

THE TRANSFORMERS

In a world crying out for change, these 50 architects and designers who comprise our iGen hotlist this year could make a telling difference

BY MARIA LOUIS

TRUPTI DOSHI

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT, THE AUROMA GROUP. PONDICHERRY

Growing up in Mumbai near the Versova beach, Trupti Doshi found a mystique friend in its waves that eventually planted the desire to design. "I would stand on the promenade on a moonlit night and see a black shimmering void on one side and a bustling world on the other. How did that happen? The idea of being able to create a world out of a void, create space where there was only sound, fascinated me like no other. It led me to becoming an architect," says Doshi with almost childlike nostalgia.

Her journey thereafter is quite unusual. After graduating with honours from the University of Mumbai, she "schooled" under French architect Satprem Maini. "That is how my hands-on training began – and I went on to build Sharanam Rural Development Centre, as one of two architects, by training 450+ local untrained villagers in 20+ highly specialised building skills." The centre was chosen by the United Nations Environment Programme as a model for sustainable development in India.

Other architectural heroes, in Doshi's book, include her grandfather Vanu Bhuta, architect of

Mahatma Gandhi's samadhi at Rajghat. She also derives inspiration from the works of philosophers, poets, musicians and architects – the poetic works of Sri Aurobindo, Leonardo Da Vinci's paintings, Michelangelo's sculptures and buildings by Louis Kahn and Antoni Gaudi.

The Auroma Group, she acknowledges, is a family affair. Her brother **Viral Doshi** is an engineer, building technologist and woodworker; his restoration of French villas was awarded by the French Government. "**Viral's wife** is in charge of the visual communication, graphic and web design. We are mentored by my mother – **Roma Doshi**, an interior designer cum landscape artist; while our father **Prabodh Doshi** is a product designer and production engineer," she adds.

A conscious synergy between art, science and sustainability remain the hallmarks of their projects. Auroma French Villaments, a residential project near Pondicherry, is one of her path-breaking projects till date. The design focus brought about a synergy: in its aesthetic expression with wooden balconies, French cornices and large

French windows and doors; and scientific excellence that is seen in its materials, deep verandahs, orientation to minimise solar gain and maximise breeze

Living and working in Auroville has put a desire in Doshi's heart to someday design a sustainable campus for wholistic education, health, eco-tourism and senior living. She sees innovation as designing buildings and cities – not as ends in themselves, but as parts of the larger cyclical loops of nature.



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PROJECT

Auroma French Villaments, Pondicherry