

# COURTYARD

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In Memorium  
02

The Story  
06

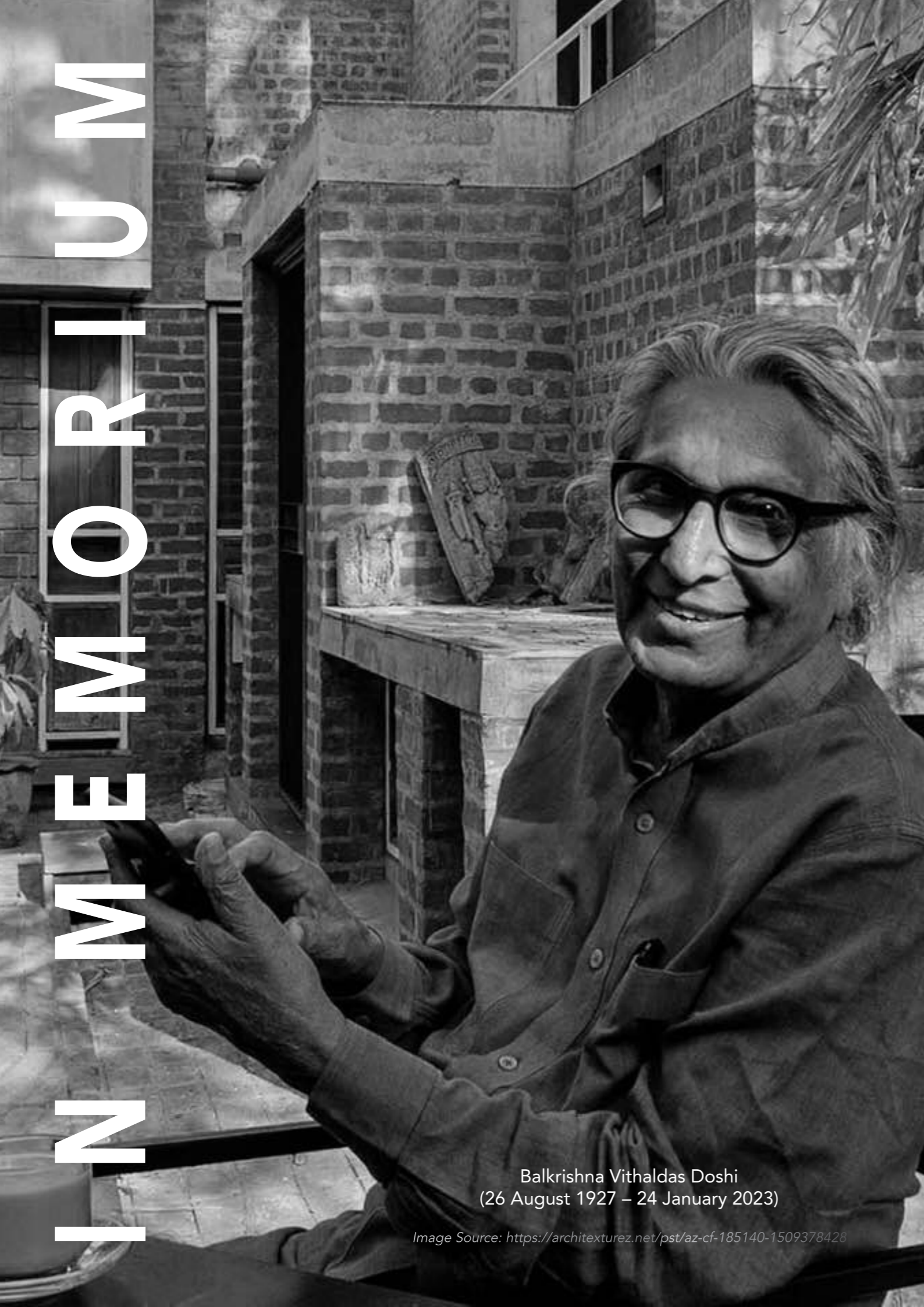
The City of Ahmedabad  
08

Agree to Disagree  
10

Trivia  
12



# IN MEMORIAM



Balkrishna Vitaldas Doshi  
(26 August 1927 – 24 January 2023)

Image Source: <https://architexturez.net/pst/az-cf-185140-1509378428>

Graphic Credits: Deepak Anand

## EDITORS' NOTE

Being a man whose architecture has inspired three generations of architects, B.V. Doshi has always been revered in his field. In an India that is so rich in its history, culture and geography but was awaiting its apt modern architectural expression, he took the innovations of the West and made it dance to the tunes of the Indian soil. Architecture had opened up to the masses of India and that was just the beginning.

