platform

CREATIVE LIFESTYLE

Rs 100

Jan - Feb 2008

THE ARTS ISSUE
Pablo Batholomew
Subodh Gupta
Pooja Sood
Sanjeev Bijli
Manil Gupta
Ganieve Grewal
Chatterjee & Lal
Nitin Mukul
Sohrab Hura

ALSO FEATURING
Soha Ali Khan
Aparna Chandra
Anoushka Shankar

PLUS
Award Winning
Designer Neil Foley
Poet Daljit Nagra
Documentary Filmmaker
Ayesha Sood

By Sabrina Singh

space design

Planet 3 Studios

A young organisation that was founded in 1998 by Kalhan Mattoo and Santha Gour Mattoo. The fresh energy and creativity of the studio can be seen in some of the most cutting edge and outstanding spaces that have been created.

The Project
Vidyalankar Institue of Technology.

Design Team
Kalhan Mattoo & Santha Gour Mattoo. Mumbai.

Kalhan's Statement
Creative vision: We do not subscribe to any particular idiom in architecture or even theory for that matter. There are a few things that we do believe in, we focus intensely on the requirements of the clients and the end user, trying to understand their needs and from there we get some information — we call this our 'Gems of Wisdom' which, we use in our designs. We do not burden ourselves with any particular style and are easy with experimenting and accepting new ideas. We also believe in balancing wit and wisdom and think that design can be profound and light hearted at the same time. Our vision is not to really change the world through design however but to create wonderful spaces that people can inhabit and enjoy.

> We have used
> recycled and 'low-
> touch' materials.
> The look was created
> using an appealing
> colour palette. It is
> difficult to define
> and we like that.

Concept: We sent some people from our studio to the existing structure and they just talked to the students there. By doing so we really got an insight into what goes on in the institute we term that as 'data mining'. So we mined many heads and what came across was that their college did not function the way they thought it should. So we went out of the box! We focussed on the students, their needs and drew inspiration from it. Learning need not necessarily happen in a dull boring environment. We wanted to create a design that students connected with and claimed as their own.

Design: We understood that the college does not belong to the trustees or the academicians, it primarily belongs to the students and one has to look at the design in terms of the end user. We tried to understand their attraction to the outside, and accordingly we got all of that inside the campus. So we had a *chai ka tapir*°, the internet kiosk, we created a man sized chessboard between the blocks, we have a table tennis table, we have an outdoor, indoor café, we have a telephone booth. The walls bend tilt and turn to contain spaces. They break away from the rigidity of sensible and safe architecture. We have used recycled and 'low-touch' materials. The look was created using an appealing colour palette. It is difficult to define and we like that.

Awards: We received the *'Designshare Honor Award 2007'*°. It is the *Oscars* of educational facility design worldwide. This is the first time an Indian design firm has received this, it was very exciting for us as it was our first architectural project and because we were experimenting with a bizarre thought that worked in our favour.

Future Projects: Currently we are working on a Science Centre, a lifestyle community for NRIs and a product design for a new age workstation is going into production with *Godrej*. Hotels, lounge bars, education facilities, offices, Industrial buildings... you name it_

°glossary