



INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES | GERMANY + INDIA 2011-2012

INDO-GERMAN URBAN MELA

Pune

DURING EVENT COVERAGE

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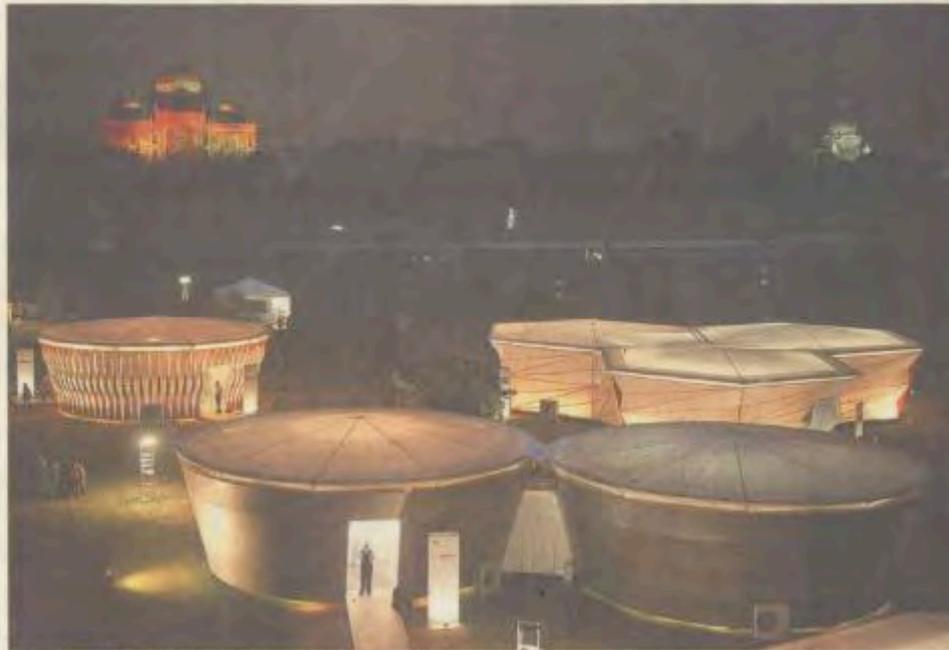
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Germany
Land of Ideas

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The bamboo blessing



ARCHITECTURAL AMBITIONS: Installation artist Markus Heinsdorf. A look at Heinsdorf's bamboo pavilions at Indo- German Urban Mela

KARTIKI NITIN LAWATE

INSTALLATION artist Markus Heinsdorff is the man behind the multi-faceted pavilions at the Indo- German Urban Mela, which is now on in Pune. **Hot Property** talks with him about design and alternative architecture globally.

Tell us a bit about bamboo architecture, your area of specialisation?

Working with bamboo is my way of staying connected with nature. I try and use as many natural materials as possible. Bamboo is one of the most useful and fascinating plants. With regards to preserving nature and sustainability, bamboo takes only three years to grow unlike most other trees. It can be used at par with wood and is an extremely environmentally friendly construction material.

India does not have many companies that specialise in bamboo architecture. But I hope and know that this will change in the near future. Like bamboo, fabric opens complete new possibilities for architectural design. India is poised to be a good market for it for any kind of construction. India is home to one of the best bamboos in the world, the giant bamboo.

Can you give an idea about the designs that are on show? For my design at the Urban Mela, I wanted to use a new and unique concept with

fabric. India is known for its fabrics and hence my focus here was to build on that and use a fabric like cotton. I have focused on using more steel and membrane. Here, I have tried to imbibe my idea of sustainability by using as much as locally available raw materials and by building the structures in India.

The objective behind the design of the pavilions has been to retain the traditional aspects of Indian design and mould them into sustainable architectural solutions. Technology is not limited to machines. The intricacy and rigour that go into weaving fabric, as I see it in India is also in that sense - high technology and this is part of my architectural construct as well. I am also amazed by the use of colourful and precious stones in Indian architecture, and the hand crafted nature of the motifs.

Bringing it all together with German architectural techniques was an intense process of research and selection. As a result, the materials utilised, especially the joints can be used for low cost housing. So more than the cost implication, utility is what matters.

What's your take on the modern architecture in India?

