

*'All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women
merely players'
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FOLIO 2

THE YARDS WE SCALE

inscape

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS
POWERED BY NIPPON PAINT



'All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.'
So said William Shakespeare,
The story could be a whistle or whisper
Characters could sob or shout,
What completes the delivery is 'the Setting',
Be it Theater, reel-life, or real life
The cover sketch is a signature 'Thota Tharrani'.
Creativity coming alive to get Rajnikanth and
Shriya in 'Sivaji- The Boss' to celebrate life and
love, weaving in and out through dreamy spaces
and yards as billions watch with throbbing hearts.
Strong parallels to what Designers do- Making
dreams come true in real life, literally impacting
billions. More on Page 36

The
Yards
We
Scale

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

As we take another step with Folio 2 on the 'The Yards We Scale' in the illustrious IIID Golden Jubilee Rainbow Series of Inscape, I am reminded of the profound words of Marcel Proust, who once said, 'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.' Indeed, within these pages lies a treasure trove of insights that will not only broaden our horizons but also deepen our understanding of the intricate dance between space and design.

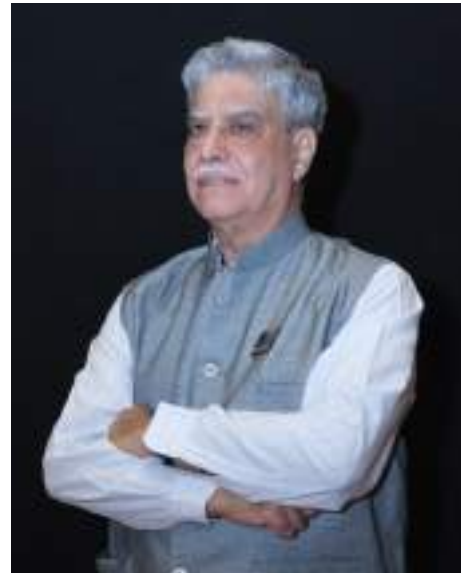
In the ever-evolving realm of interior design, publications such as this are akin to guiding stars, illuminating our path forward with brilliance and clarity. They serve as beacons of knowledge, offering invaluable wisdom and inspiration to all who dare to venture into the uncharted territories of creativity and innovation. It is with great admiration and anticipation that I delve into the depths of this publication, marveling at the sheer diversity and depth of the topics explored.

'The Yards We Scale' beckons us to transcend the confines of conventional thinking, inviting us to embrace the boundless possibilities that lie beyond the familiar. With each turn of the page, we are transported to a world where imagination knows no bounds, where every space is imbued with meaning and purpose. From the sacred courtyards of ancient civilisations to the vibrant urban landscapes of today, the journey we undertake is nothing short of transformative.

What strikes me most about this publication is its unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation. The meticulous selection of topics, coupled with the expertise of the finest design minds in the country, ensures that we are treated to a veritable feast for the intellect. It is a testament to the vision and dedication of IIID that such a comprehensive and thought-provoking series has come to fruition, enriching the lives of its members and readers alike.

IIID is proud of Inscape as its spokesperson already creating ripples with Folio 1 on 'The Spaces We Shape'. With a dedicated website, this design publication is setting a new standard and may be the biggest takeaway ever for the members. Let us not forget that this is a collectible coffee table series and should be treasured as such. It is my hope that we will carefully build upon this series, nurturing it as a source of inspiration and knowledge for generations to come.

I also take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our esteemed editorial board for their tireless dedication and unwavering commitment to excellence and of course all the members and readers for the huge encouragement and support.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ar. Sarosh Wadia'.

AR. SAROSH WADIA
PRESIDENT - IIID

Editor's Note



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jabeen Zacharias'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

JABEEN ZACHARIAS
EDITOR, IIID INSCAPE

October 20th, 1968, Olympic Games, Mexico. Galleries spellbound as the most thrilling event of High Jump unfolds. Athletes ready to challenge physics and gravity with muscles and mind, to benchmark what we mortals can scale. Faster, stronger, higher was the chant. The bar was set at a never before 2.24 meters! There comes an athlete; a loner, a first timer, who didn't like to practice, missed the opening ceremony to see a sunset driving and sleeping in a van; a curious case as the newspapers would dismiss. Fosbury from US, ran fast, rose high; but instead of taking his body parallel and towards the bar, flipped and arched with 'his back to the bar'! That was an Olympic record; and the beginning of the 'Flop' revolution. Fosbury didn't participate in the Olympics anymore, but the Fosbury Flop does; the only way till date for every athlete to scale the heights.

Why Yards? As you hold the second folio of the IIID Golden Jubilee Rainbow Series of Inscape, honestly, I will be disappointed if you don't have this killing, nailing question. This Folio is a designed Flop to flip our game with backs turned to the notching bar of just Interior Design to soar high with face upward for a higher and wider glimpse of what lies around, in between and within before entering into the soul spaces of our built environments. Yes, we are doing the Fosbury Flop; sprinting, springing, surging with our backs on to the arch of the Rainbow, looking skywards and forward, taking in the larger spread of all the realms before it all blends into that single picture of hope and happiness for mankind, which the Rainbow promises: Which Good Design promises!

'Yard' is Old Saxon in origin. All through its journey as Gard, Gart, Gardo, Garth, Yarde etc, it always meant an enclosed, fenced, and defined space which was 'open' too. 'An Interior Exterior Space or an Exterior Interior Space?' whichever way the designer in you want to look at it. Yards then edged and nudged their way inwards as in Courtyards to provide core and connections to our Interiors or outwards as Surrounds to provide context and conversations with the world around. Their trails have left behind unbelievable footprints across every single culture and civilisation spanning Man's history, holding many a secret which could still be that universal healing potion for the fuming planet and the forlorn souls in its yards.

'Yard' also holds very interesting nuances for Designers in particular! A popular unit of measurement for length exactly three feet or 36 inches which dates back to medieval England, conceived as the distance from King Henry I's nose to the end of his outstretched thumb. It can also mean the average stride or pace of a person, a practical and relatable unit for easy measurement. With such sensitive connections to human scale, Architects and Designers often opt to think in yards while shaping our spaces. Then comes 'yardstick' with its metaphorical meaning; the comparative



The record breaking Fosbury Flop (1968), Credit: Bettmann Archive

Why Yards? As you hold the second folio of the IIID Golden Jubilee Rainbow Series of Inscape, honestly, I will be disappointed if you don't have this killing, nailing question. This Folio is a designed Flop to flip our game with backs turned to the notching bar of just Interior Design to soar high with face upward for a higher and wider glimpse of what lies around, in between and within before entering into the soul spaces of our built environments.

standard and index we attach to anything and everything including the kind of Designers we are, the types of Designs we do and the magnanimity of the impact we bring in; Like it or not, that bar goes up every day with the huge challenges our times set for us. We are designers, problem solvers, drivers of change; We need to figure out that Fosbury Flop.

Inscape Folio 2 brings you strong clues and connotations on the many promising powerful philosophies of Yards with its many versatile tones and undertones. For maestro Rewal, Yard is 'Yaad' as celebrated in the Museum of Martyrs at Punjab, For Mohe, it is about the mindful 'mind space' it captures, for Lilia, the sacred lessons it holds, for Dinesh, the possibilities. With the wisdom of 'Stapati', the manifestation at 'Bodh Gaya', and the 100 Moments pinned for reference, let yards claim its place in your Design Thinking, be it as a space or a measure or an index. The texture of the cover sketch by Thota Tharrani with Rajinikanth and Shriya dancing at our fingertips, I hope will inspire us to dream for real people to dance or mourn as the drama unfolds on the silver screen of our true lives.

By the way, did you notice the shoes in the picture? Different and mismatched. Symbolic maybe since soon we too may need to wear different shoes to do the Flop jump as 'Designers' to scale the seemingly unsurmountable heights to change the world. Let us yard up and scale up!



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Intimate Embrace of Y-aa-ds to the Boundless Expanse of Yards

Timeless Wisdom through the
Life and Works of Raj Rewal

**A CONVERSATION BETWEEN RAJ REWAL (RR),
FOUNDER OF RAJ REWAL ARCHITECTS AND
JABEEN ZACHARIAS (JZ), EDITOR- IIID INSCAPE
AT DELHI, 24 JAN 2024.**

The architectural journey and philosophical musings of Raj Rewal have been nothing short of enlightening. His profound insights into the symbiotic relationship between space, structure, and light, coupled with his unwavering commitment to integrating 'Rasa' with modern design principles, showcase a lifetime dedicated to the art of architecture. In this *tete-a-tete* with editor Jabeen Zacharias, Raj Rewal shares invaluable insights into his design philosophy, prolific processes, and the evolving landscape of Indian architecture. Reminiscing his seminal projects, he shares the intricacies of his approach, emphasising the blend of the inside and the outside to evoke a sense of harmony with 'Yards' often playing the protagonist.

The conversation gives us a peek into Raj Rewal's visionary mind as his timeless works continue to inspire and enrich the fabric of Indian architecture and design. It invites readers to explore the intersection of tradition and innovation, urging them to delve deeper into the realms of architectural discourse and the profound impact it has on shaping our collective experience of the built environment. Rewal also illuminates the significance of courtyards in architectural design, emphasising their role as communal spaces that foster social interaction and cultural exchange. Rewal's wisdom serves as a guiding light, reminding us to remain steadfast in our pursuit of design excellence while staying attuned to the needs of society.



Raj Rewal stands as a titan in the realm of Indian architecture and design, renowned for his awe-inspiring designs that seamlessly blend tradition with modernity. His prolific career spans decades, marked by an unwavering commitment to creating spaces that resonate with the cultural and social fabric of India. From iconic public structures to intimate residential spaces, Rewal's works reflect a deep understanding of design principles and a profound appreciation for the human experience within built environments.

Rewal's remarkable career is adorned with notable projects like the Hall of Nations, Asian Games Village, Lisbon Ismaili Center, and CIDCO Low-Cost Housing. His global influence is underscored by the prestigious Robert Mathew Award from the Commonwealth Association of Architects. Recognised for excellence, Rewal received the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur from the French Government in 2016, and the Golden Architect award in 2003. His architectural prowess was honoured with the IBC award in 2002 for the Parliament Library building and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Institute of Engineers (India) in 2001, alongside the gold medal from the Indian Institute of Architects.

JZ: The Indian Institute of Interior Designers is celebrating its 50 years with a series of 7 publications; The Golden Jubilee Rainbow Series. Each of the folios have different topics which are key to a holistic understanding of spaces. For the second folio, we are exploring the idea of ‘yards’ with you. I would like to start our conversation with a simple question, what comes to your mind when you hear the word yard?

RR: Yard or Yaad? (he counters with a very charming smile) like reminiscences, akin to the Hindi word 'yaad'?
Maybe the literal meaning, yard as a unit of measurement?
Then, of course, there's the spatial connotation—courtyards, backyards, etc. It's intriguing how one word can evoke and hold such diverse interpretations each with so much depth. I must say I wouldn't have loved any other word more for this conversation. Yards inspire me!

JZ: Yes, it is truly fascinating how different interpretations of ‘yards’ emerge in our conversations with different people. But the nuances of ‘yaad’ have come up for the first time; beautiful! It reminds me of how Charles Correa used to say ‘.we live in memories.’ In this edition of Inscape we are focusing on yards as spaces and as a measure. Inscape would like to listen to your thoughts on yards from these dual angles.

RR: In my design philosophy, I envision the trinity of space—a symphony where architecture, light, and structure harmonise to create a canvas for human interaction. Beyond this, I add another layer: Rasa, the essence that imbues each space with emotional resonance. It's this Rasa that imbues every built form with a sense of grandeur. Yards, whether nestled within, flanking, or surrounding a structure, whether adorned with lush greenery, tranquil water features, or rugged stone, hold the keys to realising spatial visions that not only engage the senses but also evoke cherished memories. Yards contribute as silent narrators of our experiences, stirring the soul and etching indelible imprints on our consciousness.

Consider my recent venture, the Martyrs Memorial(Jung-E-Azadi) in Punjab, where a series of courtyards serve as poignant expressions of reverence for the many sung and unsung heroes who sacrificed their lives for us. Rooted in sacred vernacular traditions, this memorial intertwines narratives of bravery and resilience, paying homage to Punjab's spirited legacy. Tradition seamlessly merges with the contemporary, epitomised by a minar—an emblem of triumph—standing proudly at the entrance, a harmonious blend of heritage and innovation. Drawing inspiration from the vibrant Phulkari textile, interlinked courtyards breathe vitality into the surroundings. Each space pays homage to the land's generosity and vibrancy, unfurling like petals in gentle grace. Such is the power of its design, that one can almost hear the rhythmic cadence of Bhangra and feel the emotional resonance of the melodies. It is a celebration of culture, climate, and context, where yards serve as the foundation for meaningful design and heartfelt remembrance.

JZ: The museum is an ode to Courtyards too considering how the whole design came alive through the intertwining courtyards telling the story. Could you share your thoughts on the cultural significance and contextual considerations of courtyards across our times? You have often sensitively used courtyards, how can courtyards integrate contextual, cultural ethos into our designs?

RR: Of course, I don't think there is anything more relevant than courtyards, with their special blend of sky, ground, flora, fauna, light quality, breeze, smell, and comfort, to set a better context for any project. It reminds me of another project that took me to Portugal—

Tradition meets innovation with a triumphal minar at the entrance, echoing Punjab's vibrant culture



As the vibrant artistry of Phulkari envelops, interlinked courtyards resonate with the rich hues of Punjab's cultural fabric. Photo by Sheeba Madan



the Lisbon Ismaili Center. Here too, we explored a modern interpretation, honouring Islamic design principles amidst a tapestry of cultural exchange and courtyards were the commonality. This is very apt for the theme, here, courtyards emerge as the central character. Six sacred spaces, woven intricately into the design, unveil a loom of purpose and tradition. From the majestic grandeur of the entrance to the Char Bagh to the tranquil sanctum of the prayer hall, cocooned within its courtyard, and beyond-to civic realms adorned with their verdant retreats. Even aloft, smaller courtyards cradle intimate structures, echoing the Jamaat Khana's essence. Designing its crown, a roof of granite and steel, posed both challenge and revelation, birthing a jali reminiscent of timeless wonders. Not only was I evolving the form for courtyards but also reliving the intricate grace of Fatehpur Sikri, Agra's stone marvels and the aura of Alhambra's splendour, all of which play and blend the inside and outside seamlessly. Let me share some sketches as we curated this reverence to tradition embraced by the breath of modernity.



Culminating in the intricate kufic style—a homage to the exquisite Islamic artistry, the courtyard serves as a tranquil canvas where tradition and beauty intertwine seamlessly.

JZ: Bringing all that together; the local landscapes and contexts, the religious overtones and social-historical essence, the interiors and exteriors, the blend of natural elements, light quality, and cultural significance is a complex difficult brief you set for the project. How do you navigate these requirements blending boundaries and creating amazing spatial experiences?

RR: We begin our design explorations with a desire to venture beyond the mundane, embracing all spatial dimensions and weaving them intricately with the tapestry of the local landscape and context. This is our vision for every project. The challenge, in the Lisbon Ismaili project, was in infusing sacred religious essence into architectural design, you can see it in these hallowed halls of the Jamaat Khana—a sanctuary of Islamic significance. Over three and a half years, Lisbon, with its rich heritage, became our muse. Immersed in its essence, inspiration blossomed, culminating in the intricate kufic style—an homage to the Quran's exquisite artistry. We were guided by the community and revered figures like the Aga Khan himself. In the skilled hands of Portuguese artisans, our vision materialised, exemplified by the creation of a fountain—a testament to love and dedication. Particularly poignant is the mural, a cherished creation by my departed son, its whispers intertwined with the gentle murmur of water within these sacred walls. It is not just in monumental buildings, we embrace yards in even simple housing projects.



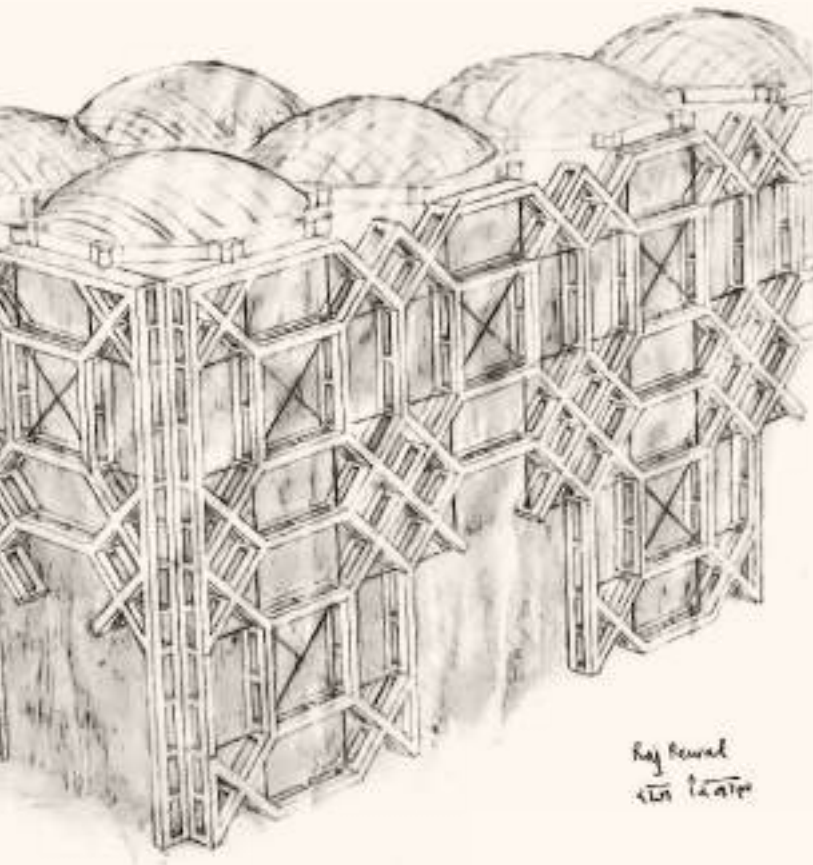
The Belapur Housing project in Navi Mumbai for example was driven by the plan- a desire for yards serving as lifelines of very essential communal spaces. These plans were meticulously crafted to preserve the social-cultural essence of Mumbai's chawls. They form a series of yards within the layout. A courtyard is but a public room.

