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## APOORVA SHARMA

ASSOCIATE, ARCHITECT HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR, MUMBAI

Since her childhood, Apoorva Sharma was keen to pursue Fine Arts or Commercial Arts. But a visit to the studio of a family friend, who was a leading architect in Nagpur, set her on a different course. "I observed her working style, went for site visits, sat through client presentations and enjoyed the whole process. That vacation engraved in my mind that, come what may, I have to be an architect," she recalls.

Inspired by different design favourites during her college days at the School of Architecture, IPS Academy, Indore, she says, "Each style of architecture has its own charm and beauty. I'm equally inspired by Le Corbusier as I am by Antoni Gaudi. I find deconstructivism as appealing as I find classical architecture."

Her biggest training ground has been her work with Architect Hafeez Contractor since 2004. Sharma states, "While I was studying architecture, Hafeez Contractor was making waves in the entire country. Getting an opportunity to work with him and learning something new every single day is a dream come true."

The firm has been dedicated to providing excellence and efficiency along with sophistication in building technology. She emphasises, "We believe that architecture should be honest and respond to the spirit of the time characterised by distinct ideas, disparate missions, contrasting convictions and divergent preferences."

Educational campuses are close to her heart, and her team has designed some of the best – Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS) (Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad), Manipal University (Jaipur), Manipal County (Bengaluru), Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (Raebareilly, Assam, Bengaluru).

Sharma would personally love to design a museum of art or technology. Although she says each project is significant in its own right, she recalls with fondness the new academic building at BITS Pilani. "We had," she says, "a unique concept of taking the ground plane down up to nine metres below the surrounding level, to maintain the axis between the iconic Clock Tower and the Saraswati temple. While doing this, we ensured complete natural light and ventilation, and have beautifully manicured greens at the grade level."

Another exciting and path-breaking project, a work in progress, is a hotel and convention centre in Delhi, which aspires to be the largest hotel in the country. Sharma discloses, "We are conceptualising the complete building in structural steel. Though you see some great buildings abroad such as Pompidou Centre, Paris, in India it's going to be the first of its kind."

She firmly believes that art is an integral part of architectural design, adding: "Architects love innovation; we are usually on the lookout for the latest innovation in materials and products, which we can incorporate into our inevitably innovative designs. While material is a crucial aspect, the soul of any project is its concept and form. So, innovation in architecture is a blend of innovative forms, concepts and materials."



**PROJECT**  
BITS Pilani, Rajasthan