It is always said that we really come to know the value of someone, once they're gone. It probably is just human tendency to probe a little deeper and meaningfully into something, when we are forced to deal with its absence. As a part of the architectural fraternity, we are now finding our own ways to pay homage to Ar. B.V. Doshi who left us on 24th January 2023. This issue is our humble attempt to share his journey, keep his legacy alive and somewhere in the process, help you find closure.

The issue begins with an 'in memoriam' segment which is a collection of the opinions and experiences of a few, who have come across Doshi in varying capacities. What are the milestones in Doshi's life and how would he describe these snippets from his journey? A trip down memory lane with us will shed light on Doshi's life through this interesting lens. With the natural boon of the Sabarmati river, coupled with the architectural marvels of Doshi, can we look at the city of Ahmedabad in a new way? On multiple occasions, B.V. Doshi mentions how he lets his architecture be the background to the life that it should host. Is this what architecture is meant to do? Or does it have to make a statement much larger than itself? This issue covers a lot of these ideas and ends with some fun Doshi-themed quizzes and puzzles.

-Anirudha Rai and Disha Dilip

## B.V. Doshi - His immortal legacy and its eternal echoes

For most students of architecture in India, B.V.Doshi is synonymous with the city of Ahmedabad, arguably the nation's architectural Mecca. His is one of those names encountered early on and then repeatedly after, in our journey through architecture.

B.V.Doshi was born in Pune to a family involved with making furniture, and was a graduate of Mumbai's esteemed J.J.School of Architecture. He began to work under Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn soon after graduation, and unified his deep-rooted understanding of the regional idiosyncrasies with his learnings from having worked closely under architectural icons of the west. He quickly became one of the elemental architects in the shaping of the new independent India. Inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan, he had a hand in establishing several institutions in the country.

Over the span of his seventy year long career, Doshi pioneered brutalism and modernism in India and developed a muted yet poetic style in architecture that came to be known as characteristic of his Ahmedabad based practice, Vastu Shilpa. B.V.Doshi was perhaps best known for the childlike lens he held to life and human beings, and his architecture allowed people to take the foreground. He was a passionate educator and recipient of many of the country's and the world's most prestigious architectural awards. Most notably, he was the only South Asian laureate of The Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Doshi remains an inspiration to innumerable students and practitioners in the architecture fraternity. May we continue his pursuit of peace in architecture.

- Ananya Diggavi  
Editorial Team

## Prof. Doshi – The Master Impressionist

For Prof. Doshi, all the world was a stage and all the men and women were players. Seeing life as a drama acted out in the perception of his projects, he explores aspects of Indian mythology and at all times, he creates out of association. Entering his building is like meandering through memories of Doshi. The reality is to be understood through the intangibles rather than its obvious manifestations. This is the story in his map.

His early age impression of the home of Jain monks in the Pols, transformed into the Institute of Indology. Memories of his hometown Pune, its streets and water bodies, along with a visit to a sculptor's studio in Egypt, scripted the making of Sangath. In IIM, Bangalore, Doshi was inspired by the Fathepur Sikri complex and the Madurai Meenakshi temple and went on to organise the complex interlocking building, courts and corridors. In his earlier days, Doshi demonstrated his connection with his roots, his associations, his memories, and his identity.

Doshi wrote stories and fabricated myths to define the narrative of each of his later projects, which rather logically, rationalised the explanation for his imaginary world. From Gufa to the Diamond Bourse project, his imagination to build a story was spectacular. The fabled bedrock found while excavating at the Diamond Bourse project was dreamed up into a fantastic story of the mythical churning of the ocean by the gods and demons in search of the elixir of life. The fable was introduced to bring a rationale to the rather complex geometry of the plans and into its acceptability.

Always, the sense of fantastic and magical is apparent in his buildings. It is in this that we finally regard the works of the master.

