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ISOLA 2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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Mr. Anuj Malhotra

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear members,

It gives me great pleasure to see ISOLA's second newsletter in circulation. At the outset I would like to thank the Editorial board headed by Anuj Malhotra for their meticulous effort. This News letter provides us with a platform to share thoughts and articles by our members. Features on best practices and innovation in our field will be very welcome in the forthcoming issues.

The last year and half has been eventful. The functioning of ISOLA has been made more transparent and first steps have been taken towards a representative structure. The Local Chapter Committee headed by Avdhoot Kumthekar has put together guidelines for the formation and running of local chapters. I am happy to share with you the formation of the Delhi-NCR chapter with Ms. Sujata Kohli as the Chairperson and the Bangalore Chapter with Mr. T. M. Chengappa as Chairperson.

This year marks another first for ISOLA - the calling of entries for ISOLA Honors and Awards. The ISOLA Honors and Awards will recognize merit and excellence within the profession and the student community. This year our Jury is composed of Eminent Senior Professionals. I call upon members to participate whole heartedly in making this programme a success.

Our profession needs and deserves more visibility within the Government, our co-professionals and the general Public. With this in mind the Professional Standing committee with Shweta Agarwal as the co-ordinator is working towards recommendations for the same. The ISOLA Landscape Education board under Prof. Shaheer is working towards formulating standards for recognition of Landscape education by ISOLA. A welcome step towards this, is the Education workshop being held by SPA and supported by ISOLA to be held in Delhi in October. I am sure that this initiative will go a long way in starting a dialogue on the landscape Education in India.

This year we have taken the opportunity to combine our Annual General Body meeting with a small event 'ISOLA Eight' which will see both senior and young landscape architects from around the country speak on subjects of their choice for 12 minutes each. We aim to make this an annual event, which along with the Annual conference will give us a chance to meet and interact with each other at least twice a year. The preparations for the Goa Conference 'Leveraging Leisure' is now in an advanced stage and the Mumbai-Goa LOC is working tirelessly to bring us a great event.

Looking forward to seeing you at the AGM in Ahmedabad.

With best wishes.

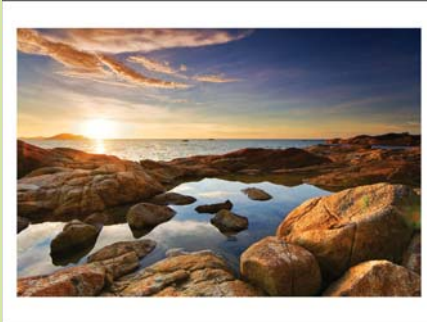
FROM EDITOR'S PEN

I'll keep it short. Every voice needs a medium. This is a potent medium for all the fraternity of landscape architects. We hope that it grows its roots soon. Our society has undertaken and accomplished quite a few milestones in terms of memberships and organizing of society's structure. It now needs to be given a big push for it to gain substantial momentum to make it run and add value to the practice of the profession. This newsletter aims at just that. It is a revival of some sort with the work that was put in place by Sachin Jain, Luna Mukherjee and Prof. Shaheer. I truly hope the movement intensifies and members make a good use of platform.

LANDSCAPE PRACTICE

OUR PROFESSION: LOOKING BACK FOR MOVING FORWARD

Dr. Shishir Raval



As we move forward with aspirations and apprehensions in the field of landscape architecture, it would help us to look back briefly into relatively recent historical traditions of our field so as to understand its core ways and values.

If one accepts North American and European practitioners of the last few centuries (such as, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and Nan Fairbrother) as pioneers of the modern landscape architecture “profession” and scrutinizes their work, then one realizes that it was more hands-on/on-site and process-oriented. It intimately involved the local landscape and community. It was more like a relationship that some teachers/healers/priests still have with their community –engaged with it directly to understand and help heal maladies and overcome misfortunes while receiving (mostly) in-kind sustenance from the people they served. 1 Thereby, with their long-term, in-place involvement, they promoted coherence, resilience, and health at the individual and the community levels.

Our prevalent fee-for-service, project-to-project model of practice is based on the professions of doctors and lawyers and is only about hundred or so years old. Perhaps we can’t go back to the ways of the above stated traditions completely, we do need to question our prevalent model in light of this tradition and the values it upheld. Despite access to and use of innovative technologies, doesn’t our current model often detach us from the processes of nature and rhythms of community life that we disrupt knowingly or unknowingly? Do we not end up seeing landscape as a part of the site as opposed to seeing the site as a part of the larger, functioning landscape? How do we overcome our compulsions for short-term design decisions that often result in fragmentation and threaten indigenous eco-diversity? How can we ensure coherence, resilience, health, and even inner beauty through our work? Where would our current model lead us? Can we afford to go there?

