

# ARCHITECT

## and INTERIORS INDIA

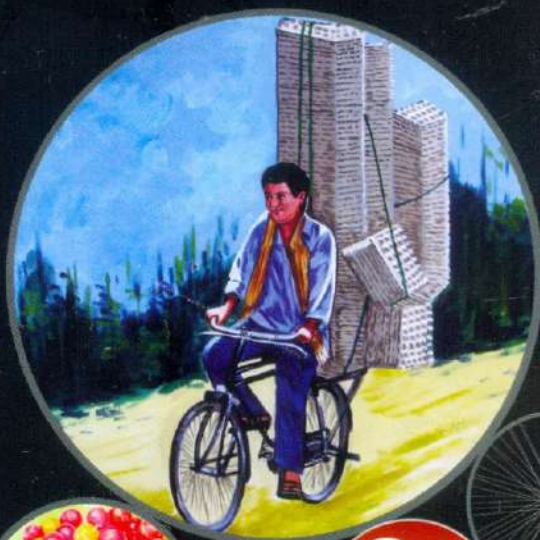
Ideas, inspiration and insight for architects and interior designers

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### SPECIAL REPORT

APSDA 2012 in Goa:  
IIID seminar on design  
for changing lifestyles



3<sup>rd</sup>  
anniversary



recycle

**iGen**  
CELEBRATING THE  
NEXT GENERATION  
OF INNOVATORS

green power



sustainability

# ROUTING FOR CHANGE





## MANISHA AGARWAL

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT, MOBILE OFFICES

“ MARKET NEEDS HAVE PRESSURED ARCHITECTS TO REALIGN THEIR FOCUS AS PER THE NEEDS OF THE CLIENT AT HAND, AND NOT AS PER SOCIETY AS A WHOLE ”

**Manisha Agarwal studied at the** Centre for Environmental and Planning Technology (CEPT), Ahmedabad, from 1990-96 to receive her diploma in architecture. In 1994, she received a fellowship for the student exchange programme at the Bezalel Academy of Arts, Jerusalem, Israel. After a brief professional training period at Reinhold Pingel in Auroville, she worked with Kiran Kapadia Associates, Mumbai, after completing her time at CEPT.

However, Agarwal asserts that is no substitute for good teaching. She is extremely grateful to her teachers, who have also been role models. “For instance, Dilip Purohit liberated our minds, Anant Raje engaged us with the discipline of architecture, Kurula Varkey put us through the iterative vigour of making, Leo Perreira introduced scales of spaces, and Neelkanth Chayya questioned the relevance of architecture,” the 39-year-old recalls.

After her degree, Agarwal pursued a course for a master’s in urban design architecture during 1998-2000 at Cornell University, New York. She was awarded the Helen Fagan Tyler Award, James M. Kittleman Award, Mary Lyons Fellowship, R.D. Sethna as well as the Ratan Tata Travel Grant, and another travel grant at Cornell University.

From 2000 to 2001, Agarwal worked as a project architect at Rafael Vinoly Architects, New York, on projects such as National Neuroscience Research Centre – NIH at Bethesda, Maryland, Mahler 4 at Amsterdam and the Barcelona Convention Centre in the Catalan city.

She has been a research and teaching assistant at Cornell University, and is



Third Eye Office in Mumbai.

currently visiting faculty at the Kamla Raheja Vidyandhi Institute of Architecture, Mumbai.

As an architect, Agarwal believes that one must work at a number of levels, starting from the grassroots at schools of architecture. “Both Shantanu [Poredi] and I [partners at MO-OF] teach at KRVI, where we connect pedagogy with practice and vice-versa. At the level of public projects, we partake in open competitions that encourage diverse ways of questioning and thinking, and finally publish and discuss critical and seminal projects that address the change that is

required in architectural thinking today. We also engage in several housing projects of varying scales, users and levels of affordability – which we consider to be one of the largest needs of the nation.”

As for the best project of MO-OF so far, Agarwal thinks it’s the recent work they did for the School of Planning and Architecture in Vijayawada. “It questions the process of learning and its manifestation in space. Here, we see the programme of learning take centre stage while the buildings become the backdrop,” she points out. ■

• Aruna Rat





## SHANTANU POREDİ

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT, MOBILE OFFICES

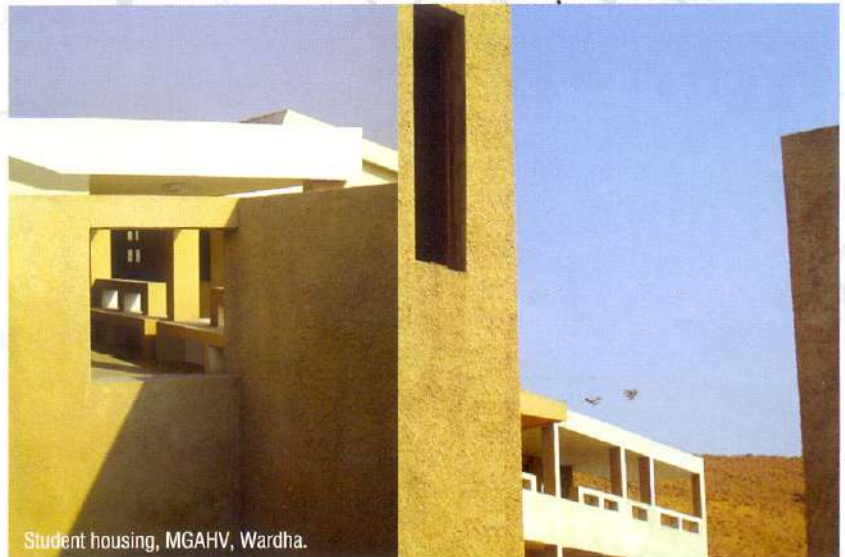
“ WE CANNOT ESCAPE UTILITY, BUT WE CAN SURELY RE-DEFINE IT AND SUBVERT THE ARCHITECTURAL INTENT ”

**Shantanu Poredi, principal architect,** Mobile Offices (MO-OF), has diverse national and international exposure in the field of architecture, in both education and practice. Founded in 2000, MO-OF offers integrated design for the built environment, encompassing master planning, urban design, architecture, landscape and interior design.

Forty-one-year-old Poredi believes: “Collaboration, for us, is about two things. One is the collaboration of people from different disciplines; and the other is the collaboration of ideas. Research is the starting point of our design methodology.”

The firm strongly believes in research that is not limited to logistical information, but to conceptual thought. “Ideas of sustainability are strong design concerns. Our intention is to bridge the gap between architecture and ecology and to create socio-cultural communities and integrated physical infrastructure systems,” says Poredi.

In the Indian context, he observes that it was post-Independence that a lot of changes took place in architecture. “A whole generation of architects responded to the larger issues that arose: what is Indian? The architects of our generation have the freedom to script a



Student housing, MGAHV, Wardha.

Photographs: courtesy MO-OF

new architectural manifest. This whole discussion seems to be missing. We are in a time which demands partnering and collaborating with the government in the process of nation-building.”

Landscape forms an integral part of MO-OF’s work. Braiding of landscape into the building environment forms a cohesive system.

Poredi observes that every project is under constant scrutiny and judgement.

As an architect, he believes that the community needs to work right from the grassroots level.

“Our current campus for the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) in Vijayawada questions the process of learning and its manifestation in space. Here, we see the programme of learning takes centre stage, whereas the buildings become the backdrop.” **AS**

• Aruna Rathod