

GW INTERIORS

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Stunning Designs

by ZZ Architects, Sonali Bhagwati
and Planet 3 Studios

Russell Gilchrist

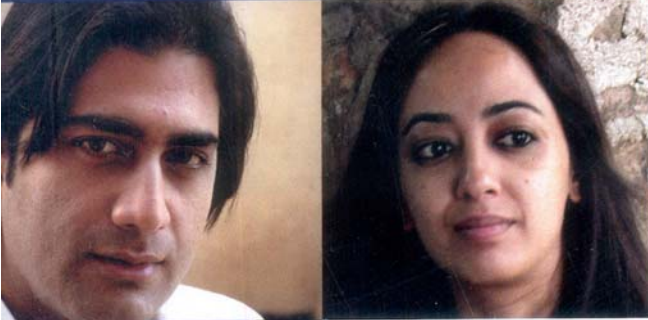
on the sustainable design of
Pearl River Tower

Red Bull's
London Headquarters

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Insights on wall décor from architects Satya Raj, Mallika Kumar, Vivek Gupta and designer Payal Kapoor.

Partners in Design



SPOUSES, BUSINESS PARTNERS AND MUTUAL MUSES, KALHAN AND SANTHA GOUR MATTOO'S ARCHITECTURAL JOURNEY IS ALL ABOUT CREATIVE PASSION, RADICAL IDEAS, TIRELESS TOIL AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

Kalhan and Santha Gour Mattoo were drawn to each other and to architecture like opposite poles of magnets. Fresh, fearless and fuelled by the desire to learn architecture hands-on, they established Planet 3 Studios Architecture Private Limited (P3S) in 1996, soon after graduating from Mumbai's JJ College of Architecture.

Initially they operated from home with pagers, and then graduated to cell phones and a small studio. Working overnight, sleeping on sites, and in other strange places, they toiled to carve a niche in the architectural world. Showcasing their talent with 'design intense' projects, they soon had their hands full with residential buildings, corporate complexes, banks, educational institutions, malls, retail outlets, restaurants and resorts.

Their innovative yet pragmatic creations have won national and international acclaim, and they have now been invited to present their path breaking Vidyalankar Institute of Technology (VIT) project at the World Architecture Festival in Spain.

Design Philosophy

Listening to the client, responding to future needs and keeping an open mind form P3S' design philosophy. Kalhan sums it up smartly, "Architecture is full of theories and 'isms' like modernism, post-modernism, minimalism etc. We don't subscribe to any of them, and prefer to be light on ideology and heavy on innovation."

