Stepping on Master Architect's Philosophies in Design Studios: An Experiment to Create Logical and Sensible Future Architects

Prof. Radhika Pathak

*Asso. Prof., Priyadarshini Institute of Architecture and Design Studies, Nagpur
E-mail: pathakradhika@yahoo.com)*

Abstract—*Architecture has the power to create beautifully effective shelter for the needs, hopes, dreams and memories of humankind, both collectively and individually.*

This design philosophy is an attempt to reconcile and bring design factors into an equilibrium, and create a NEW sustainable "architectural gestalt" [1], to transcend architectural fashion. A treatise to explain and understand why it is necessary to intellectually balance design factors empowering all architects and designers to create a built environment that transcends the sum of its individual parts.

The past comments of great architects including the International Style Architect Mies Van der Rohe inspire us to explore this. Humbly, I have come to better understand his design struggle. Mies said architecture is great "only when it is an expression of its time. Architecture is the battleground. It is a struggle to find the "essential factors." I sense, I feel, there is a void of missing "factors" and "starchitecture" will not fill this void, there must be something more.
It is been observed all over the world that today's Architecture is without any logic and sense, and only the blocks of fanciful masses, which carry no specific meaning or philosophy. Looking into this fact, In this paper we have documented design process formulated by us for second year design studio, where the students are made to go through how Master Architects think and develop their concepts and philosophies, after rigorous thought process. Objective of this methodology is to create logical and sensible Architects in future, by training them right in their academic life.

Keywords: *Philosophy, Expression of building, Implementation, Logical, Sensible.*

1. INTRODUCTION

"One of the great beauties of architecture is that each time it is like life starting all over again". – Renzo Piano[2]. This inspires and directs us to work on designing a design process for 4th sem Architecture students, where we tried to make the students understand that your architecture can not be beautiful and lively unless and until there is some thought process involved to land upon a logical and sensible designs.

Architects owe it to ourselves to have a strong design philosophy for the simple reason that unlike painters or sculptors or musicians, the art created by is used everyday by the people it was created for. [3]

"Architecture starts when you carefully put two bricks together. There is begins." – As said by Ar. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe[2],when an architect starts designing, it must start with the basic objective and purpose of design with some logical and sensible reasoning. Keeping this in our minds, we have developed and implemented "A Design Process" in our 4th Sem design studios, where students study, analyze, understand and implement Master Architects' Design Philosophies in their own designs. Objective behind this particular exercise was to stimulate thinking process in students' minds, with the help of Master Architects' works. When students study the Master Architects' works and philosophies, and how they transfer their metaphysical thoughts into physical spaces, this helps the students to understand what exactly a philosophy or a concept means in Architectural design.

In the first century BCE, Roman **Architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio**, also known as simply -- **Vitruvius** --authored his book De Architecture. This book is known today as The Ten Books on Architecture [4]. Vitruvius is famous for asserting in Book 1 Chapter 3, that a building must exhibit the three important qualities of *firmitas, utilitas, venustas* — often translated as firmness, commodity, and delight. That is, a building must be strong , useful, and beautiful.

Philosophy is **the study of knowledge**, or "thinking about thinking", although the breadth of what it covers is perhaps best illustrated by a selection of other **alternative definitions**:

- The discipline concerned with questions of how one should live (ethics); what sorts of things exist and what are their essential natures (metaphysics); what counts as genuine knowledge (epistemology); and what are the correct principles of reasoning (logic) (*Wikipedia*)

- Investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

- The study of the ultimate nature of existence, reality, knowledge and goodness, as discoverable by human reasoning (*Penguin English Dictionary*)

- the rational investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics (*WordNet*)

- The search for knowledge and truth, especially about the nature of man and his behavior and beliefs (*Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary*)

- The rational and critical inquiry into basic principles (*Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*)

- The study of the most general and abstract features of the world and categories with which we think: mind, matter, reason, proof, truth, etc. (*Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*)

- Careful thought about the fundamental nature of the world, the grounds for human knowledge, and the evaluation of human conduct (*The Philosophy Pages*)

Philosophical questions (unlike those of the sciences) are usually **foundational** and **abstract** in nature. Philosophy is done primarily through **reflection** and does not tend to rely on **experiment**, although the methods used to study it may be **analogous** to those used in the study of the natural sciences.

It provides a good way of **learning to think** more clearly about a wide range of issues, and its **methods of analyzing arguments** can be useful in a variety of situations while formulating a concept of any design..[2]

98% of what gets built today is shit. – Frank Gehry[2] Which is absolutely applicable for today's situation of Architectural Practice and construction industry in all over the world. With our this step of design process, we hope that we are creating the architects who will understand the importance of creating an Equilibrium of Appropriate Balance. This will lead to a better understanding of the value of an architect's design. Believing this, we undertook Design IV Semester Studio on the basis of Master Architects' philosophy, detailed process of which is described below.