- Prof. Anand Krishnamurthy  
WCFA

## The contagious effect of B.V. Doshi's incredible mind

As a starry eyed seventeen year old heading out for the first time, it was probably a gift to have come into contact with Professor Doshi's amazing energy and aura. I am talking about 1989 when he was at the peak of his work life but still took time out to come to college and be actively involved with us students. I can vividly remember a particular day when the whole atmosphere in our studio was electric, mid semester review of our first ever design project in college. We got to know that he will be dropping in for the presentations and a look at the shaky, unresolved incongruous sketches on tracing papers of various sizes was least inspiring. Prof. Doshi spent an hour on each jury that day and was able to show us a world of meaning in those lines we had drawn ourselves, a depth of discussions on the spatial quality of our projects, extracting out from what we had drawn unknowingly and subconsciously making us aware of the power that was vested in us to create.

From this to my fond memories of going to his house every Holi, sitting on the floor in completely ragged coloured clothes and enjoying sweet treats his wife made for us, with even better stories and brilliant conversation with him discussing everything from spirituality to our favorite food.

This is what he was about, a rare expanse of a human mind that could travel fearlessly anywhere that caught his imagination. A creator with a rare ability to stay rooted yet fly. I recently saw an online discussion he was heading and was so pleasantly surprised at how even a new medium of communication could never take anything away from him, he was so adaptive and alive. Professor Doshi, one of the people in my life who will continue to endlessly inspire me.

-Anjali Shukla, Architect from CEPT batch of 1989  
Partner, Studio 9491, Delhi

Balakrishna Vithal Das Doshi is born in Pune on 26th August 1927.



"At CEPT University, we believe in a holistic approach to education, where theory and practice go hand in hand, and students are encouraged to engage with real world challenges"  
Doshi founds CEPT University in 1962.

(<https://cept.ac.in/>)



"Space that you pack, volume that you make, the levels that you create and the layers that you build comes into the making of an architect"-BV Doshi.  
BV Doshi had a cameo appearance in filmmaker Mani Ratnam's O Kadhal Kanmani (Tamil) in 2015.

(OK Kanmani-Amazon Prime)



"He never talked about architecture; he talked about people, seasons- we were talking about behavioral sciences. Le Corbusier freed my mind." – Doshi on having worked under Le Corbusier between 1950 and 1954.

(<https://www.ft.com/content/f788adac-59ef-11e9-939a-341f5ada9d40>)



"What, after all, is the role of an architect? Is he supposed to build only monuments? Is he supposed to work only for clients? Is social consciousness not part of the architect's duty? That's what I took as my challenge."  
Vastu Shilpa Foundation received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for Aranya Community Housing in 1995.

(<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/balkrishna-doshi-architecture-backdrop-life-180309122903881.html>)



"I'm not an Architect, for me it's a search. The story of my life has been constantly absorbing, evolving, reflecting, changing, moving slowly becoming one again as if a calm river gushing slowly towards the unknown ocean"  
Balakrishna Vithal Das Doshi passed away on 24 January 2023 at his residence Kamala house in Ahmedabad.

(Doshi: chapter two in YouTube)

1927

1950-54

1962

1995

2015

2023

1947



Doshi's art teacher Venkatesh Patil suggests he study architecture at the Sir Jamshedjee Jeejeebhoy College of Architecture in Bombay and he joins JJ College of Architecture in 1947. Bombay was a completely new experience for Doshi, as compared to Pune.

"Vastu Shilpa emphasizes the connection between human beings and their surroundings, aiming to create spaces that promote well-being and balance" – Doshi on his own practice Vastu Shilpa which he started in 1956.

(<https://www.sangath.org>)



"Sangath is not just a physical space; it is a manifestation of my philosophy and approach to architecture."  
In 1980 he builds his own studio, Sangath in Ahmedabad.

(<https://www.sangath.org>)



- "The Paths Uncharted gives a sense of order and tranquility in the life of Doshi even when it is sailing at times, in turbulent water" BV Doshi published his autobiography, Paths Uncharted in 2011.

([dnaindia.com/india/report-paths-uncharted-captures-building-blocks-of-bv-doshi-s-life-1600819](https://dnaindia.com/india/report-paths-uncharted-captures-building-blocks-of-bv-doshi-s-life-1600819))



"I recognized that architecture is a backdrop, it proactivates life when in tune. It heightens all the events to their ultimate sensations such as light, space, form, structure, texture, colour, rhythm and heightens our skills and catalyzes events and rituals." – BV Doshi on receiving the 45th Pritzker prize in 2018.

