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INNOVATE



A & B

Designs with Attitude

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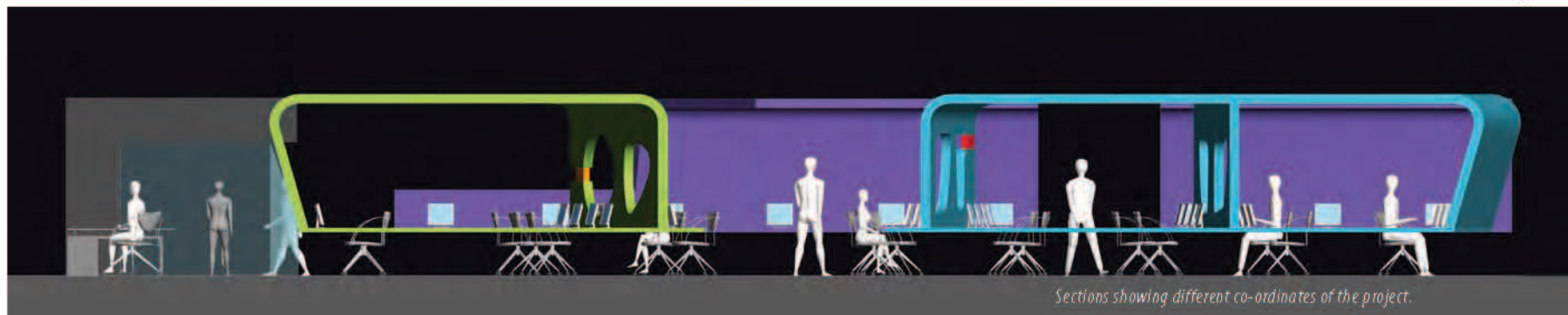
Conceptual sketch of the project.

SPATIAL PALIMPSESTS

Collaborative Architecture's recent venture - WRAP 3, refers to the chronology of the projects in which the architects have employed the concept of 'non-hierarchical tectonic imagery / strategy' in their projects.

Photographs: Courtesy the architects





Site constraints, low budget, and lack of skilled craftsmanship – Collaborative Architecture's project WRAP 3 saw all these difficulties. But yet when you look at the final product, it will not reflect the restraints that the team hurdled over to go through to make the spontaneous sketches into a reality. The rectangular site never offered any possibilities to create an architectural wonder, but what was in support was the client's enthusiastic offering of a free hand to the architects. One would consider that the nature of the occupant and resources of funding might have limited the dynamics of this computer lab for orphans, but the lack of funds does not register in this "amazing" spatial kaleidoscope created by the collaborative practice of Lalita Thadani and Mujib Ahmed.

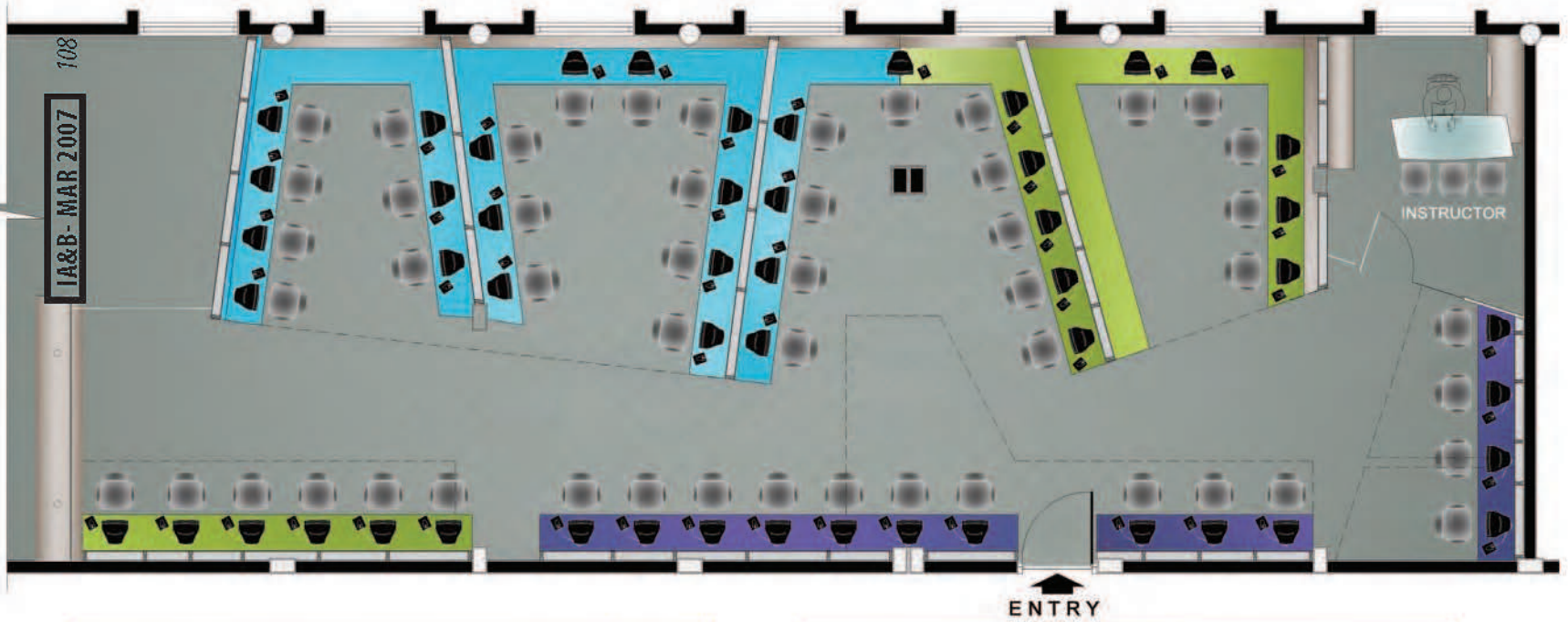
Conceived as a series of wraps, juxtaposed to create overlapping diverse layers of colours and spatial overlays. The target age group was of students of primary and secondary schools, which made the design process, lean heavily on child perception. The architects created a wholly informal teaching environment that the children could relate to and explore the potentials that 'e-environment can offer. They employed the concept of 'non-hierarchical tectonic imagery', which made it easier for children too adapt themselves easily. The interior 'wrap' is cut out to project it as the childish 'intuitive' doodles that doubled up as 'crawl graffiti' on the walls as well as an integral architectural element. The design veers away from the dogma of rational modernist approach for a design process, which favoured accidental discoveries.

"The design, in part deals with the dichotomy of perception – on the higher level it is the simple reading on the plan versus a highly complex 'three dimensional



The project conceived for an informal teaching environment incorporated various elements for the target group, which was primary school children.





construct' and at the basic perceptive level as a continuous changing 'spatial kaleidoscope' generating unique spatial compositions with every changing position in the space", enthuses Mujib. "Each encounter with the space is a discovery, prodding the young minds to search for more. The colours, which mark the different domains in the matrix, have been carefully chosen to generate brilliant overlays. It also gives each domain a territorial character, which is vital in designing spaces for children", adds Lalitha enthusiastically.

The whole mass is anchored from the top, leaving the entire space clear of any visual obstructions at the floor level. The workstations on either side are divided by clear float glass at the bottom resulting in a levitating spatial matrix. Besides the inventive architectural approach, the program tackled the cost effectiveness as the very fact that it was designed for an orphanage. So was the recurring maintenance cost, and the artificial lighting was restricted to the most essential as the centre is operational only during the daytime.

Though a low budget programme, the final result showcased the difference architectural elements can bring when used properly.