JZ: Earlier when I was talking to your team, I was almost possessively told by them that the interiors of the project are always done by the firm. Can you elaborate on how you ensure that the interior of each project receives the same level of thoughtful consideration and care?

RR: The marriage of interior and exterior spaces is paramount- a symphony of form, function and aesthetics dancing in harmonious unity. Yet, at times, the melody may falter as external voices could disrupt the design when specialised interior designers are not in sync with the original vision. While their expertise can enrich, it often diverges from the overarching vision and can lead to a discordant blend of success and disappointment. The outcome can sway unpredictably in the public sector, where quotations dictate direction. In projects where we wielded the brush of creativity internally, like my own house the Rewal residence or Sham Lal House, Parliament Library, Lisbon Ismaili Centre, and World Bank Resident Mission Building, our hands always shaped a completely cohesive narrative. Landscape design is also important, its embrace fluctuates-sometimes cradled within our expertise, guided by external wisdom. Landscaped yards are the one pure element that blends the inside and outside.

Left: Sketch of the Lisbon Ismaili Center Facade

Below: The poignant mural, a cherished creation of Raoul, the departed son of Raj Rewal resonates with the whispers of the gentle murmur of water within these sacred walls.



JZ: Earlier, you mentioned the concept of Rasa, infusing spaces with a certain essence or emotions. Can you delve a little deeper into how this profound idea gets integrated into your designs and the significance it holds in shaping human experiences within those spaces?

RR: The infusion of Rasa in design, as Dr. Kumaraswamy expounded in Indian aesthetics, imbues the design process with a transcendent depth. Much like the myriad emotions penned in literature and painted on canvas, buildings resonate with a symphony of dynamics—echoes of exuberance, whispers of gentleness, and screams of joyous whimsy. Consider the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Rohtak, where we created a labyrinth of courtyards that births a sanctuary for creativity and collaboration, where disciplines intersect, and minds intertwine in a dance of exploration. Here, architecture becomes the pulsing heart of a 'city of arts,' drawing inspiration from the storied legacies of Nalanda and Fatehpur Sikri—a homage to cultural exchange and intellectual vitality. Rasa is a dance of harmony, where design transcends the confines of the physical realm, reaching deep into the emotional and cultural fabric of humanity—creating sanctuaries where souls can soar and connections can blossom amidst the whispers of the sublime.

JZ: Given your passion for historical and geographical contexts, have you ever intentionally explored the intricate design principles of such traditional setups in your architectural research? Has the socio-psychological relevance of courtyards in shaping relationships and cultural values, etc been a topic of study and practice for you?

RR: Indeed, they are very fascinating topics of study. We're actually in the process of compiling a book on a similar theme. In my journey, inspired by Pupul Jayakar, I curated India's architectural essence for the Paris Festival of India. Fatehpur Sikri, with its whispered echoes of history, became my canvas—a city not merely of buildings but of a holistic urban vision. Stepwells of Gujarat, steeped in mystery, beckoned me with their silent depths, while Mandu unfolded its secrets—a complex swaddled in the tales of yore. Though our designs may not mirror these ancient wonders, their essence dances within our creations, shaping the very soul of our architectural philosophy. We are in the process of publishing a new book, 'Architecture in India,' born from the pages of our past endeavours. Jaisalmer's golden spires and Dattia Orcha Palace's whispered melodies find sanctuary within its pages—a testament to our dedication to preserving India's architectural splendour. Within these traditional setups, courtyards often play a crucial role in shaping life and relationships, especially for women. They were often the designated area where



women could gather, engage in activities, and find solace. These courtyards not only serve functional purposes but also act as cultural symbols that influence social interactions and relationships within the community. From the sun-soaked lanes of Italy to the coastal havens of Portugal and Spain, courtyards whisper tales of sanctuary. Verandas, front yards, and backyards alike serve as gateways to worlds beyond- a delicate balance of shelter and openness, tradition and innovation.

JZ: With your deep reservoir of wisdom in design and architecture spanning epochs, how do you perceive the interplay of past design paradigms with contemporary ideals, and what do you envision for the days yet to unfold?

RR: Navigating the shifting tides of urban evolution, we are now at crossroads where high-rise living emerges as the harbinger of change. Some trade the comforts of small houses for the allure of towers. Towers, with their promise of clubs and amenities, beckon them with modernity and convenience. Yet, for some, like myself, the embrace of tower life still feels a little foreign, a departure from the sanctity of open spaces and the warmth of connection. In cities like Bangalore, Bombay, and Gurgaon, where private outdoor spaces have shrunk, the communal/public spaces should remain steadfast. And so, as the urban landscape continues its metamorphosis, the importance of courtyards as communal threads, woven into the fabric of city life, remains an unyielding testament to the essence of human connection in an ever-evolving world.



Within the walls of the Rewal Residence, a deeply personal narrative is painted in both interiors and architecture that echoes throughout every corner.

Verandas, front yards, and backyards alike serve as gateways to worlds beyond-a delicate balance of shelter and openness, tradition and innovation.



Top: The courtyards at the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Rohtak, inspired by the timeless beauty of Nalanda and Fatehpur Sikri, offer a serene haven for artistic exploration and expression.

Right: The CIDCO Low-cost Housing at Belapur is a testament to innovation and resilience.

Far right: CIDCO Low-cost Housing was envisioned as a vibrant community, each home graced with access to intimate courtyards—a colourful sanctuary of affordability and camaraderie, depicted in this illustration.



JZ: Architects and Designers despite being part of a critical primary service sector are in reality a luxury only available to a small percentage of our people even today. As designers, how can we address the needs of almost 80% who need us? What strategies can you propose for leveraging our expertise to benefit the majority?

RR: Reflecting on my journey, three decades ago, I recall Charles Correa's call-to pioneer low-cost housing in the heart of Navi Mumbai. Bombay's unfamiliar climate and architectural landscape initially daunted me. But alongside visionaries like Laurie Baker, we embarked on a transformative odyssey. Our canvas: the Belapur Housing for Income Tax Officers is a testament to innovation and resilience. The fruition of our labour was

a vibrant community, each abode adorned with access to intimate courtyards—a sanctuary of affordability and camaraderie. Yet, our path was strewn with obstacles. Despite global acclaim, urban dynamics veered our project astray, as units were repurposed, drifting from our original vision. Nevertheless, the courtyard spaces endured as communal sanctuaries, radiating solace and enchantment. Serving the marginalised 80% isn't merely a mandate; it's our sacred duty as designers to society.



JZ: Reflecting on our conversation about yards and their impact on interior spaces in our lives, what closing thoughts or insights do you have about the future of our profession and the role of design in shaping our built environment?

RR: I'm struck by the profound significance of courtyards and yards in the narrative of architecture and design. I did think of it intuitively earlier, in this conversation, I am spelling it out. These spaces, emblematic of both tradition and innovation, serve as poignant reminders of our interconnectedness with the built environment and the natural world.

Reflecting on the past, present, and future of architectural and design practice, yards emerge as timeless motifs that bridge the gap between heritage

and modernity. They represent sanctuaries of serenity amidst bustling urban landscapes, fostering a sense of community, connection, and respite amid daily life.

In contemplating the trajectory of design, I'm filled with a sense of responsibility to honour and elevate these sacred spaces, and would like the next generation to be aware of this responsibility. In closing, let us remember that the legacy of design lies not only in the structures we build but more importantly in the experiences we create. May courtyards and yards continue to serve as timeless symbols of human ingenuity, resilience, and imagination, inspiring generations to come to dream, explore, and connect with the world around them.

Yard

Exploring the Yardstick of Context, Culture and Climate

SANJAY MOHE

Ar Sanjay Mohe, founder and partner at 19 year old Bengaluru based 'MindSpace', has a distinguished and illustrious career. A prodigy of Sir JJ College of Architecture, Mumbai, Mohe had a working association of 21 years with Bengaluru's Chandravarkar and Thacker Associates, stints with Ar Charles Correa in Mumbai and in Saudi Arabia, prior.

His work spans a spectrum of projects – Research Laboratories, Knowledge Parks, Campus Designs, Beach Resorts, Libraries, Corporate Offices, Residences - and has been well recognised for his contribution to the field which resonates with a more sustainable approach towards Architecture, revolving around the five elements of nature, climate and context. His awards include - The Golden Architect Award by A+D & Spectrum Foundation Architecture Award (2009), India; J K Cements Architect of the Year Award – 1991 /1999 /2001 /2004 /2007 /2008/2013; The Award of the Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects – 2002; ar+d International Annual Award of Architectural Review (1999), London, Gold Medal from ARCASIA (the Asian Forum for Institutes of Architecture-1998).

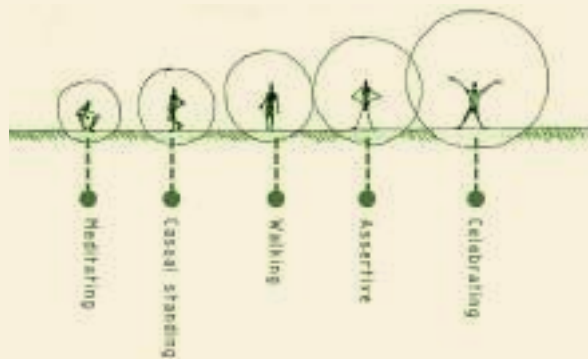
Sketches and Photo Courtesy: MindSpace Architects





Architect BV Doshi once said, 'Sitting in the verandah of a house you communicate with the society, within the house you communicate with the family and in the courtyard you communicate with the sky and the cosmos.' As Doshi poetically articulates the profound interconnectedness of architectural spaces, we venture into the contemplation of the 'yard'-a defined space open to the limitless sky. It transforms into a private sanctum or a public arena-a dockyard, a timber yard, or even a graveyard-each carrying physical and emotional weight, inviting contemplation on the intricate art of delineating boundaries that encapsulate tangible and intangible fragments of space and imagination.

The way to understand a space is by looking at ourselves. Every emotion and situation makes us feel a certain way and we create invisible bubbles that reciprocate the same. When this bubble is aligned with a built space, it creates a comfort zone.



The boundary could be very notional like sitting around a fire on a cold evening or under the shadow of a tree in a *somberi katte* (gathering place under a tree) or a place of learning at the Shantinikethan.

At the Warangal Fort, four majestic gateways define a large gathering space, and stone quarries offer canvases for captivating settings of random platforms and steps. Our fascination lies in crafting enclosures with minimal interventions, echoed in Tadao Ando's immersive Church on Water-where you sit in a 'room' observing a cross in changing weather, a testament to nature's seasons. Or Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial where with a simple cut in the soil and polished black granite insertion, a profound emotional connection is achieved.

Creating Dr Reddy's Memorial mirrored our approach of minimal intervention-defining a space by celebrating existing elements on site and introducing a black reflective water body. Like crafting a story, we aimed to emotionally engage people in a journey through unfolding spaces, orchestrating an experience akin to the gradual build-up of a raga in Indian classical music, reaching a crescendo.

In this journey of realisation, every element played a pivotal role - the unfolding spaces, the play of light, the sound of water, the smell of grass, and the gentle breeze. The ritual of removing one's shoes and touching Mother Earth became a fascinating sensory experience. The memorial transcends a physical structure, evolving into a journey of emotional resonance and introspection.

We aimed to emotionally engage people in a journey through evolving spaces, orchestrating an experience akin to the gradual build-up of a raga

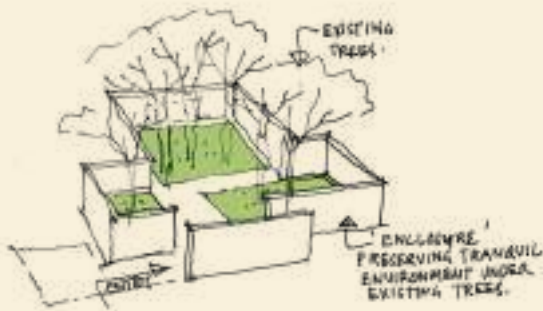
*Tadao Ando's Church on Water,
in summer and winter*





Below: A sketch depicting planes wrapping around a tree at the IISc library and a cross section showing activities at different levels at IISc library.

Top: Anji Reddy Memorial



The concept of 'ownership' of open space evolved from simple fences to opaque compounds and ultimately, invincible fort walls. The detailing of these walls defining yards conveyed messages about fragility or strength, and reflected the owner's status - poor/rich, ordinary/special. The porosity of enclosure openings and yard gateways expresses dignity.

In designing the IISc library, there was a cluster of tall trees where the shade of their canopies could have become the library by itself. We had to just create an enclosure to preserve the tranquil environment where one can take a book, sit under the trees and feel connected with nature. Scaling a space such that it 'feels human' has always been a priority, akin to the ethos found in Correa's earlier works like the Gandhi Ashram, Bharat Bhavan, and several houses. Creating intimate spaces by experiencing larger volumes from low soffits is something we aimed to incorporate in our projects.

Scaling a space to evoke a humane feeling is a priority.

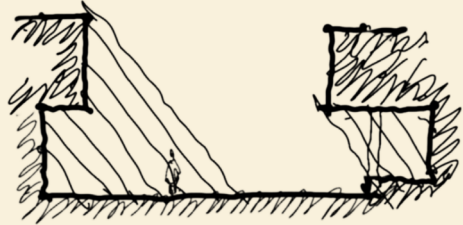
Our climate allowed us to explore these yards in various forms by blurring the boundaries between the built and unbuilt, hence creating those in-between threshold spaces that can be 'inside' or 'outside' at the same time. Correa, Doshi, and Bawa taught us how to create those ambiances. The climate dictates the way this yard will be shaped/sized to allow the right amount of light, air, rain, and noise to filter in, hence the courtyards in Kerala work differently than that of Rajasthan- one is designed to keep rain away and bring in breeze in a hot and humid climate and in the other, houses built densely to become insulation for the adjoining houses, keep direct sun and

radiation away, creating a means of celebrating shade and bringing in hot outer breeze through shaded screens that cool it.

Every climatic zone learned to embellish the yard, through the play of volumes, verandahs, levels, materials and also addressing the elements. The screens, jaalis and colonnades create layers of defence against harsh sun. Controlling light, visual privacy and bringing in the breeze, whether it is a small family house or a large palace, the principles remain the same, creating ingenious solutions of various scales.



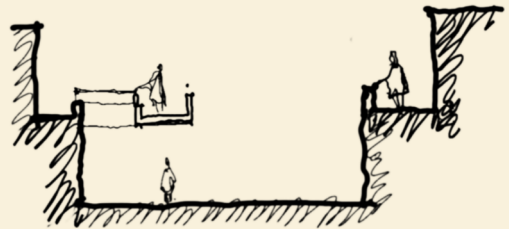
a yard



a yard with shading elements



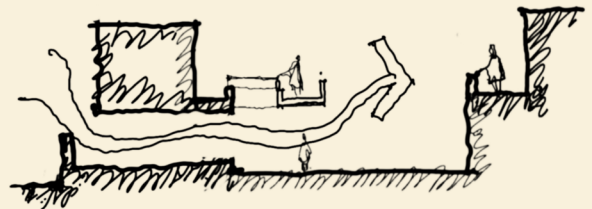
a yard with verandhas



a yard within a space

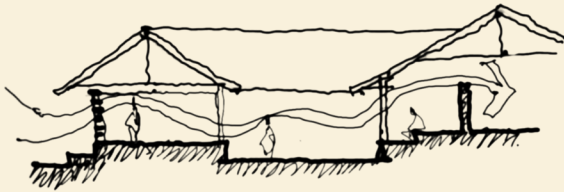


a yard with terraces

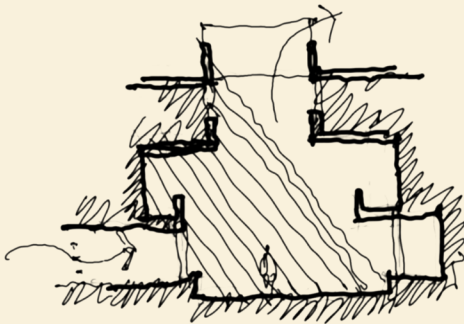


a yard bringing in a breeze

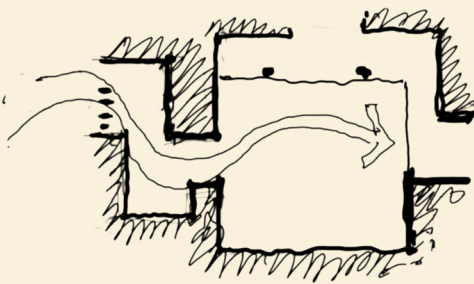
Climate dictates the way yards will be shaped & sized to allow the right amount of light, air, rain & noise to filter in, hence the courtyards in Kerala work differently than that of Rajasthan. One is designed to keep rain away and bring in breeze and in the other, houses built densely to become insulation for adjoining houses, keep direct sun & radiation away, creating a means of celebrating shade and bringing in hot outer breeze through shaded screens that cool it.



a kerala house



a rajasthan house section



a rajasthan house plan





By blurring the boundaries between the built and unbuilt, Correa, Doshi, and Bawa taught us how to create in-between, threshold spaces that can be inside and outside at the same time.