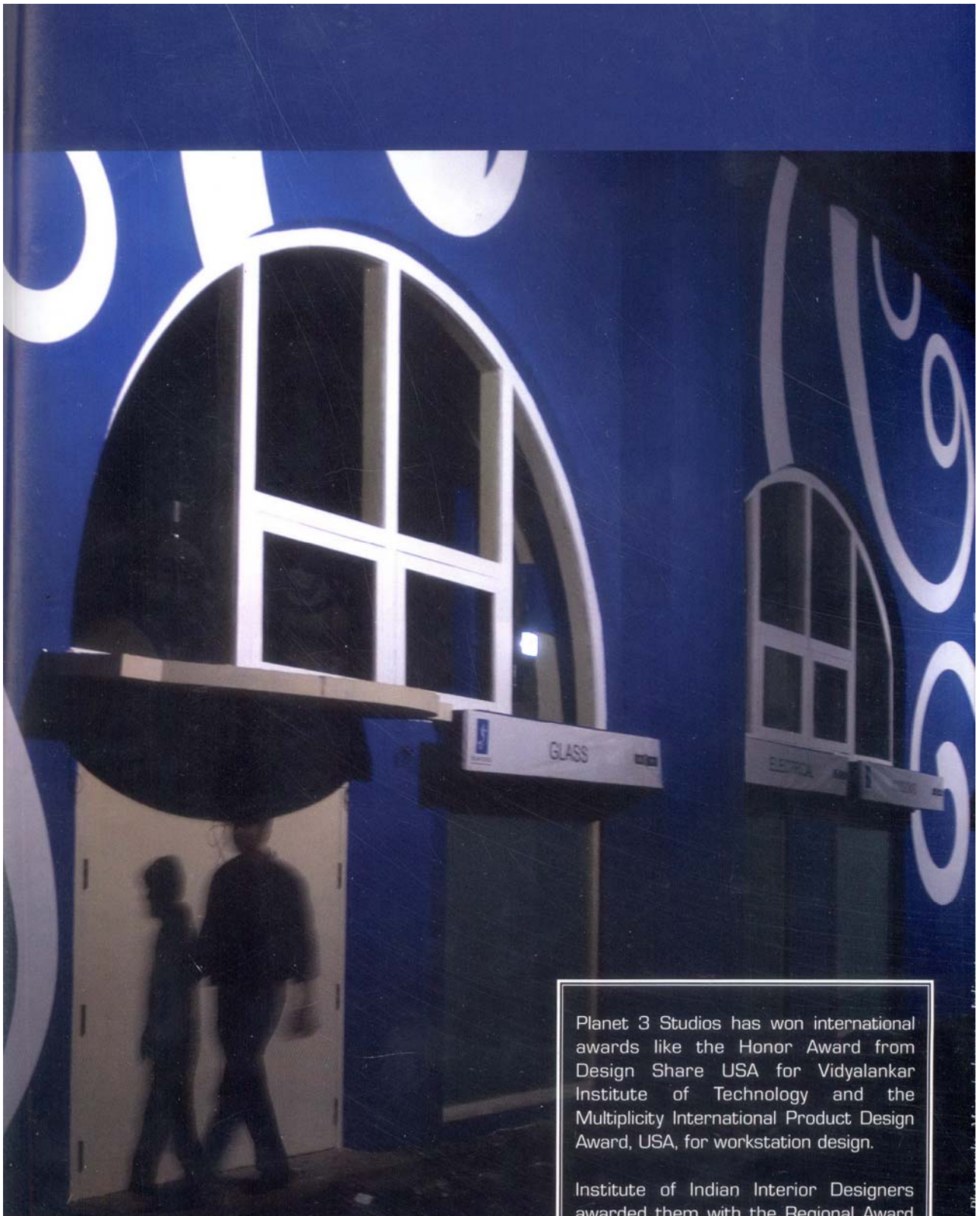
Their radical approach is evident in their designs – Mumbai's Vidyalankar Institute, a contemporary education village; the Amenity Block, Pune a commercial edifice that has a grassy knoll on a sloping roof with porous screens; and the Gunnebo India office in Thane which has an Indian baithak with swings where employees can interact.

Signature Style

Refreshingly, they don't have one. "After you do ten restaurants or offices, they start reflecting a certain line of thought, which becomes your signature style. We look at everything with a beginner's mind to learn new things and bring fresh perspectives to design," explains Santha.

The Future

An international project is coming their way and their long list of Indian projects includes an ecological resort in Coorg, a science centre in Shirdi, mixed-use developments at multiple locations, six theme restaurants in Baroda, Bengaluru and Mumbai, quite a few banks and a mall in Noida. "The future looks exciting for architects, who are willing to think differently. Not many experiment and designs are still gimmicky. But this is temporary; when customers demand a certain sensibility, then architecture will mature," says Kalhan.



Bold and beautiful...the Seahorse Building.

Planet 3 Studios has won international awards like the Honor Award from Design Share USA for Vidyalkar Institute of Technology and the Multiplicity International Product Design Award, USA, for workstation design.

Institute of Indian Interior Designers awarded them with the Regional Award for Seahorse Products Mall and the IQN Office.



► Big Picture

Landmark Creations

Vidyalankar Institute of Technology, Mumbai

Vidyalankar Dnanapeeth Trust required a modern complex to accommodate futuristic learning concepts for the entire engineering school.

P3S chose an unconventional horizontal form for a Gurukul-style contemporary education village. The building has faculty blocks along a central 'learning street'. Between blocks are leisure areas like a life-size chess-board, a table tennis court, a café, a book kiosk, a graffiti wall, and a suspended amphitheatre. The spatial connectivity of these areas encourages interaction and communal learning. The well-ventilated classrooms have soft seating, spill-out balconies and student interaction zones. An oversized sunroof brings in the sky and shields against inclement weather. The sense of space is heightened by the use of recycled shipping container material and re-engineered sleeper wood.

Crossover, Bangalore (Restaurant)

UV Hospitality wanted a multi-cuisine vegetarian eatery with open kitchens, a lounge bar, a fine dining section and an open air grill with rich and varied interiors accommodated on two levels.

