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World's largest dynamic facade - Aedas ■ Jimmy Mistry ■ Imagining buildings of 2050 ■ 70+ pages of Products & Ideas

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With a diverse presence in Architecture & Master Planning, Interior Design Consultancy, Turnkey Interior Fit-out, Modular Furniture, Adventure Sports, Resorts & Budgets, Della Technica Architects and Interior Design Company has been at the helm of quintessential designs & development since 1998. The firm has set far-sighted benchmarks and reinvented architecture that includes UB Group, Bajaj, India Infoline, Mittal Steel, Dharamshi Securities, Arvind Mills and Emerson amongst others. With a string of awards and recognitions, today, Della Technica is continuing its vibrant vision supported by more than 2000 professionals networked across five offices in India.

The interesting thing is, the driving force and inspiration, the man behind all these creations, Jimmy Mistry, candidly admits,

I am a

NON-QUALIFIED ARCHITECT!

Well, his passion and determination speaks through his work and has proved beyond doubt that it doesn't necessarily take a degree from an elite design school to set new benchmarks in design.

Till date, he has transformed several ET 100 corporate cultures into dynamic environments and crafted many value propositions into experiences from major Master Planning and Mass Housing projects to large scale Architectural Projects from Shopping Malls to TV studios, from award winning Yatch Design (M.Y. Kalizma) for Dr. Vijay Malya to high profile residences, award-winning retail design (Bajaj Probiking) and hospitality design. A mechanical engineer turned architect, interior designer, urban planner, entrepreneur & resort owner (Della Adventure, Lonavala), here we are sharing a brief interaction between Surfaces Reporter and Jimmy Mistry, Principal Architect & CMD, Della Technica, Mumbai.

What is 'Design'?

Jimmy Mistry: Design is fundamentally a combination of form and functionality and to me design is anything that creates an element of surprise and serves the functionality.

Your idea about 'Selection of materials' for design...

Jimmy Mistry: Design and materials are the dots that we connect to get the final product. Materials are formation blocks of a good design. You could have a design for a very swanky building but if the materials aren't right, the design doesn't go together. Today, with the availability of newer materials, selection is far more complex than what it used to be.

Earlier, when we had only one kind of lighting to work with, materials responded in a certain manner. Now with numerous lightings available, materials respond in a completely different way. Sound plays an important role too. Unlike today, most of the Indian architects hardly paid attention to sound insulation in hospitality projects earlier. Today, it is vital to choose materials that are sound absorbent. That is one more dynamics you need to keep in mind while selecting materials.

With science and engineering becoming more and more complex each day, it's not just aesthetics and functionality for which you pick up something, the selection process has gone way beyond its life cycle. For instance, in Della Technica, we use water-soluble paints and have completely stopped using plywood and other forms of wood products not because the world has started talking about being green. We have always been conscious about Material selection ever since 1995-96 when our furniture factory was set-up in Daman. Architecturally, I use a lot of wooden elements in the exteriors but none of that is real wood. We have designed an entire resort with wooden log-like cabins without using even 1% of wood. Cement Fibre boards are used which have been stained and dyed to look like wood.

Experience of designing the police station in Mumbai...

Jimmy Mistry: It was not only the Police Station; I have designed a lot of things for the Maharashtra police including the Commissioner's office, IG's office, Immigration, Traffic headquarters etc. It was a pleasurable experience! While designing the police station, a great understanding of materials was required. It is easy to design an office because we know that an office is going to be maintained. **To design a police station, which will look good 10 years down the line, you need to be very careful about the kind of materials you use because they are 'not' going to be maintained.** The Police station designed at Marine drive was a case in point and it was a good experience to try and sit with the Maharashtra police to standardize things where they do not have a standardized manual even today. I gave them materials that will look nice, function well and they don't need to be maintained at all. I think we were quite successful in creating a maintenance-free design where people get surprisingly refreshed on entering a police station like that.

About Urban Planning and Urban design ideas...

Jimmy Mistry: Design a non-qualified architect, non-qualified designer and a non-qualified urban planner, I try and address the same vacuum. If I am designing a township for middle income group in Indore, considering the cost of constructing 1100-1200 sqft for a ground+14 tower, I try to analyze what are the other developers doing and offering for that price and what is it that I via my medium of design and selection of materials can offer a better product in the same price range.

A better product in terms of better space planning, better selection of materials, better understanding of cross ventilation, getting an optimal amount of light in the building etc.

Sometimes the package also includes fighting with the developers for providing drying balconies so that the clothes are not hanging all around the building. Nobody wants to hang their clothes out of their living rooms; they do it out of no choice.

"The engineering of selection process of a material is no longer a simple job. It's a very complex process and architects & designers who can address these engineering ideas and explore them will be able to do the optimum selection of materials and not any other way around."

A better understanding of creating air conditioning shaft is important so that you don't have condensers seen typically hanging out in these middle-income housing.

Now if a simple municipal law were to address this that a flat plan will not be approved without a drying balcony; in the next 20yrs, all the hanging clothes in our city are going to vanish off. This is my way of addressing a design issue right at the core after having a thorough understanding of what is missing and addressing them.

