



NOVEMBER '08

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Dilli haat - Janakpuri

"A day on the road is worth a year at school" - this old saying is very often attributed to Ho Chi Minh, founder of modern Vietnam. He himself spent 30 years on the road, largely in Europe, before returning to his native land to lead it to its successful struggle for independence in France. I spent almost a fortnight "on the road" last month, on a voyage of discovery through Holland, Germany and France (principally Paris). As an architect and planner, every time one visits European cities, one subconsciously starts identifying the conspicuous and not so conspicuous aspects of their city planning to identify the elements that make them such good examples of urban planning and detail.

Paris is a city built on a grand scale, with its buildings spanning the past two millennia. Its first inhabitants were from a Gaulish tribe called the Parisii; thereby giving the city its eventual name. Enough of history then, I don't want to give you a long list of buildings - mail me, and I shall be glad to send you an Archohm "must see" list for practically all the large cities of Europe - in most cases experienced first hand by Sourabh.

Coming back to these cities - be they Paris, Rome, London, Berlin; anyone - with or without an eye for detail, can see the painstaking thought and execution that has gone into their buildings - private or public, urban inserts - at all scales; and landscaping - both hard and soft.



Then there is the attention and detail paid to arranging **views and vistas**. How often do we turn an innocuous looking corner to suddenly gasp because we find what just chanced upon an architectural or spatial marvel. It happened to me in Rome, when I seemingly chanced upon the famed Fontana de Trevi!

This article will not discuss why such experiences are so far and few in Delhi. That's for us to ponder on, it is because we are all in a hurry in the time, or because we don't walk enough, or that our cities aren't well planned...?

As I conclude I can't help but think about Sourabh's statement, made whilst sitting at a roadside bistro at a small town called Munster (which has bronze models with inscriptions in braile situated at vantage points to aid tourists), "Being a **first world country is a state of the mind**". And therein lie all the answers to my questions above.

This month Sourabh has touched on an interesting topic - that of fonts and logos. Here I would want to share with you the new logo of Hindustan Lever. The company believes that the its new logo is symbolic of the company's mission of "Adding Vitality to life". It comprises of 25 different icons representing the organization, its brands and the idea of vitality.

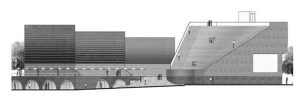
-Kunal Savarkar

Arshith Bajja, an Archohm family member (financially a client) made us proud by successfully completing the **Himalayan car rally** early this month. The above tries to do justice to the 'madness' and passion we all share!

FEEDBACK:
Appreciate the work Archohm team is doing...
One thing which I like the most is the way you spirit your staff has, which shows how good is the chemistry between the management and the staff.
Harvinder S. Sethi

Very nicely composed, informative... All good wishes with you... hope your organization flourishes. Good to see your work and the level of efforts put in your projects.
Devanshu Brahmacharyya: A friend, and an architect in the true Ahmedabad tradition, a good designer, and a keen educator, Ar Devanshu shares our thoughts on architectural and design education.

Nabin Patra: Single shot 'know-it-all' of construction practices of all kinds - the good, the bad and the ugly; this sensitive architect prides himself on his attention to the minutest detail. [Compendium- Unlike what our October issue claims- he is NOT a connoisseur of beer; he is a connoisseur of all things to do with 'spirit']



Dilli Haat, the combination of food plaza and craft bazaar is a formal *mela* in a busy city like Delhi. *Mela* means a massive gathering to celebrate a festival, so imagine through out the year..... It is a permanent place, which represents the Indian art and culture, the cloth, the food etc. which serves about 15000 foot falls in a day.

The interesting part I want to share is, that on a rotation basis artisans come from their villages to this place, for a fortnight, to sell their products to us city dwellers; so every fortnight you can meet new artisans with their new types of products, and believe me they are the best selected from all over the country... **so when are you planning to visit next?**

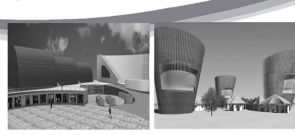
After creating two such zones in Delhi, Delhi Tourism decided to build one more which will be much bigger in scale than the earlier ones. When you have a choice, you think of flavour, so we thought lets add a new flavour - that of music, adding tabla shaped structures which are directly related to cultural programmes.

Apart from the craft shops and food stalls we have tried to add a lot more facilities like an air-conditioned arcade for days when the weather is unpleasant, a similar indoor dining facility, much larger exhibition spaces, an auditorium with 1,200 seats (probably the biggest public auditorium in Delhi), a grassed amphitheatre with a seating capacity of approximately 1,500, dormitories for artisans, a youth hostel for young visitors and lots more....

