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# ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

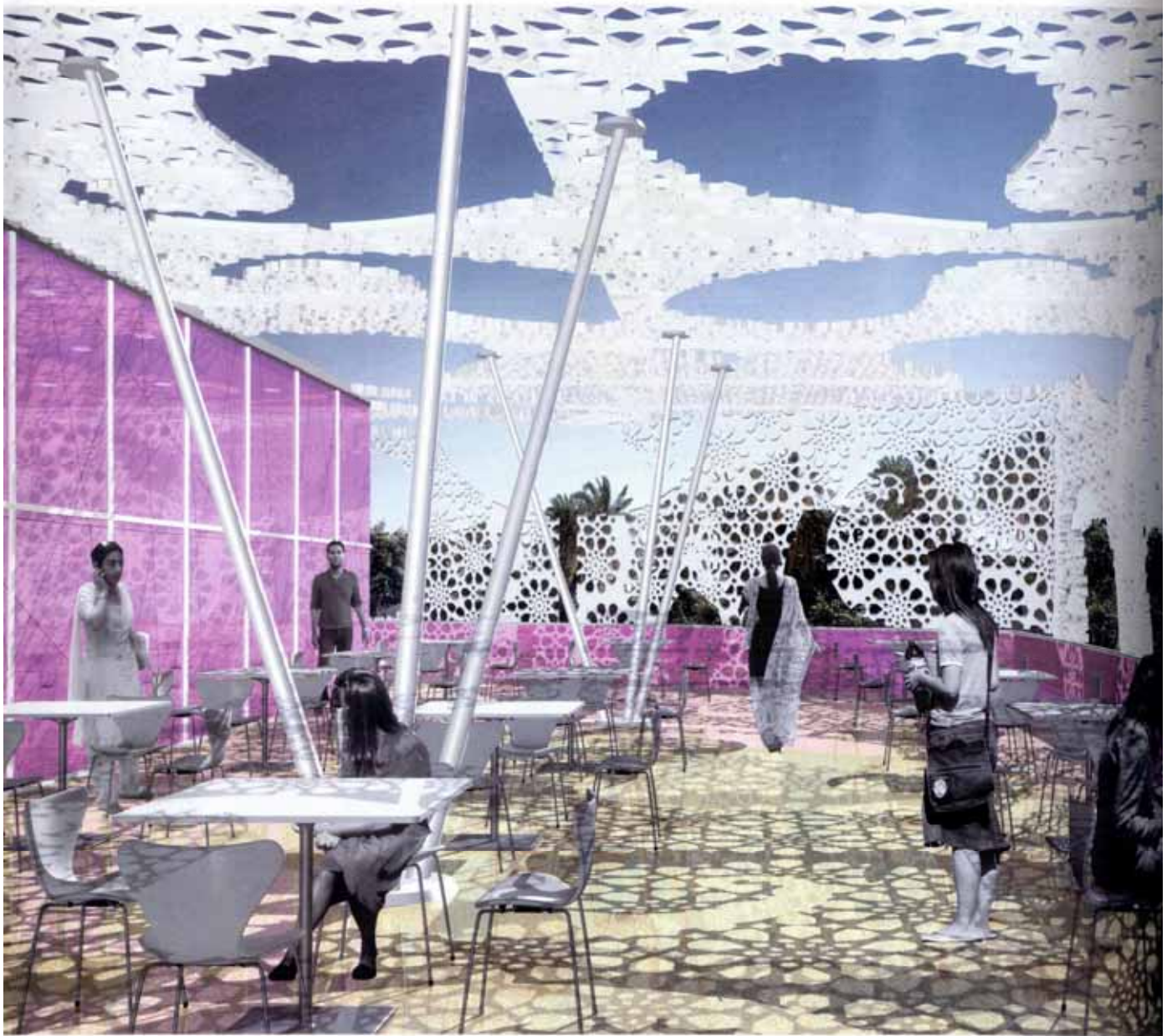
## CONTEMPORARY VIADUCT CONCEPTS

■ Innovative Interior Design ■ Lighting Talk

Innovative Interior Design

# reworking approaches

Kahean Mattoo



Food Court, Pune



These are exciting times for design in India. Young professionals challenge the established thought processes through surprising, interesting and fresh ideas. Wonderfully, a new market is rapidly emerging that wants these transformations to happen. Our studio understands some trends as follows:

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH:** We seek new challenges and look at every design opportunity with a beginner's mind. This approach of getting involved in various kinds of projects across disciplines help in cross fertilisation of ideas. Learnings from one situation, context, type can be applied elsewhere, usually with surprising results.

**Reference:** What we learned with the design of an education facility Vidyalkar Institute of Technology in terms of programming was applied in the design of Gunnebo Corporate Office, a different context but similar concerns.

**CO-CREATION:** The client is not someone to speak down to. We believe in knowing the fundamental, stated or unstated needs of the client from which great insights can be gained. Squatters from our studio inhabit and experience the client's life or work and collect mounds of data that can be mined for nuggets of inspiration. The client is made a partner in design creation from the beginning. A lot of clients today are self-aware and world-aware and it is important to tap that resource to the maximum. We ensure buy in from them at the very beginning.

**Reference:** By talking to typical patrons that frequent hospitality destinations in Bangalore, we gained the insight that it was not one monolithic demographic that we were addressing, but different groups with distinct

needs. We worked with the client in articulating our response to this, resulting in a successful outcome with 'Crossover Restaurant'.

**DESIGN-BUILD:** Any construct, be it interiors or architecture, is finally a product. This needs to be delivered at expected quality standards, within specified time frame and a budget. The reality of construction management and quality of contracting agencies leaves a lot desired. Many of our clients now insist that we as designers take singular responsibility for the design as well as delivery of the project. Through design-build, we assume the role of master builders and ethically and contractually answer for our creations in totality.

**Reference:** 'Starwood Capital' was setting up their first office in India and gave us the mandate to design and build it. We delivered within an onsite construction schedule of 22 days, while beating the design and construction quality standards of their overseas facilities.

**SHELF LIFE:** Designing for obsolescence is not such a bad thing anymore. Built to last is pointless when customer preferences change rapidly and consequently, trends shift. Nimble footedness and ability to embrace change are preferred over timelessness. Our work responds to that.

**Reference:** 'Seahorse' is a building products retail space set up in old mill warehouses. The store will move to a more permanent space in a few years. In the interim, the space had to be designed keeping in mind its early demise which influenced the choices of materials, forms and finishes.

**GLOCAL:** We learn from everywhere, our studio is connected with the latest and the best anywhere. Enabled by information technology, ideas travel



Cafeteria, Gunneto Corporate office

across the globe at dizzying speeds. Many of these hit us and we ensure in time application. Interconnectivity within a globalised design community is a reality. However, global vision stays anchored to local context; we draw from local cues as much. It is this ability to marry local to global that in some ways defines our work.

**Reference:** We designed a food court at Pune that is a contemporary glass box. The Indian context has been evoked in the 'Jali' skin that

envelopes it from outside. Providing shade in a tropical climate, it reduces the energy usage of the facility.

**FLIP:** 'Why fix it if ain't broken?' does not work anymore. If something has been done in a certain way for long, it probably needs a re-think. Challenging prior notions and truisms can open up possibilities in design. We question every thing, program sheets from clients, accepted standards, styles, trends, even us! By forcing ourselves to think out of the box, we flip ideas on their head and come up with solutions that are surprisingly different. Inventive thinking is here to stay.

**Reference:** An amenity block at the centre of a corporate park risked becoming another overbuilt eyesore. We made it a part of the landscape by running an undulating lawn over its roof. ✚

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Workstation Design