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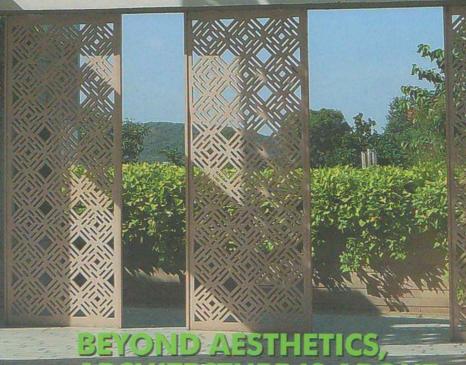
IN DETAIL: ARCHITECT PREM NATH AND ASSOCIATES

SHARING SHELTER
WITH NATURE

RELEASE REWIND: ARCHITECT DOMINIC DUBE

COMMON NOTIONS

AESTHETIC GROUNDS: ARCHITECT KEVIN LOW



MASTERS: ARCHITECT B. V. DOSHI

# Structured fluidity for the soul

**Text:** Bhavana Dhaman and Tina Garg **Photos:** M:OFA Studio





Unleashing fluidity of thought, imagination, ideas, and the self is the free-flowing interiors of the building.



Giving roof to some of the school's art pieces

"All architecture is shelter, all great architecture is the design of space that contains, cuddles, exalts, or stimulates the persons in that space," influential American architect Philip Johnson said. A structure becomes more than the exterior envelope of its inhabitants when it tunnels its way through to the very core of its residents – even temporary residents such as students. The very embodiment of this architectural philosophy is the campus of ITM School of Business, Gwalior, designed by Manish Gulati, Principal Architect and Director of M:OFA.

hough a prominent and dominating site on National Highway No. 75, the campus of ITM School of Business merges with ease with the site's surroundings and compliments its neighbour, the majestic Aaravalli Ranges, with grace and humility. At first glance, any onlooker is awakened to the building's unique structural characteristics.



The school's jali work welcomes you with a promise of shade from the Gwalior sun

# AT FIRST SIGHT

The outside walls of the main building of the business school's campus reflect tradition sprinkled generously with doses of modernity. The use of locally sourced white *Dholpur* sandstone for these external walls not only promotes and demonstrates a feather-light environmental footprint but also keeps alive Gwalior's architectural heritage. The four clear-coloured solid walls, though constitute a controlled environment, is in no way limiting.

# BREAKING FREE

"We wanted to give ITM students a space that would help the growth and maturing of their minds and provide them with a non-straight-jacketed oasis that would allow them to transcend to a whole new level," Gulati says on the genesis of the school's design.

Unleashing fluidity of thought, imagination, ideas, and the self is the free-flowing interiors



of the building. The educational institution, built on the principles of the Indian Courtyard, provides students with a large open space in the centre that allows self-internalisation, introspection, self-discovery and solace, yet allowing meaningful interactions, thereby accentuating a feeling of openness and freedom. The clean grey walls, the oval-shaped water body, and modern landscape designs on the floor reflect the enterprising and entrepreneurial spirit of the students looking to create a niche amidst the sometimes constraining and rigid world of business.

The expansiveness showcased with large courtyards, mirrored on the first floor, provides natural ventilation keeping the building sustainable and eco-friendly owing to the minimised usage of artificial lights during the day. The fluidity of the ground level extends to the first with the help of an effusive, curvaceous modern ramp, with simple, evenly distributed steel railings.



The school's parasol roof stands proudly on slender columns



# SCREENS FOR SHADE, SERENITY

One of the most prominent features of this building, on the ground and first floor, is the exquisite, modern-pattern-infused traditional architectural decoration and artistic expression, the *jali*, making ITM among the first few educational institutions to employ *jali* work. The *jali* work acts as a vertical extension of building's open courtyards. The building's *jali* 

work, standing tall at six metres and facing west, cuts the harsh Gwalior sun's glare. "The building's *jali* work protects it from the location's harsh weather, yet creates an architectural statement," says Gulati. These white *Dholpur* sandstone screens are not just an aesthetic treat that cast interesting shadows and play with light but also an architectural must for the high temperatures of Gwalior. The building keeps Gwalior's tradition of *jali* work alive, always



Stairway to green, eco-friendly heaven



The school's one-of-a-kind white dholpur sandstone jali

## FACT FILE

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT

ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT

ARCHITECTS

: MANISH GULATI

: ABHINAV CHAUDHARY

: PURUSHOTTAM ARAMBAM

PRIYANKA MAHAJAN

SABYASAACHI GHOSH

YEAR OF COMPLETION

: 2010

TOTAL BUILT UP AREA

: 24,000 SQ. FT

reminding the students to embrace the new and advanced, while staying true to their self.

## NATURAL AIR-COOLING

Keeping high temperatures at bay and lowering air-conditioning costs is the building's parasol roof. Acting as the building's second floor, on slender columns, the roof provides a sense of relief to the inhabitants and makes the ITM School of Business a truly green building. Because of the building's open centre, the building's hot air rises to the top and collects



Strong art that brings together two corridors on the first floor

there. The open parasol roof allows the hot air to escape, creating convection currents and a natural air-cooling system. Adding to this natural cooling system is the greenery in and around the building. The plants on the first level retain moisture, thus helping keep the ground level's air mild and refreshing.

### **ART-RICH CAMPUS**

In addition, stimulating students' minds are the pieces of art that the campus houses. The building exhibits its fluidity in its ability to provide shelter to art pieces from artists across the globe who gather each year at the school as part of an art symposium. The building pays homage to these artistic expressions without overpowering them, thus encouraging unconventional thinking in students. The whole emphasis then is on appreciation of art for the holistic development of learning minds.

## **FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY**

The campus of ITM School of Business not only establishes the benefits of scientific, economical and ecofriendly structures that are independent of mechanical means, but also is a testimony to the advantages of effective, impactful, soul-sustaining architecture. This public space is an example of M:OFA's mission to provide the subcontinent's urban landscapes with



Fluid, modern floor designs for the fluidity of the mind

sustainable architectural and design solutions. According to Gulati, "The studio aims at and provides functional, soul-elevating, inspiring and freeing structures, and we will continue to strive towards forward-thinking, cost-effective sustainability."