The site already has lots of green trees which we have tried to retain. This will give the site a 'complete' feeling on day one, whilst creating a **'naturally built'** ambience.

The 5 acre site is situated next to Tihar jail and will eventually have a low structured volume with a few iconic structures popping out. It will also have about 300 car parking space plus an additional 400 for scooters. A dedicated taxi, auto and bus stand has been accommodated in the master plan. The circulation is planned in such a way that your shopping experience will end up with 29 type of food stalls (each representing the taste of individual states of the country) without skipping any part of the country, in a manner of speaking.

Delhi tourism is planning to spend approximately 70 crores (which is 12 times more than the money spent on the original Dilli Haat near INA market) and is targeting to open the project in August 2010 before the Commonwealth Games.



Manish Khattar: A dear friend, salsa dancer, poet and an anchor, too much of a thinker and list but not least a jewellery designer with innumerable awards to his credit is also the owner of the design the 'zuri' by mk.



...these words to me are synonymous with design in my school of thought as a jewellery designer. In today's world, keeping yourself abreast with the dynamics of aesthetics and trends is critical to design. One needs to constantly evolve as a designer to satisfy the happening Indian sense of jewellery which clearly spans across all times, from ethnic to traditional to modern to contemporary!

Creative concepts blending with practical materials and techniques to evolve a **balance** that is **desirable and pleasant**. Handcrafted and machined, diamonds and clean lines of metals, form a challenging palette for creativity and innovation...my jewellery designs attempt to inherently possess this thought.

At the **universal level of pure design**, be it jewelry or buildings, **conceptual clarity is critical**, design is not bound by time and space. In any hour of the day, at any place, one can hit the 'bull's eye'. It only needs a hungry and enthusiastic mind at work.

To me, the epitome of passion and enthusiasm in design is 'Sourabh lead ARCHOHM'. The desire to do and achieve, to work and live is a symbol of this team. As a friend, I value the persons with which he thrives to live! As they say 'passion makes you work hard, hard work gets happiness. Happiness brings desire, desire gives the energy to create!'

Archohm is a fine blend of fun and work. My insight to this is courtesy my personal experience of being a part of almost all the office trips of Archohm.

My reading was that the teams tries to balance between hard work and play/hang out. In fact the newsletter (I am writing for is an extension of this observation). Even the design of my personal studio was an interesting insight to their mad creativity and my perceptions of a workplace, a studio and a jewellery store.



Pradeep Gupta: Extremely soft-spoken, and an example of a multi-tasking professional, Pradeep has been handling high end residential projects as well as institutional works for Archohm. His ability to work steadily has consistently won him accolades from clients.



From the outside, no one can predict and expect what lies inside the simple and clean facade of the Faculty of Economics. The inside space and atmosphere is totally different from the outside as the building is zoned into four different parts by three courtyards which bring energy, light, air and nature into the building. Additionally all the courtyards are treated with different concepts and materials which ensures that these spaces become interesting and non-monotonous and act like a huge circulation and hangout area.

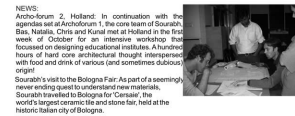
This new Economics and Management Faculty building is part of the 'Casbah' zone, a wide strip of low, high-density buildings, part of the master plan for university terrain De Luthof by OMA/Rem Koolhaas. Mecanoo's interpretation of this traditional feature of North African cities resulted in a building with only three stories, a neutral facade and an interior where public circulation and leisure spaces exist in the atmosphere of a safe and sheltered community whose different spaces are connected by the bridges, ramps and staircases that allow the seamless movement of a large number of people through the day.

The building accommodates 5,000 students and 400 employees, on a floor area of 25,000 square metres. The main entrance, the multimedia centre and the restaurant are on the ground floor. The lecture rooms are closed boxes that seem to float within an elongated transparent volume parallel to the street. Between the lecture rooms are a series of balconies on different levels that, just as the corridors and intermediate levels, can be used for casual meetings, making contact or just sitting and doing nothing.



The building is designed as one continuous space, enclosed by glass, in which four volumes of different shape and material rest on concrete columns. The square ground plan, with four connecting parts separated by three patios, ensures a free circulation to each corner of the building.

The 'Jungle' patio has a dynamic ambience, influenced by the varieties of bamboo that are interspersed throughout the walkways, and open steel footbridges that connect the patio to the first floor and incorporate it into the interior circulation system. The design for the 'Zen' patio is inspired by Japanese meditation gardens with gravel and boulders, and is the most static of the three patios. The walls of the Zen patio are covered with grids of Western red cedar that act as sun shields. The 'Water' patio, the narrowest of the three, has a glass footbridge with views to the open landscape at the rear of the building. The water symbolises the calm nature of the building.



