

arch  
ohm

at ten

NOVEMBER 2009

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# archohm works

The first of November is normally the time when it hits you that another year is almost past! As you may have realized this happens faster and faster as one goes along in life; whereas one would actually prefer it the other way!

You will be pleasantly surprised to see the theme of this edition of our newsletter - almost **completely** dedicated to our **magnum opus** - the recently delivered Archohm Coffee Table Book or CTB as it is known to one and all in the office.

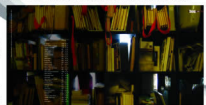


This page in the CTB talks about some of the most important aspects that Archohm has worked on and the people associated with them. There is a grid for you to figure out the same!

An attempt to encapsulate ten years of the company into one 'skim' volume - some of you must receive a copy of it - if you haven't already- my involvement in it was restricted to a train journey with Sourabh where we made a list of all possible things it might contain, and a few odd pages here and there; and countless one liners that you will find in this work.

The wonderful thing about "archohm at ten" is that it is **very readable**. I don't say this as one of the peripheral members behind its publication- but as a voracious reader who devours printed material at a pace not seen since the advent of the Internet.

You will find information on all our projects, our clients, our influences, the people who have worked here and made Archohm what it is today... and also all sorts of useless information like the average distance travelled by our employees whilst coming to work every day, the mean birthplace of all Archohm employees - practical information like our blood groups, and most of all the one piece of information you were dying to know - how many bricks did we use in building our current office building!



This is a shot of our employees sitting along some of Archohm's favourite networks.

Our printer has been delivering our copies of the CTB according to some strange delivery schedule, which we have not really understood so far, except that we keep having to postpone presentation of the CTB to you!

Do address all your feedback regarding the CTB to [atsi@archohm.com](mailto:atsi@archohm.com); rest assured that all suggestions will be kept in mind when we bring out "Archohm at 20!" There's a quiz somewhere inside, which you could attempt- note that each question comes with its own clue!

Advice for all those who want to get a cool website up-n-running, or put together a brochure, or - if you are really adventurous - compile a coffee table book - Contact [Rajesh Sunjeja](http://www.hawkeyecreations.com) at [www.hawkeyecreations.com](http://www.hawkeyecreations.com) - and sit back and enjoy the fun!

- Kunal Savarkar

FEEDBACK: Please address all feedback to Atsi at [archohm@archohm.com](mailto:archohm@archohm.com)

## editorial

Like all great tales the creation of the **10th anniversary book** has drama, passion and adventure. It contains baffling puzzles, magic and a damsel in distress or more accurately two damsels. As with most things in Archohm this story began one fine afternoon in Sourabh's office. A vision was shared to create a book that would contain the very essence of Archohm. From the projects and the people to the inspirations and containing a healthy dose of trivia this book would have it all and it would not be any book but a coffee table book.

With the dazzling image still glowing on our retinas there was a call for volunteers. Who would be brave enough to accept this challenge? Willing to go to any lengths, undertake any hardship? An intrepid band of four stepped forward and in that second our **lives changed forever**. Having been assigned our tasks we set about our work, gathering information, collecting, sifting and sorting. New ideas for pages came thick and fast and with each one a new sense of how good the resulting book would be. We knew that the journey would not be an easy one. With one month to collect the content, one month to make the pages and one month to print time was short but worries were banished from our minds as we set about our work.

Then came the first Sunday sacrificed to the book. On a day when the office is normally silent and empty; it was instead filled with the steady buzz of busy people working. As the day wore on, drawings were corrected, technical information was found and images were cropped. Hundreds of images were considered for the book, hundreds chosen and hundreds more discarded. The selected pictures and information were stuck onto the draft pages until the office was littered with the corpses of finished glue sticks.

With the hard copies of the content assigned and organised there followed the search for the soft copies. Here we would have been lost without Atsi's photographic memory. I would crawl my way repeatedly through the endless folders searching for an image and finally give up convinced that it could not be there. Then like magic Atsi would turn her powers to the task and invariably find the skulking picture within about ten minutes.

As the images seemed to be coming under control the next battle loomed on the horizon as the text reared its ugly head. With this chapter in the saga came various problems. Identifying pictures taken years before or obscure shots of architecture from across the world was challenging and it soon became clear that without Sourabh's input this would be impossible; but how to get time with him? As always his diary was jam packed with meetings and travel. So it came about that one Tuesday morning at 7am Atsi, Aditi and myself were sitting on a train as it sped on its way to Ludhiana with the draft pages piled on our knees and a laptop balanced precariously on the fold-down table. The journey involved all three of us clamouring for his attention as he identified images, suggested captions and corrected errors while we frantically typed up the text. On the return leg after a session of musical chairs that provoked looks of pity and bemusement from our fellow travellers we continued our work and as the train pulled into Delhi, and the carriage rose around us to pack up, we carried on doggedly using every last second.