([https://www.pritzkerprize.com/sites/default/files/2018\\_BalkrishnaDoshi\\_CeremonySpeech.pdf](https://www.pritzkerprize.com/sites/default/files/2018_BalkrishnaDoshi_CeremonySpeech.pdf))

1956

1980

2011

2018



**1 CEPT University, Faculty of Architecture:** He contributed immensely to the enrichment of Indian architecture, not only through his many fine works, but also by founding a school of architecture in Ahmedabad that continues to be a beacon of innovation and excellence.

*A tribute to his teacher from Bimal Patel*

**2 Amdavad ni Gufa:** "During his visits to Ahmedabad, Husain used to voice his idea for an exclusive gallery to house his works. His good friend Doshi challenged Husain by saying that he will create such a unique space that Husain will have to rise up and match the quality of the space with his art."

<http://hiddenarchitecture.net/hussain-doshi-gufa/>

**3 Sangath:** "Moving together through participation."  
"It is the mark of any resolved work of art that content and form should be fused, but there is still value in unraveling the various levels of meaning at work in Sangath."

*Balkrishna Doshi: An Architecture for India, William J. R. Curtis*

**4 Institute of Indology:** "The design of Institute of Indology in Ahmedabad (...) crossbred Le Corbusier's principle of the 'parasol' with the image of a monumental verandah."

*Balkrishna Doshi: An Architecture for India, William J. R. Curtis*

**5** On working with Louis Kahn on **IIMA:**  
"...so he selected the brick quality, and then the samples were made, the dormitory plinth was made. And he came, and he was very disappointed with me. He said, "Are you doing this with thumb(?) joints? This is not done." I asked, "What do you suggest?" I told him to stay. He stayed for four days. I said, "You'll stay here, I'll bring you the contractor and the masons, and I'll stand by you. You make the samples the way you want to""

*In conversation with IIMA in 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDMHORsbiGo>*

**6 Tagore Hall:**  
"Tasked with designing an icon that would not only honour a legendary artist but would also respond to the local climate, people & culture, Doshi & Raj created a vision for a modern structure, which draws meaning from its surroundings."  
"Standing as a testament to B.V.Doshi's flair for abstract geometry & playing with light, the Tagore Memorial Hall rises from the banks of the Sabarmati river as a monolithic concrete giant."

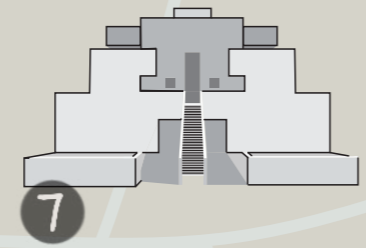
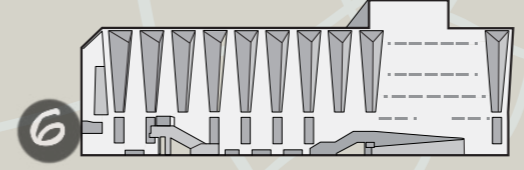
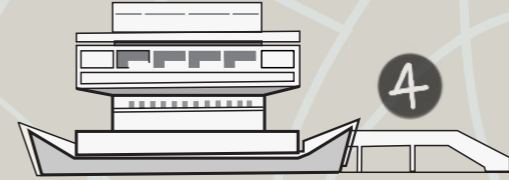
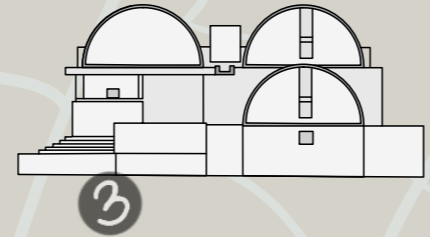
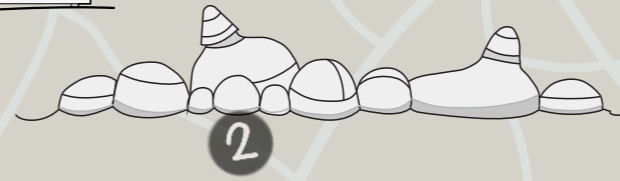
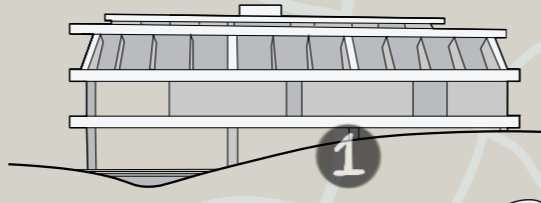
<https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/2021/10/19/a5515-tagore-memorial-auditorium-by-b-v-doshi-box-of-miracles-WWWW/>

**7 LIC Housing:** "One of my most favorite housing projects is the one I designed for Life Insurance Corporation, at Ahmedabad... Here I knew that the houses would be occupied by several generations of the same family, that they would identify with it, that there will be a strong sense of belonging and that their needs will change, and they may modify parts of it."