India is one of the fastest growing economies. This fact also mirrors in the construction and architecture sectors. Having traveled across six

main cities in India, I have seen some beautiful construction and architecture, especially modern spaces. I feel it is necessary, especially given today's day and age, to plan the cities and upcoming structures effectively and in a more sustainable fashion. One must continue to explore newer possibilities of building environmentally safe and sustainable buildings. This will help in effective planning of the future cities.

Any thoughts on differences in buildings in Germany and India?

The difference has a lot to do with how different Germany and India are, geographically. Germany is extremely cold while the weather in India is warm. That is the main difference for structural architecture. Cooling needs much more energy than heating. The structures in

Germany are trying to provide more insulation, and hence use more energy. What can be bettered in India, though, is the use of more energy efficient cooling systems that will provide the right temperature, without harming the eco-system.

In such a scenario, if Germany and India work together on redefining techniques and creating solutions for efficient architecture for both countries, we can have a win-win situation for both. India has a deep-rooted legacy in architecture that has been very well-planned and most of these can be implemented in modern city structures as well.

What is the future of alternative architecture globally?

Alternative architecture needs more experience and scope for experimenting. We have to create houses and

cities that are fit for the future. The world needs low emission, low energy and climate controlled houses. It's important to use sustainable materials in a skyscraper as well as a small house.

Your advice to young aspiring architects and students?

Students and institutions now need to focus on green architecture, human and environment-friendly structures and more sustainable designs for the future. Eco-friendly architecture will get prominence in the times to come. I would tell young people to experiment with design and raw materials to create a new, fascinating structure. The traditional ideas need to be combined with the modern ones. Lastly, let your culture be a part of the design you create.

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Taking nature into consideration

- ▶ We can use materials like jute, rice-straw, concrete and a varying, flexible membrane. Some of these materials are quite cost-effective and environment-friendly. They can be used to test and experiment with traditional architecture and explore the idea of sustainable construction.
- ▶ Natural material like bamboo/ clay/stone offers you the possibility to create spaces in most regions of the world. They can be used to make low cost structures for people who don't have a roof on their head. These materials are 100 per cent recyclable.
- ▶ We can create several modern and hi-tech spaces with these traditional materials. For instance, by combining fabric, steel, concrete and glass, we can create something new and relate it and use it for skyscrapers and future cities.





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Patterns from Germany

Installation artist and designer Markus Heinsdorff talks about his designs for the Indo-German Urban Mela

ROHAN SWAMY

ON first look, installation artist and designer Markus Heinsdorff comes across as a perfect representation of his country — Germany. Dressed casually in an all-white attire, and speaking in a measured tone, Heinsdorff says that being methodical is something that comes naturally to him. It is also something that has become an integral part of the Indo-German Urban Mela, which has travelled across the nation and come to the city as its final stop. Scheduled to begin in Pune officially from Saturday, Heinsdorff is the brain behind installation artwork as well as the unique high-end tents that have been adorning the mela over the last one year.

“When I was contacted about designing the structures, I wanted to work around the theme of bringing India and Germany together — not merging them but bringing them together. As a result, I began hunting for books at the University of Munich’s Indo-German Library. After researching, I figured that it would be a good idea to use textiles in building the structures,” he says.



Markus Heinsdorff; (top) the artist is behind the high-end tents and installation art at the venue

The tents combine the aesthetics of the Indian design and German engineering. The mela will be held at the Deccan College grounds. And Heinsdorff has not just rested there. Another important element of his designs is making use of gemstones to make delicate jewellery. In fact, he mentions that a reason why he chose to use a textile and plastic-based membrane is because bamboo had been used in China.

He says, “There is natural cooling, just like the Indians had in their old buildings. The textile is woven along with the plastic membrane so that it allows breathability. These are little design considerations that have been used.”

This is his third visit to Pune. He says, “It is a green city and has a nice feel about it but the traffic is terrible. I come from Munich, which is very small in comparison to Pune,” he says.



Report in, action awaited
Brinda Karat

The Indian EXPRESS

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INDO-GERMAN MELA

Ashish Shankar



Twelve gem-shaped pavilions designed by German artist Markus Heinsdorff have been set up in the 'city spaces' theme, at the Indo-German Urban Mela, Deccan College ground. The event will hold presentations and conferences by German and Indian organisations



Germany
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