

While on a six-month break from architecture, Aamer Taher decided to learn pottery; he had just returned to Singapore with a diploma from the prestigious Architectural Academy in London. Earlier on, he had completed the required yearlong internship – at SAA Architects – for the architecture degree which he obtained from the National University of Singapore.

To suggest that pottery's free, voluptuous forms have found their way in Taher's architecture may not be off the mark; but it would be equally facile to see how he manifested his abiding interest in curvilinear and sinuous forms in the pieces that he had created.

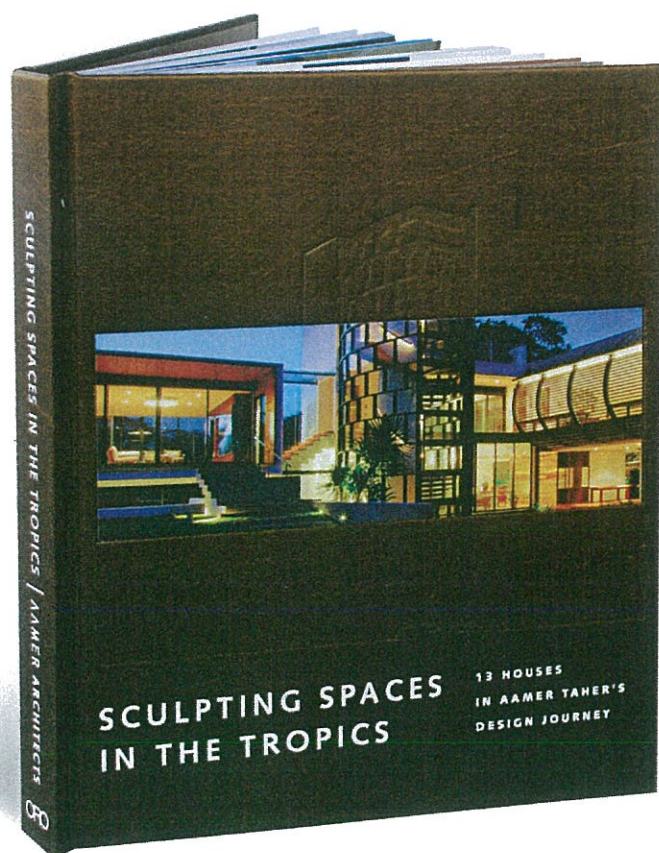
The architect Ernesto Bedmar, friend and mentor to Taher, recalls in his introduction to the book how he saw the younger architect's playful adaptation of curvilinear roofs and walls "as an expression of appreciation of freedom". "The artistic composition of circles and stripes that he often uses confirms Aamer's determination to depart from conformist shapes. Apart from the geometry of his plans, he breaks free with the roof forms and the use of materials such as painted surfaces, concrete and timber, glass and aluminium," Bedmar notes.

FREEDOM WITH CURVES

Sculpting Spaces In The Tropics: 13 Houses

In Aamer Taher's Design Journey

By Jiat -Hwee Chang, ORO Editions, 192 pages



In a chapter devoted to a project named 'The Longhouse' in Dalvey Estate, completed in 2009, Taher's masterful ways with circles and stripes are on full display. The longhouse element takes the form of a horizontal drum clad in timber louvers. It is in fact a verandah that runs along the entire length of the second storey. But by being the communal space that joins various rooms on the floor, it ceases to be a mere architectural flourish. It is, if one will, a lived-in gallery with access to external views and tropical breeze.

The curvilinear forms that interests Taher are also applied sparingly in opulent modernist forms, such those in 'The Streamlined House' on Siglap Road, completed in 2010. Here the forcefully sweeping balcony that wraps a section of the house serves as a viewing deck where the distant prospects of the city can be enjoyed. Comparisons to a luxury yacht would be tempting. The gleaming white structure would appear massive has it not been relieved by rounded edges and graceful lines.

The book features the most significant residential projects that Aamer Architects have completed over the last decade, and brims with many other fine examples of Taher's design philosophy – one that is hinged on working with the tropical environment – and, of course, his mastery of relieving rigidity and commonness with circles and stripes. Jiat-Hwee Chang's writing is lucid and, although unembellished, elegant. - MSA



1. The longhouse effect takes the form of a louvered verandah

2. Salvaged timber and concrete steps lead to the master study

3. The sweeping balcony offers distant views of the city centre

C O N T E N T S



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