The lower level has an undulating plywood wall clad in brushed stainless steel skin laminate, running the entire

Photograph: Mrigenk sharma - Indiasutra

A modern structure for futuristic learning at Vidyalankar Institute.



Photograph: Sanjay Ramchandran

► Big Picture

length of restaurant and forming the canopy for the open kitchen. The all-white acrylic kitchen has synthetic stone flooring and tabletops, gauze-like window dressing and milky polycarbonate ceiling for diffused lighting. The upper level has a conventional arrangement for the elliptical lounge straddling the terrace. Constructed from hollow tubular steel with a galvanized sheet roofing skin, its aircraft-like interior is quilted with soft faux leather.

The laminated glass flooring of the central dance floor and the flashing lasers of DJ's console add oodles of oomph and energy to the place. The dining area features an undulating roof, which replicates a canopy of leaves with supporting columns spread out as branches of a tree.

Seahorse Building Products, Mumbai (Retail)

The Sumer Group wanted to re-adapt old warehouses for retail use.

P3S kept the walls and ceiling display-free, created display islands for visual merchandise, added skylights and mechanical ventilation from steel columns anchored to the floor. They projected the brand's logo (a sea horse) on a façade in the form of painted cement asbestos sheets, to add freshness and appeal to two drab, cavernous halls. The front façade was given a subtler pattern.

Top: The elliptical lounge at Crossover Center. The tree-themed dining area of Crossover.

Bottom: The Seahorse's tail creates an elegant motif.



Photograph: Mrigank Sharma - Indiasutra



Photograph: Mrigank Sharma - Indiasutra

► Big Picture



Photographs: Indrajit Sallie

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The wooden tree sculpture at IQN.

**IQN Data Solutions
Mumbai
(Private Office)**

The flamboyant and stylish client wanted his office to reflect his personal sensibilities.

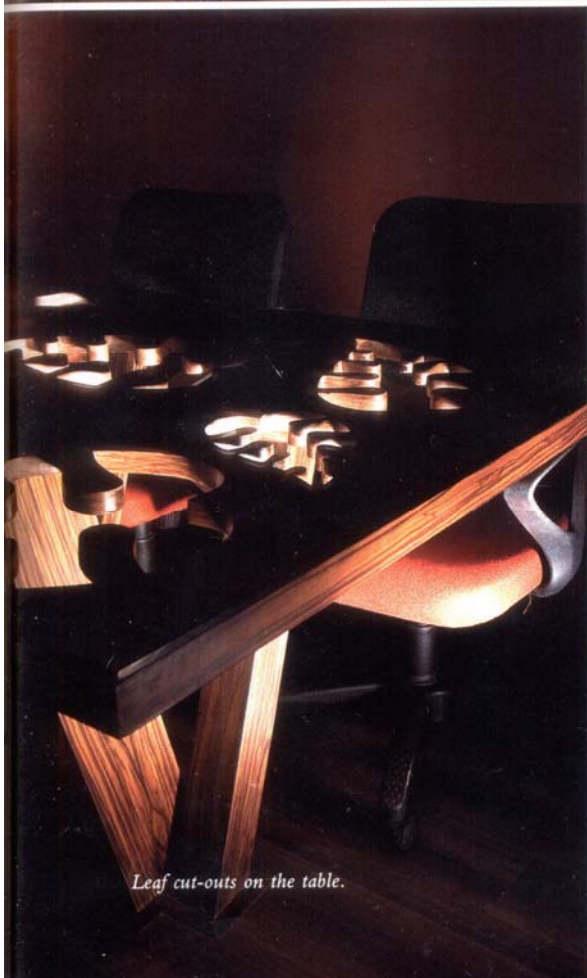
P3S defined this design with playful forms, warm colours and quirky touches. An unusual sculpture forms a part of the client's worktable, leaf cut outs adorn the conference room table to resemble a growing tree. Similar cut outs are pasted in the reception area and on client's cabin walls, while wooden shapes adorn the staff area and a charming photo frame window in the executive assistant's office overlooks the reception.



Growing tall.



Continuing with the leafy theme.



Leaf cut-outs on the table.



The quirky picture frame window.

► Big Picture



Photograph: Migrant Studio - Indicauro

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