



A retirement community project in the city revisits traditional architecture designs using sunlight as a natural disinfectant

•• K JESHI

"The pandemic has been good for us," says Dhinakar Perumal, who owns the Nirmala Nilayam Retirement Community campus near Siruvani, 15 kilometres from Coimbatore city. "COVID-19 gave us ample time to revisit traditional architectural designs such as the sky-lit courtyard that lets sunlight to filter in and disinfect the building," he says.

The compact villas for senior citizens modelled after the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards of the US, also use the traditional Open To Sky (OTS) design, where an area in the house directly opens to the sky and is covered by fibre or translucent glass. "Nothing like sunlight to sanitise homes," says architect Manikandan Ilango who has designed the villas. He has done projects across South India for over two decades and is also working on green villas. "Healthy living is the keyword now. Our vernacular buildings with courtyards were designed with forethought. At NNRC, we have used natural sunlight wherever possible.

Let the sun shine in



OTS is a traditional concept that we lost along the way. It is now making a comeback." Dhinakar says the project took off when he started looking for a retirement home for his mother. "Retirement communities abroad pack in a lot

of fun. I frequented some in the suburbs of Malden, Massachusetts, during my stay in Boston," says Dhinakar adding how watched the community play pétanque, basketball, croquet and frisbee. He adds, "That's the kind of retirement

home, a place buzzing with energy that I wanted for my mother. I found none. Though she passed away the same year, I decided to go ahead with the project in her memory." More people are opting for sky-lit courtyards, espe-

Revisiting traditions (Clockwise from top) A model home at Nirmala Nilayam Retirement Community campus near Siruvani, OTS courtyard at bathroom, and the gazebo with open sides •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Bright spaces

- Consult an expert. One should ensure that it is set up at a specified angle and is waterproof
- Choose a clear or translucent glass cover
- Ensure that there is an outlet to let hot air out
- If occupants are averse to exposure to direct sunlight, the space can be designed to allow partial exposure
- Trellises can be used or trees can be planted outside for partial shading
- Retractable shading can also be designed, especially for bedrooms

cially during the pandemic, says Bengaluru-based Sathya Prakash Varanashi who specialises in sustainable architecture. "All traditional homes around the world, in Japan, India, Europe or Africa have OTS courtyard in the centre. We avoided it in modern day buildings, because of mosquitos or the fear of rainwater coming in. Now, we cover it with window grill for security and use glass for light."

Sathya Prakash, who has designed homes in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu for over two decades says sunlight inside

homes ensures continuous circulation of fresh air. "It is best to have the ceiling at 15 or 20 ft high to accommodate the courtyard. This way, inside spaces look larger and better." He lists out other advantages too: the ability to bathe in sunlight right inside your homes and get a dose of Vitamin D.

Located at Theethipalayam, off Siruvani Road, at the foothills of the Western Ghats, the sprawling campus of NNRC has spaces earmarked for pottery, sculpting and painting. A gazebo that has a double-layered tile roofing and open sides all around stands tall in the middle of the property. Says Dhinakar, "This open space also has natural light coming in from all directions and it can be used to learn arts, music, yoga or just to meditate. We have OTS primarily in spaces that are wet like bathrooms, utility areas, and kitchen. The ceiling is kept at 11 ft to ensure better air circulation in rooms. The portico uses traditional Kerala style double-layered tiled roof for a cooling effect."

He adds, "In Chettinad homes in Karaikudi, it is called 'muttu kattu veedu' where the design helps conserve water. We have drawn the theory from there and implemented it differently."

Bird song and blue skies

The OTS concept has gained traction among people designing holiday homes away from the city, who want to bring Nature back into their lives, says Mumbai-based Neha Arte, an artist and environmental architect who works with sustainable designs and green buildings. "OTS works beautifully for green buildings that are basically about creating energy efficient, healthy and comfortable spaces. It saves energy as it reduces the need for artificial lighting and mechanical ventilation," she adds. Then, there are added perks such as views of lush treetops and bursts bird song that enhance the indoors, when it is so closely connected with the outdoors.

To know more on OTS, call 96773-33697/ 9677333025 or visit the NNRC pages on YouTube and Instagram.



Japanese Film Festival goes digital in India

Given the current circumstances, the fourth edition of Japanese Film Festival (JIFF) 2020, like other major film festivals this year, will go virtual.