We need to dig deeper into the traditions and values of our vocation and build upon our collective experience to shape future vision and new methods to help address the emerging realities of local to global crises and opportunities of all kinds. Let us develop and share ideas through the pages of this newsletter and other fora; we can’t afford to lose time or be complacent

FROM THE ARCHIVES (credit: Mr. Sachin Jain)

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY: a landscape fundamental

Prof. Romila Thapar



The relationship of the Vana to the Kshetra. These could be opposing concepts contrasting the habitat of the ascetic and the renouncer on one hand, and the established settlement or regularly ordered social system on the other. Or, in some cases they can be seen as a continuum. The debate over centrality of Nature and Culture has remained a continuing one. The opposition between Prakriti and Sanskriti, the first being that which is natural and second being that which is self consciously created, is something of a parallel to nature and Culture. If the forest was natural form, the settlement would be constructed.

Initially, the forest was considered as a place of wilderness, located on the periphery of settlements and were a hunting ground for the royals. Slowly, Asramas became the intersection of settlements and forest.

Thus, the forest became less alien and a source of revenue for timber, semi precious stones and mines.

We cannot say that Indian tradition insisted on conservation of forest or that there was little comprehension of ecology and the forest. There were times when forests were devastated and there were times when forests were conserved. It is apparent that while recognizing the dichotomy of Vana And Kshetra, its complementarily immediately surfaces. The historical role, the historical interaction and the historical imagery of the one are essential to the reconstruction of the other. In absence of one, the reality of the other is diminished.

OPINION PIECE GOING TO GOA

Mr. Samir Mathur

Most landscape architects are good travellers. I have been going to Goa regularly over the past fifteen years. These are an outsider's random thoughts on the evolving landscape scenario in Goa. As recently as fifteen years ago, Goa had a lot of answers for the interested, and asked few questions. In the days before the Konkan railway or cheap internet fares, it was mostly chartered flights from abroad that made it to Goa.

I wish to make four points here:

The evolving landscape character

In the middle 90's the experiment of Raj Vilas, Uday Vilas type of 'manufactured Indian' resort became the rage. The holiday experience seemed to acquire a new and more theatrical backdrop. Manufactured Indian meant landscape design and architecture on seemingly Indian patterns, located at the worst possible point as to its cultural authenticity. Pousada Tauma and others in Goa followed this lead of the 'traditional'. This was despite having both a strong cultural reference, as well as robust architecture by eminent professionals. Do are people really care or want to understand the spirit of a place in a holiday that lasts for a week?

A unified landscape scheme for beachfront development

Roberto Burle Marx's scheme for the landscape development of Copacabana beach in Rio was an obvious example for others round the world. In Goa this may have had mixed reactions. No such scheme was executed in the public domain apart from a few fragments of street development in Panaji. The least disturbance for the natural ecosystem seems the obvious route to follow.

North south divide

Today, a visitor feels a sense of the divide between south and north. Few people visited the highlands to the east. South of Panaji, beyond Dabolim airport were the self contained beach resorts of Bogmalo, Majorda, Park Hyatt, Dona Sylvia and to the mother lode- the Leela. Each of was an exclusive self contained mini town with rooms, cottages, restaurants and of course beaches. People rarely step out of these places to take in the spirit of Goa. The North Goa beaches were more intensive. Aguada, Candolim, Calangute, Arambol and others teemed with shacks, and had small guest houses close by for those seeking to save a few rupees. Lots of backpackers, locals and tourists made the most of the tourist season. It is interesting to note the difference in the character of North and South parts of Goa is becoming more distinctive.

The larger landscape and development concerns

Natural reserves and resources have led to creating Goa. Nobody disagrees that the twin threats of rampant tourism and mining do lead to over resource exploitation of the nature. Should there be restrictions on development? Or just better managed development? Maybe the direction of development should be to get away from the South Goa type of growth, large estates, little authenticity, and little environmental value. The recent master plan document requires study. Goa is obviously more than its beaches that your average tourist sees.

Goa is obviously more than its beaches that your average tourist sees. As an outsider, I can still see a lot of rights, and a few wrongs. As professionals, let's ask the right questions. Maybe we will get some answers then.

STUDENT NEWS

SHORTLISTED! IN THE IFLA STUDENTS DESIGN COMPETITION 2009

Riddhi Kapoor and **Bhushan Suthar** students of M.L.A. at CEPT have been shortlisted for their entry under category "Green infrastructure: landscape, infrastructure and people for tomorrow". They had combined both their works for the 2nd semester joint studio done for the University area.

http://www.46ifla2009.com.br/en/students_competition.php

FROM INDUSTRY

LANDSCAPE EXPO HYDERABAD 2nd-4th Oct. 09

Media Today Pvt. Ltd. is organizing the 4th International Landscape and Gardening Expo 2009, an International exhibition and conference for Professional Landscape Industry, Products and Equipment, Gardening, Outdoor Living & Leisure Industry, to be held at People's Plaza, Necklace Road, Hyderabad, from 2-4 October 2009. Concurrently they are also organizing an International Conference with the theme 'Plants, Places & People' for 2 days on 3rd and 4th October 2009.

