

# Architect Sheila Sri Prakash, Shilpa Architects Planners Designers



"I take my role as an architect seriously because my thoughts and actions are bound to have a lasting impact on people, society and the planet. What I'm striving to achieve is holistic sustainability through design. Space can make or mar the quality of life. My sensitivity to space comes from dance. In dance, a notional space and characters are created. In architecture, one creates the ambience and elements that give expression to the residents' dreams. Dance has influenced my thinking as an architect."

**Ar. Sheila Sri Prakash**

## Architects Behind the Big Projects

Sheila Sri Prakash is a pioneering first woman Architect and Designer in India, who, in 1979, founded her own Architectural Design firm 'Shilpa Architects,' in Chennai which has now emerged as a forerunner in environmental-friendly design and sociologically sensitive planning.

Graduated from School of Architecture & Planning, Anna University, in 1977, and also having attended the 12 weeks executive education program at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, Ar. Sheila had faced several obstacles to establish herself in a male-dominated profession. Her hard work and dedication towards architecture and design have paid her back and today she is internationally acclaimed for her trendsetting indo-centric designs, thought-leading contributions to environment-friendly design and is also renowned for developing world through socio-economically sensitive planning.

As a global leader in sustainable design that blends sensitivity for the environment with socio-economic progress for the underprivileged, she is also known for introducing vernacular and culturally relevant techniques into contemporary designs. She is regarded as the founding

practitioner-researcher who identified and defined the field of Spaciology- the impact of space design and planning on society. Her work probes the powerful reciprocal impact linking the built environment to human behavior, through urban design, architecture, and sociology.

In a career spanning more than three decades, Sheila has designed over 1,000 completed architectural projects. She is one of a 16-member team of international experts on the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Design and Innovation and serves on the Role of Arts in Society, in recognition of her signature works of Visionary architecture that features art, culture and heritage. Besides, she was named among the Top 100 most influential architects in the world by Il Giornale dell' Architettura, an Italian Journal of Architecture. Her recommendations to the United Nations 2012 Rio+20 Summit in Brazil, have been adopted in the mandate for Sustainability presented to heads of nations. The sustainability matrix titled "Reciprocal Design Index" prescribes parameters and metrics surrounding sustainable design to factor the environment, sociology and economics. Based on her research, she





# Architect Pavitra Sriprakash, Shilpa Architects Planners Designers



has spearheaded the “Reciprocity Wave” movement, which uses art to create awareness about social and ecological issues that need immediate attention.

Sheila’s award-winning international Architectural Design firm, Shilpa Architects Planners is acclaimed for pioneering work in environmentally and socioeconomically sustainable design. The firm’s portfolio spans the entire range of the real estate industry which includes residential buildings, custom designed villas, mixed use townships; infrastructure facilities; leisure, health and hospitality projects; industrial assignments; retail, commercial and IT related buildings; educational campuses, stadiums and sports facilities amongst others. The firm worked with—and is working for—Developers, Foreign Direct Investment funds, Multi-National Corporations, leading Indian Business Houses, Government, Private and Public sector companies, Co-operative societies and NGOs and has received several recognition for its design.

In 2009, Shilpa acquired SGBL Studio (Sri Prakash, Gullo, Brossa & Leenknecht), which is an Architecture and Urban Design firm. With offices in Chicago, New York and Seoul, this company has executed projects globally including the US, Belgium, Norway, China, Japan, Kuwait etc. Shilpa also executes high-end turnkey design-build solutions through a division called

Stone Lotus. Being focused on green and sustainable architecture, the firm has been a steering member of the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC). With its own LEED Certified professional in house, Shilpa is in the advantageous position of designing and simultaneously facilitating the process for LEED Certification.