"We are bringing the best of Japanese films which have garnered critical praise along with audience love to offer an enriching experience to our Indian viewers. We are confident the festival will be successful and bigger with the online platform," said Kaoru Miyamoto, the Director-General of the Japan Foundation New Delhi, in a press statement. The festival, which has a list of 30 select Japanese films across genres, is slated between December 4 and 13. Some of the popular films in the line up include *One Night, Lady Miko, Pigtales, Stolen Identity, and Our 30-Minute Sessions* to mention a few.

For details, visit: <https://watch.jiff.jp/go.jp/>

Virtual art

Artrendz Art Gallery holds a virtual art exhibition of paintings by 21 artists from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu. It will feature 41 works done using mediums such as acrylic, pen, and knife on canvas. "This is our first virtual art exhibition and we plan to use Zoom and YouTube. Those interested can get in touch with us and the links will be shared with them before the event," says Vigneshraj R, who owns the Gallery.



The exhibition is on from November 15 to 17, 11 am to 1 pm and 6 pm to 7 pm. Call 8148407465 or mail artrendzartgallery@gmail.com for details.

Art that is inclusive

How an online art exhibition, organised by an NGO based in Bengaluru, is restoring faith and confidence among artists with intellectual disabilities

•• SUSAN JOE PHILIP

Akila Vaidyanathan from Coimbatore was misty-eyed when she saw her son Nishant Srimam's paintings displayed at the second edition of eCAPA 2020 exhibition. He is one among the 59 participants with intellectual disabilities taking part in this virtual show organised by The Art Sanctuary, an NGO based in Bengaluru. "Nishant is artistic and was interested in art from a young age. This is his first exhibition and he has exhibited seven of his works inspired by Nature and patterns. I never thought he would be showcasing his works and selling them one day," she says.

There are 190 artworks including paintings, photographs, installations and clay sculptures at the ongoing event. The themes range from wildlife to abstract art. The NGO received around 500 entries and the works were selected by artist Bose Krishnamachari, founder member and president of Kochi Biennale Foundation. "Bose suggested not to set a theme, since he didn't want to restrict their creativity in any way. We have participants with autism, cerebral palsy, Fragile X Syndrome, dyslexia, Down's syndrome and global mental retardation," says Shalini Gupta, Founder Trustee of the NGO. The first edition of eCAPA



Celebrating people Dancing Puppets by Hrishikesh Vispute; Cauliflower and Onions by Basil Joseph Varghese; (below) Shalini Gupta •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, GAYATRI GUPTA



was in 2019 at Stir Gallery, Delhi. "We sold half of the works then. I was planning for this year's edition when the pandemic struck, forcing me to move online. Basic details of the artist are available with each artwork on the website." The artists were trained to pack and courier their works to the NGO. "All these little steps help them to be self-reliant," she says.

The Art Sanctuary, which was launched in 2019, conducts regular workshops on art, theatre, storytelling, photography and dance for people with intellectual disabilities. "The sessions are online now. We have professionals to take the sessions." In addition, they also provide a platform for people to showcase their talents. "My daughter has Down's Syndrome and she is a photographer and a

coder. When she created her website and uploaded photographs, a lot parents told me that they don't have a platform to put up the works of their children. Finally, it was during my trip to the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2018 that I decided to set up," says Shalini. Mumbai-based Usaid Shaikh, who is autistic, has exhibited four of his paintings. His mother, Fatima Shaikh says, "Art helps him to express himself better. An exhibition like this is important in bringing inclusivity."

Shalini has plans to hold this exhibition every year. "People are ready to acknowledge talents of those with intellectual disabilities. It is a joy to see the smiles on participants. I still remember how a photographer danced with joy when he sold a photograph he took last year." The exhibition is on till January 26, 2021. For details, visit: theartsanctuary.in or call 9810255297.

Pet pals



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BASIL This friendly and healthy soul is 11 months old. Vaccinated and sterilised, she is waiting to meet you.

Will you help Lilly recover?

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up and about, looking for fun and cuddles. While she is doing well, little Lilly's road to recovery is not yet complete, and we are looking for a kind sponsor to support her ongoing care needs.

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MUFFIN

This little girl is cute and playful. Vaccinated, she will be sterilised at the appropriate age. All pets get free lifetime veterinary care, free annual vaccinations, and free spay/neuter surgery at appropriate age from Humane Animal Society (HAS). Contact Humane Animal Society @ 93661 27215 from 9 am to 5 pm.