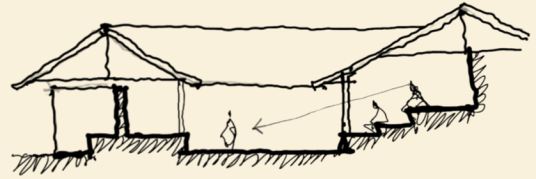
Left: Champali Maud, Charles Correa Top: IIMB, BV Doshi

Bringing in an element of water became a functional need to humidify the yard in a hot dry climate, a form of a small fountain in Rajasthan, or to bring pond water over the cascading steps under a low roof to create bathing ghats in hot and humid Kerala. Kerala houses have light reflecting off the water surface creating a magical space with a dynamic light quality.

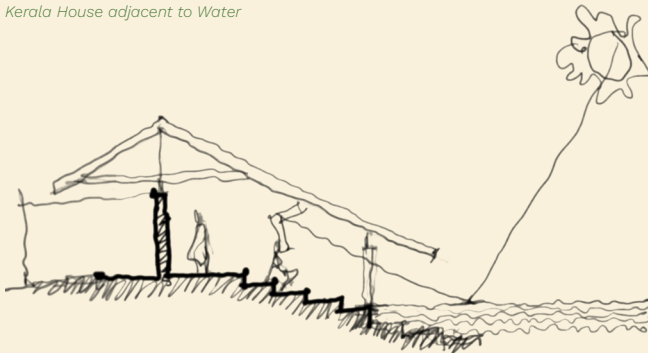
Levels within the courtyard denoted social status as well. Head of the family or head of the village sitting at higher level. This brought in an extra element of social and economic symbolism into the yard and was demonstrated at a greater scale in the royal palaces. Similar symbolism gets reflected subtly, the way master bedrooms are placed in a house or the way a teacher's room is placed in a school.



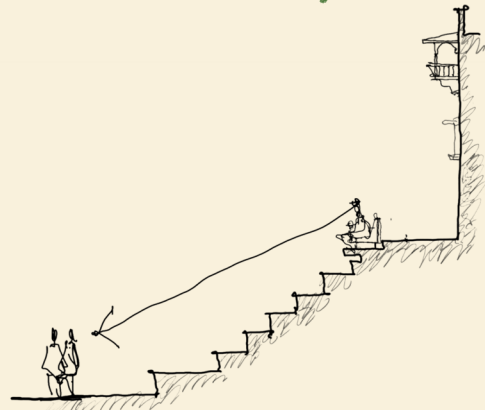
Kerala House adjacent to Water



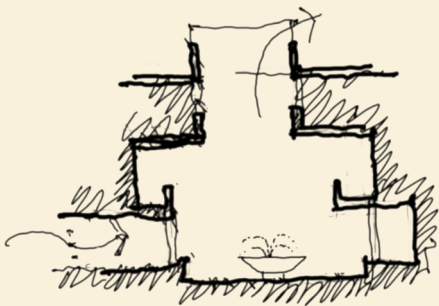
Malnad house yard



a kerala house adjacent to water



Jaisalmer Public Square

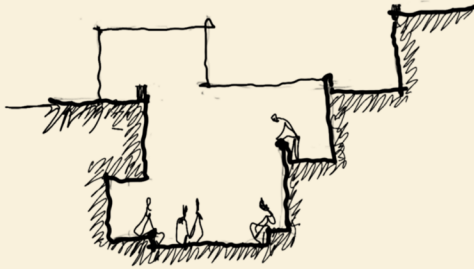


a yard with a fountain, section

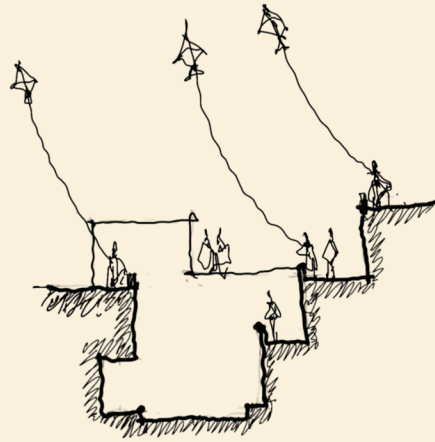


Jaisalmer Public Square

The way activities get absorbed in these front yards, courtyards and backyards vary at different times of the day and year - dictated and occupied as per the social needs, privacy, gender and age group. For example, the activities at the lower level get shifted to the roof during festivities like makar Sankranti for kite flying and the terraces become an elevated level of action.



street level activity



terrace level activity



Streets of Ahmedabad, Photo by Eli



Kite flying festival, Photo by Ashit Desai

The way activities get absorbed in these front yards, courtyards and backyards vary at different times of the day and year - dictated and occupied as per the social needs, privacy, gender and age group.

The concept of a fence, initially born out of the primordial need for a man when he came out of a cave, led to the creation of yards-private ones attached to homes and public ones formed by clustering homes around a central point like a public well. The larger enclosure, often symbolised by celebrated gateways, evolved from mere fencing to formidable structures like fort walls or temple walls, as seen in the Tanjore and Srirangam temples.

The need for communication within families and across communities resulted in a hierarchy of open yards, from private to semi-private, semi-public, and public. This concept is exemplified in Charles Correa's Belapur housing project. In a housing scheme for IISc in Bangalore, a similar idea was explored on a smaller scale, providing open-to-sky private areas for each apartment, and creating a series of open spaces with different dimensions and symbolic gateways. In this central yard, a couple of 'tilted' elements were added which gave different dynamism to the experience of the spine through minimal intervention.

Sketch of IISc housing



IISc housing

Salk Institute, Louis Kahn



Every religion has a deep-rooted way of establishing space to aid the process of praying, from the large central gathering space in a mosque with its surrounding walls and qibla defining orientation, to the series of courtyards and halls diminishing in size leading to the sanctum in a temple, culminating in a one-on-one moment with the central deity.

Charles Correa describes this as the ritualistic path. To move along a path towards a sacred centre is a primordial experience, one so embedded in the deep structure of the human mind that it has appeared in almost every society since the beginning of time.

The commonality is that both have indoor and outdoor spaces mainly because climatic factors allow for it, but the way a person experiences them is almost entirely different. The Japanese zen garden embodies the idea of the sacred through the behaviour of a person in the space. The placement of the stones, plants, the raking of the gravel and the position of sitting, all together.

Certain places carry powerful markers that, while not intended to enclose a space, give it definitive meaning



Titan Integrity Campus



Karunashraya

and purpose, interpreted by each individual differently. In Charles Correa's Champalimaud, two stone monoliths on the pathway ramp serve as such markers. As you move up the ramp, it leads to a vast waterbody seamlessly connecting to the horizon. Within this waterbody there is an object-an island, a treasure chest, a mythical adventure-metaphorically symbolises one's journey into the unknown. Similarly, a single strip of water in the Salk Institute courtyard redefines the orientation of the space itself. With one simple gesture Louis Kahn redirects your gaze to the horizon. The space tells you to look beyond the courtyard and into the nothingness.

Certain places carry powerful markers that, while not intended to enclose a space, give it definitive meaning and purpose.

Are these the fundamental principles that you believe in or is it your upbringing?

We would like to discuss two of our projects: Karunashraya- which was built around 1998 and Titan Integrity Campus built after almost 20 years. After Titan was completed, strangely one day, I was thinking about Karunashraya and found an uncanny similarity between the approaches, without any kind of intention. The expression and form of both projects are different yet there are similarities. Both are built around a water body which is the central energy zone, both have a strong visual axis, both have verandas around the water body, and both have plans that try to squeeze the space in the middle trying to scale it down. You wonder, why does this happen? Are these the fundamental principles that you believe in or is it about your upbringing?

Memories of the temple with its tank and ghat steps, surrounded by a colonnade with a focal point as the gopuram? Maybe you absorb these elements and unknowingly they start appearing in your work. You become a medium to express these ideas.

Yards gracefully navigate the delicate transition between the private sanctuary of interior spaces and the open embrace of the public exterior within the built environment; whereas in set design, these yards metamorphose onto the stage or screen, artfully reconstructed to conjure the time, context and the emotional tone of the scenes.

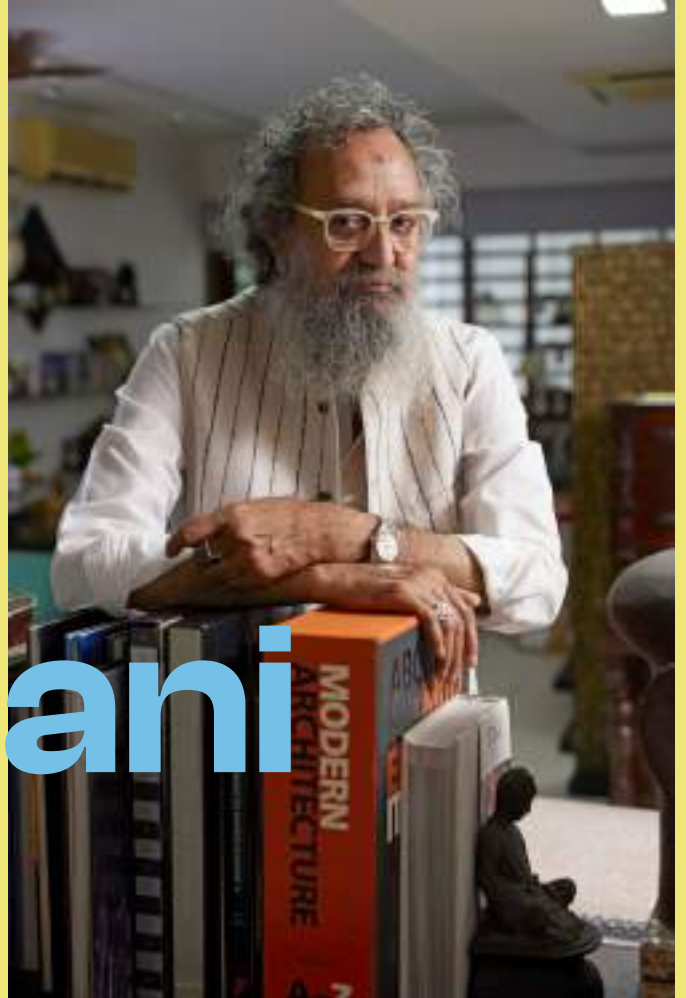
Thota Tharrani stands as India's most celebrated art directors, renowned for his versatile prowess both on movie sets and canvas. Over five decades, he has showcased his artistic brilliance through 75 one-man exhibitions across India and globally, delving into diverse mediums from pencil drawings to collages, murals, acrylics, ceramics, and watercolours.

Tharrani's masterpieces grace esteemed collections at the Victorian Albert Museum in London, Archives Municipales de Bordeaux in France, and the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi. A cinematic virtuoso, his commitment to realism sets him apart, crafting visuals that captivate audiences.

Thota Tharrani

Whether intricately designing the façade of the bustling streets of 'Bombay' or reconstructing an entire kingdom for 'Ponniyin Selvan', Tharrani excels in the art of placemaking. His mastery lies in the nuanced detailing that elevate scenes, capturing the essence of characters' emotional states. Just as he skilfully constructs the cinematic backdrop of Bombay, a familial haven that undergoes tragic devastation in the movie's climax.

In a parallel vein, the expansive yards featured in Mudhalvan undergo a dramatic transformation. Initially showcased as the picturesque setting for the 'Azhagana Ratchashiyae' song, adorned with Thanjavur dolls, scarecrows, and sunflowers, these yards later transform into a perilous site where the villain unexpectedly attempts to take Pugazh's life.



Sketches & Screens



Above: Film- Bombay, 1995

Below: Film- Mudhalvan, 1999



A SHYBYI MALL
+ PLACED MALL

A PLACED

for
SUNSHINE
THEY PLACED

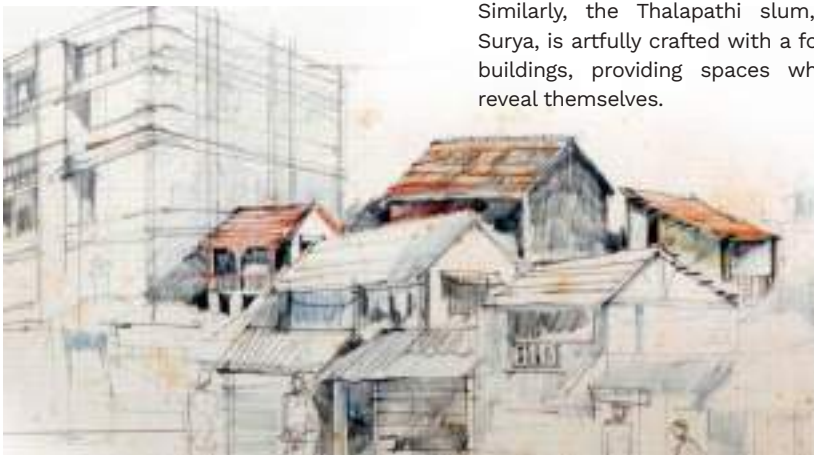


Above: Film- *Nayakan*, 1987

Below: Film- *Thalapathi*, 1991



The *Nayakan* film set, derived from photographs of Dharavi, depicts Velu's life journey in interspersed yards enveloped by densely populated buildings, culminating in a climactic moment where he watches his allies being arrested and killed, with a powerful visual link from the building's window to the bustling street below.



Similarly, the *Thalapathi* slum, where Devaraj meets Surya, is artfully crafted with a focus on yards in between buildings, providing spaces where distinct characters reveal themselves.

Interestingly, the song 'Sundari Kannal' from the movie Thalapathy is inspired by the epic 'Ponniyin Selvan'. When the adaptation of Ponniyin Selvan materialised into a film, Thota Tharrani diligently recreated the architectural style, materials, and aesthetic elements of Chola architecture, focusing on discrete details. From elements such as elaborate carvings, ornate pillars, and vibrant greenery of opulent royal palaces, to yards of communal spaces and bustling marketplaces in humble common dwellings, the set designs were crafted to transport the audience into the

vivid world depicted in Kalki Krishnamurthy's epic novel. The incorporation of natural features like water bodies, gardens, and trees added authenticity to the overall period setting.

The accompanying sketch depicts the facade of a palace adorned with intricate carvings, strategically placed at a higher contour. A front yard acts as a buffer space where subjects gather, eagerly awaiting the opening of the palace gates to rush inside when permitted.

Film: Ponniyin Selvan, 2022





Film: *Jeans*, 1998

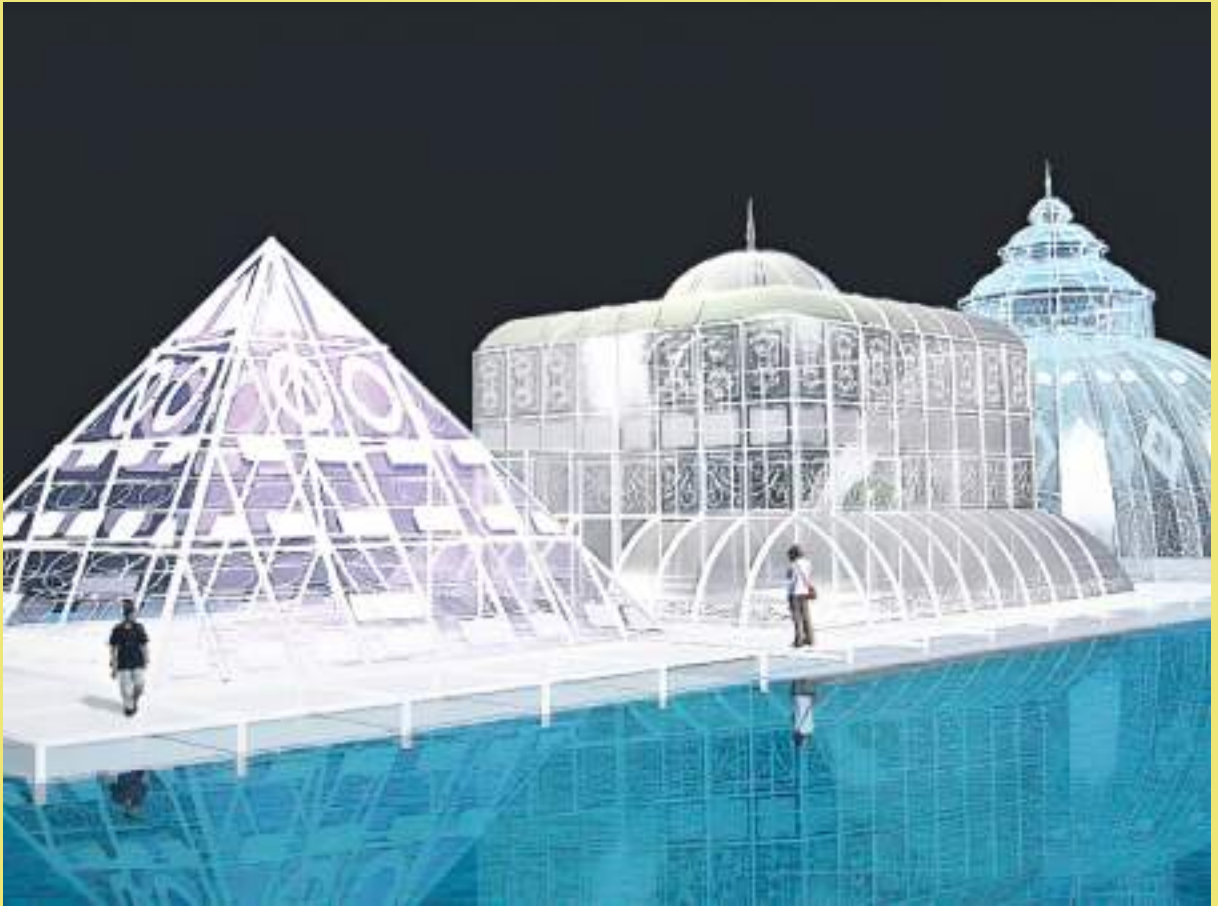


Chandramukhi's majestic front yard, once part of a palace, now turned inherited home, sets the eerie stage for haunting events to unravel. Unlike its Malayalam counterpart, the set is meticulously designed to exude grandeur, with the opening scene showcasing the palace's imposing facade from the front yard, establishing an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue.



