

*Graduated from the School of Planning and Architecture (New Delhi) and The Architectural Association (London) with a graduate diploma in Housing and Urbanism and a second graduate diploma in Graduate Design, Sonali Rastogi is Founder Partner of Morphogenesis. Sonali has been awarded Laureate of the SIA Getz Award for Emergent Architecture in Asia, Singapore 2014, which seeks to bring recognition to Asian architects, who through their vision and commitment have made a significant contribution in shaping the changing landscape of Asia. A member of the Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC), a Fellow of the IIA (Indian Institute of Architects) and the RSA (Royal Society of Arts, UK); Sonali has been responsible for a number of nationally and internationally acclaimed projects.*

*Morphogenesis is a team of passionate leaders, thinkers, problem solvers and creators, aptly led by Sonali Rastogi and Mani Rastogi - its Founder Partners...*



### Why I Chose Architecture...

I was very fortunate to be born into a family of architects. My family which was like a nodal point for our socio-ecosystem and everybody in that ecosystem was somehow an architect or related to architecture. The influences were actually all pervasive because my father started off by being an architect who practiced at home, because my mother used to go out and work. Other than that, I have always had a serious interest in reading, model making as well as observing buildings when I travelled, so these things put together supported my interest. Essentially, that is the starting point of why I choose to be an architect.

### My Journey from a Student to a Pro...

After completing our Architecture studies at The School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, we proceeded to spend a long stint at The Architectural Association, London where Mani pursued his interest in the study of nature, evolution and design processes in association with John Frazer. He also acquired a degree in Energy and Environment Studies with Simos Yannas. I studied Housing and Urbanism with George Fiori as well as studied at 'The Design Research Lab' with Jeff Kipnis. Bringing together our bouquet of interests, we started Morphogenesis in 1996 with a vision of contributing to the definition of a sustainable architecture for contemporary India, for a generation that we termed as a 'people of almost somewhere'.

### My Take on Architecture...

At Morphogenesis, sustainability is a core creative value and is practiced in the evolution of the design. The practice considers the widening scope of sustainability to be all inclusive; to include social, cultural, financial, technological and environmental sustainability.

The main question that continues to pervade our design philosophy is the notion of how do we redefine sustainability by thinking systemically? How do we celebrate identity and diversity versus homogeneity, how do we think of our buildings and cities as bazaars (places of human interaction) rather than only as machines (places of human habitation), how do we redefine our urbanism as an emergence of interwoven networks?

### My First Affair with Steel...

One of the most interesting experiences I have had very early on in my professional career where we were doing a staircase for the Apollo Tyres Headquarters which was visualized as rippling steel ribbons. But in the days where we had no BIM, the AutoCAD drawings of those could hardly be understood by the construction site. Finally, we had to work with utensil makers who are used to making multiple curved surfaces. The act of putting it together really forged my fondness for working with steel.

### Changing Dynamics of Design...

Steel is inherent to the way we build, it's part of the construction technology in this part of the world. But yes, if you really understand the structural possibilities that steel allows, there is a lot of sense of awe that can be created - whether it is large spans, large cantilevers, buildings that seemingly defy gravity - is what steel gives us, and for that, it is extremely exciting to work with.

### A Steel Project Close to my Heart...

The steel centric projects closest to my heart are actually more like objects in a building that are created with steel, like the Apollo Tyres staircase. A while ago we had done a boat hull like false ceiling for a project, currently we are doing a corten steel, parametrically generated wall cladding for a project, we have worked with kinetic steel. The fact that steel can also work very well for the product design aspect is how I love to work with it.

### My dream project...

What is very exciting is the potential of the times we live in today. India is poised at this juncture of economic growth, as a result of which the world's eyes are upon us and there is renewal of self-pride in all things Indian. It makes an ideal setting for even greater, faster and deeper implementation of our vision, a vision shared by many today- where a young breed of emerging architects will no longer look globally for inspiration, but inwards, to truly define a contemporary architecture of India.



# WOMEN PROWESS IN ARCHITECTURE

WOMENTECTURE



## PERSONAL FILE

Full Name : Sonali Rastogi  
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Architecture, London (Masters)  
Years in Profession : 22 Years  
My Best Work So Far : Pearl Academy, Jaipur