More details on www.landscapeexpo.in

ISOLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2010: GOA LEVERAGING LEISURE: landscapes and well-being

Jan 29th, 30th and 31st 2010 - Kala Academy, Panaji, Goa

Text Courtesy: Team Mumbai-Goa (full text on www.isola2010.com)

Leisure time- a designated perquisite of modern living- plays an important role in enabling mental and physical well being. The use of free time for leisure activities is generally seen as a welcome respite, wherein the phrase 'at leisure' encapsulates many moods.

In instances throughout history, the various settings of the Garden allowed for leisurely engagement with nature and people in a personal, collective and poetic sense. Likewise, open spaces and natural landscape units within and around a settlement enabled community interaction during social and festive occasions or simply as recreational places. Such spaces also exhibited strong ties with the environment and natural cycles. The limited occurrence of such private as well as secular catalysts addressed issues of identity, multi-functionality and temporal transformations that were grafted onto such spaces in an age where leisure time was not designated by daily rigours. When such trends of the connection between leisure time and leisure space are examined in today's context, we encounter a growing fragmentation and multiple designations of 'user', 'space' and 'time'.

Its consequence is seen in the variety and array of leisure spaces- built-form typologies that either emphatically asserts their association with the term, or are examples which are construed as open space for leisure, due to their expanse and green cover. The former is usually characterized by malls and entertainment complexes while golf courses, stadiums, resorts and amusement parks generally typify the latter. Another instance- the leisure getaway- has become a visible factor in land development. As the distinction between amusement and recreation and their role in enabling leisure becomes more difficult to decipher, we are seeing a flux in the definition and scale of leisure spaces. Many of these cater to a highly competitive market with increasing customer demands of quality, uniqueness and memorable experiences towards use of leisure time. Increasingly, such impressions of leisure are also tending towards exclusivity and user-profiling. How deeply do these examples truly address concerns of the natural environment and hence whether they are sustainable models is a question.

The conflict of interests between urbanization and the natural landscape is impacting the sense of the outdoor as a place of leisurely engagement. While Planning Policies and Regulations advocate conservation of natural resources and landscapes, their implementation seems weak, unless goaded by persistent activism. Due to lack of vision, the unprotected natural landscape units in the city- which could otherwise be catalysts of leisure- are eventually engulfed by an ever- expanding urban fabric. On the other hand public parks, gardens, sports facilities and exhibition grounds are seen as potential magnets of social interaction. However, in many instances, the urge to 'beautify' these landscapes without embedding adequate programmatic content is fraught with a certain type of short-lived usefulness.

This Conference attempts to explore questions such as the following:

- 1- The change in the meaning and interpretation of the term 'leisure time' and 'leisure activity' - and what it has come to signify for landscape architecture as a profession.
- 2- The degree of integration and inclusiveness of leisure spaces with the built and natural fabric in the past and present and what does this mean for our future.
- 3- Envisaging exciting ways to engage people, while addressing larger concerns of the landscape.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

1. Prof Ravi Hazra (Industrial designer, academician)
2. Mario Miranda (artist)
3. Nachiket Patwardhan (architect, filmmaker)
4. Dr. Uma Vaidya (sanskrit scholar and academician)
5. Dean D Cruz (architect)
6. Nimish Patel (architect)
7. Bill Bensley (landscape architect, Bangkok)
8. Mario Schjetnan (landscape architect, Mexico)
9. Satish Khanna (landscape architect)
10. Chitra Biley (landscape architect)
11. Richard Cass (landscape architect, UK)
12. Ms. Margie Ruddick (landscape architect, USA)
13. Shirish Beri (architect)
14. Adit Pal (landscape architect, academician)
15. Shreya Gadepalli (transport planning expert)
16. Gautam Bhatia (architect)

OTHER ACTIVITIES PLANNED

- 1-Heritage walk on 29th Jan 2009 morning by Ketak Nachinolkar- Conservation architect, Goa
- 2- Large format Display of the Goa Regional Plan dwgs at the venue
- 3- Pre conference dinner - 28th Jan 2010 at Kala Akademi
- 4- Post Conference Cocktails- 30th Jan 2010
- 5- An introduction to the Goa's Natural Landscape Heritage through a writeup by Ar. Suhas Gaonkar- Environmental Planner, Goa.

EVENT HOST DETAILS

Chairperson- Kishore Pradhan (Mumbai)
Convenor- Mangesh Prabhugaonker (Goa)

Please visit www.isola2010.com