

# Inside Outside

THE INDIAN DESIGN MAGAZINE

www.insideoutside.in

ISSUE 367

MARCH 2016

₹100

noijdirize



## LEVEL 2: ENCOUNTERING GROWTH

The timeline is used as a tool to read developments in architecture along with events that shaped the nation.



electricity grids. We are questioning the State's role as patron for architecture, or more broadly the role of the architect in contemporary Indian society. A new form of patronage has come in, where the individual is at the centre of the decision-making through an empowerment that is the result of capital accumulation.'

Sans Mustansir Dahi, Professor

of Architecture at Sir JJ College: 'A profound dissatisfaction with the state of mainstream architecture has driven the exhibition's curators to make the processes and practices of architecture in India face themselves. In post-liberalisation India, the state has virtually abdicated its responsibility of providing architecture for both the public at large, as well as for its citizens with the least resources.'

## A Larger Purpose

'Architecture is the most public of all arts – it sits in your face – it has a strong public presence in everyday living space – but there is no discussion on architecture in the public sphere. We wanted to bring the focus on architecture without

losing it in the conversation about conservation, monuments, cities and infrastructure,' says Mehta. Adds Mehrotra: 'We want to compensate for the absolute silence in the discussion of architecture in the last decade or two.'

So what has been attempted here at the NGMA, is to summon the profession to re-examine its role, to revitalise its democratic connection to society at large, with a clear eye on the future. Debates, queries, active participation through workshops, key note lectures by celebrated architects, all are part of the exhibition. The line-up of distinguished speakers includes BV Doshi, Raj Rewal, Romi Khosla, Christopher Charles Benninger, Brinda Somaya, Sen Kapadia and others.

Khosla, who spoke on Asian



# Inside Outside

THE INDIAN DESIGN MAGAZINE

www.insideoutside.in

ISSUE 067

MARCH 2016

₹100

## Who's Afraid of Building Buildings?



Summoning architects to re-examine their profession, Rahul Mehrotra, Kaiwan Mehta and Ranjit Hoskote have curated an ambitious three-month exhibition on 'The State of Architecture in India' at The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, together with the Urban Design Research Institute. Already a heady success, it is focussed at generating dialogue around Indian architecture, as it surveys the state of the architectural profession in India from 1947 to the present day.

TEXT: DEVIYANI JAYAKAR  
PHOTOGRAPHS: DINESH MEHTA,  
COPYRIGHT: UDRRI (URBAN DESIGN RESEARCH INSTITUTE)  
AND ROOSHAD SHROFF

Sanjay Mhatre has been teaching architecture in various colleges in Mumbai for the last 20 years and is also a mainstream artist. Firmly entrenched in academia, he confesses, 'I enjoy creating creative minds.' But a visit to the State of Architecture exhibition at the NGMA has set him thinking. 'I'm actually contemplating practicing architecture now. This exhibition has triggered clearer channels for me to position my practice,' he says. Clearly, Mehrotra, Mehta and Hoskote had intended to stir up the profession with their intensely detailed exhibition, but whether they anticipated that they would provoke this kind of reaction, is anyone's guess. 'It took us three-and-a-half years to put this exhibition together,' says Mehta. Of course, the credibility which the three curators enjoy in their own fields must have played no small role in opening doors for them, as they collected all the minutiae which has gone into this project. This is a significant effort to research, index and curate data about the education and practice of architecture.

### No mere eye candy

Exhaustive as the exhibition is, don't expect a sampling of every kind of architecture. Single family homes and vacation homes have been consciously excluded. In the reckoning of the curators, though these works may be great crucibles of innovation, they serve only a small privileged section of society. Mehrotra clearly doesn't think very highly of the 'Have money and taste, will spend' category of architecture created to assuage certain clients. A building could