

ARCHITECT and INTERIORS INDIA

Inspiration and insight for architects and interior designers

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Kitchen design

Serving up style

Bath fixtures

Responsible luxury

**iGen Design
Dialogue**

EAT YOUR ART OUT

WITH BICYCLE WHEELS UPCYCLED AS LIGHT FIXTURES, OLD TV SETS REPURPOSED AS BAR CABINETS AND ART INSTALLATIONS, MINNIE BHATT CREATES A PORTRAIT OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA AT +91



ILLUMINATING INTERACTION

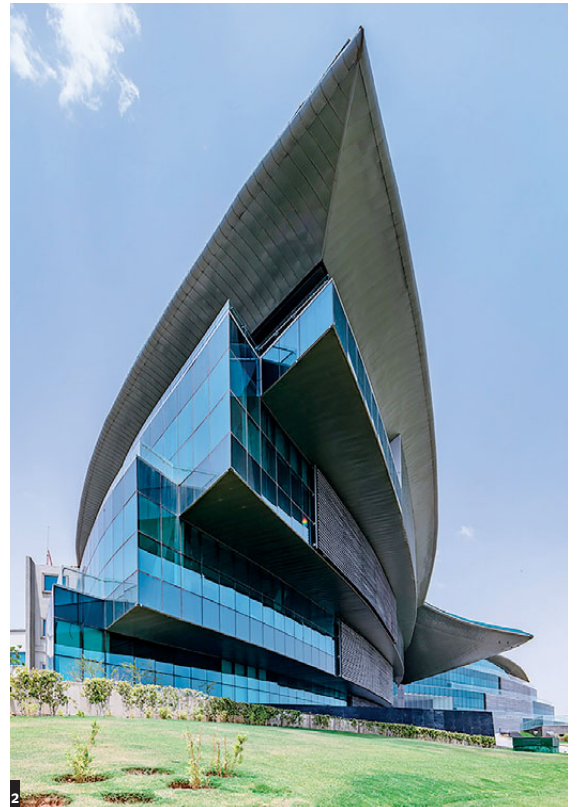
THE INAUGURAL IGEN DESIGN DIALOGUE AT JAQUAR'S GLOBAL HQ WAS AN ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

The annual iGen Design Forum is a unique day-long design and knowledge forum, which provides an excellent platform for decision makers from the architectural and interior design fraternity, along with various associations of the construction industry. Over the years, many architects, planners, designers and stalwarts of the industry have been a part of this discussion. Following the 6th edition of the iGen Design Forum, was the first-of-its-kind iGen Design Dialogue, an interactive programme organised in association with the Jaquar Group. This two-day event, which took place on August 9 and 10, 2017, offered the participating iGens the opportunity to live, experience, learn and play together.

The Dialogue took place much like an informal roundtable discussion, where each individual spoke about their design philosophy and work to those who were present. While everybody had their own personal philosophies and motivations, there were certain broad topics that were discussed that reflect the major concerns of design and the built environment today. Among these were questioning how ecologically sensitive our designs really are – a question that was put forward by Sarab Marwah of Sarab Architects & Consultants and was continually answered during the discussion on ideologies.

A common theme was the idea of collaboration, stressed on greatly by Harsh Boghani of The Crossboundaries, who aims to bring together art and design. As a sister firm to his father's architecture company, he is able to cross the boundaries between the two – exploring where and how they meet.

Another interesting collaborative team is DAC's Shyam Sekhar Menon and Siji Rehana, who (along with their third partner, Brijesh Shaijal) form a creative collaboration based out of Bengaluru and Calicut. In their own words, they are a team made up of a dreamer, a decision-maker and the guy who gets the work done – brought together by their belief



1. The iGen, developing into a community of sorts, share thoughts and ideas after the factory tour and visit to the Jaquar Group's global headquarters in Manesar.

2. Jaquar Group's global headquarters in Manesar.

that the architect is not a superhero; there is no master, but there can be a masterpiece. With their projects ranging from residences to commercial centres, in locations from Kerala to the Middle East, it is clear that their collaborative principles and focus on the project is headed in the right direction.



Yet another aspect of the collaborative design process was put forward by Anu and Prashant Chauhan of Zero9, the latter famous among the group for his 360 degree camera – which informally made him the designated group photographer. This married duo believes that ‘design is boundless’ and bring together the four verticals of interiors, architecture, exhibitions and advertising. With their interior projects, they believe in adding smart technology to the day-to-day processes and experimenting with sustainability in their sites – for instance, in a particular project they crafted solar panels in the form of leaves to be built around their concept. Another interesting problem they tackle is the lifecycle of an exhibition – instead of creating a display that must be removed, they design to make it possible to reconstruct like a movable piece of art – cost efficient, but also logical. All their projects are client-centric, as they believe their designs and desires reflect their identity. This can be seen in their advertising projects as well, which they approach with the clear focus of presenting a concept into an exact media channel.

EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

The visit to the Jaquar Group’s factory in Bhiwadi was a revelation of sorts. The entire facility is a zero wastage site, ensuring that all the materials are either reused or recycled - an incredible feat considering how extensive the manufacturing process is. This factory is the producer of various styles of faucets and fixtures. The tour commenced by understanding the process that is followed to create a single unit.

All Jaquar Group products, whether they are associated with their Artize, Jaquar or Essco brands, ensure a certain minimum standard of quality. This is all possible because of their use of advanced technology, which was an interesting topic of discussion among the iGens. Because of the technology available, the factory is able to manufacture 32 different designs in 90 seconds. Discussions about the use of semi-automatic machinery, recognition of several machines, and exclamations over ones that had been modified, punctuated the tour.

The Jaquar Group has an extensive portfolio of designs and finishes in their catalogue, which was also a major topic of discussion. The facilities proved that the company believes in providing its users with quality, durability and flexibility to give them the right choice using their advanced setup. At the end of the tour, not only did the participants have greater faith in Jaquar products - but they also began to bridge the gap between provider and consumer, offering feedback and learning much more about the products they were already recommending to their clients.

Maitri Kalapi Buch of Sfurna Designs derives her design philosophy from Indian principles, attempting to learn from what we already have and discovering what India has to offer us. She divulged that her professor once told her, ‘if you continue working like this, then the architect will be born out of you,’ a principle that she truly believes – and this is evident in her company’s projects, such as the retail showroom she designed in Rajkot. Her exploration of design goes beyond the typical use of material. In fact, she is developing her own version of architecture, which she has called ‘musitechture’, inspired by music and the extraction of the Mandala concept. Her primary concern is captured by the principle to ‘let art prevail in the smallest of acts’.

On the other hand, the Darshan Medhi of Darshan Medhi Architects clearly stated that he was not romantic about architecture, calling himself and his team ‘brick, cement and concrete people.’ Despite this, he has worked on some of the most interesting projects including stadiums, health clubs and sports centres as well as a stud farm. He also developed an affordable housing unit as large as 20 lakh sq-ft. Medhi attributed a large part of his beliefs to his experiences – his education at Westminster College; his work with Sir Michael Hopkins and, subsequently, architect Prem Nath; and, finally, his own firm and the Indian market.

Kiron Cheerla of Kiron Cheerla Architecture believes

3. The group enjoys a welcome respite with chai, coffee and conversation after the factory tour.

4. Maitri Kalapi Buch in conversation with the Jaquar expert and guide.

5. Prashant Chauhan is curious about the manufacturing process.



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in the fundamental principles of architecture that involve responding to the context, site conditions and people around – so that each project is totally fresh. His attempt at design comes from finding the best way to make everyone happy.

Kalyan Chakraborty and Arindam Ghosh of Polaris approach their designs with the belief that good architecture can lead us to a better future. Their designs strive to add value to the site, and begin with analysing the project and identifying the problems. They are focused on understanding what makes a building work, how spaces can be made functional rather than just built, and how to change and alter experiences in built spaces.

Coming to experiences of spaces, Shivani Sanghani of Kyrra Studio spoke about how she strives to be true to a material in her work. While she began her interior design projects during her second year as a student, her portfolio, her techniques and her innovation have only been increasing and developing since then, with her branching into fields like wedding organisation, taking care of details as large as the decor and as small as the invitations. To be true to her material, she believes in being careful not just with the use of materials, but even with the number and the choice – opting to use a single material innovatively, rather than multiple materials.

Vyoma Patwa of Design Lab Vyoma described her style as holistic and functional and as a focused move away from overdesigning. Her range of projects include residential and hospitality interiors and a focus towards innovation in design to make it satisfactory, minimalistic and functional.

On the other hand, Pravir Sethi of Studio Hinge attempts to avoid any singular style and does not wish to fall into the dangers of repetition. Instead, his designs are hinged together by their attention to detail (he even customises the furniture

6. The manufacturing facility for Jaquar Lighting at the global headquarters.

7. Rajesh Mehra, director & promoter, Jaquar Group, indicates the finer points of the product to Pravir Sethi.

8. A ringside view of Jaquar's latest innovations in showering products.

FAVOURABLE FEEDBACK

Prashant Chauhan of Zero 9:

I believe these kind of interactive sessions make the entire process of design very engrossing. Not only does the brand connect get stronger with professionals like us who regularly use the products without knowing much about technicalities or the process, but it also brings us to a platform where we can bring our ideas to the table - which then can be explored for customisation. Moreover, Jaquar displayed great hospitality and warmth.

It makes us proud to have been using Indian products which are at par with global ones, participating in the vision for a skilled nation with manufacturing expertise.

