



CONTEMPORARILY traditional



Archis & Tanvi

From being college mates to colleagues at work, Tanvi and Archis, with the realisation of sharing similar perspectives for profession and life at large, set up their design firm 'a+t associates' with a view to explore new design directions as a journey of discovery.

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“Our stern principle of practice is to generate spaces that reflect its occupants’ personality and aspirations rather than stamping our signature style repeatedly”

When you get to hear about a design firm started some three years back by a young enthusiastic designer duo, what impression first comes to your mind? I anticipated some funky places splashed with all sorts of bright colours with little meaning. To my delight, I encountered a complete contrast when I studied the works of Tanvi Rajpurohit and Archis Patel of 'a+t associates'.

Founded only in 2010, the firm has already received many accolades and appreciation for their refreshing designs. The first look at their projects is enough to ascertain there is no scope of pompous embellishments or quirky décor. It is purely young, neat and soothing. Their designs have certain ease and comfort

oozing elegance marked by richness.

“All our designs possess a basic seriousness with an injection of freshness,” Tanvi and Archis unanimously exclaim. The firm has an unparalleled flair for ‘modern simplicity’ or ‘classical minimalism.’ Their design aesthetic is marked by clean, simple and sophisticated lines, a palette of neutral colours and interesting textures. Students of A.P.I.E.D., Vallabha Vidhya Nagar, Tanvi and Archis happened to work in the same design firm at the threshold of their careers. “Archis was one year senior to me in college. We decided to team up when we were working with Mr. Dipen Gada in Vadodara. We realised that we share

similar perspective and ideology not only for our profession but also for life at large,” Tanvi shares with a glow in her eyes.

As young designers, whenever Tanvi and Archis are confused by the gush of ideas, the words of Scott Adams come to their rescue. “Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Design is to know which ones to keep!”

A space that would be recognised for its innovation and experiential quality achieved through simple yet bold language is these young designers’ forte. “Our stern principle of practice is to generate spaces that reflect its occupants’ personality and aspirations rather than stamping our signature style repeatedly. We are truly dedicated towards designing spaces that are not only aesthetically appealing but also analogous to its function and context,” Archis explains.

Archis elaborates, “It is essential to provide a unique design to each of our clients. For instance, a daughter of our client was a dance lover. Her passion was reflected in her bedroom through a mural depicting classical dancers on the wooden headboard. For another bedroom, the traditional element, locally known as ‘beading patti’ was placed aesthetically to prepare the headboard. The outcome was a literal feast to the eyes and graciously appreciated by the clients. Innovation does not need to be expensive.” Tanvi reminisces, “A client of ours wasn’t one who would appreciate extravagance for an original painting. However their centrally located double height dining space would look incomplete without an artifact. We ourselves designed 4’ x 11’ graphical panel custom-made from waste plywood available on the site and covered it with fabric of vivacious colours. Made in minimal time, this low budget artifact added the perfect artistic tint to the entire composition.”

Their designs for residential projects tend to have a unique expression of



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modern and chic décor radiating Indian ambience. This is conducive to the lifestyle of today’s urban Indian family. “Our attempt is to compose a few basic elements which would influence the entire environment and act as the focus of interest. Any overdo is abandoned,” Tanvi says.

Considering minimalism as a design philosophy, the design approach seems to play with the emptiness. Avoiding cosmetic ornamentation and embellishments, the décor is enriched with inherent graphical composition that renders the space finesse and magnetism. A walk through their designed apartment evokes the emotions of serenity and purity. Absence of any pomp generates an exhibit of innocence. The monotonous and harmonious appeal is soothing and relaxing. It has the feeling of coming home!

1. Custom-made by designer duo, the low budget graphical panel made from waste plywood covered with colourful fabric adds the perfect artistic tint to the entire composition.



2. Tanvi and Archis, researched market competition, brands and customer psychology while designing a commercial showroom

3. Innovation does not need to be expensive is depicted by the use of traditional element, 'beading patti' to prepare the headboard for a client's bedroom



"Extensive use of glass and metal is considered in vogue, irrelevant to the context and function of the building. But is it actually what one wishes for one's home or workplace? Or is it

simply a sheep like follow of the trend? This is the analytical exercise that we as designers initiated with. We concluded that undoubtedly the answer is debatable and subjective but certainly not for us. We strongly believed in designing simple and elegant spaces that are rather evergreen than flamboyant. This put our creative instincts to test as it is always difficult to be simple!" Archis elucidates.

"We strongly believe that a well crafted design outcome will work better, age gracefully and be pleasingly appreciated. There is nothing done for the sake of fashion. Research precursors the decision making stage inevitably. It helps to come up with a 'dos and don'ts' list. For example, the research for a residence demanded us to study the daily routine, habits and mindset of the occupants to generate a comfortable dwelling. While the research for a commercial showroom for sanitary products demanded us to study the market competition, brands of the product and customer psychology to deliver a profitable endeavour. Our research moreover includes study of works by masters for source of inspiration in addition to calculated anticipated future needs," Tanvi adds.

Whether it is commercial or residential, their creative instincts ensure that each and every niche and corner of the available space is functional. Their spaces in spite of being tight are never claustrophobic and spell luxury with a pleasant feeling of openness. "As beginners, we are usually encountered with tight spaces and constrained budget contrasted with elaborate wish-list. We strongly believe that more the limitations, crisper the design," Archis states.

When queried about the hyped issue of sustainable design, Archis subtly replies, "We opt for the 'less is more' mantra. Apt use of materials and energies in production as well as maintenance with maximised use of space is quintessential for any sustainable design in our definition. Adhering to simple measures that can add value to every penny spent and every material used is our concern. Easily maintainable décor helps in the long run."

Having worked with Ar. Nimish Patel and owing to her personal interest in textile designing, Tanvi seems to have cultivated sensitivity towards sustainability of Indian art and craft. "Our environmental concerns expand from materials to man himself and his sustainability. Our attempt is to encourage dwindling forms of Indian traditional art through a symbiotic gesture. What adds salt to this recipe is our personal touch given to each space through these customised hand-crafted elements," Tanvi states.

We realise that these promises are not just in words but also in acts as we find a delightful display of 'Madhubani' paintings, hand-made by a local artist, on a wall connecting the kitchen to the dining space in one of their designed residence. Minimum alteration as well as no harm to the existing structure is ensured. The spaces crafted by Tanvi and Archis are filled with ambient natural light and cross ventilation to lessen the burden on non-renewable sources. Precise craftsmanship ensures longer durability as well as lesser maintenance cost.



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"Our aim is to learn day by day. To learn from our own experiences is the greatest of all learning. Design is an endless repetitive cycle. It is the practice established with a view to explore design directions and taking design process as a journey of discovery. No design is complete in its entity. We can only strive to be better than the precious," delightfully conjures the new wedded couple. ●

Design firm 'a+t associates', founded in 2010, by Archis Patel and Tanvi Rajpurohit, is known for its contextual designs.

4. The design aesthetic is marked by clean, simple and sophisticated lines, a palette of neutral colours and interesting textures

5. The simple and informal kid's room is given depth with use of a vertical mirror