Being a non-qualified architect and designer, I need to be on my toes and deliver results project after project because I am out to prove a point. I am not in the project purely for fashion or brand name. I am in the project because I add value to the project and my thinking is pretty different from mundane trained designer's mind. I come up with things, which are different and add value to the overall project and the experiences of the people who occupy those premises.

Idea of high-end mass housing solutions...

Jimmy Mistry: The minute it is mass housing, it is of poor quality. We need to get new construction technology into high-end mass housing, that's the only way to address this situation and improve the quality.

In India, we suffer a lot because of **poor formwork and quality of concrete.** If these two things are taken care of in mass housing, the smaller issues can be easily addressed.

Suppose, if you are today plastering a building and you know that the quality of concrete and sand are not going to last even for 10-12 years, which means it would be due to repairs by then. This is because the silt percentage in sand which is supposed to be only 2-3% is actually 20-30%. You cannot be using sand like this.

"Nobody wants to hang their clothes out in the balconies; they do it out of no choice."

You can get silica, or ready mix plaster which would be manufactured by reliable sources and you know that the plaster is going to wear and tear for the next 20-25years. It will not lose the bond on the concrete surfaces where it is put up. If these basic things are addressed, I think we can go a long way in mass housing. So you need to change materials at times and stick to quality; that's where magazines like yours come into picture, in educating and advocating sound material practices.

Similarly the formwork needs improvement. We need to move away from traditional shuttering ply to stainless-steel or aluminium. I wish some kind of norms or regulations be implemented prohibiting the use of sand simply because the regulatory body won't allow it. You have to use a pre-mix then automatically things will improve. And the sand mafia will have nobody to sell their sand to, and we will get pre-mix which are coming from plants where the silt percentages are controlled.

This way, the life of the plaster is going to be much longer. You know things like this are going to slowly & steadily change our environment around us and the mass housing culture.

Also, nobody really focuses on lighting when it comes to mass housing. No lighting consultants are used. Why can't we use the services of lighting consultants because then it is going to be replicated. My idea is to get the best professional help you can get for mass housing. You do it not because the project deserves it but because you are emotionally connected and want to improve the quality of human lives.



*Maple Woods
Architecture & Master
Planning by Jimmy
Mistry is a 30 lacs
sq ft built up on 9.12
ares of land located in
Indore consisting of 18
buildings of ground plus
15 floors well equipped
with clubhouse, gym
and pool facility....*



Della Resorts & Villas



"What Alexander burnt in Persia (330 B.C.), we recreated in India (2012)!"

Della Tower is a luxurious residential tower, a modern architectural marvel inspired by ancient Achaemenian design and style. It is a living exhibition of Persian architecture and the ancient Zoroastrian faith.



What led to the concept of Persian Architecture...

Jimmy Mistry: It is my belief and understanding that as a designer my job is to identify a vacuum and then design within that vacuum. Persian architecture is something where there is a vacuum. If I had designed anything else in Della tower, be it contemporary or classical, it wouldn't have addressed the vacuum. With the Persian and Parsi community being extremely successful in India, they have put in a good gamut of temples, which have serene architecture with clean simple lines, but not anything of the great Persian architecture.

I addressed that vacuum and it serves the purpose from a community standpoint where I can showcase the Persian architecture to the current generation and the future generations. It addresses the vacuum where people are now proud to see something in pristine glory rather than what is in the ruins. I design to create something unique.

While designing a resort in Lonavala, I would study worldwide and design something that is not available. When you think of Goa, you can immediately think of Portuguese architecture, Balinese architecture, but there's no Lonavala Architecture.

So you need to address this vacuum and design something that is truly contemporary and international yet very earthy, which fits in the canvas of the Sayadri Mountains & ranges. For example, some restaurant designs tend to be nice, boldly done and too plush, yet without any fun element. I feel fun elements aids to greater connectivity.

When I design restaurants, I try to throw in some interesting elements, may be even in the washrooms by using materials which makes people talk about it, not because they have an expensive marble or other stone, but the 'Concept'. You know, the whole word 'Design-ideology' has to weave around creation of that uniqueness in the design.

Any plan for venturing out into public spaces as well...

Jimmy Mistry: I would love to! I have a friend whom I idolize when it comes to public spaces - Thomas Heatherwick of Heatherwick Studios. I have had the pleasure of having Thomas in India stay with me in my house and come and see my Lonavala project.

My thought process in design is idolized by this man and he specializes in public spaces. His ideologies and philosophies are quite similar where he identifies a vacuum and then he designs. He is far greater than what we would ever be. He designed 600 buses for the city of London. He was selected because he could address the design need. And in terms of public spaces, he is considered to be one of the finest in the world.

He's very excited to work in a public space in India. I have had unpeep discussions with him to get him to India and design a public space but I need an assignment. I can't use his studio or his design for a mundane project.

On importance of architects being emotionally sensitive to their projects.

Jimmy Mistry: If architects start designing for themselves, then majority of the issues with poor architecture would be resolved. If I were to design a 600sqft flat in Mira Road and imagine myself and my family living there, I would automatically be sensitive to everything including the nature & the environment. I would be supersensitive to the amount of air and light that enter my flat. I would be highly sensitive in utilizing every inch of the 600sqft in the most optimal manner.



