

# I and

interiors and decor

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Image by: Artist Rima Singh

## Bold and Beautiful

Celebrating the women in design



COVER STORY  
**Bold and Beautiful**



AN ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE  
BUILDINGS THAT ARE

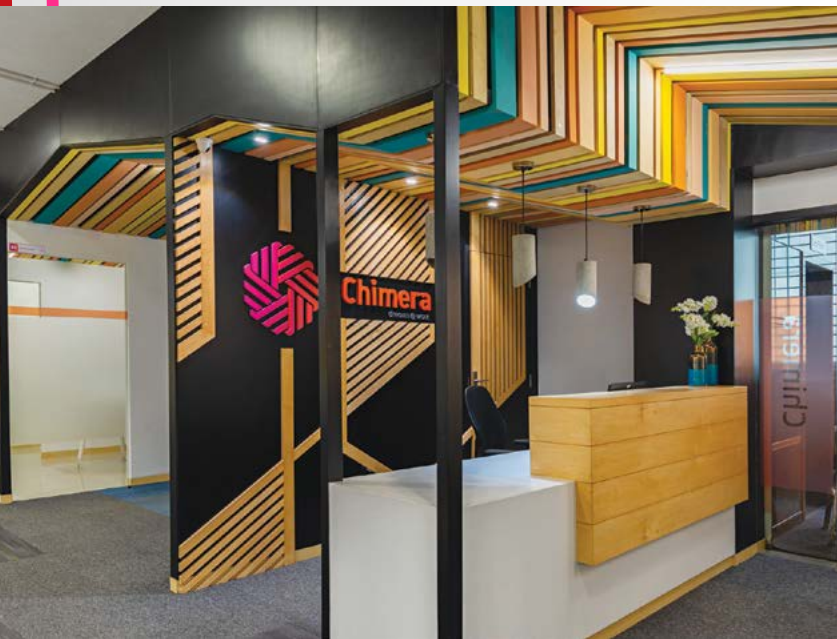
*respectable and  
responsible*

**Divya Ethirajan is the Founding Partner and Principal Architect, Between Spaces Studio**, where her work is the expression of belief. She believes architecture is about conversation, a dialogue between spaces.

**How do you describe your journey in this male-dominated industry?**

When we started Between spaces, it was extremely difficult for me. Along with the gender bias, I was also very young, so it was a lot of effort to be taken seriously. The only way I knew to deal with it was to keep working hard and hope that people look past their prejudices and make judgements only for the work and not otherwise. Today, with age and changing times, I see a lot of support in all collaborations. I now experience equality and respect from most men.





**Which has been your first project? Where? What was it? How has been your experience?**

Our first project was residential interiors for Mr Vinod in Bangalore. It was probably one of my best experiences. The building was built by hundredhands and when I met Vinod, he was very encouraging and supportive of us. We had complete design freedom and trust from our client. He became one of the key factors in giving me the confidence that I was on the right path. We rarely find clients like him and this project is close to us both personally and professionally.

**What type of projects captures your interest or rather interested to do?**

I have enjoyed working on smaller projects with intimate spaces in the past and I still love to work on such projects but over the last two years of our practice, we got an opportunity to work on some medium to large scale houses and educational buildings. Our practice has thrived on tight urban conditions no matter the scale we have worked on. These constraints challenge us and brings the best of us. Having said that, we would love to explore a building in wilderness or a cultural space in urban context that is for a passer-by as much as it is for its users.

**Your most challenging projects; where and why? Tell us more about the same?**

Our most challenging project is the law college that is at its last leg of completion. The structure is complex and took a while to crack it. It is also our first institutional project with multifunctional areas. The complexity of the structure and scale makes this project both challenging and exciting.

**Tell us about your upcoming projects; where and what type; schedule of completions?**

We are doing a few residences and institutional projects currently with varied scales. They are various stages, some have just started and others are at construction stage.

**Your wise words to next-gen stepping into this profession?**

When I first stepped into the profession after I passed from college, my father advised me to be sincere and focused. He said that the key was not to be shaken by a tough client or a strict boss or a difficult situation. He assured me that there is a lot of learning these situations and I will be glad to work through challenges. I didn't understand then because as youngsters there are many opportunities and it's easier to move and keep looking for other opportunities which you might think would be easier. But I am glad I listened to him, I can look back and tell that the best learnings have been places where I have been patient and picked my battles and let go of some. So I would say the same to next generation that they should be patient, give time for growth and develop skills and experience by being relentless. ■