Film: Chandramukhi, 2005





The surreal experience of presence and absence of yards is featured in the set design for the song 'Sahana' from 'Sivaji: The Boss', with glass as the supreme element and 'reflections' supporting the main character.

With the intention of designing a space that becomes a canvas featuring four seasons, Tharrani proposed a futuristic set that embodies glass as the supreme element. The set transforms into a poetic monument of reflections that transcends boundaries and remains as the protagonist throughout the musical journey. It's the exterior that keeps changing.

The spaces between the three domes, each characterised by a unique shape act as yards, offering glimpses into the external world adorned with naturescapes that signify the changing seasons. Concurrently, the reflective central space with water beneath the glass floor, accompanied by a cascading waterfall from a towering 50-foot rock, creates a sense of astonishment through the deliberate integration of intermediate spaces-yards.



HOTEL AT BODH GAYA

Immersive Architecture That Embodies
the Tenets of Buddhism

BY SJK ARCHITECTS

SJK Architects, established in 1990 by Shimul Javeri Kadri, is an architecture, interior design and masterplanning practice led by Shimul Javeri Kadri and Partners Vaishali Mangalvedhekar, Sarika Shetty, and Roshni Kshirsagar. Embracing a collaborative ethos, they seek to craft meaningful cultural narratives through sensitive engagement with the built environment.

Over 30 years, SJK Architects have forged partnerships with visionary clients and collaborators nationwide. Their portfolio spans diverse scales and typologies, including hospitality, healthcare, commercial, institutional, residential, industrial, and workspaces.

The firm's design excellence has been celebrated both at home and abroad, earning accolades such as the prestigious World Architecture Festival Prize (Singapore 2012), the Futurarc Green Leadership Award (Singapore 2012), The Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture & Design (USA 2016), the illustrious Prix Versailles Award (France 2016, 2022) and JK AYA Award (2023) among many others. Notably, one of their recent projects has been recognized in the UIA Guidebook for the 2030 Agenda, championing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-being. The practice's work has been featured in many eminent international publications, including Domus, Dezeen and the Future Arc Magazine.

Each of the firm's projects is guided by research and intuition, and offers a design response attuned to climate, culture, history, technology, and above all – people. The featured project, Hotel in Bodh Gaya, is an embodiment of these principles.



Bodh Gaya, where Lord Buddha is deemed to have received enlightenment, is one of the holiest and oldest pilgrimage sites for Buddhists. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and tourists from around the globe visit the city annually. Spread over 5-acres, not far from the Mahabodhi Temple (one of the four holy sites related to the life of Lord Buddha), 'Bodh Gaya' responds to the religious tourism in the region – designed as an ode to the historical roots of Buddhism in India.

View of the central courtyard which forms the physical and emotional heart of the hotel



The 78-key hotel consists of two zones – the public block closer to the northern access road and the guest block on the site's southern end. All vehicular movement is restricted to the site periphery.

The public block has spaces arranged around a long, central courtyard, which forms the physical and emotional heart of the hotel. This zone comprises a reception, banqueting facilities, a health centre with a spa, a gym, a swimming pool, and a restaurant. A linear waterbody oriented east-west separates this public zone from the residential block comprising guest rooms and suites.



Invoking Memory and Emotion: Engaging Meaningfully with Cultural Heritage

Each space in the hotel represents the tenets of Buddhism through two key architectural lyrics – memory and emotion.

The first one – memory – is invoked through traditional features of Buddhist architecture. Vaults, corbelled arches and stepped jambs are re-envisioned in a contemporary idiom across all spaces in the hotel – reminiscent of the past but designed for the present. The other architectural lyric of emotion conveys the Buddhist ethos of simplicity, compassion and serenity through a series of gestures. In that spirit, a sequence of layers from outside to inside in the form of outdoor, semi-outdoor and indoor spaces allow for a gentle transition as one enters the public block.

Portals are formed at the edges of these transitional spaces. Viewing spaces through these frames is like viewing the passage of life and its different phases. A banyan tree, the same tree species under which the Buddha is said to have received enlightenment, sits at the other end of the central



The Hotel in Bodh Gaya invokes memory through traditional features of Buddhist architecture such as vaults, corbelled arches and stepped jambs. Gentle, layered transition spaces and a soothing colour palette of muted whites and warm terracotta help convey simplicity, compassion, and serenity.

courtyard, which is seen through these frames – signifying Buddhism’s ultimate goal of enlightenment.

The building embraces the human scale, which is conveyed through the proportions of the courtyards, verandahs, arches and windows. The soothing colour palette of muted whites and warm terracotta further lends to the lyric of emotion.

The landscaping of exterior spaces, including the linear, river-like water body with floating lotus plants (associated with the purity of body, speech and mind in Buddhism) gives rise to calmness and tranquillity. Edged by ghat-like steps (ceremonial stairway to a river), the water body allows visitors to rest and rejuvenate in the outdoors.

Buddhist Philosophy and Symbolism as a Tool for Wayfinding: Contemporising Traditional Narratives

Ideas from Buddhist philosophy and symbology are translated into the hotel’s interiors, artwork and signage, which also eases navigation.

The five wisdoms associated with Buddhism, represented in the Buddhist icon of Vajradhatu Mandala, are expressed in the five public spaces – reception, cafe, banquet, lounge and spa-gym-pool. These are fearlessness, the wisdom of dharma, giving and sharing, unity with oneself and oneness with the earth.

The mandala associates each wisdom with a mudra (a symbolic hand gesture). Each mudra is further associated with specific colours, seasons, elements and symbols, which are translated into interior design schemes for the spaces. For instance, the spa-gym-pool, which represents the wisdom of ‘oneness with the earth’, is associated with the colour blue – which has been used in all the internal walls of the space. The wisdom’s connection to the winter season is represented through the motif of a bare tree on one wall, and its link to the symbol of the vajra (a ritual object extensively employed in

Tibetan Buddhist ceremonies), is represented by a wall pattern derived from an abstraction of the symbol. Finally, the wisdom's association with water is conveyed through the swimming pool, and an abstract motif denoting the element of water, which is used in the signage for the space.



The interiors of the five public spaces correspond to the colours, seasons, elements and symbols associated with the five wisdoms in the Buddhist icon of Vajradhatu Mandala. The residential blocks, located along the edge of the water body, are named after the 5 lotuses associated with the Dhyani Buddhas, symbolising tranquillity and peacefulness.

To Brick or Not to Brick: Critically Evaluating Traditions for the Current Context

The romance of working with brick, widely used in Bodh Gaya's local and traditional architecture, was immense. However, the sandy soil on the site with a poor bearing capacity made brick foundations prohibitive. Furthermore, brick vaults are not accepted in the Indian Standard Codes for earthquake resistance. Studies conducted also suggested that Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks would insulate the interiors 1.5 times better than brick, thus saving costs and energy in the long run. Ultimately a combination of materials was chosen – RCC, local brick and AAC blocks for the structure, and terracotta-tinted concrete for the vaults – each material doing what is best for the project.

Collaborating with the Local Community: Employing Architecture as a Tool for Empowerment

The hotel uses locally-made earthy roof tiles, known as 'country tiles', to insulate the RCC vault roof - a conscious choice born out of opportunity and need to support the local economy.

These half-round clay tiles, crafted by part-time farm labour, are unique to the region, made intuitively on a potter's wheel. Collaborating with 26 local families from 12 villages near Bodh Gaya, 80,000 of these clay tiles were handcrafted from earth sourced locally, providing a sustainable and cost-effective insulation for the vaulted ceilings.

A combination of local bricks, AAC blocks, and RCC vaults topped with handcrafted clay tiles is employed to develop a well-insulated envelope that responds to the region's climatic conditions



From left: Vaishali Mangalvedhekar,
Shimul Javeri Kadri, Roshni
Kshirsagar and Sarika Shetty



Passive Design Strategies to Regulate the Local Microclimate: Working with Nature for a Sustainable Future

Several passive design strategies are integrated into the design to reduce energy consumption and create a thermally comfortable environment, particularly during Bodh Gaya's hot and dry summers.

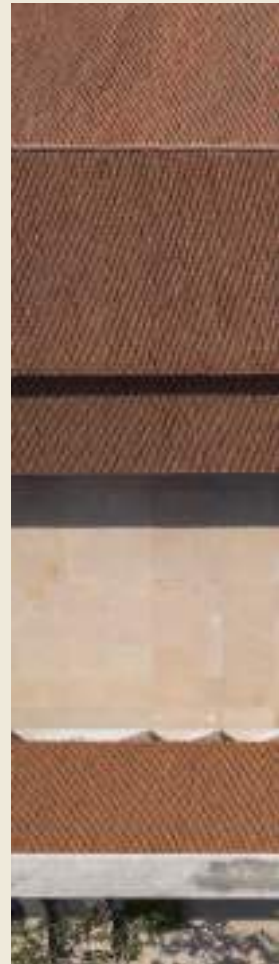
The residential blocks are oriented in the north-south direction to minimise heat gain from the western facade during the summer months. Aerated concrete blocks, double-glazed windows, and a double roof system topped with clay tiles create a well-insulated envelope. The double roof constitutes a concrete vault and a pitched roof covered with steel and clay tiles, with an air gap between them. This keeps indoor temperatures comfortable in all seasons, thus reducing energy consumption.

Courtyards are introduced to facilitate natural ventilation. All circulation spaces including the entrance lobby, comprising 30% of the total space, completely depend on the natural air flow, significantly reducing air-conditioning loads. Additionally, water bodies on site further aid evaporative cooling.

Channelling, Conserving and Restoring Water

The hotel's extensive water management system illustrates the Buddhist idea of mindfulness and conscious consumption.

The site, near the Falgu river on a low-lying paddy field, is raised to the level of a nearby culvert to avoid flooding during the monsoon season. To make water available even during harsh summers rainwater is harvested



through underground pits, tanks, and bioswales. A pond is created in the lowest portion of the site to serve as an emergency water holding area in case of a flash flood.

Deeply contextual, the design of the Hotel in Bodh Gaya goes beyond the client's brief, which demanded a cookie-cutter design across three different sites of religious tourism. It delves deep into avenues of meaningful engagement with the local culture, environment, and communities, exemplifying the practice's ethos. Beyond evoking a deeply emotional response, the project also presents a model of holistically sustainable development - one that has a positive cultural, environmental, and socio-economic impact - serving as a yardstick for future development.

PROJECT TITLE: Hotel in Bodh Gaya

LOCATION: Bodh Gaya, Bihar

PRACTICE: SJK Architects

DESIGN TEAM: Shimul Javeri Kadri, Vaishali Mangalvedhekar, Roshni Kshirsagar, Ipsita Mallick, Aparna Kale

COLLABORATORS:

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANTS:

WM/s. Engineering Creations Consultancy (I) Pvt. Ltd.

MEP CONSULTANTS:

M/s. AEON Integrated Building Design Consultants LLP

LIGHTING CONSULTANTS:

M/s. KSA Architectural Lighting Designers

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS & SIGNAGE:

M/s. Tarasha Design works

PMC: M/s Masters

CIVIL CONTRACTOR: M/s. Shree Om

INTERIOR CONTRACTOR: M/s. Interex

PLOT AREA: 4.5 Acres

BUILT-UP AREA: 76,000 sq.ft.

PHOTOS: Niveditaa Gupta



THE LEGACY OF COURTYARDS

LILIA DE JESUS

Shaping Spaces Across Time

The architectural landscape, shaped by centuries of innovation, bears witness to enduring elements that have withstood the test of time. Among these, the courtyard stands out as a design feature that has not only persisted across diverse cultures but continues to significantly influence interior spaces. This article explores the multifaceted impact of courtyards on interior design, delving into their historical roots, climate-responsive solutions, cultural influences, and the role they play in enhancing beauty, rituals, and functionality.

In the intricate dance of spatial creation, courtyards emerge as versatile stages, hosting vibrant gatherings and quiet solitudes alike. Their commitment to sustainability whispers softly, easing the burden of artificial light and mechanical air. Guided by the gentle cadence of biophilic design, courtyards cradle inhabitants

Dr. Lilia De Jesus is a globally recognised academic in Interior Design with a Master's in Art Education and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Santo Thomas, Philippines. With leadership roles in prestigious institutions like the Council of Interior Design Educators (CIDE) and the Philippines Institute of Interior Designers (PIID), she champions multidisciplinary exploration in design education. Her involvement as a board member of APSDA (Asia-Pacific Space Designers Association) further underscores her commitment to advancing design education regionally across the countries in Asia Pacific. By integrating insights from art, nature, psychology, and design, she empowers students with holistic skills, solidifying her status as a pioneering figure in design academia.



in nature's embrace, nurturing their well-being. Even in the pulse of modernity, they sway with grace, seamlessly adapting to the evolving rhythm of human aspirations.



Left: Egyptian Courtyard, lithograph based on a watercolour by Eduard Gaertner

Below: A Roman Impluvium in the House of Menander, Pompeii

Historical Roots:

The origins of courtyards can be traced back to ancient civilisations like Mesopotamia, where enclosed open spaces provided refuge from the harsh desert climate. In Egypt, courtyards became integral components of temple complexes, connecting the spiritual and physical realms. Greek architecture, notably exemplified in the peristyle courtyards of ancient villas, showcased the fusion of aesthetics and functionality.

Expanding on these historical roots, we find that the concept of courtyards transcended geographical boundaries, adapting to various cultural and climatic contexts. For instance, the Roman impluvium, a sunken courtyard that collected rainwater, showcased an early form of sustainable design. These ancient examples not only forged the path for courtyard design but also cast the spotlight on its metamorphosis into a timeless cornerstone of design expression. As we wander through history's passages, let us start with the reverberating echoes of residential courtyards, imbued with the comforting allure of home and hearth.



Residential References:

Japanese residential architecture often features 'tsubo-niwa' or small courtyard gardens. These intimate outdoor spaces are meticulously designed to bring nature into the home, creating a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor living. Sliding doors open to reveal private courtyards, allowing residents to experience the changing seasons and find moments of tranquillity within the confines of their homes.

The traditional Greek courtyard, known as the 'avli,' is a central element in their vernacular architecture. In Cycladic homes, for instance, the courtyard serves as a shaded gathering space shielded from the intense

Mediterranean sun. The use of white-washed walls, stone flooring, and vibrant bougainvillea exemplifies the aesthetic integration of courtyards into the Greek residential experience.

In the vernacular grace of traditional Indian homes, central courtyards sing with sunlight and whispers of the wind. The 'aangan' or inner courtyard acts as a hub for family activities. Courtyards in Indian homes may feature intricate jali screens, water features, and religious symbols, creating a harmonious blend of functionality and cultural symbolism.

*Below, clockwise:
A Japanese 'Tsubo-Niwa, Photo by Savannah Rivka
A Greek courtyard
A Chinese moon gate, Photo by David Stanley
An 'Aangan' in India*





The design and detailing of Bahay Kubo by Author

These traditional dwellings commonly boast two distinctive areas: the inviting front yard, known as the 'balkonahe,' which harnesses passive cooling techniques, and the verdant backyard adorned with vegetation, providing a natural sanctuary conducive to fostering a microclimate of comfort and relaxation.

In China, the '*siheyuan*' represents a harmonious union of design and nature, with courtyards serving as private sanctuaries for family life. Rich in symbolism and significance for living spaces, the traditional Chinese moon gate epitomises perfection and serves as a conduit between heaven and earth. This architectural feature played a pivotal role in delineating the transition from the entrance gate to the expansive quadrangle courtyard, a sanctuary designed to safeguard the privacy of the dwellers and ward off malevolent spirits.

The '*bahay kubo*' is a classic example of traditional architecture in the Philippines, cleverly integrating passive cooling technologies to balance the tropical environment. These traditional dwellings commonly boast two distinctive areas: the inviting front yard, known as the '*balkonahe*,' which harnesses passive cooling techniques, and the verdant backyard adorned with vegetation, providing a natural sanctuary conducive to fostering a microclimate of comfort and relaxation. Embracing the synergy between design and environment, the '*bahay kubo*' exemplifies how passive cooling systems can seamlessly integrate with traditional design to provide comfort and well-being in the Philippine heat.

