



1. CONFERENCE DETAILS

Conference Dates: III Annual National Conference, on 9th & 10th Feb 2007

Venue: Garden court, Pune, Maharashtra

Theme: Public Spaces: experience and expressions.

II. THEME

Public Spaces: Experiences and Expressions

The face of a city is presented through the grandeur and the scale of its public spaces. These spaces also serve to allow gathering and interaction of people under a collective identity. The manner in which they are used, they respond to the idea of a city being an expression and celebration of collective existence. The measure of a truly successful public space is in its ability to accommodate varying functions for varying user groups over the omnipresent variables of time, season, numbers, usage, pattern, frequency, duration and so on.

- The evolution of the urban pattern results into public spaces being misused and degenerated.
- With an inevitable morphing in the connotations and meanings of public spaces, the value of this commodity is not realized and we are losing them to the pressures of urbanization and development.
- Public spaces have been historically 'created' by the monarchs who had the where withal to do so and have traditionally been an integral part of our lives. As urban life becomes more complex, engagement with public spaces becomes more isolated and polarized and our connection with them becomes very tenuous or gets severed.
- The onus is on us, to protect and revitalize the inherited spaces which are facing neglect and deterioration and also to set into motion a positive cycle of creating effective public spaces.
- The conference will attempt to examine the role of public spaces, especially the open spaces in the city and to focus on the values of public spaces and the myriad overlaps and interweaves that create this multi faced, multifaceted, multilayered potpourri of usage, behavior, culture, architecture, art...

III. SPEAKER PROFILES

Speakers:



Diane Menzies, New Zealand

Diane Menzies is the President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects, and a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. She is a Commissioner with the Environment Court of New Zealand, undertaking mediation and decision making on environmental conflicts. She has qualifications and 30 years experience covering horticulture, landscape architecture, mediation, resource management and business management.

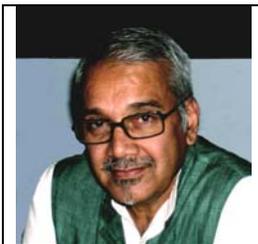
Her PhD concerned rural environmental quality issues. Diane Menzies is a past president and life member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and has served as IFLA Eastern Region Secretary and Secretary General. She is foremost a lifetime student.



Mohammed Shaheer, India

Prof. Mohammad Shaheer is based in Delhi from where he has been running his landscape architecture practice since 1976. Educated at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi (Architecture 1970, Urban Design 1972) and the University of Sheffield (Landscape Architecture, Ford Foundation Fellow 1972-74), he worked for two years in Northern Ireland before returning to India, where he spent the next 26 years teaching landscape architecture at the SPA, New Delhi. During the latter half of his academic career he was head of the Department of Landscape Architecture there.

Amongst his projects, his work at Sanskriti Kendra, Delhi is well known; also interesting are the projects for the restoration of the gardens of Humayun's Tomb in Delhi (2001) and the restoration of the Baghe-Babur at Kabul (2006).



K. T. Ravindran

Prof K.T Ravindran teaches urban design in the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi and is currently the Dean of the School. His practice involves Urban Design, institutional campuses, Conservation, Museum interiors and Exhibition design. He has been a consultant to the President of India, Chairman of IIID- Delhi, former member of the Delhi Urban Art Commission, is currently member of the Apex Committee for

Common Wealth Games, the Heritage Conservation Committee Delhi and is the Vice Chair for the EIA Committee of MoEF.

He has published extensively and has worked closely with many landscape architects in and around the country.



Martha Schwartz, USA.

Martha Schwartz a renowned landscape architect and artist is a Harvard Graduate in Landscape Architecture Program (1976-1977). She completed her Master of Landscape Architecture (1977), from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Martha Schwartz Partners (MSP) (formerly Martha Schwartz, Inc.) was formed in 1990 to provide a full range of landscape design services conceived and executed at the highest artistic level possible. Over the years, their practice has evolved from providing landscape design services primarily for private sector urban environments to large-scale public projects, land reclamation, and planning studies. MSP has offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, UK.

Her recent projects include the redesign of 26 Federal Plaza in New York City, the HUD Plaza in Washington, DC, and the United States Courthouse Plaza in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her work has been shown at the Chicago Institute of Contemporary Art, the Marlborough Gallery in New York City, New Gallery of Contemporary Art in Cleveland, and Henry Gallery in Seattle.

