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THE ART OF EXCELLENCE

CELEBRATING
AWARD-WINNING
ARCHITECTS



DESIGNING SPACES THAT BREATHE CONTEXT, CULTURE AND TIMELESSNESS



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Many architects create beautiful spaces, but your work has been recognised as transformative. What was the boldest design decision you ever took that initially seemed risky but ultimately redefined the project? What deeper intent anchors such choices?

In Ksaraah, a weekend retreat in rural Bengaluru, our boldest decision was to remove the idea of walls altogether. The built form fragmented and flowed with the site's contours, challenging conventional ideas of privacy and comfort. It was risky, but what emerged was a home that breathes—open corridors, shaded courts, and layered roofs mediating between shelter and sky.

Such decisions come from listening to context. Every site tells its own story—through terrain, light, and climate—and our role is to translate those cues into form. Material honesty is central to this: stone, brick, and timber sourced locally allow the building to age naturally with its environment. The goal is always to engage the senses and create spaces that feel inevitable, as if they've always belonged there.

Your work balances global design sensibilities with local cultural identities. How do you create something original yet rooted?

We don't see global and local as opposites but as complementary layers. Global design provides clarity, precision, and innovation, while Indian craft and culture bring emotion, tactility, and depth. Our process begins by studying the client's story, the site's climate, and its social context.

We reinterpret traditional elements through a contemporary vocabulary—clean lines, natural materials, and light that animates the space. A local craft may inspire detailing, or a vernacular motif might find new expression through modern geometry. By collaborating with artisans and experimenting with materials, we ensure the design feels both current and timeless, familiar yet forward-looking.



What undercurrents in society do you pay attention to in order to anticipate design needs before they become mainstream?

We find inspiration by observing how people live, rest, and interact—often between big moments. There’s a growing desire for stillness, authenticity, and emotional connection to space. At the same time, we look to the past: traditional building methods and craftsmanship hold deep ecological wisdom.

Studying how vernacular architecture responded to climate and community teaches us how to design responsibly today. Post-pandemic life, for instance, has shifted priorities toward wellness and adaptability. By combining these insights—heritage and modern living—we aim to create spaces that feel relevant now and resilient for the future.

“Shalini Chandrashekar, Principal Designer and Co-Founder of Taliesyn Design & Architecture, creates spaces that are deeply rooted in context while embracing contemporary sensibilities. Her work balances cultural identity, material exploration, and human experience, crafting architecture that resonates emotionally, engages the senses, and stands the test of time. At Taliesyn, every design tells a story that is both personal and timeless.”

Recognition is often a milestone. How has it influenced your journey, and what would you tell young designers about creating work that endures?

Recognition affirms that contextual and human-centred design still resonates in an increasingly fast-paced world. Rather than adding pressure, it encourages us to go deeper—to experiment thoughtfully and refine what we already believe in. Awards are meaningful markers, but they’re not the goal; they remind us to stay curious and true to intent.

For young designers, the focus should always be on authenticity. Don’t design for applause—design for purpose. Every project should emerge from an honest story that reflects its people and place. Consistency, curiosity, and empathy are more important than spectacle. If your work speaks sincerely to its context and time, relevance and recognition will naturally follow. ■

How do you measure architectural success—by recognition, user experience, or long-term social and environmental impact?

Success begins with human experience. If people feel connected, comfortable, and inspired in a space, it has achieved its first purpose. Client satisfaction naturally follows. Beyond that, the real measure of success lies in longevity—how a building performs socially, environmentally, and emotionally over time.

A successful project is one that ages gracefully, uses resources responsibly, and continues to serve its community. While awards are encouraging milestones, they remain secondary to creating architecture that uplifts daily life and leaves a gentle footprint on its surroundings. The most meaningful legacy is quiet endurance.

