The sense of architecture

DEBBIE RODGERS speaks to architects Mona Doctor and Poppo Pingel, whose love for construction of spaces that positively boost the five senses fostered love between them.

Architecture has become very refined," says Mona Doctor. "Nowadays, architecture is not just a question of size, but rather architecture of the senses. It's more than just building something, but creating a space that can stimulate all five senses - sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

There is a trend in architecture today to create buildings that engage all the senses, not just visually. This is where the concept of "sensory architecture" comes into play. It's about creating spaces that stimulate the senses and make people feel good.

Where's the practicality?

You can't do it all in today's urban environment. In this case, there is no rigid division between visual and other senses. That's what the architects at the Centre for Environmental Planning and Management, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, calls it. "It's about how you deal with different materials, different textures and how you work with nature that makes the difference."

The crux of all things natural design is creating a connection - the sound of a beating heart, the sight of a passing cloud, the smell of a freshly baked loaf of bread. Both, like in nature, function as signals to our system for adjusting to the environment we are in. A house by Poppo Pingel in Ahmedabad, for example, uses natural materials like wood, stone, and clay to create a sense of harmony with the environment.

Designs by duty (clockwise from left): Villa from installation; architect-couple Mona Doctor-Pingel and Poppo Pingel; sections of Quiet Healing Centre in Aurumville.

DECONSTRUCTION IS A LEXICON IN THE COUPLE'S DESIGNS. AS IS USING ORDINARY THINGS IN AN EXTRAORDINARY WAY.

Artistic freedom

While their ideas have been formulated at Kite and inspired by the master architect R. Kathrina, their work, says Poppo Pingel, has been in the context of Aurumville. The non-commercial nature of Aurumville has given them the freedom to experiment. Close to long-hours between clients, architect and supervisor make it possible to develop new ideas and creative blocks.

"The pink wonder"

Jeremy Tetford, a resident of US, has set the record for the largest balloon sculpture built by an individual. The giant balloon dog is made of 8,867 pink balloons and is not held by any support structure.