I write now after months of solid work with the coffee table book released in the public realm. The journey has been long and hard but as I look back on the highs and lows I can only hope that people can gain as much from the finished product as I have from being part of its creation.

**Elizabeth Shaw** - Quietly determined, cool and efficient - that describes this architectural trainee from England. Apart from conceptual design work on the Cerita Campus, she has been one of the pillars behind the project known as "CTB1" "damsel in distress number one"



The day the first few prints of "archohm at ten" came out, there was a whole new level of energy one could feel walking into the Archohm building. I won't deny my heart was beating like a train on a track (borrowed lines from a Shakin Stevens song) as I walked up Sourabh's office to get my first peek of the final product. As I climbed the stairs, my eyes kept shifting from one face to the next... desperately trying to ask if they had seen the book, and if they had, did it do justice to the four months of hard work, sweat (air conditioning at Archohm is switched off at 6:30 every evening) and tears (for some this holds true) that had gone into compiling and designing it?

The apprehensions were somewhat put to rest when I saw smiles on Sourabh's and Atsi's faces as I walked into the room. But they were fully laid to rest when, while I was opening my copy of "archohm at ten", a gentleman we refer to as NP in the book walked in with a wide smile on his face and almost shouted "It's excellent guys!". If the final result had finally turned him into a believer, I think we had done our job well.

This project has been an extraordinary and a very special journey for me. The two things SG had promised before we embarked on it were that the end product would definitely not be short of "awesome" - as he would settle for nothing less- and the journey leading up to it would be nothing short of "total fun and madness". Looking back on it now, I think he's been right on both counts. Although for people not associated with Archohm but reading this article, I should specify that Archohm's definition of "total fun and madness" also includes sleepless nights, 7 a.m. group meetings, anxiety attacks etc. etc.



Shot of the Living Lounge of the villa Agri. It explains the sign in line of all the employees at Archohm on a typical day.

Over 550 design compositions, including the ones that didn't make the final cut, were conceptualized and put together; not counting the numerous edits each went through till we reached the print stage, with a clear directive of each composition being "good enough to be a poster in itself". Two support designers - Anoop and Pooja, who deserve a mention and a big thanks too, and 12-15 hour days ensured the book was ready for print in approx three months. How the content- text, pictures, text about pictures etc- was compiled is, however, material for a separate article or two.



I feel a sense of achievement and satisfaction now when I flip through "archohm at ten". The sense of achievement comes from the fact that it was a tough project and the first of its kind undertaken by us and we came through it successfully. And the fact that no matter how tight the deadlines got, no matter how tired or fatigued the mind felt, no one in the team ever thought of compromising on the quality of work ensuring that we gave it all we had makes it a very satisfying experience.

Here's raising a toast to "archohm at ten"... and looking forward to "archohm at twenty!"



**Rajesh Sunjeja** - Luckily he was bald before he joined hands with Archohm, so that's one thing he can't blame us for! We have left no stones unturned to not drive him to complete insanity with all our projects. A perfect partner and associate, one with whom Archohm aspires to go a long way! "knight in shining armour"

## guest thoughts

# in focus

At times I felt that the CTB was conceived of at some random moment in some completely out of context place - with an idea to put together our thoughts and works in an interesting manner. I am sure, however, that at the time when it was first thought of, none of us truly grasped the enormity of the endeavour being undertaken.

The intricacies of compiling a 1000 leaf book started unfolding only when we began working on it. The idea was extremely ambitious; the efforts as a result seemed to fall short at every level. The basic limitation was the dire paucity of time. February for assimilation of content, March for design and April for printing was the simple timeline.



A shot of a necklace made with a large number of different precious stones designed by Pooja Puroso.

Archohm found an able enthusiast in Hawkeye Creations, headed by Rajesh Sunjeja. We all had one thing in common; we had never done this before! That naively translated into energy to gear us towards the final product. From paper hunting to printer negotiations, from fund raising to article requests, each and every moment was a learning experience in itself.

Seeing a dream manifest into a tangible entity is the best incentive to take it to completion. That is perhaps what goaded us to push our limits, aiming to bring in a certain sense of finesse and high quality. The silhouette of the book haunted our dreams at night and was like a mirage during our waking hours. To make that elusive fragment of our imagination, into something that we will cherish the rest of our lives - seemed the only way to live!

From getting the Finnish Mark print from the Aalto Museum curator, to calling and collecting the building names from an old Austrian guide, re-creating the marble cities (built by Sourabh and Kunal as children) to re-clicking the school bus (on which Mohit and Sourabh travelled daily), each and every act bears testimony to our ambition to present an interesting story in a fun way.

The book was actually a construct of the memories of a lifetime. The sheer beauty of some of the pictures will leave you wanting for more, while making you feel more knowledgeable by providing you detailed information on the most interesting (if random) facts, figures, places and people!



