


“IN SEARCH OF ART... IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE”

A new approach to landscape design workshop



An Interactive workshop provides a way to create an intensive educational experience in a short amount of time, when the time for a more comprehensive effort may not be available. A workshop can introduce a new concept, spurring students to investigate it further on their own. Especially for students who work together, a workshop can help to create sense of community or common purpose among its participants.

Landscape architecture is a burgeoning specialization that has immense opportunity and growth prospects as a career in India as well as abroad. Landscape architecture involves analysis, planning, design, management, preservation and rehabilitation of land. Landscape architects work towards blending functionality and aesthetics with nature.

Landscape improves the appearance of a place, some people like to grow plants, and others want their place to look good. A well-designed landscape is a pleasure for the owners of a property, it enhances and adds to the resale value. Landscape design involves much more than placing trees, shrubs and other plants on the property. It is an art, dealing with the conscious arrangement or organization of outdoor space for human satisfaction and enjoyment.

Conducting a workshop on specialized subject like landscape gives lot of opportunity for the student to explore the subject in detail. Landscape architecture is one of the specializations in the Bachelor of Architecture course. Why not bring students talents and skills to such Design workshop?

School of Architecture, MS Ramaiah Institute of technology, Bangalore conducted one day workshop on “Art in Landscape Architecture” a design workshop on 29th October 2013. The focus for the Second year and third year students so that they could



Fig. 1: Every day art

apply to the subject of Landscape design. Students from other school of Architecture also participated in this workshop. The objective of the workshop would be to explain the relationship between art and landscape in a built environment, to understand the implication by applying them to selected examples and to attempt creative expression through the medium of landscape design in a given space.

Ar. Raghu Raman from Chennai, Ar. Rohit Marol from Bangalore gave presentation in the morning session of the workshop - different types of art related to landscape, relationship between art and landscape, the content of the presentation was summarized as follows.

The best of design in architecture, city planning or landscape have also been works of art. Traditionally there has been a strong relationship between art, landscape & architecture. Examples like landscape and city plans of Versailles, Paris, New Delhi has been works of art.

The notion of the landscape encompasses the interplay between humans and their surroundings.

Landscape design we know needs to be more; much more. It needs to dignify, bring a smile on the face, and make us to think, of the great future, of the times we live in, of our ambitions and dreams.

The Everyday art includes the fruits (Fig.1) at a roadside vendor heaped in neat systematic stacks, red yellow a pleasant pattern, Pipes heaped to make a composition of voids, Morn-

ing sunrise, Kites in the sky, school children in bright woollens streaking across the road.

The examples of built art are Facades of carved wooden havellis, A well cast metal railing, A floorscape that enriches the space, The sweeping curves of a grand staircase, well carved out temples, painted doors etc.

Installation art describes an artistic genre of three-dimensional works that are often site-specific and designed to transform the perception of a space. Installation art can be either temporary or permanent. Installation artworks have been constructed in exhibition spaces such as museums and galleries, as well as public and private spaces. Installation art sits right on that curious border between architecture, art and interior design – part physical experiment, part personal expression and part designed space. The works of installation by artists Javacheff Christo and Jeanne-Claude (Fig.2) show the untapped potential



Fig. 2: Installation art by artist Javacheff Christo



Fig. 3: Surrounded Miami island by Javacheff Christo



Fig. 4: Wrapped Tree by Javacheff Christo

of spatial experience not often seen in more purely functional or purely artistic works of design.

Artist like Javacheff Christo and Jeanne-Claude created environmen-

tal works of art. The purpose of their art, they contend, is simply to create works of art or joy and beauty and to create new ways of seeing familiar landscapes. Artist Javacheff Christo

and Jeanne-Claude art is very unusual. Wrapped Trees (Fig.4) is one among them. Wrapped tree was extremely dynamic: varying silhouettes of trees moved in the wind with the skeletal framework of branches made visible when the translucent material was back lighted by the sun.

Javacheff Christo' and Jeanne-Claude's idea to surround eleven islands (Fig.3) in Miami's Biscayne Bay with 603,850 m2 of pink polypropylene floating fabric was one of the installation work was seen, approached, and enjoyed by the public, from the causeways, the land, the water, and the air. Surrounded Islands was a work of art which underlined the various elements and ways in which the people of Miami live, between land and water.

Land art is an art form that is created in nature using natural materials such as bed rock, boulders, stones, logs, branches, leaves and water. Sculptures are not placed in the landscape; rather, the landscape is the means of their creation. The works of art frequently exist in the open, located well away from civiliza-



Fig. 5: Artist Andy Goldsworthy's land art

tion, left to change and erode under natural conditions. These kind of art called site specific sculpture, designed for a particular outdoor location. British sculptor photographer and environmentalist Andy Goldsworthy's producing site-specific sculpture and land art situated in natural and urban settings. The materials used in Andy Goldsworthy's art (Fig.5) often include brightly colored flowers, icicles, leaves, mud, pinecones, snow, stone, twigs, and thorns.

