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PERKINS EASTMAN REIMAGINES THE BIRTHPLACE WITH AASTRIKA MIDWIFERY CENTRE

Designed with evidenced-based research, new birthing clinic is the first in India to feature sensory technology in the labor and delivery rooms



Lobby (L) and Patient Room (R) of Aastrika Midwifery Centre
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New York, NY (May 4, 2022) Transforming the birthing experience for the better, Aastrika Midwifery Centre, founded by Dr. Janhavi Nilekani, is an evidenced-based birthing center in India designed to promote natural births and steer mothers-to-be away from Cesareans. Perkins Eastman was commissioned to do the programming, planning, interior design, and execution of the 5,300 sf healthcare center.

Set within the existing Vasavi hospital in Bengaluru, also known as Bangalore, Aastrika Midwifery Centre is the first clinic in India to feature specialized Denmark-inspired “Sensory Technology” in the labor and delivery rooms. Specific combinations of the audio-visual stimulation and specialty dimmable lighting have a documented calming effect on the otherwise clinical space, creating a sense of well-being and an overall comforting and supportive birthing experience.

After referencing several evidenced-based research papers, including the Ariadne Labs and MASS Design Group’s study on “Innovation in the Design of Child Birth Spaces” by Dr. Neel Shah and colleagues, as well as the research and documentation conducted by Reshma Bachwani for Aastrika, “The Birth of a Birth Centre,” Perkins Eastman began the design process.

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“As a mother, designing the Aastrika Midwifery Centre was an extremely rewarding experience,” says Perkins Eastman Associate Principal Tania Phillips, AIA, who led the project. “As a team, we had valuable discussions about the integration of evidenced-based design principles in support of natural birth and the overall philosophy of the project. As part of our design process, we participated in a virtual conference, GynZone in Copenhagen, to better understand the latest trends in the design of midwifery models of care. We learned about sensory technology, and we met with Swedish midwives so they could share their personal experiences. They provided us with great insights into the midwifery model of care, labor, water births, and post-partum recovery, which proved to be invaluable.”

That research paid off. With both outpatient and inpatient care, the design of Aastrika provides continuous support to a mother-to-be during her pregnancy. The birthing suite comprises two Labor and Delivery rooms and three Antepartum/Post-Partum rooms with expansion capability. While the design focuses on the patient’s well-being, it also promotes optimal staff efficiency. Quick access to call rooms, collaborative spaces, nourishment areas, and break rooms have all been carefully considered in the layout of the center.

Designed to promote an active labor, the private birthing suite features a hallway that is designed as an early labor lounge, encouraging the mother to ambulate while in labor while featuring areas of respite and nourishment along the way.

The Labor and Delivery room is unlike any other clinical space in the birthing suite. Designed to reduce stress, maintain an active birthing environment, and improve the overall patient satisfaction, the spacious room has exercise equipment, like a birthing ball and a ceiling-mounted rebozo, or birth rope, to support and encourage the mother through natural labor. A birthing pool is provided to give the mother the option of a water birth or, alternatively, water immersion, which is known to provide pain relief during labor. Designed to be larger than industry standard, the Labor and Delivery rooms support the mother-to-be through all stages of labor.

“Aspiring to showcase the best practices in maternity care in the urban private sector, Aastrika Midwifery Centre has been specially designed to support normal childbirth and use midwifery principles,” says Dr. Janhavi Nilekani, founder of Aastrika. “Together with Perkins Eastman, we carefully thought about every detail of the mother’s experience. We are delighted with the final design.”

Aastrika Midwifery Centre is now open, in time for Mother’s Day. The innovative birthing clinic is the first of many set to be built in Bangalore, India.

ABOUT PERKINS EASTMAN

Perkins Eastman is a global design firm founded on the belief that design can have a direct and positive impact on people’s lives. The firm’s award-winning practice draws on its 1,100+ professionals networked across 24 offices worldwide. By keeping the user’s needs foremost in the design process, the firm enhances the human experience across the spectrum of the built environment. For more information, visit www.perkinseastman.com.

Photography available.

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