Climate-responsive Design:

Courtyards have proven to be adaptable solutions to climatic challenges, offering designers the opportunity to create microclimates within interior spaces. In hot and arid regions, courtyards provide shaded areas and promote natural ventilation, mitigating the impact of scorching temperatures. Conversely, in colder climates, enclosed courtyards harness the greenhouse effect, capturing and retaining heat to ensure a comfortable interior environment.

A notable example is the traditional courtyard houses of the Middle East, where central open spaces allow

for cross-ventilation and serve as cool refuges during scorching summers. The use of water features, like fountains or reflecting pools, not only enhances aesthetics but also contributes to the cooling effect, creating an oasis within the built environment.

Courtyards offer opportunities to create microclimates within interior spaces.



A Middle Eastern courtyard house with fountain

Cultural Influences:

Courtyards play a pivotal role in accommodating cultural rituals and daily activities, becoming an integral part of residents' lives. In traditional Moroccan '*riads*,' courtyards host communal gatherings, celebrations, and daily routines. This integration of function and ritual elevates courtyards beyond mere architectural features to spaces that facilitate meaningful human interactions. Courtyards act as cultural connectors, seamlessly blending with diverse traditions and lifestyles. In traditional Islamic architecture, the '*sahn*' serves as the central courtyard in mosques and homes, fostering community gatherings and spiritual contemplation.

Expanding on these cultural influences, spatial designers today draw inspiration from these traditions to create modern spaces that reflect a globalised world while still honouring cultural roots.



The 'Sahn' courtyard of a mosque, Photo by Tevfik Teker



*The Singapore School of the Arts by WOHA,
Photo by Patrick Bingham Hall*

Green courtyards, featuring sustainable landscaping and vegetation, not only enhance aesthetics but also contribute to improved air quality and well-being.

Spatial Transitions and Beauty:

Courtyards serve as transitional spaces, guiding occupants through a sequence of experiences that engage the senses. The interplay of light and shadow within courtyards creates dynamic and visually stunning environments. Water features, such as cascading fountains or serene ponds, add an auditory dimension to the space, enhancing the overall sensory experience.

For elucidation, the Alhambra in Spain provides a pertinent case study, particularly exemplified by the Court of the Lions, showcasing the superlative aesthetic and spatial intricacies inherent in courtyard design. Within this architectural masterpiece, intricate geometric motifs, verdant foliage, and the melodic resonance of water-redolent with the alluring fragrances of jasmine and orange-converge to engender a captivating ambience that transcends temporal and cultural confines.

Modern Interpretations:

Contemporary designers continue to find inspiration in the principles of courtyard design, adapting them to meet the challenges of the modern world. Green courtyards, featuring sustainable landscaping and vegetation, not only enhance aesthetics but also contribute to improved air quality and well-being. Atriums, light wells, vertical gardens and terraces in urban skyscrapers draw on the concept of courtyards, creating sustainable, open, and inviting spaces within densely populated structures.

To visually illustrate these modern interpretations, one can explore projects like the Singapore School of the Arts, where a series of interconnected courtyards create a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor spaces. The use of sustainable materials, vertical gardens, and innovative shading systems showcases how courtyards remain relevant in addressing contemporary design challenges.

The Future of Courtyard Design:

As designers navigate the complexities of the future, courtyards continue to serve as a source of inspiration for innovative and sustainable design solutions. The integration of technology, such as smart shading systems and climate control, ensures that courtyards remain adaptable to changing environmental conditions. Virtual reality simulations and 3D modeling allow designers to envision and refine courtyard designs, pushing the boundaries of creativity and functionality.

Importance in Design Education:

In design education, the inclusion of courtyard design as a fundamental component is paramount. Courtyards, with their rich historical significance and adaptive functionality, offer students valuable lessons in sustainable and culturally responsive design. By understanding the principles of courtyard design, future designers can develop versatile solutions for contemporary challenges, from climate change to urban density. However, achieving a comprehensive understanding of courtyard design and its environmental interior design requires more than just grasping the fundamental principles. It necessitates a deep appreciation for research, through which innovative ideas can be unearthed. Moreover, it entails drawing insights from the wisdom of esteemed masters who have conceptualised awe-inspiring vast or intimate quadrangles and courtyards, facilitating human engagement and interaction that leaves a lasting impression. Essentially, these masters theorise the art of crafting experiences. Such fountains of knowledge serve as catalysts for creativity and intrinsic motivation within design education, strategically aimed at charting new territories for the enhancement of physical environments and the enrichment of quality of life. This includes the deliberate exploration of courtyards as spaces imbued with profound meanings.

Conclusion:

From ancient civilisations to modern-day constructions, courtyards embody the intersection of culture, nature, and design, enriching the built environment and enhancing the human experience. These architectural marvels not only address climatic challenges by providing natural light, ventilation, and passive cooling but also foster cultural connections and enhance beauty, rituals, and functionality. Whether it's the Roman atriums of antiquity or the contemporary atriums nestled within skyscrapers, courtyards continue to inspire designers and inhabitants alike, reminding us of the enduring power of design to create spaces that are not only visually captivating but also deeply rooted in cultural and climatic contexts. As we navigate the challenges of urbanisation and sustainability, the enduring influence of courtyards serves as a timeless reminder of the importance of creating spaces that prioritise connectivity, well-being, and harmony with the natural world.

YARDS OF OUR TIMES

DINESH SUTHAR

Dinesh Suthar, along with his partners Jitendra Sabalpara and Bharat Patel, co-founded Design Works Group in Surat. Their unique structure adopts an assembly line format, effectively harnessing individual strengths, expertise, and areas of interest for project management. Dinesh, in his role, brings a wealth of international work and travel experience to the practice, infusing it with his values of minimalist design and functional excellence. Renowned for his gold medal-winning design thesis and scholarly achievements, he continually seeks simple yet captivating solutions for project challenges. His admiration for modern contemporary architecture, characterised by clean lines and simple geometry, permeates .DWG's philosophy. With numerous awards and accolades earned in a relatively short time, the firm's projects and ethos are held in high regard within the burgeoning design community, serving as an inspiration to the younger generation.



In the vast expanse of the ever-expanding cosmos, we, as humans, are but a minuscule fragment. Yet, our innate nature propels us towards expansion in every conceivable dimension – physical, mental, emotional, enlightenment and spiritual. This yearning for more, for growth, becomes palpable when we immerse ourselves in nature, a force that fosters an awareness of our existence. Despite our transition from the open embrace of nature to enclosed shelters, our deep-rooted connection to it persists, and it is through 'yards' that humans find a means of expanding this connection.

In a physical sense, they extend the boundaries of our homes, offering private open spaces that seamlessly blend with the outdoor world while maintaining the sanctity of our private realms, be it front yards, courtyards or backyards.

The genesis of courtyards is an enigmatic journey, their roots extending from the ancient Mohen-jo-Daro to the elevated perch of Machu Picchu. These timeless

sanctuaries have seamlessly woven themselves into the fabric of habitable spaces worldwide, transcending cultural, climatic, and contextual boundaries. The artistry in courtyard design mirrors the intricate dance between societal nuances, cultural tapestries, and climatic demands. In southern India, courtyards unfurl as intricate canvases, characterised by their slender, simple layout and modest elevation. This purposeful design serves as a protective barrier against the harsh sun and unpredictable rain-laden winds. It represents a nuanced adaptation to the climatic conditions that shape life in this region.

Courtyards serve as more than mere conduits for light & ventilation; they forge connections between people, nature, & the transition between interior & exterior spaces.



Community-centric courtyards in Barcelona, photo by Nick Wehrli

Conversely, in the arid landscapes of Rajasthan, courtyards take on a majestic demeanour, broadening at their zenith to form an inverted pyramid. Here, they metamorphose into multi-layered sanctuaries, where shaded terraces stack upon one another. This architectural ballet, a resplendent ode to design finesse, becomes a haven in the scorching embrace of a hot and arid climate.

In this tale of courtyards, each design whispers a unique narrative, an eloquent dialogue between the past and present, between cultures and climates. They emerge not just as architectural or design entities but as living, breathing testimonials to the art of harmonising human habitation with the ever-changing symphony of nature.

Courtyards serve as more than mere conduits for light and ventilation; they forge connections between people, nature, and the transition between interior and exterior spaces. Beyond individual residences, these courtyards flourish at the neighbourhood level, as exemplified by the vibrant city of Barcelona. In the heart of Barcelona City, the unit blocks stand as exemplary embodiments of community-centric courtyards, seamlessly blending the practicalities of light and ventilation with the fostering of social bonds. Here, the communal spaces within become havens for parks, children's play areas, and other shared amenities. This synergy transforms the courtyard into a thriving hub of social interaction, creating a harmonious balance between individual dwelling units and communal activities.

Contrasting with the vivacity of community courtyards, private courtyards emerge as secluded retreats, catering to the solitude of a single individual or a small family. In an era where the expanse of available land is dwindling, these private sanctuaries offer a delicate balance—allowing a withdrawal from the outside world while preserving a profound connection with nature.

The architecture of Indian residences intricately reflects cultural values, centred around family and community bonds. Characterised by large joint families, homes are designed to meet the diverse needs of various age groups under one roof. Courtyards, a fundamental

element, originally developed for sunlight and ventilation, later transformed into social hubs. Acting as visual connectors, courtyards are the heartbeat of the home. In cluster settlements, they become communal spaces, aligning with Vaastu principles as sacred voids. Courtyards accommodate prayer spaces, kitchens, dining areas, and water bays, embodying a seamless blend of custom and functionality.

Traditionally, Indian homes were crafted with three distinct elements: enclosed areas, semi-open spaces, and open expanses, each orchestrating a dynamic transformation throughout the day and seasons. At the heart of this architectural dance lies the courtyard—a canvas of infinite possibilities resonating globally. In various regions of India, courtyards are not mere architectural appendages; they are integral to daily life. In rustic landscapes like Rajasthan and Saurashtra, front yards host pastoral scenes, while central courtyards serve as multifunctional stages for activities from sleep to celebrations. Backyards silently witness the cyclical drama, holding cherished belongings. Within this symphony of spaces, Indian homes become living narratives, unfolding new chapters of architectural ingenuity each day.

As an architect, I perceive courtyards as dynamic transitional spaces, seamlessly connecting indoor and outdoor environments. In today's landscape of soaring land prices and shrinking plot sizes, integrating courtyards poses a significant challenge. The close proximity of houses exacerbates this complexity, hindering natural light and airflow, particularly in rear sections. Legal mandates require front and back yards to prevent encroachment, yet users increasingly prioritise air-conditioned interiors due to affordability. Convincing users to embrace courtyards demands a delicate balance between pragmatic design and convenience. Understanding user perspectives is essential, as cost constraints often prioritise practicality over aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly designs. Crafting functional and enriching spaces within urban constraints remains the architectural challenge of our time.



Project Vahadivan by .DWG, Surat, Photo by Vinay Panjwani

They emerge not just as architectural or design entities but as living, breathing testimonials to the art of harmonising human habitation with the ever-changing symphony of nature.

In today's era, despite a scarcity of natural resources, designing spaces that prioritise human comfort remains paramount. The significance of courtyards has become more pronounced than ever as life hurtles forward amidst a technological revolution. We find ourselves tethered to devices, often forgetting the simple joys of experiencing the sunrise, feeling raindrops on our skin, or observing the ever-changing hues of the sky. In urban settlements, birds have seemingly vanished from our daily lives, a stark contrast to just two decades ago when sparrows freely roamed around our homes. Today, the sight of birds in our homes is a rarity, a loss keenly felt by the younger generation. However, a transformative shift occurred in one of our projects named 1101. This apartment, situated on the 11th floor, presented an opportunity to reimagine the open terrace as a flourishing green space. We introduced trees and landscaping, infusing the terrace with a courtyard-like character, creating a more introverted space. After a year, the once barren terrace has transformed into a haven for bulbuls and sparrows. The apartment now boasts a central courtyard and balconies converted into green spaces adorned with live plants. As Yatin Pandya aptly termed it, the courtyard functions as an introverted, active outdoor living space. As a window to the sky, it emerges as a critical element for life energies—sun, wind, water, and vegetation.

As a window to the sky, it emerges as a critical element for life energies—sun, wind, water, and vegetation.

Project 1101 by .DWG, Surat, Photo by Vinay Panjwani





The Hive by OpenIdeas, Photo by Yash Parekh-Panchkon

The technological revolution isn't just a curse—it's a beacon illuminating the path toward resolving contemporary challenges within the built environment. In this realm, computer simulations and artificial intelligence emerge as architects of change, optimising spatial layouts and mitigating the climate's impact on structures. 'The Hive,' a residence crafted by the innovative minds at OpenIdeas, epitomises this symbiosis. Within its walls, technology seamlessly intertwines with human comfort, choreographing spaces to dance in harmony with occupants. Solar trajectories are scrutinised to birth a simulation that gracefully wraps the dwelling and its courtyards. This dynamic screen responds adeptly to climate whims, orchestrating shade and light across the house in a balletic fashion.

As the Architect describes- 'The architectural presence, undoubtedly, is established by the solar sensor-based facade, which lies at an exciting intersection of art and engineering. Its geometry is inspired by the hexagonal structural patterns found in nature such as those of honeycombs and carbon crystals'- giving the project its name. Analysed as per the structure, function and mechanism, its design is based on structural strength, transformability and biomimicry. The unique opening

mechanism of the facade positions are derivatives of the quality of light exposure and thermal comfort levels inside the house. Experientially, the modules create striking sciography by casting patterns that change with the diurnal rhythm of the sun.

Beyond this technological opus lies the realm of small houses, where ingenuity and space management intertwine. At .DWG, we've orchestrated numerous dwellings that seamlessly incorporate wind towers and intimate courtyards into compact spaces. The compound wall metamorphoses into an integral part of the courtyard, breathing life into confined spaces. The setback areas are reborn as flourishing yards, resurrecting the essence of these spaces within our homes. Marcio Kogan, the visionary Brazilian architect and filmmaker, masterfully wields the boundary wall as a creative instrument, inviting courtyards into the heart of built spaces. In this dance between tradition and innovation, The Hive and the projects of Studio MK27 by Kogan stand as testaments to a future where architecture not only adapts but embraces the transformative power of technology.

*Courtyard in House 6 by
Marcio Kogan, Photo by
Pedro Kok*



*Project Vanvaaso by .DWG,
Surat, Photo by Ishita
Sitwala | The Fishy Project*



*Project Vanvaaso by .DWG,
Surat, Photo by Ishita
Sitwala | The Fishy Project*



In the labyrinth of concrete and steel, architects and visionaries grapple with the conundrum of fostering green oases amidst sky-high structures. Charles Correa, in his pioneering effort with Kanchanjunga apartment in Mumbai, embarked on a quest to infuse such spaces into vertical living. Today, the torchbearers of innovation, like Total Environment, a visionary developer, strive to weave green open spaces into the very essence of vertical communities. Across the globe, the emergence of 'Green' buildings and biophilic structures marks a paradigm shift, ushering in a new era where personal outdoor havens are not sacrificed in the pursuit of vertical living. Milan's Vertical Forest, a towering residential masterpiece crafted by Stefano Boeri, stands as a testament to the fusion of architecture and nature. Balcony areas adorned with landscapes and trees defy the conventional norms of urban dwelling. While these elevated sanctuaries may never fully replicate the intimacy found in traditional courtyards, they do offer a respite amidst the unyielding dominance of concrete. The challenge at hand lies in crafting a methodology that elevates vertical living to embody the same levels of privacy, intimacy, and a sense of belonging that traditional courtyards provide.



Vertical forest by Stefano Boeri

As we stand at the crossroads of architectural innovation, the transformative power of technology, coupled with a heightened sensitivity to human behaviour, offers a path forward. The marriage of AI and architectural prowess can revolutionise our approach, creating spaces that are not only efficient and sustainable but also inherently delightful. In this harmonious coexistence, yards transcend their physical boundaries, becoming dynamic breathing zones that connect us to the essence of life itself. The conclusion, therefore, is an invitation to architects and visionaries to continue weaving the story of courtyards, ensuring that the evolving architectural landscape resonates with the fundamental human need for connection, nature, and beauty.

Design Reverie : Stapati's Ode to Yards

The Design Philosophy of Stapati

Within the verdant embrace of Kerala's tropical landscape, amidst the undulating terrain and whispering palms, lie narratives of design that celebrate the delicate dance between nature and human endeavour. Journey with us as we explore the profound tales of these built marvels by Stapati, where verandahs and yards emerge as soulful echoes of Kerala's architectural legacy.



In the annals of time, there was 'Sthapathi', the master builder, crafting monuments, blending art, science, and design with discipline, love and beauty. Tony Joseph's Stapati, acknowledges a holistic approach where no single master builder reigns; instead, it's a collaborative dance, where diverse talents intertwine, weaving a tapestry of expertise to birth masterpieces. Based out of Calicut, Kochi, and Bangalore, Stapati's journey is marked by ingenuity, reverence, and a relentless pursuit of excellence, as chronicled in 'Timeless Resorts' by ORO Editions.

Notable among their opus are sanctuaries like the Kumarakom Lake Resort, the Alila Diwa in Goa, and the Enchanted Island Resort in Seychelles. The symphony of their regionalist interpretations have often captivated the world's gaze with their audacious spirit. Founded in 1989 under the guiding light of Tony Joseph, a visionary shaped by the halls of MIT Manipal and the University of Texas, Austin, Stapati echoes the resonance of Charles Moore's legacy.