<https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/2021/03/11/a3590-life-insurance-corporation-housing-by-b-v-doshi-reversed-strategies/>

**8 Shreyas Foundation:** To educate is to learn and to learn one must be free. It is known that through nature one learns and random openness provides free movement.

<https://www.sangath.org/projects/>



"Life is like a river that begins from a spring and flows into a vast ocean. It is a cyclic phenomenon. Architecture and the city are a living energy force, an extension to life and is constantly evolving. I do not like rigid rules"  
-B.V. Doshi

<https://www.thehindu.com/society/tribute-the-humane-architect-bv-doshi/article66431257.ece>

# A GUIDE TO DOSHI'S AHMEDABAD

# "Architecture has the responsibility to make a statement, larger than itself."

AGREE



Asst. Prof. Asijit Khan

We'll assume for the purpose of this discussion that architecture includes every building and physical structure created by the human race. From the aqueducts of Segovia, Spain, to the pyramids of Egypt and the mud-brick homes of Harappa, we can see how architecture transcends the physical surroundings to convey a culture, societal structure, and the economic capabilities of a society. With the aforementioned assertion, we make the false assumption that all architecture created in India and around the world is the product of architects. Just 5-6% of design and construction work in India is done by trained professionals like architects. This indicates that non-professionals or laypersons complete more than 90% of the work. So who gets to make that statement? Does the onus lie with professionals like architects, or is it a universal responsibility? In the grand scheme of things, architecture does have a role to play in shaping a civilization if we only consider the act and not the person executing it.

Now, what does one mean by "making a statement"? Regardless of the scale and type of the intervention, architecture does, whether intentionally or not, speak of things that are more than what first appears. By virtue of its sheer being, every architectural intervention expresses the aspiration of a civilisation. As a result, it is inevitable that architecture must ensure an influence that inspires a society to long. Sometimes the "statement" we sought may not be as powerful or as loud as we would want it to be or what we would have imagined it to be, but the architecture nonetheless compels us to reflect on and reconsider its intended purpose beyond the given programme. The need for that impact to be "greater than itself" is also up for debate. Quantifying the impact of the architecture in this situation might not be a wise yardstick.

By virtue of its sheer being, every architectural intervention expresses the aspiration of a civilisation.

NEUTRAL



Asst. Prof. Krishnapriya R

In my limited years of association with this profession, I have grown to understand that the job of an architect is considered to be in providing "service" to their clientele and by extension, to society at large. In what is considered conventional architectural practice, the "project" begins as the client's vision. Through multiple creative, economic, social and professional negotiations, this vision is brought into tangible form by the architect and a diverse network of experts, vendors and of course, human workforce. The image of the architect as the sole creative genius who gets to take a stand on what the final manifest form would be like, is still the narrative that we prefer to champion within the profession, which is where we grapple with the "shoulds" more than the "coulds". It seems to subsume the many stories that narrate what actually went into these projects coming to being - from patronage, to personal quirks of the client's family, to the tile vendor having shortage of the specific shade of teal thereby leading to a new combination of teal and baby blue which was never part of the original plan,

to a labour strike affecting the pace of work - you name it.

My contention here is not with architecture "making a statement larger than itself" (which it does, by default, whether wished for or not), but with the idea of "responsibility". Without absolving ourselves from the basic codes of professional ethics which form the core of the practice, there are way too many factors and stakeholders involved for architecture alone to shoulder the "responsibility" of making a statement (which could be ANY kind of statement, really). Oftentimes, architecture just is and that, is permissible. No frills, no grand oculus revealing the depths within, no elevation screaming allegiance to a long-dead "genius" from another continent. Just there, allowing life to unfold within & around itself, and every once in a while, making a statement.

There are way too many factors and stakeholders involved for architecture alone to shoulder the "responsibility" of making a statement.

