

Architect: URBANA / Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury, Marina Tabassum, Dhaka (Bangladesh)

Lighting designer: Nasim Chowdhury

Photographer: URBANA / Kashef

Project location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

An architect's home

In Dhaka (Bangladesh), the architect Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury built himself a flat that combines the elements of a spiritual modernity with local traditions.

In Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, the architect Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury designed this penthouse flat for his personal use. The roof garden is of courtyard proportions and a veritable celebration of the elements: light and water. Slits and openings in the wall modulate the sun's incident rays, and the monsoon rain awakes the multi-terraced topography of basins and gullies into a living play of water.

A symbolic archway made of old brick separates the entrance area and living area from the more private sphere of kitchen and dining place. The interior offers a wealth of alluring materials and textures - such as the beaten sheet copper surfaces in the kitchen. Cool, veranda-type rooms make the tropical weather bearable, even without artificial air-conditioning, and large wooden shutters provide protection from sun or rain.

The sculptural design of the bare concrete in the bedroom unmistakably evokes the style of Louis Kahn, whose parliamentary buildings in

Dhaka are his legacy to us and a highly influential monument to modernity. The floor is a jigsaw of travertine fragments.

In this project, Kashef has succeeded in combining elements of local, cultural identity with those of architectural modernity. The common denominator here is a certain ethereal quality and a magic of the materials, as can be found in the modernism of Kahn or the later works of Le Corbusier for instance.

The economic use of warm, directed light from low-voltage halogen lamps creates an intimate and mysteriously dramatic, man-made environment. Starpoint pendant luminaires highlight points of interest in the room, while grazing light from recessed luminaires emphasise the lively structures of the walls.

Instead of a diffuse brightness, Kashef preferred to use Pollux low-voltage spotlights, which, being point light sources, set individual lighting accents in the half-light of the room. In this way, they add dramatic lighting effects to the architecture. Pollux spotlights are ideally suited for picking out objects from the darkness, such as a piece of graphic art, especially when used in conjunction with the framing attachment.



