

arcVision Prize
Women and architecture 2013
Honorable mention



ANUPAMA KUNDOO
TAMIL NADU, INDIA

The Jury selected Indian architect Anupama Kundoo for a special mention for her capacity to focus to material research with a view of reducing the environmental impact of building technology. We appreciated her project for Volontariat Homes and for Urban Eco-Community and praised her experiments in using many unconventional materials in ways appropriate to the context, as well as efforts at recycling. Finally, the Jury liked her dedication when approaching the problem of affordability of construction and sustainability in all aspects.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Pune, India, in 1967, married, two children. Practicing architect since 1990, having realized over a hundred built projects. The practice demonstrates a strong focus on material research and sustainable architecture supported by extensive research and experimentation from the development of building technologies to building prototypes that are environmentally sound and socio-economically beneficial. The projects range from planning and urban design to architecture and detail product design of building systems.

“Based on the use of ‘poor’ materials and methods and close attention to the social function of architecture, Anupama Kundoo’s work is a convincing alternative to the new forms of International Style, which give many of today’s buildings a standardized look, even in the emerging countries.

Her research focuses on design methods suited to the construction of sustainable buildings with very basic materials, like the sun-dried mud bricks of the Volontariat Homes for Homeless Children in Pondicherry (India), or the terracotta cones and glass bottles juxtaposed to form arches as supports for the roof of the Wall House.

The reconstruction of her house made from bricks and recycled materials at the Venice 2012 Architecture Biennale brought her international fame: taken out of its original context it created a highly theatrical effect, yet it could give the impression of being a one-off art installation rather than a design project.” Stefano Casciani, scientific director arcVision Prize

VOLONTARIAT HOMES – Pondicherry, India

This project was built using a rare technology pioneered by Ray Meeker of Golden Bridge pottery, which consists of baking a mud house insitu, after constructing it. A fired house or a fire-stabilised mud house is in principle, a mud house built with mud bricks and mud mortar that is cooked after building as a whole to achieve the strength of brick.

A social project with cost as a major aspect that informed design, the project uses many unconventional materials as well as absorbs urban waste. Bicycles wheel frames were used as formwork for windows and later as window grills. Glass bottles were used as structural units for masonry in the toilet and wet areas. Glass chai cups were used to finish the openings at the top of the dome.

This highly experimental project is an example of radical thinking that is being explored to approach the problem of affordability of housing for all, and more over integrally sustainable in all its aspects.



URBAN ECO-COMMUNITY – Auroville, India

The housing project demonstrates an example for low density development that is urban in character. Streets are created on upper levels that are connected through external stairways to achieve connectivity and community. A feature that is found usually in ground levels of pre-automobile times is taken into the structure and these lively 'streets' characterize the sense of the community. These 'streets' are set back from the building façade to allow privacy to the housing units but also to enable hot air exhaust by increasing the air-stack effect by creating voids along the windows of the lower levels.



WALL HOUSE ONE TO ONE – Venice Biennale, Italy

Full scale architecture was constructed within the Corderie of the Arsenale in response to the theme 'Common Ground' demonstrating a range of innovative technologies that utilize geometry and structural efficiency to shape architecture in a way that it reduces resource consumption drastically while improving socio-economic conditions locally. The project was constructed by 30 architecture and engineering students from Brisbane and Venice including 60% female students and 40% male students with the support of 6 Indian craftsmen. This project is also a research into fired clay and its potential in architecture in the way it extends its application in walls, floors as well as roof construction.