From left (sitting) Ar. George Seemon,
Ar. Tony Joseph, Ar. Anupama A., Ar.
Rajesh K.A., Ar. Poonam Noufal
From left (standing)
Ar. Mohandas P., Ar. Harish M.



them when necessary. Earlier a barren hilltop when the project began, Yahvi has now transformed into a verdant oasis. Progressing through a series of interconnected spaces, the narrative crescendos into a lush grove that invites contemplation and immersion into the surroundings.

'In one of our projects with a huge Banyan tree, we documented and measured the tree, it created a courtyard there, and the whole design revolved around that tree. So, in fact, the tree created the yard; and the yard shaped the house.', recalls Tony Joseph with regards to a residential project in Kollam, Kerala

These juxtaposed narratives underscore the essence of contextual design—wherein Stapati choreographs the environment, either sculpting it to fit their vision or orchestrating around its existing majesty. In both instances, the result is a symphony of space, where human ingenuity harmonises with the timeless rhythms of nature.

Left: Dining space that opens out onto the yard.

Far left: Yahvi: A sectional sketch of the residence amidst the undulating terrain.

Below: The yards are envisioned as vibrant hubs for social gatherings and lively interactions.

Blurring boundaries : Yahvi and the House Around Trees

In the symphony of design, sometimes 'absence' speaks volumes. The Yahvi residence, nestled in Montana estates, is a testament to this philosophy. Evolving in harmony with the site's topography, it embraces the winds and frames vistas of the Western Ghats and the distant sea. Thoughtful transitions blur the lines between indoors and outdoors, as yards become integral to the spatial poetry.

Nestled within nature, the pool and its surroundings emerge as a haven for relaxation and intimate gatherings. Here, the landscape becomes a mirror of its organic milieu, crafted to preserve and emulate its natural splendour. With utmost reverence for the existing trees, the design honours their presence, even delicately transplanting





the tree created the yard and the yard shaped the house

Preserving memories : Mandalay Hall-Concept Hotel

Mandalay Hall is one of the few remaining Jewish homes on Synagogue Lane, Mattancherry, a melting pot of cultures and home to 38 different communities. Inspired by the history and beauty of the heritage structure, the Mandalay Hall Concept Hotel was conceived, bridging Kochi's past and present, keeping the interventions to a bare minimum, where the yard serves as an expressive narrative.

As one traverses the mustard-toned rustic walls, a small entrance and corridor guide the way into the warmly lit reception. These guiding walls serve as silent storytellers, their presence complemented by the lush tropical courtyard that unfolds beyond, framed by a series of elegant arches. Here, the courtyard becomes more than just a transitional space; it becomes a threshold

to another world-where time seems to stand still and whispers of the past echo in every direction.

The design approach of the rooms essay the ethos of an art gallery with seamlessly flowing spaces, devoid of divisions. The reused elemental windows are enhanced with neatly tucked-in study tables that look over the narrow street below.

A discreet yet enticing open courtyard invites you to ponder further, complete with a pool that absorbs the harmonious hues of the sky. It is this oasis, this void in space, that forms the crux of the project. Beyond the court, lies two more 'galleries', with varied volumes and a material palette consisting of light oxide walls, black limestone flooring and wooden flooring.

Courtyards here stand as symbols of connection-between the past and the present, the indoors and the outdoors, the individual with a collective consciousness. They are spaces of contemplation, inspiration, and rejuvenation, inviting all who enter to pause, reflect, and embrace the beauty of the moment.

House around trees: Thoughtfully organised spaces around the majestic existing trees on the site

Interiors of the 'gallery' rooms



View upon entry with glimpses of the yard beyond



View from the courtyard





*View of the linear courtyard
of Mandalay hall*



Context as the protagonist : Kumarakom Lake Resort

Water, the overriding metaphor of the ecosystem of the backwaters of Kerala, manifests itself as yards, forming the leitmotif of the design at the Kumarakom Lake resort. Built in an era when tradition lay forgotten, the resort stands as a resplendent homage to the region's essence. Verandahs, adorned with steep-pitched roofs and rhythmic tiled cadences, beckon travellers to linger. Every detail, from the soft caress of lighting to the gentle texture of fabrics, evokes memories of Kerala's cultural tapestry. The large meandering pool, its edges fringed with swaying palms, forms a central yard where all the rooms open out and are accessible through a series of steps reminiscent of ancestral 'Kulapadavus'.

The rich traditions of the highly refined timber craftsmanship together with the intricate roofing systems converse the work within the material praxis of the region. This, when combined with the modalities of playing with light and spatial sequencing, accentuates the setting for a heightened sense of luxury.



Top: A celebration of vernacular craft and materials

Bottom: The meandering pool with its palm-fringed edges



Transparent open plans invite the outside in, allowing employees to effortlessly transition to the green roof spaces, reminiscent of lush yards.

Left: Malabar headquarters: The yard slopes up to form a 'green' roof

Center: View of the indoor courts

Right: Green landscape spine in between

High, yet grounded : Malabar Group Headquarters

'In the intricate dance between human ambition and nature's grace, a building's footprint upon the earth is inevitable. Yet, within this delicate balance, lies the designer's solemn duty-to tread lightly upon the sacred canvas of mother nature. For in every line drawn and every material chosen, lies the potential to minimise the impact upon our precious planet. It is in this pursuit of harmony, that the true essence of design emerges-a symphony of human ingenuity and ecological reverence, echoing through time.'- Tony Joseph



In the lush embrace of Kerala's tropical landscape, the Malabar Group Headquarters stands as a testament to harmonising with nature's rhythm. Positioned upon a steep sloping site, its westward-facing orientation presented a unique challenge, met with ingenious design solutions.

Here, office spaces unfold as two separate blocks, separated by a verdant landscape spine-a vibrant artery pulsating with life. Transparent open plans invite the outside in, allowing employees to effortlessly transition to the green roof spaces, reminiscent of lush yards. Strategically placed balconies with large trees and vegetation on the western facade cut out the intense sun, creating a green buffer yard. The green roof sloping to the ground in the South, not only tempers the southern sun's fervour but also serves as natural insulation for the spaces below-a testament to sustainability woven into the very fabric of the design.

In the culmination of our journey through Stapati's wonders, it is the yards that linger in our minds as poignant reminders of the delicate balance between human ambition and nature's grace. From the verdant oasis of Yahvi's yards, to the organic harmony of the House Around Trees in Kollam, yards emerge as sanctuaries

of serenity and symbiosis. In Mandalay Hall-Concept Hotel, the courtyard stands as a timeless testament to the interplay of history, culture, and nature-a sacred space inviting contemplation and connection. In the picturesque setting of Kumarakom Lake Resort, the fluidity of water evokes the notion of expansive yards, while at the Malabar Headquarters, the verdant roof and the boundless sky inspire the idea of yards rooted in sustainability and design.

It is with pronounced intention of embracing the past and forging the present, with a conscious choice of not evoking dejavu that Stapati approaches their projects as well as their specialised endeavors. In their furniture line Smaram (Smara or memory+ Maram or tree), they meticulously collect, and document wood sourced from old and demolished houses, embracing its inherent ageing and damage. Similarly, in their venture named Vanam (forest), the focus shifts to exploring the porosity between inside and outside through landscape design. Through these spaces, we witness the profound poetry of yards - where human ingenuity converges with the timeless rhythms of the earth, creating spaces that resonate with authenticity, reverence, and the timeless beauty of nature's embrace.

Image courtesy: Stapati

Envisaging India's geo-cultural tapestry with Nippon Paint

DR KAUSTAV SENGUPTA

Dr Kaustav Sengupta holds a PhD in Colour Psychology and is a renowned academician, futurist, trend analyst, colour bio-behaviourist, colour forecaster, writer, social worker, TEDx speaker & Associate Professor at the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Chennai.

The only Color Phycologist in India who has got a patented color forecast modeling tool; through this tool over 30,000 meta-tags were processed from over 55 catalysts across a time frame of 16 months from various parts of the country. Dr Sengupta has meticulously developed the 'Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025'.

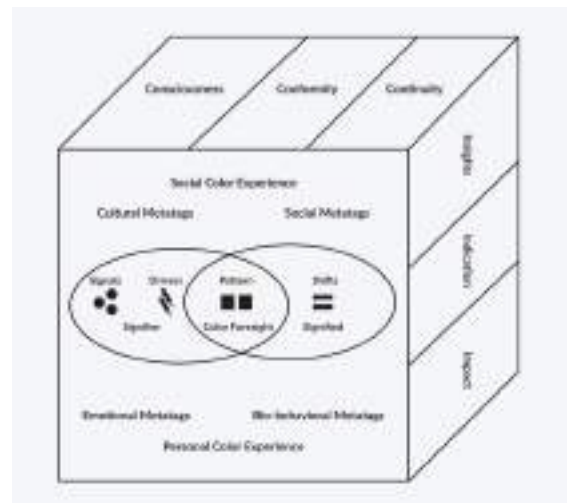


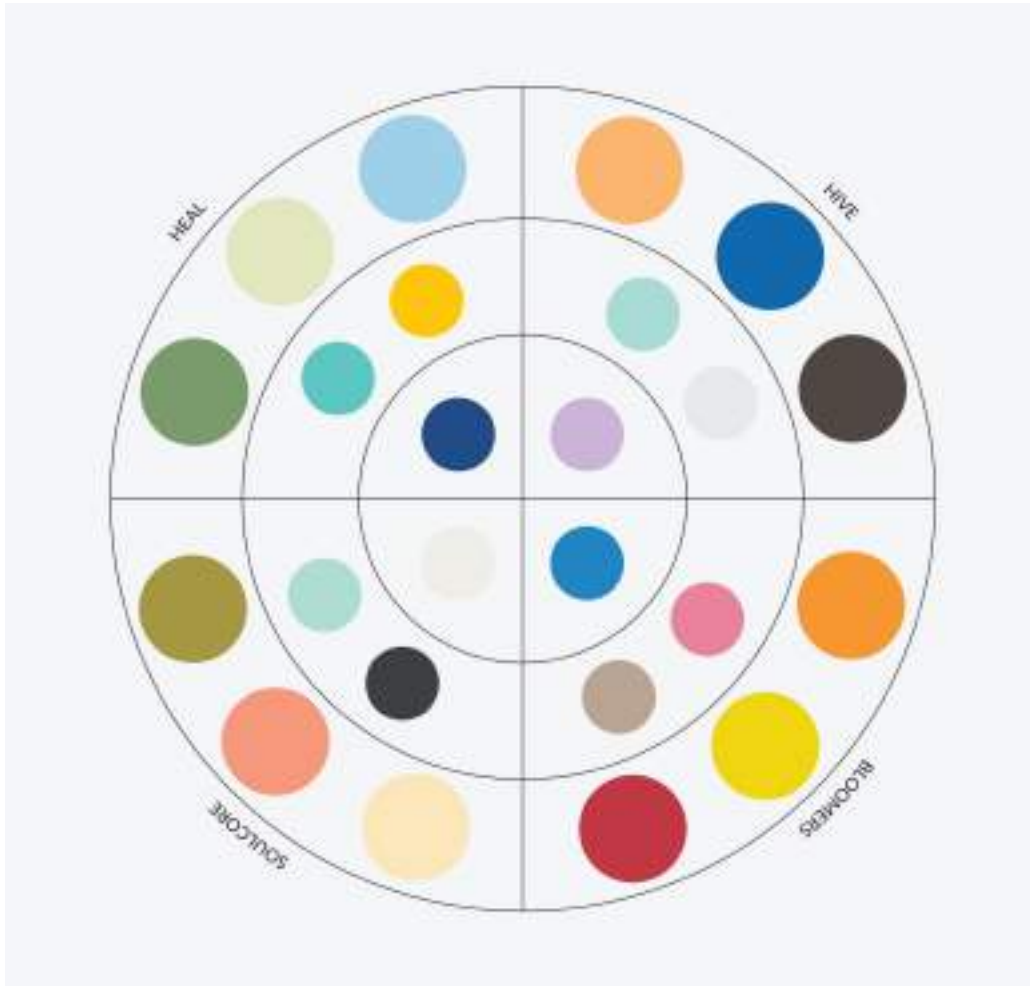
THE MASTER CLASS SERIES BY NIPPON PAINT

Color saturates every facet of India's cultural canvas, serving as an intrinsic element in its rich tapestry. Embedded in religious ceremonies, festivals, and daily rituals, vibrant hues hold deep spiritual resonance, with specific colors linked to various deities. Festivals like Holi exemplify the jubilant celebration of color, signifying renewal and unity. Traditional attire, a chromatic symphony, mirrors the nuanced diversity of regions. From intricate artworks to architectural wonders, India's love for vivid expressions is evident. In essence, color becomes a dynamic language, conveying symbolism, joy, and a profound cultural identity that enriches the vibrant mosaic of this diverse nation.

It is this very affinity with colors that has prompted Nippon Paint India to introduce 'Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025'. In collaboration with a color expert and 'Color Consultant' - Dr Kaustav Sengupta, from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, the team has introduced innovative color palettes tailored for the youth keeping in consideration the regional trend forecasts. This visionary approach is an enhanced celebration of India's diversity and rightfully acknowledges the profound impact of colours on its emotional, social, and cultural collage.

The Hypothalamus, a structure located deep within the brain, experiences the impact of colors via signals from the retinal ganglion cells. Each of these hues and shades carries meta-tags with memories in the context of cultural,





Top: A few archetypes of the 'Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025'

Left: The 'Color Foresight Cube' (SenGupta, 2018), forms the macro base for this color mapping system

social, emotional, and bio-behavioral reactions. The 'Color Vision Forecast' utilizes Dr Sengupta's copyrighted 'Color Foresight Cube' method, to map these color signifiers through signals and drivers to understand plausible color directions. For a holistic development of this forecast, over 30,000 meta-tags were processed from over 55 catalysts across a time frame of 16 months from various parts of the country. The 'Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025' thus brings forth sets of color archetypes emphasized as stories and themes.

The theme 'HEAL' reflects the need for comfort and the dreamlike surrealism of existing in a peaceful state, while the archetype 'BLOOMERS' puts the focus on the steadily growing popularity of handmade and craft culture, where individuals yearn to learn new skills that could bring creative ideas to life. The mood of 'HIVE' emphasises the need for cohabitation and bonding, while the theme of 'SOULCORE' persuades one to seek the answer to a question that has puzzled mankind, 'Who am I?' - an eternal enquiry to find the 'self'. A pictorial representation of the vivid color palettes these themes portray are depicted here.



The shades of blue are seen to feature quite prominently across the various archetypes in this color forecast of Nippon Paint India. Indigo, a natural shade of blue, is a star in this array. Being a timeless and versatile color to use in interior spaces, it can simultaneously weave a regal backdrop with elegance when teamed with clean whites or can accentuate the much-needed 'pop' when sided with yellows. Indigo is perceived primarily as blue with an underlying note of violet.

Nippon Paint India's 'Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025' stands as an impressive fusion of art, science, and human psychology, serving as a powerful tool to empower designers nationwide. The forecast allows for a meticulous curation of colors tailored to spatial functions and cultural diversities, all while maintaining a strong connection to regional resonance. Nippon's commendable approach, demonstrating a keen understanding of the unique nuances within its target market, is not only praiseworthy but also serves as an inspiring model for the industry's future endeavors.



Thematic Color Schemes from Nippon Paint India's 'Color Vision Forecast for 2024-2025'



COLOR FORECAST INDIA 2024-2025



From Tradition To Trend, Shaping Contemporary Homes

Elevate Every Stroke with Bold Luxury Vintage Paints

Forget boring beige! True luxury isn't just what you own, it's how you make it your own. And what sets your space apart more than a splash of daring colour? Bold hues aren't just trendy, they are a statement. They take your walls from blank to brilliant, creating a unique and stylish haven that reflects your one-of-a-kind personality.

Known for its creativity & quality, Craig and Rose was established in 1829 by two young Scottish entrepreneurs James Craig & Hugh Rose, Craig & Rose became renowned for manufacturing superior quality paints, and professional painters and decorators quickly adopted it as their brand of choice. At that time, paint was milled, and competitors used to grind raw materials twice. Always keen to go the extra mile, Craig & Rose were known for their triple grinding.

Over the years, Craig & Rose won numerous exciting contracts, such as painting the iconic Forth Bridge, manufacturing paint for St Paul's Cathedral, palaces around the world and the South American Railway. They have the power to elevate the overall aesthetic, providing a visually stunning backdrop that captivates the senses. The use of rich and vibrant hues, such as deep blues, regal purples, or striking emerald greens, can immediately evoke a sense of opulence and sophistication. These bold choices go beyond the conventional neutral tones, making a bold statement that is both daring and confident.



Design Tip! Level up your garden glow: Copper Patina on Copper paints instant aged elegance.



Imagine yourself strolling through bustling New York City, craning your neck to admire the majestic Lady Liberty. As sunlight dances across her copper skin, you notice the vibrant tapestry of greens and blues – a testament to time's artistry. This breathtaking patina, a natural reaction between copper and the elements, has inspired Craig & Rose's newest creation: Artisan Copper Patina Paint.