2. TOPIC (IV SEM, DESIGN STUDIO) : "STUDY OF MASTER ARCHITECTS' DESIGN PHILOSOPHY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION."

Under this assignment, Students designed a project implementing and depicting the master architect's philosophy through their designs. Objectives of this exercise was that building designed by the student shall reflect the philosophy, principles, style & identity of the selected Architect. The proposal should reflect the style of the concerned architect. In the beginning typology of building was not disclosed to the students, as study of philosophy was more important to understand by the students which can be implemented to any of the typologies.

To start with, students were divided in various groups according to their selected architects. Case studies were done within stipulated time frame through study tours to various destinations, where they studied the projects of various Architects and their philosophies through visits and interaction with architects wherever it was possible.

In this exercise, due importance was given to materials, detailing and the style of the architect.

Objectives of this study was to understand philosophy and style of that particular architect details of objectives discussed as following:

2.1. To understand the "Design process" of master architect.

Every architect follows a peculiar process for designing, which is the outcome of his/her thinking process, which we call it as "Philosophy". Philosophy of architect is reflected in the way he/she designs. So for studying, analyzing, interpreting and implementing philosophy, to study design process is very important.

2.2. To understand the evolution architectural form.

Evolution of form of a building is nothing preconceived idea but must be the outcome and should be evolved from your concept. Philosophy is depicted directly from the form of a building which should be the result of functional and logical reasoning of a designer.

2.3. To analyze it and study the effects of variables on form.

Since form is the first visible parameter to understand and appreciate a building, its mandatory to study the variables which effect the form. This is basically the study of various physical, natural and psychological aspects which govern form of a building.

2.4. To initiate an understanding of initial concepts of Design theory.

Every design theory is evolved from rigorous and constant research of philosophies and functional and practical approaches towards a built environment. Here students study how design theories are formed based on philosophies and concepts.

3. THE OVERALL PROJECT WAS STUDIED INTO THREE PARTS:

3.1. Part A: Study of Master Architect's Design Philosophy

Methodology:

1. Brief description/introduction to the students about the topic.

2. Master Architects were identified and introduced to the students.

3. Presentations by faculties on different Architect's work and his/her philosophy and its implementation in architectural design

4. Case studies of different architects at various places were presented to the students where they learnt and understood the thought process and philosophies of master architects and how they transform it into the design
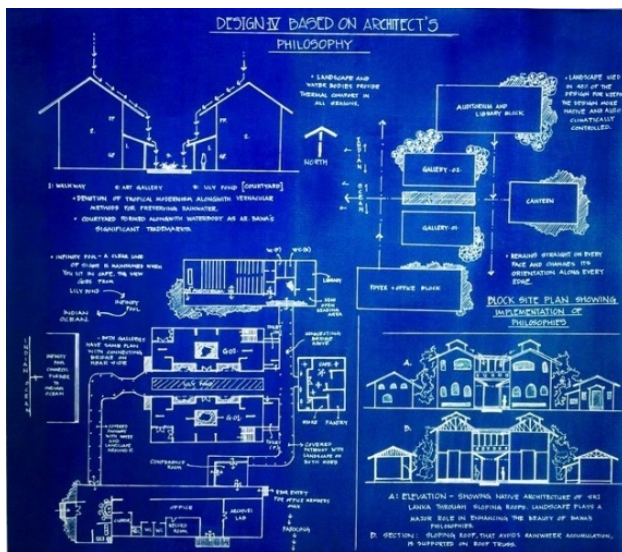
3.2. Part B: Documentation and analysis.

1. Study of Architect's identified buildings through Case Studies.

2. Identifying the construction techniques, materials, and forms.

3. Documentation of the same by students.

4. Conclusions drawn by the students on the basis of case study and analysis.

5. The project will be analyzed with following parameters:

a. Physical analysis based on :

- Architectural form

- Visual inference

- Study of building materials

- Study of openings (door/windows)

- Understanding and analysis of structural systems

- Study of spacial organization and volumes

- Role of allied elements like texture, light, color and its interrelationship

3.3. Part C: Implementation of design philosophies.(Actual design)

1. Workshop 1: Before the typology of project is introduced, students worked on 3 D model/composition where they tried to reflect Architect's design philosophy without considering any function.

2. A project introduced to the students where they had to actually implement the philosophies of selected master architect in their designs.