Christopher C. Benninger

Born in America in 1942, Christopher Charles Benninger has lived and worked in India for the past 35 years. Some labeled this as a “self imposed exile”. He studied City Planning in M.I.T. Cambridge and Architecture at Harvard University under Joseph Luis Sert, where he was later a professor of Architecture in the late 1960’s. A Fulbright Fellowship brought him to Ahmedabad in India in 1968, and he returned as Ford Foundation Advisor to found the School of Urban Planning there in 1971. Benninger often quotes Gandhi’s indicative, “Live in a village and plan for the world”. Later he founded the Centre for Development Studies in Pune, India (1976) involving him in rural development and poverty alleviation work. He has prepared city and urban plans for Nepal, Sri Lanka and India He has advised the World Bank, UNO and Asian Development Bank on development projects in Asia and Africa. He is a distinguished architect, planner, Institution Builder and a writer. He is a Fellow of the Council of Architecture, India, a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Architects and a member of AIA and APA.

Anuradha Mathur, U.S.A

Anuradha Mathur is an architect and a landscape architect. She is Associate Professor, School of Design, University of Pennsylvania. She has a Masters in Landscape Architecture from Penn, and a Bachelors of Architecture from CEPT, Ahmedabad.

Anuradha is co-author with Dilip da Cunha of *Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape* (Yale University Press, 2001) that looks beyond objectifying the Mississippi as a river, and draws out a more dynamic and layered landscape that demands negotiation more than control. They were visiting faculty at Harvard University for the academic year 2001/02. Their most recent book, *Deccan Traverses: the Making of Bangalore’s Terrain* (Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006), was released in June 2006. It follows a public exhibition held in Lalbagh, Bangalore, in October 2004. The book and exhibition bring together a unique and extensive documentation of Bangalore’s history and landscape agency.

Tong Mahn Ahn, Korea

Professor Tong Mahn Ahn is teaching in landscape architecture program of Seoul National University of the Republic of Korea. He got a bachelor degree in architecture and a master’s degree in landscape architecture from Seoul National University, and he was supported by the Colombo Plan scholarship to get a masters degree in town and country planning from the University of Sydney, Australia. He also studied urban and regional planning in the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. with the support of

Fulbright scholarship. He is now IFLA Vice President for Asia-Pacific Region. His works include many advisory, research, and planning duties in landscape architecture.

Peter Latz, Germany

Professor Peter Latz is working as a landscape architect and town planner since 1968.

In the same year he started his academic career, being now since 23 years the chair of landscape architecture and planning at the Technical University of Munich. He lectures and teaches worldwide, was guest professor in Harvard and is since several years also adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

As principal in the partnership Latz + Partner for 38 years, Peter Latz has worked on most of the firm's projects as the leading planner. With the award-winning project "Landscape Park Duisburg Nord", the metamorphosis of a large industrial Brownfield into a people's park and vivid part of the city, he has gained world-wide reputation.

James Hayter, Australia.

James is Principal of Oxigen, practicing landscape architects and urban designers. His experience in practice and teaching extends over a 25 year period and includes the realization of many of Australia's well-known designed places. He is the recipient of Australian and international awards of excellence for his projects.

He was the former Principal Landscape Architect for the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra, responsible for the design and management of Canberra's open spaces, including the Parliamentary Triangle. The Parliamentary Triangle is one of Australia's most loved, studied, planned and commented on public spaces, not only by Australians, but by visitors from overseas. He is a graduate in architecture from the University of Adelaide, and has master's degrees in landscape architecture from Sheffield University and urban design from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. He has worked in the UK for Derek Lovejoy and Associates and in the US for Michael van Valkenburgh and Associates.

James Hayter is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, past National President, and immediate Past Vice President and current Treasurer of the International Federation of Landscape Architects.

Kulbhushan Jain, India

Kulbhushan Jain is Emeritus Professor of architecture at CEPT University, Ahmedabad.

He is chairing the Doctoral Programme of the university.

Involved with teaching, research and academic administration at CEPT, he has published several papers, articles and six books. For more than 30 years, Prof. Jain has been actively involved in promoting the cause of architectural conservation. He has been involved in several projects in Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Nagaur and Jaipur.

Recipient of several UNESCO awards, he has also won design and academic awards. He retired as Director School of Architecture, CEPT in 2005. He is practicing with architect wife Minakshi Jain.

Dr. Subodh Kerkar, India

My encounters with land art began with my fascination for the sea. The sea was my constant theme for a long time. I painted the ocean changing its colours and temperaments with changing time and seasons. I painted boats anchored on the sand and the fisher-folk busy on the beach in their daily chores. The sea became my teacher, my inspiration and my friend.

Then one day I decided to abandon my studio and go to the beach to create my art. The seashore became my theme and my media.

One day I walked to the sea with a bag full of mussel shells during monsoons. The sea was rough. Thundering black clouds floated on the horizon. Strong salty winds made it difficult to keep the eyes open. It was a mega-drama of nature. I planted my mussel shells on the sand in a composition and when I moved back to have a look at them, I was stunned. The great ocean had become a backdrop for the act of my mussel shells.

