

india

# mondo

arc

THE MAGAZINE FOR DESIGNERS WITH LIGHT #07 2016

₹ 500

1ST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



## LIGHT IN ESSENCE AND LUXURY IN SPIRIT

*Combining the fragility of the filament glass bulb with the robustness of marble, through a 9 month long period of research, emerged a unique installation of 'marble bulbs' for Lodha - The Luxury Collection, by architect Rooshad Shroff.*





Lodha Developers commissioned Mumbai architect, Rooshad Shroff to design a temporary barricade for their recently acquired site, on the premium Altamount Road. It was effectively meant to be a peripheral wall that was to last for 2.5 years and reflect the ethos of their brand The Luxury Collection.

The designer began by considering "Luxury" and defining it as the highest level of exclusivity, customisation, and innovation. This idea was then demonstrated through a two-part treatment of the boundary wall; the primary section, meant for intimate engagement, employs craftsmanship and hand skill as a channel, while the secondary section overlays the latest of technology to express customisation and detailing that true "Luxury" affords.

through this installation, the designer also recognised the potential for establishing a distinct night-time identity for the site, and by extension, the brand, given its favourable location in a residential area. Light therefore became the central preoccupation of his endeavour.

Thus, the secondary zone, which is designed to be enjoyed visually from a distance by moving vehicles, uses backlit Alucobond sheets, with painstakingly detailed and custom-designed perforations.

The more significant primary zone marks the main entrance, and its design plays on the traditional Indian ritual of lighting a lamp at the threshold of one's home. Here, imagining light as an integral component of the installation, Shroff presents light in the form of a "bulb" - a motif of the fundamental light source. Further, the filament glass bulbs' inherent projection of fragility is contrasted against its execution in a robust medium. In the selection of its material, the designer gravitated towards marble, given his recent and ongoing explorations with the stone. Marble also made a logical choice for its strength and moreover, for the unique quality of magical translucence that it acquires when shaved down to a minimal









thickness. The 'marble bulb', an elegant marriage between two divergent ideas, was finally developed through a 9 month long period of research. A finely-tuned fabrication process emerged, involving first, the hollowing of blocks of white 'makrana' marble using specially developed tools. Two parts, of 6 to 9mm thickness, are formed such that they join together to create the final bulb. The challenge presented by the resulting inevitable but visually disruptive joint is handled deftly by the designer, who introduced carved patterns on the bulbs' surface to absorb the joint. Therefore, not only is the joint concealed,

but in fact adds value, as the carving is executed by highly skilled artisans from Jaipur, in patterns inspired by crystal glass. The variety of patterns results in a variety of thicknesses, in-turn creating varied lighting effects. The marble bulb is capped with a hand-turned brass fitting wherein a small LED light source is fitted. Finally the installation is assembled by mounting the bulbs on a grey Alucobond metal sheet, flanking either side of the entrance, around the Luxury Collection logo. Multiple references to the building are embedded in the installation. A total of 197 bulbs signifies the building height of

197m, 53 different types of carvings signify the number of apartments, and 3 sizes of bulbs denote the 3 apartment sizes (3/4/5/ BHK). In fact, upon the dismantling of this installation, Shroff has proposed that the bulbs be auctioned, from which the proceeds would be donated to organisations working to promote handicrafts. On the whole, this 16 feet high temporary installation, complete with vertical gardens and street landscaping, rises to become a significant and memorable architectural and urban gesture. Most of all, it marks a new peak, in the showcase and communication of a brand through design, light and material. [www.roshadshroff.com](http://www.roshadshroff.com)



Level 0: The State of the Profession. The opening section is a quantified critical review of the profession of architecture in India. The books and magazines displayed have become archives as well as forums of discussion.

be green, sustainable...all of that...and still have an aesthetic which brashly declares 'I am different.' This, to Mehrotra's mind, has far reaching social implications which may not be immediately perceptible in any dramatic way, but which adversely affect the psyche of people, together with an inherent polarisation that will be created in our society in the coming decades. In his own work, Rahul steers away from orchestrated stage sets, moving, rather, towards an aesthetic which does not polarise society, or create a sharp divide between rural and urban as well as the 'haves' and 'have nots.' 'The transition from socialism to capitalism is long and disruptive – characterised by both glamour as well as displacement. What role can architecture play in this process?' asks Mehrotra, for

whom the most pressing issues in Mumbai are housing and sanitation. Chest thumping of any kind in architecture is frowned upon. 'The curators have identified 10 buildings that have made a shift in the way architecture can be understood. Among these are Charles Correa's Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad and Tara Rastogi Housing in Delhi, the Embassy of Belgium in Delhi by Satish Gujral, the Indian Institute of Forest Management in Bhopal by Anant Raje and Raj Rewal's Hall of Nations in Pragati Maidan. 'Some have been celebrated while others not so much,' says Mehrotra. 'But now, architecture has slipped into modes of luxury or vanity com-

modity – pretty houses and rich interiors! Today architects are introduced as lifestyle-producers – handmaidens to a demand for style and fancy living!'

This exhibition puts forward the notion that the State has more or less given up the responsibility of projecting an 'idea of India'



through the built and physical environment as it had done in the post-independence era. When several state capitals, government and educational campuses were built across the country. Says Mehrotra: 'The major state-directed projects are highways, flyovers, airports, telecommunication networks and