Step back in time to 1886. The colossal Statue of Liberty arrives in New York, her copper form gleaming like a beacon of hope. Yet, within just a few years, a magical transformation began. The copper, exposed to the elements, embarked on a journey of metamorphosis. Oxygen, rain, and wind became its paintbrushes, slowly creating the iconic green patina we know and love. Inspired by this timeless masterpiece, Craig & Rose sought to capture the essence of aged copper in paint. Artisan Copper Patina Paint

allows you to bring the story of Lady Liberty and countless other copper beauties into your own home.

This isn't just paint; it's a portal to a richer, more evocative world. Each brushstroke whispers tales of time and nature's artistry. Imagine transforming your living room into a haven of aged sophistication, your bedroom into a sanctuary of calming coastal vibes, or your outdoor space into a vibrant tapestry of history.

With Artisan Copper Patina Paint, the possibilities are endless. So, unleash your inner artist and embark on your own creative journey. Let the opalescent hues of Verdigris, turquoise, and aqua dance across your walls, imbuing your home with the timeless beauty of aged copper and the spirit of Lady Liberty herself.

'Bold, Luxury & Aesthetic.'

25 MOMENTS THAT DEFINED YARDS

In the vast chronicles of human history, the concept of 'Yards' has served as a profound cornerstone, connecting civilisations across the ages. From the ancient Indus Valley to the forefront of modern innovation, yards have gone beyond mere measurements, embodying cultural significance, creativity, and connectivity. Take, for instance, the timeless elegance of the nine-yard saree, symbolising both tradition and adaptation as it evolves with the passage of time. Across continents and epochs, from the enchanting gardens of Alhambra to the symbolic grounds of Tiananmen Square, yards bear witness to the ebb and flow of human endeavour.

Yet, they extend beyond their historical roots, beckoning towards uncharted horizons. Whether it's the Mars Yard, where rovers traverse simulated Martian terrains, or the immersive 'rain of light' in Louvre Abu Dhabi, yards serve as gateways to new realms of exploration and understanding. Within their embrace lies the essence of our shared journey, where stories of the past converge with aspirations for the future. Let us tread reverently upon the sacred ground of yards, for within their expansive scope, the narratives of humanity unfold in all their richness and diversity.

01

2800 BCE

The historical roots of the '9-yard saree'

Indus valley

Yard as an Object

In the contemporary landscape of the 'Metric era,' the mention of the term 'yard' evokes a myriad of intriguing associations, with the 'nine-yard saree' being among the most captivating. The saree, as a timeless draped garment, has evolved through countless iterations, each reflecting the unique essence of its region's culture and climate. However, do we know its origins? Interestingly, it goes way back in history to the early Indus Valley civilisations. From a mere piece of clothing to a social status litmus, the saree has ingeniously found its way to an aesthetic expression at the hands of creative designers as seen at this Kochi Biennale pavilion.



Sarees

Archaeological Survey of India



Saree installation by Stapati, Kochi Biennale Pavilion, Stapati

02

2600 BCE

History of Huddling Humans

Mohenjo-daro and Mesopotamia

Yard as a social platform

Social interactions are imperative in shaping human civilisations. This fundamental characteristic has prompted us right from the early days to reside in clusters of residences. However, even when the dwelling units were identified as personal spaces, spill-out spaces from these structures are often found pouring out onto a yard, a public congregation square, or 'atriums' as it was known back then. Archaeological ruins of Mohenjo Daro (Indus Valley civilisation) and Ur (Mesopotamian civilisation) visually testify to how these 'yards' were an integral feature of these cities. Thus, formed the associated definition of a yard as a spatial construct.



Private courtyards of Mohenjo Daro

Emmanuel Guddu

Opulent residences further integrated courtyards within as well, Ur III period

Dr. Moudhy Al-Rashid

03

1045 BCE

Siheyuan - Chinese Courtyard Houses China

Yards as an extended living space

As the concept of community congregation space gathered momentum among societies, adaptations of the same thought within a residence were also explored. During the Western Zhou period in China, houses were physically split into four built forms to encompass an open yard. These four structures around the courtyard, often aligned according to the cardinal directions, were segregated and designed based on function, social hierarchy, climate responsiveness and culture. The yard in the centre thus formed the crux of the activities within the entire residence by being a multi-functional extended living space. *(Additionally refer to the 'Academic Series' pg 49)*



Courtyards as extended living of Siheyuan houses

Caitriana Nicholson

04

70 CE

Alhambra Paradisal Gardens Spain

Yards of grandeur

The story of the Alhambra palace and its courtyards begins with the origins of the 'paradise garden'. Responding to the arid climatic conditions, these courtyards feature gardens and water bodies that symbolise life and divinity. Persian innovation, including the construction of extensive underground water conduits spanning up to 80 km, laid the groundwork for Alhambra's renowned four-part garden plan. This 'chhār-bāgh' design features a square divided by intersecting walkways or water courses, showcasing the fusion of nature and advanced engineering. The 'Paradise Garden' concept became synonymously symbolic of grandeur, in residences across the Middle East where Islamic influences were prevalent.



The Alhambra Court of Lions, Granada, Spain

Vishal Jhaveri

05 70 CE

Roman Baths and Atrium Bath, England

Yards featuring water

Envisaged as a grand bathing and socialising complex, the Roman Baths are one of the best examples of how yards serve as a communal space for various activities, particularly bathing. This well-preserved 'Roman Bath', globally renowned, witnesses a daily influx of 1,170,000 litres of hot spring water at 46°C, filling the bathing area. While water was an extravagance in public baths, it was an element judiciously conserved in the atriums of Roman houses. An impluvium or tank collects the water falling in through the compluvium (open roof) and leads them into underground storage cisterns. (Additionally, refer to the 'Academic Series' pg 47)



View of the Great Bath, part of the Roman Baths complex, Bath, England

Diego Delso



An illustration of a Roman atrium with an impluvium

De Agostini Picture Library

06 79 CE

The House of the Vettii Italy

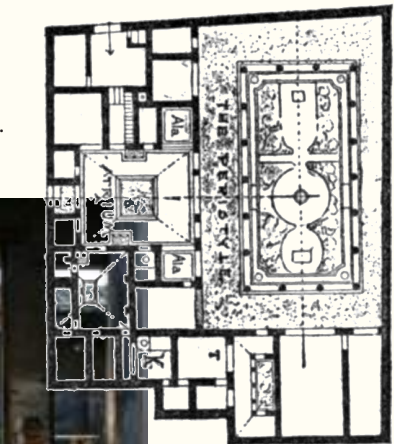
Yards as an image of a lost town

House of Vettii in Pompeii and its courtyards stand as the only image, embodying a city's final-period aesthetic, preserved by Mount Vesuvius' eruption. Spanning 1,100 square metres, the plan is fashioned in a typical Roman domus except for a tablinum (room opposite the entrance). There are twelve mythological scenes across four cubicula (private rooms) and one triclinium (dining room). The house, crucial evidence of Pompeii's pre-destruction charm, is divided into five sections- the large atrium, small atrium, large peristyle (court surrounded by columns), small peristyle, and shop. The building encapsulates the city's grandeur

and historical significance through its yards, space planning and captivating mythological depictions.



View through the atrium to the peristyle



Plan of the House of the Vettii, Vitruvius- The Ten Books on Architecture

Peter Stewart

07 900 CE

Turf Houses Iceland

Yards as climatic insulators

We have quite a paradox here as yards are usually termed as spaces devoid of roofs.

Iceland with its extreme climatic conditions and isolated geographic location demanded offbeat solutions for its houses. The local birch was used for the frames of the structure, while natural turf being in abundance, was laid out all the way from the walls to the roof to provide thermal comfort.

Being organic in nature, the turf houses required periodic maintenance and gradually gave way to modern housing solutions. Only a few of the deserted houses are maintained and restored to preserve the region's history.



Icelandic Turf houses

Chris

08 1084 CE

The Native American Kivas Colorado, USA

Yards as ceremonial social chambers

Kivas are subterranean pits constructed by the people of the Pueblo culture living in today's southwestern parts of the United States. Usually circular in shape and built into the ground, they represent the world below, where humanity is thought to have originated, echoing the nurturing embrace of a mother's womb.

The kivas were primarily used as a space for religious ceremonies. Some smaller kivas were also found to be roofed with a small opening at its centre with a ladder for access.



Ancestral Pueblo Kiva is located in Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado

Stephen Oachs



Chaco Culture National Historical Park, New Mexico

Jim Shoemaker

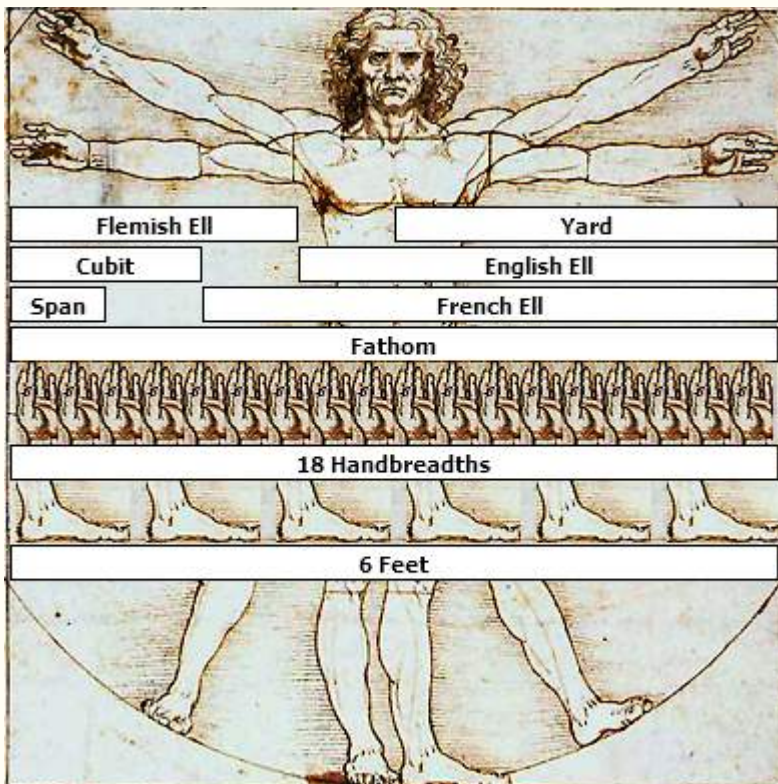
The English Yard England

Yard as a unit of measurement

'It is ordained that 3 grains of barley dry and round do make an inch, 12 inches make 1 foot, 3 feet make 1 yard, 5 yards and a half make a perch, and 40 perches in length and 4 in breadth make an acre.'

-Act on the Composition of Yards and Perches, dated to the reign of Edward I or II.

The history of measurements is a fascinating journey that reflects humanity's quest for precision and standardisation. Legend has it that it began with the length of a man's girdle, a belt worn around the waist. This archaic measure evolved further when King Henry I declared that a yard should be the distance between the tip of his nose and the end of his outstretched thumb. This royal decree turned the yard into a unit that varied with each monarch. It was however formally standardised during the reign of King Edward.



The world's progression into the 'Age of Enlightenment' prompted a shift to metric units, replacing the yard's subjective measures. Metaphorically, 'yardstick' signifies a standard for comparison, evaluating dimensions or achievements against established norms, reflecting humanity's pursuit of precision.

Clockwise from top
 1. This derivation of the Vitruvian Man by Leonardo Da Vinci depicts nine historical units of measurement: the Yard, the Span, the Cubit, the Flemish Ell, the English Ell, the French Ell, the Fathom, the Hand, and the Foot. Da Vinci drew the Vitruvian man to scale, so the units depicted here are displayed with their proper historical ratios.
 2. A set of length gauges by Troughton & Simms mounted beside the Greenwich Royal Observatory, Andres Rueda
 3. Henry I, Painting by Unknown artist
 4. A comical illustration of King Henry I's proposition of yard, geo-logaritmica



10

1200 CE

Master of the Nets Garden Suzhou, China

Yards as a symbol of craftsmanship

An amalgamation of courtyards, bridges, diligently crafted landscape principles and elements of water, the Master of the Nets Garden is a representative work of the classical Chinese gardens, which aims to create a curated nature miniature. Initially ideated to symbolise a Chinese fisherman's simple and solitary life, the garden has undergone several thoughtful iterations over the years. Now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the garden beautifully demonstrates the adept skills honed by its designers for synthesising art, nature and architecture to create unique metaphysical masterpieces.



A painting of the Master of Nets Garden

Kanga 35

11

1300 CE

The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay England

Yards for spiritual refreshment and rejuvenation

Yards can bring solace and improve the mental well-being of its users. The Abbey in Sutton Courtenay, a spiritual retreat centre, is a textbook example of an English medieval manor house, which focuses on tranquillity that invites contemplation amid nature. Bathed in sunlight, surrounded by greenery, and echoing with history, the courtyard offers an escape from daily life. Whether in solitary reflection or shared moments, it becomes a serene oasis, harmoniously merging the past with the present. This convergence cultivates a rejuvenating atmosphere, providing a timeless respite for visitors seeking peace and spiritual refreshment.



The Central Courtyard

Olivia Morgan Roberts

12

1370 CE

Bastille Courtyard

France

Yard as a symbol of revolution

It is remarkable when yards hold the power to bring people together, united under a cause.

The Bastille courtyard is one such historic space. Once a fortress and later a symbol of tyranny it witnessed the fervour of the French Revolution. On Bastille Day, the courtyard becomes a site of remembrance and celebration, honouring the triumph of the people over oppression. Crowds gather to pay homage to the spirit of liberty that surged through this place, marking a pivotal moment in history. The Bastille courtyard serves as a living monument, symbolising the collective strength of its people.



'The Storming of the Bastille', Visible in the centre is the arrest of Bernard René Jourdan, m de Launay (1740-1789).

Bibliothèque nationale de France

13

1500 CE

Topkapi Palace Courtyards

Türkiye

Yards of Royalty

The courtyards of Topkapi Palace in Istanbul epitomise royalty in the number of courtyards and their varied functions.

As the residence of Ottoman Sultans for centuries, the First Courtyard, or Court of the Janissaries, is a gathering place for elite troops. The Second Courtyard housed administrative buildings, showcasing the palace's bureaucratic functions. The Third Courtyard, the palace's core, held the sultan's private quarters and the Harem, embodying royal opulence. The Fourth Courtyard, with the Enderun School and private pavilions, reflected education and leisure. Together, these courtyards

weave a narrative of Ottoman grandeur, blending architectural magnificence with historical resonance.



Topkapi Palace, Türkiye

Yair Haklai



Daisen-in & Buddhist Monasteries

Kyoto, Japan and Leh, India

Yards as a symbol of human life

Symbolising life's journey according to Buddhism, Daisen-in, a Zen temple in Kyoto, unveils a profound narrative through its five well-tended gardens. The gardens seamlessly connect elements: rocks resembling mountains representing trials, a cascading waterfall depicting the flow of time, clipped shrubs embodying stages of growth, and raked white gravel mirroring life's voyage from the energetic rapids of youth to the serene currents of adulthood. In this sacred space, each element dictates a nuanced story, inviting contemplation on the wisdom inherent in the human experience and making Daisen-in not just a spiritual haven but a sanctuary for reflections on life's exhaustive journey.

Much like Daisen-in in Kyoto, the Buddhist monasteries of Leh Ladakh, like the Hemis Gompa, introduce the concept of enlightenment through their central open yards. Adorned with colourful prayer flags, vibrant murals, prayer wheels, stupas, and intricate details, these spaces vividly showcase the rich cultural and religious heritage of the region. The courtyards not only serve as the epicentre for religious ceremonies and rituals but also double as community assembly halls. In both settings, from Kyoto to Ladakh, the courtyards emerge as symbolic stages where cultural, spiritual, and communal dimensions seamlessly converge.

The courtyard of Buddhist monastery, Hemis Gompa, Leh, India

Rajen Banerjee



Daisen-in Stone Garden

Ivanoff



15

1600 CE
1850 CE

Havelis Rajasthan

Yards fostering relationships

To beat the scorching heat of Rajasthan, Havelis incorporate square-shaped inner courtyards that also serve as vibrant hubs enriching familial bonds. Historically, chowks were sanctuaries for women and children, providing safe spaces to socialise. Beyond practicality, these courtyards are the beating heart of daily life—a stage for entertainment, rituals, and interactions. The choreography of household activities unfolds here, creating a porous space where joint families living under one roof find joy in shared routines, making the courtyard the living essence of these grand residences. Havelis are architectural gems, seamlessly

blending Mughal and Rajput styles.

(Additionally refer to pg 22)



Podar Haveli

Sathe Architects

16

1675 CE,
1850 CE

Wada and Chowki Houses Maharashtra and Goa

Yards as a reflection of Culture & Craft

Wadas, unique among Indian courtyard houses, vary in their treatment of yards. Garhi or Rajwada types feature central courtyards for social gatherings, while those along the Konkan coast limit them due to heavy rainfall. Combining Maratha, Mughal, Rajasthani, and Gujarati architectural influences in spatial layout and detailing, these houses optimise airflow, light, security, and privacy, reflecting rich architectural heritage.

Goan Chowki houses blend Portuguese and Indian styles, featuring vibrant colours, ornate balconies, and Mangalore-tiled roofs. They include raised platforms

in courtyards for seating and storage, enhancing both cultural richness and functional versatility in Goan residential architecture.



