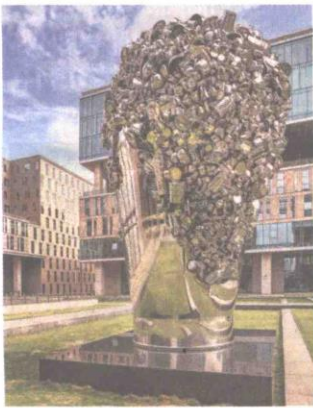


# The Hindu

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### The art of beautifying public spaces

Sculptures, paintings, murals can add charm to the open environment and convey a message too.  
**RANJANI GOVIND** takes a look at the emerging trend



But are we looking at a medium of expression in art where India is lagging/matching other world urban settings? Dimpy justifies that architects and builders take pride in their structures and it's no longer just purely functional. "Aesthetics of buildings and facades are treated with a lot of thought. Art is now part of the contemporary vision in India too. Our metros can compare with their counterparts abroad, although a lot more needs to be done and why are we comparing?" she asks

#### Involve everybody

Multinationals and business houses have the appetite to spend and acquire sculptures which only enhance their spaces. They also understand the value of art and what it does to the viewer, according to art professionals. According to ace sculptor Ravinder G. Reddy, whose solo-show using a host of materials at the RMZ EcoWorld is on, we are far behind the West or even third world countries as far as art in public spaces are concerned. "We need to sensitise people to enhance aesthetics outdoors. One strong way of doing this would be to introduce tax benefits to industry sponsors/builders/developers or architects where attractive measures can abring companies to sponsor art more easily," says Mr. Ravinder Reddy.

Interacting with artists and architects for cultural and urban settings of immediate context should not become rare initiatives. It must be a natural progression in art for built spaces and open environments, according to Mr. Reddy. "Even having good sculpted works of statues of national leaders should be aesthetic, and not tucked away in corners at cross-junctions. This is a disrespect to sculptural art."

Amongst several others, Ravinder Reddy and Subodh Gupta are being in-



invited to foreign shores for public art installations. Sculpture artists are available in plenty in India who are recognised abroad. "I was invited by Bangkok to have my installation at a beautiful natural surrounding there. During the Nehru and Indira Gandhi period I have done works for Lalit Kala Academy and the Delhi Development Authority for Central Delhi. It has not yet percolated to other States in India," says Mr. Reddy, ruling the fact that nobody pays heed to the Central government stipulation that every public building includes sculptures. "Be it sculptures, paintings or murals, such art will enhance the surroundings of a building. Organisations and artists have been pressing the government that just as spaces allotted for gardens in every locality in the Master Plan, there has to stipulations for artworks included in buildings," says Mr. Reddy.

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Earlier architect Charles Correa during his talk in Bengaluru in 2015 had exhorted all practising architects to contribute to the designing of public spaces. If we can expand each one's role towards society, administrators, artists and office space designers too have to share an artistic envisioning for city spaces. Why can't sculptures be a part of every public space just as large botanical gardens or the reasonably spacious road spaces where seating is provided? Public space-and-art is a trend creeping into Bengaluru in many forms.

Earlier, large entertainment avenues, gardens, parks or public buildings hardly brought in serious public art where artists were made to be involved. But with the likes of K. Jaisim who even brings stone seatings and sculptures into large projects; Naresh Narasimhan whose work at the restoration of the building for NGMA speaks loud of the landscape architecture sprinkled generously with outstanding sculptures; or

art historians, practitioners and teachers at the Chitrakala Parishath who have every kind of outdoor art installed at their environs, public art has come to be accepted as an extension of the aesthetic persona of spaces.

#### Collaborative communities

The RMZ Foundation's art initiative at its Bellandur Ecoworld creates communities coming together to help accentuate art and present a new destination. Does such art initiatives help people look at office space providers differently as the Foundation also has a permanent art gallery where non-IT people would be part of the consuming public?