A shot taken in Greece. Dedicated to Shivdutta, one of Archohm's oldest employees.

### to me archohm happened!

**Atsi Anil** - Hardworking, focused on the job at hand, with a photographic memory if I ever saw one! Interior Designer who knows Italian brands like the alphabet - from Arflex to Zaccarotto, she is a person you can absolutely rely on to do a job. Also extremely aware to the concepts of eating and sleeping...! "damsel in distress number two"



### NEWS:

For those who are not aware, on 6th of October, Archohm was joined by its latest recruit, **Zaha Gupta**, who arrived a few days before schedule. Mohit is busy trying to see where she will be accommodated in the office...

As always, **Diwali was celebrated with a bang**... and lots of food and drink. This time, we switched the venue from the Archohm office premises to Anand Lok. Truly an occasion to remember the year that went by and welcome the year coming up!

**Diwali shopping:** The pre-requisite of the organization of a Diwali party, is inevitably shopping for the same. This saw Sourabh, Mohit, Ajit, Aditi and Atsi going to Chandni Chowk for a six hour long shopping session. They came back loaded with all the paraphernalia needed for a Diwali party! By the way, they also bought random items like doormats...! So, if anyone is dissatisfied with their Diwali gifts, you know who to blame!

**CTB distribution:** As mentioned, the CTB is being delivered in unequal instalments- a few at a time- which we are then placing in your hands! The idea is to hand deliver them so that we ensure you open them at least once!



**CTB presentation:** We decided to present "archohm at ten" to all the office employees in a slideshow presentation, making use of the gathering that the Diwali party at Anand Lok had ensured! 50 odd pages were picked up and an explanation for all of them offered. It was undoubtedly an activity enjoyed by all present as it quelled their queries regarding the enigma called the CTB!

**Bathroom prototype:** The visit to Italy entailed a sneak peek at the sample prototype of the bathroom design made by Archohm. The people at Rapaci had done a brilliant job. Definitely a new milestone in the never ending journey of Archohm's design team...

### Some interesting bus stops around the world



### UPCOMING PROJECTS:

**IIT Administration block**  
Archohm has been invited by IIT Delhi, through their old associates BECIL, to present a design proposal for the facelift of all its premier facilities like Dogra hall, the main auditorium of IIT which has been witness to lectures from the likes of Bill Gates and Tony Blair. The other spaces include the Seminar hall, the big 'roundabout' venue, the Senate room which is to be expanded for higher capacity and re-oriented for exhibitions, examinations and the entrance spaces to the block, the first entry points to the IIT campus.

### Shooini University

A premier biotech university in the picturesque hills of Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Shooini aspires to be a world class educational hub and has aligned with Archohm to move towards this aspiration. This further strengthens Archohm's educational campus expertise in recent times.

### BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH:

Sneha Malavika Manju  
Tenth  
Sixteenth  
Thirteenth

NEW JOINEE:  
Isha Nanda  
Architect

## designs

# sourabh's desk

archohm is my life. for malavika, my wife, it's my first love.

to me archohm happened.

archohm's birth was one of the most unplanned things of my life. I worked on a guest house for bank of tokyo in golf links under the banner of 'nishi Kapoor and associates' a well wisher, colleague of my father, as a result of this guest house we had made in roads into the Japanese construction company misui and in may 1999 they invited me to participate as an architect in a limited competition for the delhi noida toll plaza. 'toll plaza' was alien to me and the title 'architect' in me was a thesis away. I was then working on my final thesis project at IIS, cept, on the 'behaviour of sinners'. from sinners to roads, journey could not have been shorter. I entered the design competition and won the right before signing the contract, on my 386 computer and the canon desktop printer, came the name and logo of archohm.



Shot of the Archohm logo in the office lobby- the logo is a single combination of dimensional representation of archohm for architecture and the Greek alphabet 'alpha', a unit of electrical resistance.

since its inception, I have attempted to keep Archohm as a design office that tackles all issues with creative solutions. This has made the project mix, people mix and the client mix refreshingly rational and exceptionally exciting. the body of work we have is not a comprehensive set of convincing solutions but an honest description of our attempts in hope of improving and evolving with every project we undertake.

archohm today has reached a certain stable professional status and tries to look back and learn on one side and envision the future and aspire towards it at another level.

sharing of this journey of archohm was difficult and perhaps personal at places. we wanted to do it to see ourselves, our work and our friends. every page was vetted, every thought was questioned, every idea was discussed. eventually we decided to keep it a simple and innocent, a rather honest submission of facts and figures about ourselves. I felt this has strengthened the product, stitching the various apparently disjoint fragments together into a story, rather an evolution of a story, a truly true reflection of life and work at archohm.

archohm is a family to me with all its members, a strength and a responsibility that keeps me going strong



A shot of the complete Archohm office- in its present state.