

SOCIETY

A MAGNA PUBLICATION
www.magnamags.com

INTERIORS

₹ 75 January 2014

TOTAL 300 PAGES



Prakash Gulati

Vinod &
Shalini Bachala

Rahoul & Lakshmi Singh

Devika
Bansaljee

Hameeda & Anir Sharma

Superstars of
Design



CREATIVITY PERSONIFIED

Devika Banerjee is one of the most respected interior designers in Kolkata owing to her sleek and understated designs and use of locally-available resources. Her Kolkata-based firm **Designers Guild** comprises of a bunch of bubbling young talents constantly pushing the envelope of creativity.



Since 1998, Devika Banerjee of Designers Guild has strived to design spaces that promote local artisans. She also feels strongly about our dependence on fossil fuels and is of the view that architecture must focus on reducing energy consumption, especially in areas such as HVAC and lighting. At present, the firm is working on a jewellery showroom interiors and refurbishment of an MNC's regional office.



D

evika Banerjee speaks to *Society Interiors* about her passion for designing.

What motivated you to become an interior designer?

After my foray into furniture and fashion designing in the 80s, interior designing was a lateral move. The first opportunity arose with the refurbishing of prime properties for overseas investors in London. My first project in India was an experimental one. I had to do up the regional office for Pal-Peugeot, which went on to receive tremendous critical acclaim.

What are the challenges you encounter when designing?

The major challenge in any custom design project is to find essential meeting points between client's expectations and my design sensibilities. In corporate design, this is relatively easier as the variables are not many nor substantial. However, it is a bigger challenge in retail, recreational and residential projects. Having found the points of convergence, one has to then expand on those to create a product that is functionally and aesthetically holistic. The budget is invariably a challenge too.

What has been your favourite project so far?

My favourite project is the first one in India, back in 1998. I was commissioned by Pal-Peugeot to do their new regional office of 1,000 sq. ft. area in Kolkata. The client gave me a free-hand with the design, but with a tight budget. This office was featured in three of India's leading design magazines and got me started on building Designers Guild.



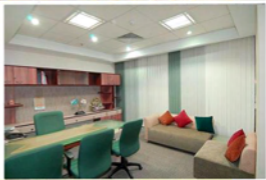
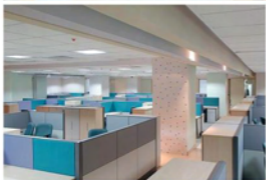
BROTHERHOOD NETWORK OFFICE FOR ABP GROUP

Among her varied projects, we bring you three that are close to Devika's heart.

BROTHERHOOD NETWORK OFFICE FOR ABP GROUP

This was an office for Brotherhood Network, a new ITES start up for the Ananda Bazar Patrika Group. The sleek Brotherhood network office has an interesting flowing model for cubicles with zigzag patterns. The furniture, designed by Devika herself, is unusual in terms of shape and colour. "We bagged this project through a competition and had to work on an extremely tight schedule. The design process was very satisfying as the client was in sync with our design sensibilities. The challenge was getting some of the more experimental designs executed," says Devika.





NESTLÉ REGIONAL OFFICE IN RAJARHAT

Yet again, Devika's firm won this project through an all-India competition. The main challenge she faced was to improvise the design ethos of a global brand like Nestlé and inject some elements of originality. "From our experience, we knew that even venerable corporates are normally quite indulgent when it comes to designing the reception area. So, we let our imagination flow for this space." The familiar birds nest logo, therefore, was perched in a forest of trees that formed the backdrop to the reception desk. The reception table got a rough-edged, yet elegant look from a medley of wooden logs. Inside the office, a long partition wall was ridged symmetrically in pastel shades. Selected columns within the work area got a polka dots treatment to break the monotony.



PAL PEUGEOT'S EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

"Most visitors used to comment that Pal-Peugeot's office, completed early in 1998, didn't quite look like it was involved in selling and servicing cars," quips Devika. For this project, she ensured the optimal use of natural lighting, streaming in through large windows on two sides which created a bright, cheerful look. To ensure uninterrupted flow of light, two partitions in the office are made of transparent acrylic, while the third one is in large perforated aluminum sheets hung from the ceiling with coloured twine. The conference room and the visitors' lounge are enveloped in a floor-to-ceiling elliptical partition in sheer acrylic, tethered with custom-made acrylic channels. The use of acrylic gave a chic look to the decor. "Three trenches under the floor (this was before the days of LAN trunking) carried electrical, plumbing and AC lines across the office's width to provide infrastructural flexibility for future adaptations," she adds.

Devika's projects are not just aesthetically pleasing but are functionally-efficient spaces showcasing her ability to strike the right balance.

CONTACT DETAILS

DESIGNERS GUILD

4C, Orient Row
 (Next to Park Circus maidan)
 Park Circus
 Kolkata 700017
 6033 2283571
 9830773040
 www.designersguild.net