Rice paddy art (Fig.6) also called as Tanbo art is an art form originating in Japan where people plant rice of various types and colors to create giant pictures in a paddy field. The people of Japan were looking for a way to revitalize their village. Archaeological exploration led to a realization that rice had been grown in the area for more than 2000 years. To honour this history, the villagers started a rice field behind the town hall. With the paddy as a canvas, the villagers cultivated and used four different types of heirloom and modern strains of rice to create a giant picture in the field.



Fig. 6: Tanbo Art on rice field

In recent years, public art has increasingly begun to expand in scope and application — both into other wider and challenging areas of art form, and also across a much broader range of what might be called our 'public realm'. Such cultural interventions have often been realized in response to creatively engaging a

community's sense of 'place' or 'well-being' in society.

Art and Landscape

The appreciation of art is literary, pictorial or spatial requires close observation and willingness to enter into the alternative world. Arts are exclusive: through some aspects of a particular



work may have mass appeal, a deeper understanding and appreciation is not automatic. It requires focused effort and sometimes extensive education and training. Of course, each works invites interpretation: there are layers of meaning and some more accessible than others.

Designed landscapes offer themselves as a public and immediately accessible medium of creative expression. How successfully can we use them to extend boundaries of our perception and aesthetic experience?

The park at 7 WTC, designed by landscape architect Ken Smith, consists of a central open plaza with a fountain and flanking groves of trees and shrubs. Featured in the fountain area is a sculpture by renowned artist Jeff Koons, entitled Balloon Flower (Fig.7). The mirror-polished stainless-steel sculpture represents a twisted balloon in the shape of a flower that has been enlarged to monumental scale.

The Industrial landscape at Daman (Fig.8) designed by Prabhakar B Bhagwat, Ahmedabad is good



Fig. 8: Industrial landscape Design at Daman



Fig. 7: Landscape design for Fountain Park by artist Jeff Koons

example for fusion of art in landscape. In this design the land is sculpted like a piece of land art and weaves the spectrum from industrial to agrarian into one fabric. The landscape makes for a strong corporate identity and simultaneously dwells on the processes of industry and landscape, and in other landscape project in Chennai (Fig.9) architects employs plant material, water and light elements to create a setting for an iconic pool. The "pool" is an installation in collaboration with artist Hemi Bawa. The steel lily pool is now the emblem for the hotel and its most recognizable symbol.



Fig. 9: Landscape design for hotel at Chennai



Fig. 10: Jacob Javits plaza, USA



Fig. 11: Biomedical research roof top garden

At Jacob Javits Plaza, well known landscape architects Martha Schwartz partners, USA designed the benches swirl (Fig. 10) around the six foot tall grassy hemisphere that exude mist on hot days. The new plaza is reconnected to its surrounding context and provides innumerable seating opportunities for people having lunch or for watching other people. These elements offer a critique of the art of landscape in New York City.

In another project Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research (Fig.11) the rooftop garden is designed with clipped hedges, which double as seating, are rolled steel covered in Astro-turf. The green colours, which are the strongest cues that this is a garden. are composed of colored gravel and paint. The intent was to create for the scientist who occupy this building a visual puzzle that could not be solved. Its beautiful piece of art in landscape and the garden is an ode to "better living through chemistry"

Approach to the Landscape design workshop

Morning session was rich with eminent speakers talking about various forms of art in landscape design that helped students to go ahead with workshop. The Various topics were discussed in the workshop in the morning session by Landscape Architect Rohit Marol and Ar. K. Raghuraman. The presentation by the speakers really helped student to understand how landscape design should be done. In the Afternoon session landscape design competition was held for the students in a group for live sites in Bangalore like landscape design for City Square, Toll booth, underneath flyover landscape design, Median



Fig. 12: Inauguration of the workshop by Ar. Rohit Marol & Principal Dr. S. Y. Kulkarni



Fig. 13: Students involved in working in design workshop



Fig. 14: Final touch for design in the workshop

landscape design. The students' works were evaluated by landscape Architect Mrs.Nina Chandavarkar & Ar. Bijoy Chacko. In the final session Mrs. Nina Chandavarkar concluded the final session of the workshop by giving prizes to the winner of the landscape design competition.

The students' work who participated in the competition was exhibited so that the seniors, friends could give feedback so that they could discuss regarding topic & learn, the feedback actually helped the student in developing their skills. The outcome of the workshop was very positive & interactive. Even faculties from other school



Fig. 15: Ar. Nina Chandvarkar & Ar. Bijoy Chacko evaluating students' work

of architecture also enthusiastically participated in the workshop.

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Conclusion:

Workshop focused on certain specialized subject, is activities intended to guide and stimulate students to get interest in such discipline. Workshop offers students the opportunity to explore the numerous facets of landscape architecture and its scope in society. It helps students to identify such specialization subject so that in future they could think of doing post graduate programme & future practice. In such workshop, students

will develop skills such as gaining a sensitivity to landscape quality, understanding of the arts and a humanistic approach to design, having the ability to analyze problems in terms of design and physical form, gain technical competence to translate a design into a built form.

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Fig. 16: Display of students' work after workshop

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Photographs: Courtesy the Author.