Archohm-JCBL European Tour: An extremely short, but well rounded itinerary that saw the project team travelling across Holland to see Utrecht University, the Delft University, Wageningen agriculture University, Arnhem Art and Dance School, and then ended in Paris where the world's foremost business school, INSEAD (at Fontainebleau) was much appreciated by all.

The growing Archohm family: Here we must share with you some good news (sometimes referred to as 'progress' by the older generation) on the personal front for Archohm staffers Rachna Mittal who has had a baby girl and Devender Rawat who in turn has had a baby girl. Congratulations and hope the lucky families get some sleep at nights!

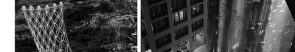
UPCOMING PROJECTS:
The Cerita Campus: Just outside Le Corbusier's visionary city - Chandigarh, is the Cerita Campus, which will eventually be home to various centres of higher education. In the first phase it will have an engineering college, an architecture college, a management institute and a design school. Archohm has been commissioned to design these institutes, as well as the common facilities.

DS Corporate office: Archohm is presently designing the interiors for the new Corporate Office of one of India's fastest growing infrastructure and construction companies - D.S. Constructors Ltd. The design envisages modern and state-of-the-art working spaces with a 'minimalistic' approach that create an atmosphere conducive to enhancing efficiency.



112 kph: The world's first commercial 'rocket car', the Hungerford, hit the road in 1929. Despite its rocket engine, fuel consumption of more than 4.5 litres per kilometre and a six-metre exhaust flame the Hungerford had a disappointing top speed of only 112 kph. The firm went bust in 1939.

The knotted chair by Marcel Wanders is an unusual design using an avant-garde technique. With the help of a high-tech carbon core and gravity, a woven mesh is transformed into a super lightweight chair.



Aqua Dom, the world's largest cylindrical aquarium, placed in the lobby of the Radisson SAS Hotel in Berlin, at 25m height is the largest cylindrical aquarium ever built. Filled with about 9,00,000 litres of sea water, it contains some 2,600 fish of 56 species.



ever given thought how much logos and their typeface reveal about a company, this miniature realm is a complete world in itself that touches our everyday life. My school days 'habit' of scribbling my name, alphabets and thoughts all over my text books in various fonts, shapes and sizes made me a very early addict to the aesthetics of a logo.

just to share with you a bit of the vocabulary of the typeface technology, there are different weights of a typeface, regular, bold, italic, extra bold, extra. A distinctive part of a letter have names. The upright is the stem, the part of an 'N' or 'D' that kicks up is an ascender and the hanging bit of an 'Y' or 'Z' is a descender. The curved top of an 'A' is a terminal and the tail of an 'e' is the final. The space inside an 'o' is the counter, a part of upper and lower case, the fundamental typologies of text are serif, which have little feet and san serif amongst all, from type face to fonts, helvetica is considered the universal winner! helvetica is a swiss typeface invented in 1957 by max miedinger. a neutral modern classical typeface also works as contemporary stylish font without being overpowering and bold. KLM, 3M, BMW, nestle, are a few examples. It is very legible, large x-height and short ascenders and descenders. Arial and helvetica come close to each other for many, but here is a demonstration of some fundamental differences.

four fonts that try to compete with arial and helvetica are
Futura: designed between 1924 and 1926 by paul renner
Univers: designed in 1954 by adrian frotter
Meta: designed in 1984 by erik speikermann
Verdana: designed by mark carter

identity designers as they are called, try to form an inspirational resource and reference tool of their own as a palette through which they can explore the trends and influences on international branding. logos are better known for their simplicity and longevity of aesthetics. to be internationally, McDonalds, Nike, olympics and apple are straight winners as they are conceptual, clear and simple. they have an underlying meaning and courtesy complete overexposure and marketing, they are extremely identifiable without their names and function. closer home, indian brands like dci, sbi, airtel birla group etc come to mind as some special ones.



not in the same league of course, but archohm also has been a proud designer of logos as its extended portfolio. archohm trying to work with the electrical resistance of ohm, stretching the dimensions of architecture.

agroy for its simplicity and authority
zuri trying to mix metals to create contemporary jewellery defining an 'M' after its designer
shankh emphasizing the 'ginglish' version of an 'oyster' for interiors

jd , the developers, trying to extend beyond boundaries
one cant help but dig deep into this to discover the incredible power of this tool in profiling a company. the graphic as well as the typeface tries to define the philosophies and the values of the firm.
i cannot resist drawing yet another parallel to architecture. the famous words of louis Kahn, **every brick wants to be something** is the keystone to this. every letter, every font, every colour wants to represent something. it needs to be creatively designed to logic and thought, else it starts Losing its strength. that's the power of design. the power of concept!