



**SOCIETY**

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# INTERIORS

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**SIZZLING ISLAND-CHIC STYLE AT  
SOFITEL THE PALM, DUBAI**

**AR. HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR'S  
ICONIC DESIGN FOR EMAMI**

**+ SANJAY PATIL | ADITYA AGRAWAL | WOW ARCHITECTS**



# ARTISTIC CREATION

THE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS OF EMAMI LIMITED,  
DESIGNED BY MUMBAI-BASED ARCHITECT HAFEEZ  
CONTRACTOR, CELEBRATES THE BRAND'S ETHOS OF  
UPHOLDING INDIAN TRADITION WITH A MODERN TWIST.



*The white walls of the Emami Chisel Art Gallery contrasts with the black frames pattern, lending a contemporary yet rugged look.*

**W**ith changing corporate work culture, most of the established brands are redesigning their existing spaces to suit the new work culture. **Emami Limited**, one of the leading Indian producer of Fast Moving Consumer Goods, had six offices at different locations in Kolkata. This configuration made the workers feel disconnected from each other and the company as a whole. Hence, the company's management wanted to create a united corporate culture that encourages collaboration.



*above:* Note the understated beige sofa in the Chief Managing Director's cabin. The artworks on the walls add character to the room.

*below:* The sedate seating arrangement contrasts with the colourful painting here. The twin sculptures of babies at the corner generates interest.





*Above: The Chief Managing Director's cabin is done in Italian marble flooring, while the decor is modern.*

*Below: The reception table outside the Chief Managing Directors' Chambers. Note the antique metal reclining Ganesha statue.*





*ABOVE:* A corridor flanked by directors' rooms and conference rooms. The sculpture stands out against the Italian marble flooring and backlit walls.

*CENTER:* The conference room is contemporary and equipped with modern amenities and also displays paintings.

*BELOW:* A chamber of the Chief Managing Director is subtle yet stylish.



Hence, they all shifted to a 10-storey office space spread across 1 lakh sq. ft. area at Kolkata's Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, overlooking the main road. The new headquarters designed by Mumbai-based firm **Architect Hafeez Contractor**, established 'cohesion of design' that features an open, inviting space that brings people together, allowing employees to move easily to different floors via multiple staircases, which are widened to allow people to interact freely. The landings have break areas that are being well used.

*ABOVE: An interesting wall mural in the passage leading to the office canteen.*

*BELOW, LEFT: A Nataraja metal sculpture near the office entrance area, which leads to the elevator area.*

*BELOW, RIGHT: Stone-topped dining table designed for the Emami directors.*



*Emami Library that showcases the company's products and awards.*

The crisp, clean design vocabulary of the building is well complemented by a huge statue of the Lord Surya outside the entrance door. Designed by renowned sculptor from Odisha and Padma Vibhushan recipient Shri Raghunath Mahapatra, the statue is made of dark granite and the chariot and horses of red sandstone. "The statue and our office face the East. As they both face the sun, they take the light of the sun god which signifies 'the rising'," says **Aditya Agarwal**, Managing Director of Emami Limited. The statue not only makes the office exterior striking, but also exudes positive energy. "We also plan to install the statue of Lord Surya's consort Chhaya Devi", adds Aditya.

On entering the seemingly modern office, one witnesses subtle traditional touches in the form of motifs, artworks and artefacts. On each floor, the landing space has some exquisite statues made of sandalwood, rosewood or metal lending an artistic touch to this space.

The ground floor has a section dedicated to the reception area. This area has a striking inlay panel of 7x5 ft. The inlay carpet work is accentuated with semi-precious stones and laser-cut stones by artists from Gujarat. A little ahead of the reception area is the Emami Chisel Art Gallery to host art exhibitions and events. The decor of the art gallery is contemporary and futuristic. The space on the ground floor has white walls, which contrasts the black space frames of the ceiling and the curved pipes interconnecting the columns, lending it a contemporary yet rustic look. Explaining the design concept, designer **Roshan Choudhary** adds, "We deliberately didn't opt for a false ceiling on the ground floor so as to give it a spacious feel. Both the levels are interconnected through a winding wooden stairway with steel railings.





The wood and steel combination also imparts a chic appeal, heightened by steel arches connecting the pillars. The white vitrified tiles flooring in matte finish is highly functional for high traffic areas.”

The architect has given equal emphasis to space planning. The second floor houses the Human Resource department and Emami Realty. The third floor has Emami Biotech, the fourth has Emami Paper Mills, fifth has IMD and Corporate Affairs, sixth houses Finance, Legal, Secretarial and Marketing departments, the seventh floor has Corporate Communications and Media, eighth has the Directors’ chambers and boardroom and the topmost floor has the cafeteria. The atrium is another highlight of the office owing to the stunning art installation of 15x30 ft. by Delhi-based artist Vinod Daroz.

*The atrium is the highlight of the office, having a huge mural. Owing to its lounge-like setting, it is used for casual meetings.*



*ABOVE, LEFT:* The main reception area on the ground floor has a striking inlay carpet done with semi-precious stones and laser-cut stones.

*ABOVE, RIGHT:* An imposing statue of the sun god is created by renowned sculptor Shri Raghunath Mahapatra.

The artwork is a multimedia installation where ceramic, china clay, wood and paint have been used. The design of the artwork signifies Emami's growth in diverse business interests and is visible from the main road. The atrium, with its lounge-like seating, is suitable for casual meetings.

Glass plays an important role in the interior and exterior design of the office. Transparent glasses around the entire building enable ample flow of natural light, while the stacked glass on the walls near the elevator lends a plush appeal. Flooring is largely done in Italian marble, though vitrified tiles are used in the work zone. Exquisite wallpaper in the boardroom and chairman's rooms add to the aesthetic appeal. The boardroom has a fantastic display of artwork by great artists such as FN Souza, Manjit Bawa, MF Hussain, Bikash Bhattacharya, Satish Gujral and others.

Back-painted glasses have been used for the tables of senior management. Staff tables are procured from Singapore. The poly coating or melamine finish ensures easy maintenance of the furniture. Use of paint was minimized to control the accumulation of dirt. The staircases are adorned with various brand memorabilia like autographed photos of many Emami brand ambassadors.

The office design reflects the company's mantra as it is a fine blend of Indian tradition with a modern, futuristic vision.

*Text: Kakoli Poddar. Photographs: Biswajit Chatterjee*