DISAGREE



Aryaman Paul  
Batch 2018

"L'art pour l'art" (Art for Art's sake) - Victor Cousin; like all other great forms of expression Architecture has no responsibility but to itself. Hence when I read this statement, my initial response was "Yes, architecture should" but then it begs the question "Why should Architecture? And how would Architecture?" I think that every line drawn by an architect has a purpose, a statement made, but are they ever perceived as the initial intention by the populace. Subtle statements are generally overlooked, and bold assertions bring out varied responses and reactions. Statements made by a built environment can often be alluded to prerequisite connotations, like a Church or a Museum, buildings of significance. As Louis Kahn once said, "The first line on paper is already a measure of what cannot be expressed fully". It captures the reluctance and anxiety of beginnings, the overflow of ideas, that filter and trickle down into a singular stream of thought. The loss is then not what is expressed but eventually, what is left out, the inevitable regret of unexplored possibilities.

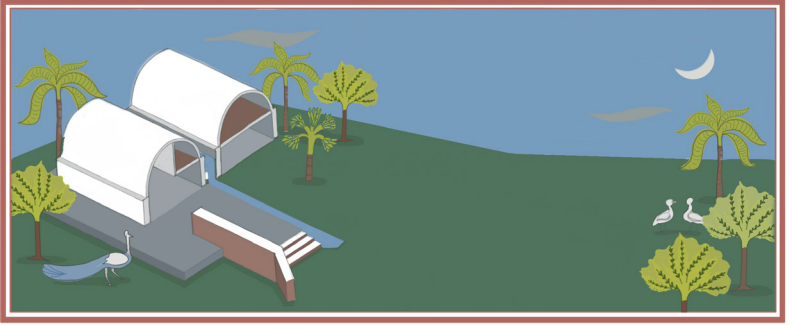
Hence, it asks the question, "Should Architecture only focus on making a good building or a building that expresses itself well?" There seems to be a content-consensus that Architecture done well is appreciated but not celebrated. "Celebrating" Architecture is limited to the few that practise and understand it. A "Statement" that is made or not made is not something that would provoke deep intellectual conversation and debate among peers and gatekeepers, it would merely be a fleeting thought lost in space. Hence, as a final affirmation "Good architecture can make a statement, but great architecture is effortless"; it does not need to make a statement to be seen or heard, it persuades people to have the freedom to make their own choice.

(Great Architecture) does not need to make a statement to be seen or heard, it persuades people to have the freedom to make their own choice.

**"It wouldn't be wrong to say that he lives in a real and imaginary world, simultaneously, constantly reinterpreting everything he sees through his drawings and absorbing it into his works. Sometimes the lines in his drawings are very delicate, sometimes exaggerated, and at times almost fluid. They have nothing to do with reality, but they talk about the fluidity of life."**

-Khushnu Panthaki Hoof  
(Granddaughter of BV Doshi)

Source: <https://www.apartmentomagazine.com/stories/a-world-of-imagination-drawings-by-bv-doshi/>



## SCRAMBLE

The circled letters from the following four clues will give you the anagram to complete this famous quote from Premjit Ramachandran's film, 'DOSHI':

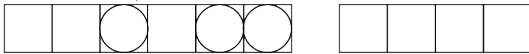
Estonian architect, under whom B V Doshi worked as protégé-



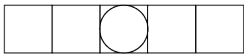
Post-war architectural style, that Doshi pioneered in India-



Auditorium in Ahmedabad designed by Doshi, dedicated to a famous bengali poet-



Cooperative Society for which Doshi designed a township in Kalol-



"India has always survived and celebrated through \_\_\_\_\_"



Graphic Credits: Sivani Dirisala



## TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

From the three statements below, identify the incorrect one:

B V Doshi-

- (a) believed that Le Corbusier's buildings in Chandigarh bore no relationship to the country around them.
- (b) has collaborated with MF Hussain to make a painting.
- (c) has done a cameo in a Tamil movie.

## IDENTIFY THE PROJECT



"A plinth, a toilet at the back and an electrical connection"

Which housing project of BV Doshi started off looking like this, but has grown overtime to look very different today?

## GUESS WHO



He is a partner at BV Doshi's Firm - Vastu Shilpa Consultants. He was recognised for innovative urban design for his work on the inner city of Hyderabad. He is related to BV Doshi.