Steps involved:

1. Identification of focus area to implement the design philosophy.

2. Identifying the design elements to transform philosophy into architectural design

3. Identification of materials, structural systems, construction technology etc.

4. Actual planning and designing considering above aspects to reflect master architect's philosophy in the proposal.
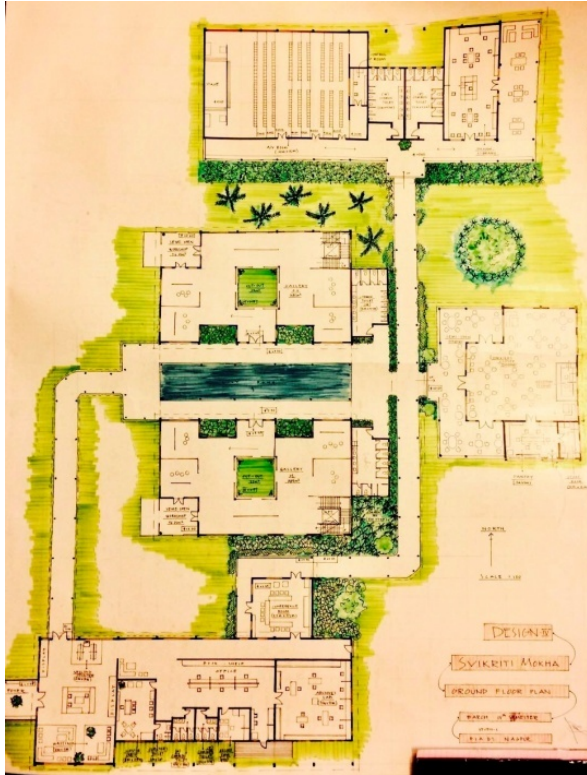
5. **Stage-2:-** Design an Art Gallery which shall reflect the philosophy, Principles, Style and identity of the selected master architect. The site located on the study tour location, near the site of Master Architect's building. The way an art gallery is designed affects how visitors and customers perceive it visually and navigate it spatially. Design of art gallery based upon the raw space you have to work with, the kinds of art you intend to display and the Architect's philosophy you want to interpret through the gallery design.

2.5. Objectives:-

- To learn and implement design principles employed by the Master architect.

- To understand complex circulation and initiation into vertical circulation.

- To understand complex spatial and volumetric organization and their concepts.

4. CONCLUSION

Architecture is an expression of values. – Norman Foster[2], This comes true, only when Architects are trained right during their academic sessions in their studios for how a logical and sensible design be created by formulating some design principles and philosophies after rigorous study of Master Architects' works and their philosophies.

No architect or architecture student can develop a truly convincing and substantive design without a well-considered approach. For some, it is easier to incorporate all the relevant factors through an Explicit approach. For them, starting right-in on design sketches before thinking about the project is likely to yield disappointing results. A building's architecture needs to understand and fit the character and expression of their building and context of its site in a way almost analogous to the way a tailor must understand and fit, not only the height
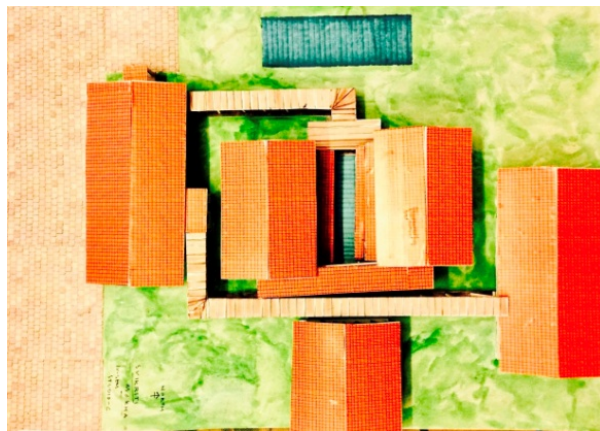
and weight, but also the lifestyle and culture of the users for which it is intended. It is therefore necessary to find an approach for understanding the architectural intervention with logical and sensible designs. If a designer can achieve the required depth of understanding through an intuitive grasp of the

As said by **Ar. Tadao Ando,** *"I believe that the way people live can be directed a little by architecture" [2],it's a very basic and primary responsibility of an Architect to give logical and sensible designs to the society, as their architecture plays a major role in their personality development, progress and physical and mental health also. At the same time, its our basic and primary responsibility as an institute or university, to give logical and sensible future Architects to the society.*

REFERENCES:

[1]   http://www.zingyhomes.com/latest-trends/design-philosophy-ar-prs-sivakumar/
My Design Philosophy - Ar. PRS Sivakumar

[2]   (Critical Thinking for Architects:Developing a Project Premise and Concept, Barry D. Yatt, AIA, CSI)

[3]   Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1993, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, Ma, USA

[4]   Vitruvius, 1st Century BCE "The Ten Books on Architecture"

[5]   http://www.philosophybasics.com/general_whatis.html)

[6]   http://wjmarchitect.com/econofunctionalaesthetic.htm)