spaces.

“Most of our buildings reflect an attempt to combine the familiar with the new, the traditional with today, by working with age-old solutions in a technologically-savvy structure.”

– Seema Puri & Zarir Mullan, SEZA



SEEMA PURI & ZARIR MULLAN

The founders and principal architects of SEZA, Seema Puri and Zarir Mullan believe that design has a dual responsibility — one to guarantee the end users a meaningful space, and the other to create architecture that is relevant and adds sculptural charm to the fabric of its surroundings. The duo set up their practice in the '90s, with an aim to meld architecture, interior design and landscape, and blur the lines between the inside and outside. Villas, bungalows, residential developments, hotels, showrooms and shopping malls form only a part of their project portfolio.

SHEILA SRI PRAKASH



Besides being referred to as an acclaimed architect, Sheila Sri Prakash is also considered an expert in sustainability and green architecture. Her design firm, Shilpa Architects Planners Designers was set up in Chennai in 1979. As a member of the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), Sri Prakash has also played a pivotal role in streamlining the LEED Certification process in the country. Her prominent projects include the State Bank of India head office in Chennai, Bamiyan Cultural Centre in Afghanistan, Taj Vivanta Resorts & Spa in Puducherry and the Mahindra World City in Chennai.

Quick Fact
Sri Prakash is also a Bharatanatyam dancer and a musician.

SANJAY PURI

With an innate ability to make every space look different, and a conscious effort to stray from repetitive design, Sanjay Puri established his firm in 1992. Over time, the firm put together an impressive portfolio, comprising one-of-a-kind projects like the Bombay Arts Society, the Piazza in Montenegro, Hyatt Srinagar and the Global City in Mumbai. With his latest initiative entitled Dialogues, Puri added another feather to his cap, bringing designers from across the country onto one platform to encourage design discourse.

“India is poised for a lot of development in design, and in the future, we can hope for people to be more aware of the power of design.”

– Sanjay Puri, Sanjay Puri Architects

SHIMUL JAVERI KADRI

Shimul Javeri Kadri's firm, SJK Architects builds gently, naturally and lightly in its context. The 24-year-old firm is driven by a respect for nature and a fundamental belief in people and their connectedness. Kadri's designs draw inspiration from historical India, but still remain relevant in the modern scenario. Her innovative projects include the Hotel on the Ganges in Rishikesh, The Handloom School in Maheshwar and the Jiji House restoration in Mumbai.



Quick Fact
On the side, Kadri also acts as a writer, jurist, speaker and teacher.

SONAL SANCHETI & RAHUL GORE

Quick Fact
Sancheti pursues several allied interests like filmmaking, set designing, photography and scuba diving.

“We usually stay away from a signature style; the most complex and beautiful solutions are often the simplest.”

– Sonal Sancheti & Rahul Gore, _OPOLIS Architects



SIDHARTHA TALWAR

In a career spanning over 20 years, Sidhartha has worked on diverse projects ranging from retail and corporate interiors, to exhibitions and thematic events. He founded Studio Lotus along with Ambrish Arora and Ankur Choksi in 2002. The studio has done some fascinating work including the RAAS hotel in Jodhpur that set a benchmark in hospitality projects, and KHOJ, which was an experimental art laboratory and residence for upcoming artists. The Grand Jury Prize at the Design for Asia Award is one of the many accolades the studio has bagged to date.

Quick Fact
Sidhartha is a visiting faculty member at the TVB School of Habitat Studies.



SONALI & MANIT RASTOGI



Morphogenesis, headed by Sonali and Manit Rastogi, thrives on challenges. The 20-year-old firm is responsible for The British Council in New Delhi, Delhi Art Gallery in Mumbai, Pearl Academy in Jaipur and the Infosys campus in Nagpur, among others. As a philosophy, the firm looks to the processes of nature — being responsive to context, maximum efficiency with minimum waste, closed loop — to define their work and organisational structure. Holistically, the firm puts the Indian perspective into the global context to create contemporary, practical structures.

NOTE: This listing is in alphabetical order. At the time of going to press, due to time constraint more than a few pertinent names were unable to send updated profiles. The magazine will carry the same in due course.

In 2001, Sonal Sancheti and Rahul Gore, both graduates of the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) in Ahmedabad, merged their design sensibilities to set up _OPOLIS Architects. The multidisciplinary design practice has undertaken large-scale projects such as The Bihar Museum in Patna along with Maki and Associates, and more recently, the North Wing extension to the Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai along with Steven Holl Architects. The firm's innovative design solutions are grounded by a sensitivity to the project, its site and surroundings.