Truly a multifaceted personality, Ar. Sheila has not only received several accolades in the world of architecture but also has proficiency in Indian classical dance and music with training to the highest performance levels. She was fortunate to have been trained by masters like Guru Dhandayuthapani Pillai who taught her Bharathanatyam, a classical Indian dance form; and Kuchipudi, another classical dance form, from Guru Vempatti Chinna Sathyam. She has performed in over 700 Bharathanatyam and Kuchipudi recitals all over India at both solo performances as well as in dance dramas with school troupes. Besides this, she has danced with professional and renowned personalities like Ms. Kamala Laxman, Ms. Padma Subramaniam, Ms. Hema Malini & Ms. Lakshmi Viswanathan etc.

Moreover, also being a Veenai artist, she has the distinction of playing, composing and recording Radha Madhavam and Sivaleela Vilasam with the world-renowned Veenai musician – Chitti Babu.



A big advocate of sustainability and urban design, Ar. Pavitra Sriprakash believes that sensitivity to local ethos is crucial in designing space that people respond to. Her design philosophy focuses on innovative solutions for environmental and socioeconomic sustainability.



## Architects Behind the Big Projects



Following the same career path and philosophy as of her mother, Ar. Pavitra Sriprakash, daughter of Ar. Sheila Sri Prakash stepped into the world of architecture & design and in a very short period of time has earned lot of recognition.

She spent most of her childhood playing with drawing board and watching her mom sketching and designing outstanding projects. This fascinated her to enter into architecture field and show her in-built talent and creativity. Currently, the Chief Designer and Director at Global Design Studio of Shilpa Architects which is an acclaimed design house that draws inspiration from cultural values that are distinctly rooted in the sub-continent, fusing vernacular methods with modern design and construction practices, Ar. Pavitra has completed her Masters in Architecture and Urban Design from Columbia University

and a Bachelor Degree in Architecture from School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University. Besides, she has done research on "Sustainable Programmatic Landscapes" and the interface between architecture and landscape design in planning robust urban spaces from Columbia University.

Having practiced urban design and planning in New York and Chicago, Ar. Pavitra has designed projects across India, and also worked on the projects in the United States of America, Norway, Japan, China and Kuwait as part of SGBL Studio, Shilpa's International Urban Design Studio. She believes that no matter what the style of architecture, the building needs to respond to its geographical location and climatic conditions in which it exists. This can be successfully done with thoughtful detailing and connecting the building to its site with a strong connection between the architecture and landscape design.

She strives to achieve holistic sustainability through design and believes that sensitivity to local ethos is crucial in designing spaces that people respond to. According to her, development activities should not harm nature rather respect it as only by saving nature and community we can create a holistically sustainable model of urban development.



Ar. Pavitra is of the opinion that for a holistic approach, a combination of social, economical and ecological factors is vital. Moreover, vernacular building techniques, local materials and the work of traditional skilled artisans need to be inventively integrated with modern design and construction technology.

The works of a Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas who is a founding partner of international firm 'OMA', practising architecture, urbanism, and cultural analysis, inspired her more and following the same footsteps, she is the big advocator of sustainability and urban design. OMA's buildings and masterplans around the world insist on intelligent forms while inventing new possibilities for content and everyday use.

Considering her knowledge pool and expertise in sustainability, she was invited as a speaker at the conference on "Go Green Puducherry", organized by CII jointly with the Government of Puducherry,

in association with Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), to address the first technical session titled "Architects Perspective on Green Buildings & Environment". She was also invited by IGBC to present on "Architectural Perspectives in Hospital Buildings" at the Technical Session for Sustainability Leadership in Health Care at the IGBC Green Building Congress 2013, Chennai Trade Centre. Moreover, as one of the first LEED AP professionals in the country, she was invited as a panelist at The Economic Times ACE (Architecture | Construction | Engineering) tech - Global Green Summit in Mumbai, to share her insight on "Sustainability, Society & Environment: Searching for Synergies".

Ar. Pavitra, the true lover of humanity, art, music and an accomplished Bharathanatyam Dancer is looking to work on a dream project where effect of music, dance, culture, tradition and art can all be intervened together.