Sanvordekar house, Chowki of Traditional Goan houses

Heta Pandit

17

1675 CE,
1850 CE

Thinnai and Nadumuttom

Tamil Nadu and Kerala

Yards evolving as a socio-climatic response

Thinnai, a distinctive architectural element in Tamil Nadu, refers to a raised platform or veranda typically found at the entrance of homes. More than a mere front yard space, the thinnai serves as a cultural cornerstone, providing a welcoming environment for social interactions, discussions, and communal bonding.

Nadumuttom in Kerala is a central courtyard testifying to climate-responsive design. Doubling as a cultural hub for community gatherings, festivals, and daily life, these yards act as the nuclei of Kerala's traditional architecture.



Thinnai in its essence, Tamil Nadu, Radhika Amin



Nadumuttom of Nalukettu, Joshy Mjl

18

1675 CE,
1850 CE

Rajbari Zamindar Houses

West Bengal

Yards of Opulence and Power

Kolkata's grand courtyard houses symbolise the wealth of the Bengali zamindar class, once the playgrounds of the elite. In contrast to the British Neoclassical buildings, the Bengali elite fused European Neoclassical, Mughal, and traditional Bengali styles, creating a unique architectural blend. Thakurdalan, a central space, held the annual Durga Puja. These mansions featured a complex layout with interconnected smaller courtyards, passages, and corridors, showcasing a rich fusion of styles reflecting both colonial influences and traditional aesthetics.



Sovabazar boro Rajbari thakurdalan at Sovabazar area of North Kolkata, India.

Amitabha Gupta

19

1864 CE

Arlington Graveyard

USA

Yards as an epilogue of life

Yard acquires a dreadful dimension when associated with 'graveyard,' extending its connotation to denote the epilogue of life. It was in the 18th century that planned park-like areas gained popularity as cemeteries in the United States. Initially, these expansive gardens with elaborate statues and markers catered merely to the affluent. They became accessible to the lower classes only after industrialisation. Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia is one of two in the U.S. National Cemetery System under Army supervision. Spread across 639 acres, the graveyard serves as the solemn resting place for nearly 400,000 individuals who served the nation.



Arlington graveyard, USA

David Brown

20

1905 CE

Times Square

New York City, USA

Yard as a public square.

Times Square serves as a vibrant urban yard, diverging from conventional geometric norms. Despite its name, this iconic space is not a literal square but adopts a distinctive bowtie shape. Positioned at the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Broadway, the area unfolds into two triangular sections that function as a bustling public space; it rightfully encapsulates the dynamic essence of New York City. The convergence of theatres, dazzling billboards, and a constant flow of pedestrians paint a vivid tapestry of urban life, making Times Square an emblematic and unparalleled 'yard' in the heart of the metropolis.



Times Square, USA

Jakub Halun

21

1939 CE,
1949 CE

Fallingwater House & Eames House USA

Yard as an element of nature

Deviating from the conventional courtyard, front yard, and backyard model where built structures meet the unbuilt, Fallingwater- a masterpiece by Frank Lloyd Wright is intricately interwoven with nature, seamlessly incorporating boundless natural elements into the house's design.

Perched over a waterfall, its cantilevered balconies and open design offer immersive views, turning the residence into a celebration of the surrounding yards. Wright's design blurs the lines between the crafted and the organic, a captivating dance of architecture and wilderness.



The flowing stream forms the yard of the house, Fallingwater, USA

Mariano Mantel



The front yard of the Eames House, California, USA

Edward Stojakovic

Similarly, Charles and Ray Eames' prefabricated Eames House nestled in Pacific Palisades, is a testament to creativity. Surrounded by lush greenery, the courtyard is an artistic canvas, blending simplicity and functionality. The Eames House is a fluid continuation of space, with liberating rooms that seamlessly flow between floors through double-height spaces. Here, the boundaries between private and public areas blur, imbibing the concept of yards. More than a yard, it's a dynamic extension of Charles and Ray Eames' inventive spirits, shaping their enduring legacy in design.

Chernobyl & the Tiananmen Square

Ukraine and China

Yard as a memory of destruction and tragedy

The yards near Chernobyl, abandoned after the 1986 nuclear disaster, are frozen in time, overgrown and haunted. Rusting playgrounds and crumbling structures bear witness to disrupted lives. Nature has reclaimed these spaces, leaving a melancholic yet resilient atmosphere. These yards stand as poignant reminders of the lasting impact of the tragic event. However, on the brighter side, there have been spotting of wildlife returning to these grounds. Furthermore, the newly proposed 'Safe Confinement', 108 m high and 162 m long, ensures containment for at least 100 years.



Chernobyl seen from Orbit

Alexander Gerst



Chernobyl Nuclear power plant, Ukraine

Mattias Hill

Tiananmen Square derives its name from the adjacent Tiananmen ('Gate of Heavenly Peace') to the north, serving as a boundary with the Forbidden City. The square gained notoriety for the 1989 protests and subsequent massacre, where a military crackdown occurred. Today, it remains a prominent symbol, encapsulating China's complex history and its aspirations for the future.



Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China

Derzsi Elekes Andor

Maggie's Centres & the Serpentine Pavilions England

Yards of Contemplation

Intermediate spaces such as courtyards, front yards, and gardens, proximate to nature possess transformative and therapeutic qualities of healing. Maggie's Centres are envisioned as spaces to prioritise and provide innovative, psychological, and social facilities for terminally ill cancer patients. Maggie Keswick Jencks, in her final year, spearheaded the design concept to transform these spaces into comforting alternatives to clinical environments. Yards within this context serve as havens for solace and contemplation.



Architect Alex de Rijke in the garden that extends beneath Maggie's Centre in Oldham, England.

Andrew Crowley

Maggie's Dundee by Frank Gehry, Garden by Arabella- Lennox- Boyd, Scotland

Maggie's Centres



Serpentine Pavilion by Sou Fujimoto, London

Maurits Ruis

Meanwhile, the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London is an annual temporary structure that showcases international architects or design teams. The pavilion, completed in six months, graces the gallery's lawn for three months, inviting public exploration. Sou Fujimoto's 2013 design redefines in-between spaces as transparent terrains, encouraging diverse interactions with the site.

Louvre Museum & Changi Airport

Abu Dhabi and Singapore

Yards of Modern Interpretations

When it comes to interiors, yards can be interpreted as expansive spaces intimately connected with natural elements, either visually or experientially. The Louvre Abu Dhabi's courtyards, crafted by architect Jean Nouvel, blend contemporary design with cultural allure. The mesmerising parasol creates a 'rain of light' effect, casting a unique ambience. Set against water, these courtyards offer serene spaces for cultural events, enriching visitors' experiences amid the museum's stunning architectural landscape.



Louvre Museum, Abu Dhabi, UAE Alexey Komissarov



Rain vortex of Jewel Changi Airport, Singapore

Courtesy of Jewel Changi Airport

In contrast, Jewel Changi Airport innovatively redefines 'yards' with its 'rain vortex,' an indoor waterfall cascading from a semi-inverted toroidal dome. This architectural marvel not only captivates with its geometric brilliance but also sustains plant life. In Jewel, the blend of innovation and nature transforms the airport into a harmonious narrative of design, water, and greenery, inviting travellers into an enchanting space within the bustling airport hub.

Yard as a training tool

The term 'yard' takes on a new dimension as researchers recreate the terrain of Mars, providing insight into the reality of the planet's surface.

JPL's Mars Yard, a rugged Martian playground meticulously crafted with geologists and engineers, tests rovers for interplanetary journeys. This outdoor proving ground not only mirrors the Red Planet's diverse terrains but also narrates a story of scientific curiosity and exploration, turning yards into gateways for unlocking the secrets of distant worlds.



JPL's Mars Yard

Robbie Shade

As we advance into an era where design intersects with technology in unprecedented ways, the significance of 'Yards' in design becomes ever more pronounced. As a measure, space or scale, they offer opportunities for connection, reflection, and innovation. They remind us that design is not just about aesthetics; it's about creating meaningful experiences that shape our lives and perceptions. In every design iteration, from the physical realm to the digital sphere, yards are vital elements that enhance creativity, comfort, and contemplation. As we continue on this journey of exploration and discovery, let the interpretive integration of yards within various design dialects remain integral, guiding us towards new horizons of creativity and expression.

75 More Moments That Defined Yards

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| 01 | 3000 BCE
First vertical garden,
Grapevine crops as garden element. | 11 | 1370 CE
Spanish Patios,
Spanish parallel to Italian Cortile. |
| 02 | 600 BCE
Hanging Gardens of Babylon,
Gardens purely for pleasure. | 12 | 1450 CE
The Forbidden City – Beijing,
Yard, a political and ritual focal point. |
| 03 | 500 BCE
Sigiriya Citadel Gardens, Sri Lanka
First planned gardens. | 13 | 1528 CE
Mughal Gardens,
Symmetry, axis and fountains
resembling paradise. |
| 04 | 500 BCE
The Acropolis,
Column-defined courtyards emerge. | 14 | 1550 CE
Villa d'Este, Tivoli, Italy,
Terraced Renaissance Garden. |
| 05 | 100 BCE
Mediterranean Courtyards,
Atrium of the House of the Faun,
Pompeii, Italy | 15 | 1564 CE
Medersa Ben Youssef,
Moroccan courtyard with water at
the centre. |
| 06 | 530 CE
Hagia Sophia - Istanbul, Turkey,
Vast interior courtyard or atrium | 16 | 1565 CE
The Cortile del Belvedere
Square of high Renaissance in
Vatican, Rome. |
| 07 | 800 CE
Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain,
Expansive courtyard is known as
Court of Oranges. | 17 | 1570 CE
Plaza Grande, Quito, Ecuador
Public square of political
importance. |
| 08 | 1100 CE
Medieval Great Halls, England,
Interior courtyard of magnificent
hammer-beam roof. | 18 | 1577 CE
Yuyuan Garden, Shanghai
Chinese garden of 'peace & comfort'. |
| 09 | 1190 CE
The Cour Carrée, Square Courtyard
of Louvre Museum, France. | 19 | 1580 CE
Spanish Plazas, Plaza Mayor, Madrid
Major plaza in the heart of Madrid |
| 10 | 1300 CE
The Courtyard of the Maidens,
Alcázar of Seville, Spain,
Europe's oldest palace in use of
Mudejar Architecture grandeur. | 20 | 1583 CE
Beit Ghazaleh, Aleppo, Syria
Royal Ottoman architecture with
central court. |

The moments that define the term “yard” can be found throughout history, from the spontaneous emergence of vertical gardens with Mediterranean grape vines to confined spaces that transcend boundaries through powerful materials like glass, many instances in history redefine our understanding of this term. Within these 75 defining moments lies a wealth of interpretation with notable references like yard as a measure of length to Railyards, Shipyards, and even graveyards, prompting intellectual reflection upon the broader implications of the word "yard."

21	1603 CE Stuart Gardens, Britain Geometric gardens of class & power.	31	1816 CE The Kunjur Chowki Mane Based on ‘Manushyalaya Chandrika’
22	1631 CE Palace of Versailles, France Monumental gardens, are as important as the palace.	32	1819 CE Courtyard houses of Ghana ‘Atta kwame’ made from mud.
23	1636 CE Harvard University- Educational courtyards - Quiet space for gathering, reading and interaction.	33	1845 CE Victorian Drawing Rooms, Osborne House Ornate furnishings, heavy drapery, and a mix of patterns and textures.
24	1728 CE Jantar Mantar, Jaipur, India Astronomical observatory including large courtyards.	34	1859 CE Chatham Historic Dockyard, England World's most complete dockyard of the Age of Sail.
25	1734 CE Colonial American Gardens, Mount Vernon, USA Gardens of British influence.	35	1866 CE Pacific's Bailey Yard World's largest railroad classification yard
26	1741 CE English Landscape Garden, Stourhead Scenic garden for all seasons.	36	1877 CE Blohm+Voss Shipyard, Hamburg, Germany Evolution of shipyards into modern, technologically advanced facilities.
27	1745 CE Japanese Zen Garden, Ritsurin Garden, Takamatsu, Japan Embodies principles of Zen design.	37	1884 CE Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad Exquisite interior courtyard with British colonial interiors.
28	1754 CE Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, Russia Grand courtyard called 'Palace Square.'	38	1891 CE Siberian Railway Yards, Russia Main transcontinental Russian rail line connecting European and Asian cities.
29	1787 CE Palácio do Deão, Goa Mansion with a front yard of Portuguese influence.	39	1904 CE Casa Azul (Frida Kahlo Museum), Mexico City Courtyard surrounded by cobalt-blue walls.
30	1814 CE Indian Museum, Kolkatta Spacious landscaped courtyard with Colonial influence.	40	1925 CE Bauhaus Building, Germany Arranged like a Mediterranean courtyard house.

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 41 | 1930 CE
Cloisters, New York, USA
Courts, Medieval Arts & Colonnade. | 51 | 1973 CE
The Sydney Opera House, Australia
Terraces that provide panoramic views of the harbour. |
| 42 | 1931 CE
Villa Savoye, France
Modern masterpiece with garden terrace. | 52 | 1975 CE
Darlington Railway Centre, UK
Features historic railway yard. |
| 43 | 1938 CE
Villa Malaparte, Italy
Cliffhouse with an oceanic yard view. | 53 | 1983 CE
Alang Ship Breaking Yard
Largest ship recycling yard. |
| 44 | 1944 CE
The Eltham Palace, England
Art Deco interiors with a skylight showering rays of light. | 54 | 1986 CE
Jawahar Kala Kendra
Open spaces between the 9-square concept. |
| 45 | 1945 CE
The Glass House, Connecticut, USA
The surrounding landscape is let into the house, enhancing porosity. | 55 | 1988 CE
Bahrain National Museum Garden
Garden showing Bahrain's history & culture. |
| 46 | 1945 CE
Farnsworth House, USA
Steel & glass structure, letting nature in. | 56 | 1988 CE
Aga Khan Academy Dhaka
Arranged around green outdoor spaces. |
| 47 | 1948 CE
Lunuganga estate, Sri Lanka
Landscape architecture that grows with time by Geoffrey Bawa | 57 | 1989 CE
The Louvre Pyramid, Paris, France
Unconventional courtyard, surrounded by open spaces. |
| 48 | 1949 CE
Säynätsalo Town Hall by Alvar Aalto
Elements of classicism and scale by in-between spaces. | 58 | 1991 CE
Water Temple, Hyogo
Large reflecting pond above the main hall. |
| 49 | 1972 CE
Hyundai Heavy Industries Shipyard
Biggest shipyard in the world. | 59 | 1992 CE
The Getty Center, USA
Open courts with outside scenic views. |
| 50 | 1972 CE
The Kimbell Art Museum, USA
The central courtyard allows natural light into the galleries. | 60 | 2001 CE
CaixaForum, Madrid, Spain
Cultural centre, vertical garden, and large open front yard. |

- 61** **2007 CE**
Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi
Draws on Mamluk, Ottoman, and
Fatimid styles with a large courtyard.
- 62** **2009 CE**
Urban Courtyard, High Line, US
Transformed old railway track into
linear park for public space.
- 63** **2010 CE**
The Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
Features Sands SkyPark with an
infinity pool and landscaped gardens.
- 64** **2010 CE**
The Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE
Landscaped terrace at its base
- 65** **2011 CE**
Kauffman Center for the Performing
Arts, Kansas City, USA
Futuristic lobby with glass walls
- 66** **2012 CE**
Gardens by the Bay, Singapore
Futuristic Supertree Grove with
vertical gardens and urban greenery.
- 67** **2013 CE**
Pure Land, Tibet
World's highest vineyard
- 68** **2014 CE**
The Edge, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Futuristic courtyard with smart
building tech and energy-saving
sensors.
- 69** **2016 CE**
The Oculus, New York City, USA
Transportation hub and shopping
centre with futuristic structure.

- 70** **2019 CE**
The National Museum of Qatar -
Doha, Qatar
Expansive courtyard inspired by the
desert rose.
- 71** **2021 CE**
Rajkumari Ratnavati Girl's School,
Rajasthan
Circular School in a desert with a
cooling courtyard.
- 72** **2022 CE**
Common Sky -Buffalo AKG Art
Museum
Cutting-edge open-air courtyard
- 73** **2023 CE**
Pavilion for Old War Office in
Whitehall, London
Five-metre sculptural fountain
- 74** **2023 CE**
Hickoke Cole AI designed building.
Courts in between 24-storey
structure.
- 75** **For 2025 CE**
Saudi Arabia's pavilion for Osaka
Incorporates audio-visual elements
showcasing Saudi Arabia's marvels.



a yard



a yard with verandhas



a yard with terraces



a yard with shading elements



a yard within a space



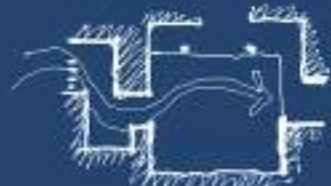
a yard bringing in a breeze



a kerala house



a rajasthan house section



a rajasthan house plan



Malnad house yard



Jaisalmer public square



a kerala house adjacent to water



a yard with a fountain, section



terrace level activity



street level activity

Yards

SANJAY MOHE
IIID INSCAPE FOLIO 02

inscape

An official publication of the
Indian Institute of Interior Designers

Powered by Nippon Paint



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Sonam Ambe

Website & Social Media

Design Brewery & Studio SHKA

IIID Office Address

109, Sumer Kendra,
Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli,
Mumbai, Maharashtra 400018
Write to us at connect@iiidinscape.com

Visit our website at www.iiidinscape.com
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Printed in Mumbai by Hira Prints Inc.
ISBN: 978-81-964873-2-4
Folio 2, April 2024

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