

GO SHOPPING! Beautiful benches, gorgeous organdie and mesmerizing mirror frames

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Featuring: Anjali Goel, Archana Tivary, Devi Design, Kapil Aggarwal, Kiran Gala & Associates, Laurie Baker, Lovekar Design Associates, Pinky Shah, Rohit Chatterjee & Mohan Mahadeviah, Smitha Murthy & Pradeep Krishnappa, and Studio GSA Architects

Seeing Through



▲ Anjali Lovekar



▲ Ashwin Lovekar



▲ Sonia Bhat



Graphics and the design actualization of a transparent work-culture as interpreted by Lovekar Design Associates, dominates the interiors of a construction firm in Pune.

TEXT: MONISHA NAIK SINGH | PHOTOGRAPHS: HEMANT PATIL; COURTESY THE ARCHITECTS



[1] Enamelled glass and vertical hatching provides a semi-private feeling on the inside as it does not allow complete visual contact with the spaces outside.

Exploring new dimensions of design with each successive project appears to be the mantra of Pune-based design firm Lovekar Design Associates. And the office project they undertook for Shriya Construction and Rainbow Housing followed this mantra to a T. "When our clients approached us with a brief that specified something subtle and understated, we knew that we had to create something that had to be simple in essence and pristine in spirit. So, our concept focused on a design plan that would emphasize and yet relate to the transparent work-culture that forms an integral part of the company's credo," states Ashwin Lovekar as he takes us around the 1,200-square-foot office space, on which he worked with partner (and wife) Anjali Lovekar and design associate Sonia Bhat.

[2] The reception lobby shows an abundant use of clear and enamelled glass. A sculpture in steel is a visual interest-holder. Graphics on a partition lends character. The serrated-edged ceiling hides the AC duct, which starts here and ends in the conference room. The ceiling forms a unifying element in the design



[3] A unique feature of the reception area are the bent-glass benches which have practically no visual bulk

As the client required an open-office space, the basic layout features working and common areas alongside a long corridor, allowing the eye to travel easily along its length. Extensive use of glass complements the minimum use of colours and materials, lending the space a translucent quality. Transparent and enamelled glass along with a moderate use of grey-dyed veneer on the furniture adds style along with the anti-skid grey floor tiles.

The reception has bent-glass benches that rest invitingly along wall-lengths, facing a triangular table. With their bases painted in white, these benches have been inclined at angles to ensure comfort. Small and compact, the reception area has a simple form. "The idea was to enhance the graphic wallpaper with the company's name that forms a visual backdrop," explains Anjali as she points towards the wall panel in steel and black that is, in essence, a graphical representation of the company's name. The



[4] The wall graphics in the director's cabin are suggestive of the various materials used by construction companies

wall panel also doubles up as a facade for the PA's cabin and the Reprographics room that lie beyond. An installation of pipes with a mirror in the background, both embedded in a black pebble floor, looks perfect in the niche that it is assigned to. "Here again the attempt was that whatever was created for this space had to relate to the kind of work that the company was associated with." Vertical stripes in white on the bent-glass reception table add texture to austere grey

Extensive use of glass complements the minimum use of colours and materials, lending the space a translucent quality

and white surroundings. The ceiling in this space forms a focal point of the design. "We created a low false ceiling in white to conceal the existing air-conditioning duct," reveals Ashwin. "Irregularly serrated, it begins at the reception area and ends vertically, as it drops down into the panels of the partition and door of the conference area."

Adjoining the reception area is the manager's cabin flanked by glass on three sides. Essentially bare, this space adheres to the minimalist notion that has been adopted here. The curved ceiling flows into a silver laminated panelling that houses a filing cabinet painted in white. "The table is a single piece of bent-glass that has been attached to a side storage finished in white paint, SS laminate and grey-dyed veneer," explains Ashwin.

The state-of-the-art conference room has comfortable, sleek chairs that complement the white enamelled glass table. A dark grey veneer strip running through the centre of the table adds to the element of interest. "The

[conceptmaterials]

>CONCEPT

To create a space, that would be simple in essence and yet retain an unblemished and temperate mood. The design plan sought to focus and emphasize on the transparent work culture that forms an integral part of the company's credo.

>MATERIALS

Walls and ceiling	White lustre paint
Flooring	Rustic anti-skid grey tiles
Glass	Clear and enamelled glass
Furniture	Grey veneer, SS laminate and lustre paint



[5] The design of the director's cabin focuses on a clean-lined look

[6] A sculptural effect in the workstations and the area used for storing files creates an element of interest

strip was incorporated into the design here to house electrical sockets," remarks Anjali. The conference room is separated from the executive cabins by glass walls partially covered with a film with vertical lines, "to ensure a certain amount of privacy." A wall alongside finds a plasma screen with its control panels wedged within the dark grey veneer strip. Overhead lights wash the room in a warm glow.

Free-standing open workstations occupy space between the manager's cabin and the conference area, while utility areas (the washroom, a small pantry and a store) are well concealed behind the dark grey panelling that flanks the passage. "Built-in handles make the grey facade appear smooth, making it difficult to imagine that there are actually functional spaces beyond," states Anjali. A work unit houses a large cabinet that is used to store the numerous files that are generated in this business. "The storage unit had to be large. To reduce its bulk visually, we gave it a white ribbed finish that also added a



sculptural feel to it," adds Anjali. Niches along this unit accommodate computers, making it convenient for the staff to work here. Adequate care has also been taken to ensure that the lighting here is conducive to distraction-free working.

The two directors' cabins have been spaced apart deliberately. Fashioned to appear austere and simple, they reflect a corporate look that is essentially functional. A formal worktable, again fashioned out of bent-glass, has been created for client or visitor interaction. "We were keen to add a touch of colour to the space here. But as the design was to be simple, we decided to not do anything flamboyant. Instead we opted for graphics along a wall in hues of grey and black that portrays the various materials that are usually used by construction companies," elaborate the Lovekars as they credit Sonia with her role in designing the graphics for the entire office. The play of textures takes its cue from the ceiling and the hatching effect on the glass partition.



[7] & [8] The dark-grey panelling in the passage camouflages the doors of the pantry, the washroom and the storage area even as the textured ceiling in white conceals the AC ducting above

[9] One of the director's cabins. Like all the areas in the office, this space, too, follows a minimalistic design plan

"This play of textures reflected on the director's table is something that I truly liked. So, we decided to opt for similar simplicity in style interspersed with a play of textures even in the junior director's cabin," concludes Ashwin.

The seamless view, a clever use of materials along with an interesting play of light have all contributed towards creating an office that is stylish, contemporary and extremely work-friendly. Lovekar Design Associates have managed not only to come up to their clients' expectations, but have eloquently made a contemporary style statement through an eye for detail! ■

[factfile]

Client	Shriya Construction and Rainbow Housing
Total area	1,200 sq ft
Designers	Ashwin Lovekar, Anjali Lovekar and Sonia Bhat
Duration	Four months
Time of completion	February 2008