

Sathish, Sowmya

RESEARCH AREA: Learning Spaces, Flexible classrooms, Neuro-architecture



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Sowmya Sathish works at the intersection of architecture and education. Her research examines classrooms as physical environments, asking what makes a space flexible, for whom, and to what effect.

She came to these questions through a persistent gap in practice. Buildings that perform well technically do not always work equally well in use. Spaces may meet every prescribed standard yet remain at odds with how people think, work, and engage within them. A decade of teaching brought this interest into the classroom. As learning environments shifted from static, didactic layouts towards more open and participatory settings, the relationship between spatial design, pedagogical practice, and learners' cognitive experience came into sharper view. The same environment could support discussion and collaboration in one context yet create distraction or constrain participation in another. What interests her is the distance between the two, and what it would take for architecture and education to close it.

Before entering academia, Sowmya worked as an Environmental and Sustainable Design (ESD) consultant, specialising in building performance, energy optimisation, and green certification. She later taught related diploma programmes at Temasek Polytechnic, where she was a finalist for the President's Award for Teachers in 2021. She was also awarded the Gold Medal for her MSc in Building Science from NUS (2011).

She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Architecture at NUS, under the supervision of Associate Professor Eddie Lau Siu-Kit, Vice Dean for Graduate Programmes in the College of Design and Engineering.