When architects start getting emotionally bound to their projects, things will completely change. Without a doubt, safety & security will be the number one priority. In most cases however, I think, the commercial aspect takes over.

Please share your experience in designing the Della Resorts and Della Adventure.

Jimmy Mistry: It's been quite a life changing experience for me because last 4 years have gone into doing it. And the net result is a total shift in my entire life & career, from being a designer and an architect to being a resort owner. It is India's largest adventure park and we know we are running a resort so we become a proper hospitality company that is running 5 restaurants, 3 lounges, a convention centre, a resort and an adventure park. And now we are talking about doing a similar set up in Bangalore, Delhi and Goa. My whole career and life has changed into doing something like this. I enjoy designing for myself because I am not under somebody's control. It is quite motivating to hear appreciation about what you have created and your level of passion speaking in the minutest detail of the project. You feel elevated to do more.

"I am working on a residence to be designed for Chairman of Religare in Delhi on 3 acre piece of land. It is a very-high end residence and a very tastefully done up place. It is an exciting project. Setting up Della Adventure in Bangalore is another interesting project where my mind is continuously working."

Moral responsibility of architects...

Jimmy Mistry: It is a complex issue and I think education is definitely one of the answers to that. The quality of education is quite poor in overall design sense & engineering aspects, in terms of aesthetics, also in terms of sensitivity towards design.

A line of thought to be inculcated into every budding architect and Interior designer in the country is that you are designing for others and you are morally responsible for the people you are designing for. This is the missing link.

There is no such line of thought inculcated into the students that **you are morally responsible, if not legally for your design, be it a hut, a warehouse, a house or an office.** If this thought can be engrained in their DNA while they are in college then I believe everything else will be answered automatically.

Tell us about your love with Lighting.

Jimmy Mistry: I got involved with landscape and lighting design at a personal level. I am very intrigued with it because of my initial exposure to studio designs with majority of the television studios that we had designed. My involvement in lighting started much before most architects and designers started realizing the importance of hiring professional lighting consultants. My office Della House was done entirely with Led lights way back in 2004 when people have not really even understood the importance of Led lights.

In all our projects, Della towers or other projects, extreme amount of importance is given to exterior-elevation lighting and interior-lighting design. I tend to get involved with it entirely and enjoy designing the lightings myself.



A high-end residential project by Della Technica

Della Técnica is responsible for all the corporate office furniture in the showcased project - Black & Veatch (both designing & manufacturing) of a 41,000 sq.ft. office space located in Pune.

You usually manufacture the furniture for your projects.

Jimmy Mistry: Yes, I had setup a furniture factory in Daman in 1997. It is a pretty unique 70,000 sqft factory that manufactures furniture which only supplies to our own projects; we don't sell the furniture in the market.

My entire resort furniture has been designed and manufactured in the factory. It produces great quality furniture while price-wise, it is even more competitive than China. Total furniture in all our projects are 100% designed and manufactured by us.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS



ENERGY



BLACK & VEATCH

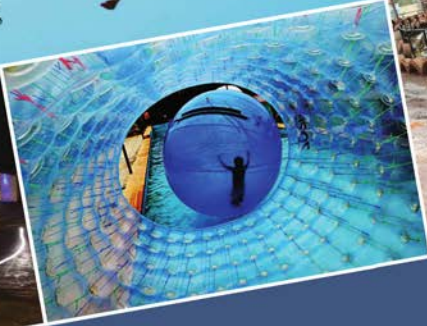
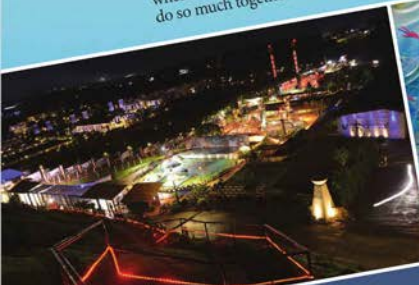
Your favourite project....

Jimmy Mistry: Definitely, today it is designing the **Adventure project at Lonavala**. Designing the adventure park, the second homes, designing the public spaces inside the park, the resort & landscaping, the gardens, multiple restaurants, convention centre & ball rooms. **It is a great feeling when you can do the entire project the way you want to get it done.** It is my favourite project and I feel that my design talents are best explored in a diverse project like this where in a single project I am able to do so much together.



Della Adventure, Lonavla

Passionately conceptualized and designed by architect Jimmy Mistry, Della Adventure is India's largest adventure park which is constructed together with a resort, making it a great hospitality package packed with Adventure & relaxation. The project has 5 restaurants, 3 lounges, a convention centre, a resort and an adventure park. "And now we are talking about doing a similar set up in Bangalore, Delhi and Goa," says the proud owner.



Your message for Surfaces Reporter magazine.

Jimmy Mistry: You guys are doing a good job. If you could consciously awaken designer's conscience and make them feel responsible for whatever they are using in terms of materials, a larger purpose would be served to the society, the architecture and the design community in particular.

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