Darshan Medhi of Darshan Medhi Architects:

I think the level of back-of-the-house manufacturing that goes into the making of these products can be experienced closely and details could be developed to take these designs to the next stage; it's very much a learning experience for us all. Thanks for this, Bibhor, Karishma and Maria.

for all his projects) and the exploration of folds and materials. He believes that a thing of value would make you notice a new nuance about it every time you look at it.

One of the most interesting topics of discussion, however, was that of technology and design – of which Sushant Verma of RAT [lab] is a practitioner. Involved not only in research in architectural technology, he also has an education forum to encourage this interest among students and professionals. He believes that the role of the designer keeps changing with technology, and that machinery and programs can now be used not just for research and development – but also in the process of designing. He has shown this by looking at projects in all scales, including analytical programs that measure proximity, traffic, etc.

Such a belief is also favourable among the Jaquar Group, as they aim to use cutting-edge technology in their designs. These discussions made the forum the perfect catalyst for the kind of collaborative design that was being discussed. This excursion offered the iGens not only an opportunity to explore what Jaquar is about, but also to open themselves up to a national forum of design discussion and action. After all, everybody present had a common goal – to create something and provide solutions through architecture and design.

However, this was not the only interaction that took place. Since the Dialogue was scheduled for the end of Day 2, the iGens as well as the organisers had already had a chance to meet and interact, starting from the first lunch at the Trident



9. Lighter moments: The iGen with editor Maria Louis at the entrance of Jaquar's brand experience studio designed by Michael Foley; (inset) Sarab Marwah and Shivani Sanghani strike a pose with a chandelier from Jaquar Lighting.

10. At the in-house showroom of Jaquar's sanitaryware, lighting and wellness products.

11. A photo opportunity with the organisers before the group left for home.

Hotel in Gurgaon, where the group was accommodated. The sprawling resort was perfect for initial introductions, as the experience of the space added to the idea of being secluded and away from the chaos of the Millennium City. The first meeting took place over lunch at the hotel's restaurant following the arrival of the iGens from cities such as Chandigarh, Vadodara, Calicut, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Mumbai – before they all proceeded together for the factory tour.

The Jaquar Group, which is steadily and rapidly expanding, is a part of the sanitaryware, wellness and lighting segments, establishing itself as one of the frontrunner manufacturing companies. Among their facilities is a factory in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan that is sprawled over 35,000sq-m. As part of the Design Dialogue, the Jaquar Group invited the iGens to a guided tour of their facilities and factory to acquaint them with the manufacturing process and make them aware of what sets the Jaquar Group apart from its competitors.

Even more impressive than the factory in Bhiwadi is the Jaquar Group's global headquarters in Manesar. Conveniently situated so that it has an abundance of space and easy connectivity, the global headquarters has been designed by Gayathri & Namith Architects. The building has a form that resembles an eagle spreading its wings, reminiscent of Eero Saarinen's JFK terminal and Zaha Hadid's London Aquatic Centre, only strengthening the brand's connections to the global market. The form is also symbolic of the flow of water, as well as an eagle soaring higher and higher – just like the brand has continually done. Thus, the building is not just an office; it is also a factory, a showroom and a representation of the brand itself; its culture, its people and its growth.

This building also houses the manufacturing plant for Jaquar's lighting fixtures, among other products. Like the company's products, the structure's construction and operation shows great concern for conservation and ecology. The 12-acre net-zero property is LEED certified and powered by

solar energy, with an energy-efficient insulated glass system.

Along with offices, a factory and showroom for their sanitary, wellness and lighting products, the global headquarters also houses a brand experience studio designed by Bengaluru-based Michael Foley Designs. Following the concept of the building, this inner shell is based on the idea of 'the art of sculpting water'. The entire project is a walkthrough of the Jaquar Group experience, documenting its rise and growth.

Each segment incorporates a different aspect of its ideology, brought to life by the concept of Rasa, the quality of emotions in the classical dance form of Bharatanatyam. The design is as much an experience as an exhibit, capturing all the moods of water and the emotions that correspond with it. Like the steady movement of a river, the viewer flows from one room to another, one mood to another. The defining feature of this studio is its intense attention to detail, along with a superior use of technology – the features include high-definition screens, artistic displays and use of steam to give the experience an ethereal feeling. Each segment was greatly enjoyed by the iGens, making the visit more than a visit to an office – it was truly memorable for each one of them!

This interaction and the various activities encouraged the young architects and designers to get to know each other, their work and philosophies. Travelling, eating and experiencing the Jaquar Group's facilities together led to a deeper understanding of what each individual is bringing to the industry. Dinner and drinks at the end of the first night brought out the 'play' aspect and united the iGens through their shared experiences – the number of which can be clearly seen by how late into the night the programme ran.

The inaugural iGen Design Dialogue was an incredible success, creating an environment of shared ideologies and an experience that's more rewarding and memorable than sitting in a boardroom or conference hall. It was a brief respite from reality, but also a celebration of it. **AB&**