I experimented extensively with nature using nature as my canvas. I created craters in the sand and lit them up. I had sand turtles covering the whole beach. I made use of old boats with glass incorporated in it in order to evoke the memory of water. My boats remember their voyages and the glass in turn remember the sand it is made of.

As a land artist I like to work with nature, not against nature. The nature is my canvas and my partner. In that sense it is collaborating with God to create art.

My art has a symbiotic relationship with the earth.

Pralhad Kakar

Pralhad Kakar is the Advertising Film Director for Genesis Film Production Pvt.Ltd., India's oldest and one of India's foremost Ad film production houses since its inception in 1977. Pralhad Kakar has ruled the advertising world with his brand of irreverent humor and has created award winning commercials for the most reputed corporate and agencies in India and the Asia Pacific region. Our clients include PepsiCo (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, The Philippines, Vietnam, New York), Levers (India), Nestle (India and Pakistan), Britannia Industries Limited, United Breweries, Proctor and Gamble (Vietnam), and Sony Entertainment Television, to name a few. He is also a worthy recipient of the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to Advertising and Film Art (2000). The Abbys, held in Bombay recently, conferred a "Recognition of Distinction" for Pralhad's contribution to Indian and Asian advertising. Brand Equity named Genesis as the top production house for the years, 2003 and 2004.

IV. EVENTS

Kathak performance

By Shamatai Bhate on first day 8pm:

Smt. Shama Tai Bhate, Pune

Shama Bhate, Director, 'Nad-Roop' a School of Kathak Dance & Music (Pune, India) brings to her activity a holistic understanding of the Kathak tradition. Shama has galvanized artistic scene with her unique institution Nad-Roop, where the best of Indian creative expression finds its own space. The Nad Roop platform is now recognized by artists and the public for its wholesome, traditional attitude to Indian classical art forms.

Shama's work spans over a period of more than thirty years in various capacities...performer, teacher, choreographer, artistic director, thinker and administrator. Her personal idiom, evolved over the years, is an amazing blend of virtuosity (tayyari) and sensitive expressions (abhinaya), revealing the high degree of classicism. Her original perspective on Kathak allows her to choreograph abstract subjects and contemporary themes with equal ease. Shama's theoretical study of Kathak makes her discerning critic and reviewer. Even as her dance remains strictly traditional, she is quick to explore the possibilities of innovative joint ventures. She has been doing collaborative productions with some of the topnotch jazz ensembles of this world.

Over the years Shama has trained (from the very basic to advanced stage...) numerous professional Kathak Dancers who have been performing independently on stage and conducting their own Kathak

dance schools.

Visit to Shaniwar Wada

A visit to Shaniwar wada was conducted on second day at 8am. The tour was conducted by Ar. Kiran Kalamdani who is involved in restoration and conservation work of shaniwar Wada and other old buildings in Pune.

IV. CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

From Public to Private

This is a good time to look at what is happening to public space, in cities and elsewhere. In the midst of a huge development boom, the public realm within towns and cities is taking a massive hit; it is palpably diminishing both in quality and quantity.

Attention, it would appear is centered on how more public land can be brought within the private fold: for the enjoyment of the few and the deprivation of the less fortunate many. A walk through any city, town and its suburbs tells us this; we read it in the newspaper every day. Footpaths disappear in flyover projects, or are encroached by people and activities displaced from elsewhere, large parts of the legacy of urban spaces are left in a state of neglect and ultimately built over.

City as Puzzle

Gradually, the city has become a puzzle.

On foot the experience is almost akin to that encountered on an obstacle course—a route to be negotiated with care: divided, disjointed, dead-ended: indefensible public space (in the words of Oscar Newman), unsafe.

Subterfuge is the leitmotif of development decisions. Decisions which proceed almost as a concerted thrust towards the destruction not only of what we might value in our urban heritage, but also destroy opportunities for the creation of better, new, public spaces. Development authorities face a crisis of urban planning and urban design.

Bringing the City together

As KT Ravindran once implied, open space is the glue that holds the urban fabric together. It is time we identified open space as a primary infrastructural component of the city, an inclusive, integrated network interwoven with the city's life and image.

So, "infrastructure projects" would connote open space development works and not only roads, over bridges and services. Open space, especially public space offers a key towards negotiating and eventually solving the urban puzzle.

Public space is constantly under threat. Some recent examples: the Goa regional plan (since withdrawn), works for the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, developments associated with the Mumbai mill lands, the Ridge in Delhi, and many others. Some stories with a happy ending; others, not so happy.

Public space needs to be protected, reclaimed, and created. It has to be found, identified, made visible, its boundaries deconstructed, opened to association and integration with new development, developed and enhanced using new funds.

And new public space: fulfilling its vital social role-- that of a class-less, egalitarian forum for the enactment of the drama of everyday city life, barrier free, the focus of community and cultural interaction. An architectural and visual device, as well as an artistic medium, certainly defining component of the image of the city.