



iDECORAMA

50 DAVAS INSPIRING

WOMEN'S SPECIAL EDITION



INSPIRING DIVAS

Keeping up with the tradition of celebrating Design Par Excellence, iDecorama Magazine has yet again geared up to unveil its most ambitious edition, on the eve of International Women's Day. We bring to you a showcase of most influential Indian women architects and interior designers who with their unwavering determination and passion are setting a new benchmark for the fraternity with their exemplary work. As a part of our initiative to salute and commemorate the landmark contribution of the women achievers, iDecorama Magazine shines spotlight on the Top Inspiring Divas who with their impeccable Craftsmanship and Creativity are Scripting the Future and are set to be the 'Connoisseurs of Tomorrow.' Besides, the special feature also touches upon crucial issues such as gender parity, payscale, women empowerment and also looks into the initiatives undertaken by these Divas to uplift the society.

Story Courtesy: Rajath Kumar & Nisha Shukla



SONALI RASTOGI

FOUNDING PARTNER, MORPHOGENESIS

Graduated from the School of Planning and Architecture (New Delhi) and The Architectural Association (London) with a graduate diploma in Housing and Urbanism under Jorge Fiori and a second graduate diploma in Graduate Design (DRL) under Jeff Kipnis, Sonali is the Founding Partner of Morphogenesis, one of India's leading award-winning Architecture and Urban Design practices. Morphogenesis has been ranked yet again, for the eighth time running, among the Top 100 Architectural Design Firms worldwide by Building Design Magazine, UK in WA100 2019. The practice is the recipient of over 95 international and national Awards. Sonali has also co-authored Morphogenesis' first monograph 'Morphogenesis: The Indian Perspective, The Global Context', published by Images Australia under their Master Architect Series. Working across a diverse canvas ranging from architecture to urban design, landscape and interior design, Sonali is passionately interested in the materiality and craft in architecture, and is deeply invested in the detail of building. A Fellow of the IIA (Indian Institute of Architects) and the RSA (Royal Society of Arts, UK), she also extends her impact on the built environment as a council member of the Delhi Urban Arts Commission.

Do you think women have achieved equality in terms of gender, status, power, respect and pay in the society?

I don't know about the society, but I do know that according to a survey conducted by an International architecture and design magazine, Morphogenesis is one of six firms in the WA100 list of the world's largest Architecture firms which is gender neutral, with over 50% women across all levels. We are also incredibly proud to report a positive pay gap in the favour of women, based on the median of our staff's salaries. Power and Respect are more about the individual and have nothing to do with the gender.

Is there a shift in mind-set & outlook towards Women Architects & Designers in the fraternity?

I think because I am deeply immersed in my work where there is no gender differentiation, I don't experience this issue enough to say it is one. I don't find myself competent to comment on that.

Initiatives undertaken by you to uplift the society and women at large

Ever since Morphogenesis' inception in 1996, we have worked hard to put a range of policies and processes in place that enable our women workforce to continue their professional careers. FLEX is one such company initiative that ensures safety for women working long hours, flexibility in working arrangements for new mothers and extended maternity leaves. One of the many ways that we help employees uphold their familial and societal commitments is by supporting them to spend their time at work in camaraderie versus that which would be otherwise spent running errands. Enabling grocery deliveries, facilitating day-care services and bring your pet to work days are just some of the measures taken to help women in their careers and uphold community obligations.



Well, I am not much of a gender differentiator. All I can say is - Architecture is a network of people coming together whether its architects, engineers, urban planners, interior designers, landscape architects, clients, bankers, financiers. It's network of people who come together to put a project for human habitation, to create a new life in which a new human activity would take place. I think once a woman starts to see life in the same way as architecture, it's actually a good analogy for each other in the way that one collaborates with others to achieve a desired end result. In architecture to have work-life balance, ideal family & professional dream, need to run in parallel and draw analogy from each other.