# Global Design Studio of Shilpa Architects



The Global Design Studio of Shilpa Architects Planners Designers was awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum rating for New Construction by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC). The LEED Platinum certification is an endorsement of SHILPA's design philosophies, and corporate responsibility goals. The eco-friendly office space includes benefits such as lower operating costs and a reduced carbon footprint.

As one of the first Platinum Rated Design Studios in Asia, Shilpa Architects designed its headquarters as a next generation workplace, bringing to life the organization's commitment to reduce power consumption, open and collaborative work settings, natural lighting and geothermal air-conditioning. "Innovation and sustainability are at the core of Shilpa Architects' culture and what our clients and people expect," said Pavitra Sri Prakash, Design Director and Chief



## At a Glance

Project : Global Design Studio  
Location : Chennai, India  
Achitect : Shilpa Architects Planners Designers

Planner at Shilpa Architects. "I am proud of all that we have achieved to make the studio a collaborative and modern work environment, as it stands to symbolize our approach to sustainable design-thinking around the globe."

The building is split into multiple levels of studio space and a level each for client/vendor interaction and a Gallery. Conference rooms and open spaces are designed for initiatives to educate students, the general community and promote art. The staggering of floors gives the office



spatial and visual connectivity. Vertical ducts rise in the "green shafts" through which the conditioned air is circulated into the work and interaction spaces. The building is a single volute with the staggered levels directing the circulating air through the entire building, till it is mechanically vented out at the top of the staircase headroom. The efficiency of the Air Conditioning System is enhanced by the heat recovery wheel. Carbon-di-oxide build up is minimized because most of the air is exhausted back to the ambient. Radiant slab and Geo thermal cooling are incorporated in the HVAC System design to reduce power and water consumption. Solar power generation and use of RO treated ground water for Air Conditioning are special features of the building's engineering.

"A green building is one which uses less water, optimizes energy efficiency, conserves natural resources, generates less waste and provides healthier spaces for occupants, as compared to a conventional building." (www.igbc.in/)

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is a nationally and internationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

## Entrance & Reception Lobby

The entrance to the building is marked by a tribute to a Hindu deity, "Vishvakarma", considered to be the divine ARCHITECT! The sculpture is hand crafted specially by artisans from the Bhavani district of Tamil Nadu. In order to add local artisan touch as well, the modern "Mandap" was crafted in Mahabalipuram.

Continuing with the idea of the "Temple of Design", the grand door is inspired by traditional temple paneled door. With antique brass detailing, the door stands a majestic 12 feet in height and has to be opened by each and every visitor in order to experience the feeling of having entered the space.





Upon entry, one steps into the “Akhand” which is inspired by continuity through the same treatment for the floor, ceiling and walls thereby living up to its Sanskrit meaning - UNBROKEN! Treated with the most basic building block of Architecture, the space is built using country brick bonding technique.

The double height reception connects to the above workspaces both visually and aurally. The reception itself is treated with simple rustic material and one gets the first glimpse of exposed concrete ceilings.

The character-building element that is interpreted throughout the spaces in varying forms, scale and composition, is the company logo inspired trellis detail.

### **Client interaction spaces**

The client interaction areas at the Global design studio have been designed for various types of meetings and discussions.

The conference room is styled like a functional space addressing the need for large format design meetings.

The boardroom is designed as a double height formal space with maximum views and day lighting to provide an outdoor like meeting setting. The extensive use of fabric and eclectic collection of artifacts brings warmth to the space.

The lounge has been designed with natural quartz (agate) and wood accents. With the unique hand crafted light box, this space highlights the usage of fabric in innovative and exciting ways.

The touch and feel library is a unique client interaction area that helps envisage projects along with material samples and mood boards.

### **Other Workspace and Building Features**

- 1<sup>st</sup> time prototype of pioneering energy & resource efficient AC system
- 6% generation of power from photovoltaic panels
- 8% lower overall construction cost
- 30% energy & water savings monthly!
- 30% higher levels of indoor air quality to promote workplace productivity
- 95% of office space with natural daylight until sundown
- 100% waste recycling at source.