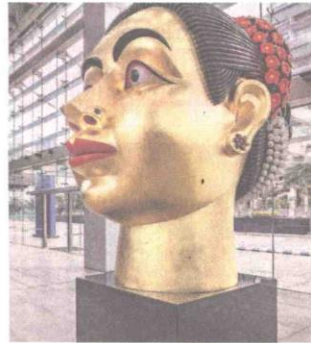
"The objective of the RMZ Foundation is to give back to the ecosystem that we benefit from. Art is one such initiative to collaborate and expand the awareness and engage our community," says Anu Menda, Managing Trustee, RMZ Foundation. The Gallery, she says, is not for profit. It is a space to promote varied interactive workshops and exhibitions and seeks to help artists - both es-



established and emerging - collaborate and showcase to a focused audience. It is not as a commercial gallery space, she adds.

Of course public-art with sculptures is gaining momentum in Bengaluru, according to award-winning sculptor Dimpy Menon. "There is a great interest and with globalisation, there is a greater awareness and appreciation of art both from the corporates and the general public," says Dimpy.

Sculptures are and will always be a part of the city as one would have noticed, but the grammar applied to each



work in each era would be different. "In the past they have been more traditional, like statues and portraits of icons. Places of worship are sprinkled all over the city; art is represented here as figures or symbols. It's just that we have got so used to seeing them, we don't often appreciate these as an art form," adds Dimpy.



## 'We wish to integrate architecture and art'

Art walks and galleries at our properties take visitors on a journey into the realm of creative pursuits, Anu Menda, Managing Trustee, RMZ Foundation, tells **RANJANI GOVIND**

**T**he RMZ Ecoworld at Bellandur is wearing a different look in its open environs. It's not just the sleek office environment, the well-done-up interiors, green lawns or the varied spread of tree canopies that are catching people's attention. Sprinkling art into every given opportunity of space, both indoors and outdoors, is trending, and public spaces, including large IT parks and office spaces, are into a landscaping design that fuses public art with sculptures. "The seemingly different exteriors that one can visualise comes from realising that art can be installed outdoors to make them part of our friendly landscaping; the vast possibilities for artistic and cultural exchange has to be realised," according to Anu Menda, Managing Trustee, RMZ Foundation.

Recently RMZ Foundation also launched an Art Walk around its permanent collection of sculptural masterpieces done up by contemporary artists Subodh Gupta, Ravinder G. Reddy, Dhruva Mistry, Paresh Maity, Arunkumar H.G. and Jayasri Burman. A permanent Gallery Space in the environs also adds to the interactions of the artists in an office space for making it more dynamic. The gallery space hosts 'Heads and bodies, icons and idols', a solo show of sculptures by Ravinder Reddy with his rare body of works.

Anu Menda spoke to *The Hindu-Property Plus* on the idea behind this initiative.

*Excerpts of the interview...*

**How did you decide on coming up with an art space like this?**

As one of the most dynamic cities in India, Bengaluru enjoys the privilege of playing host to a diverse and vibrant population along with the millennials who contribute to key roles in making art an integral part that gives this global city its unique identity. Through this art initiative, our Foundation intends to add this cultural fabric to the community of millennials and technologists who have their work places at an RMZ asset.

**Do you think such initiatives help in your space design of a tech-park? Is this trending today, as many parks have also come up with these?**

Bengaluru has long established its place on the world map as a destination for art through distinct opportunities, events, experiences and artists who stir and excite the populace. It has always served as a nexus that embraces the confluence of numerous streams of art.

Through this initiative we wish to integrate architecture and art as we go along and design all our office spaces creating platforms for the talents of emerging and established artists to demonstrate their works. Art walks and art galleries at our properties will take visitors on a journey into the realm of creative pursuits, while shaping a dynamic space for experimentation and artistic innovation. We want to make this a collaborative journey, changing the way in which public perceive art and architecture and engage with them.

**Were the artists coming forth towards this exercise, and how do they feel being a part of such parks?**

Artists are equally excited as they believe the best reward is when there is maximum interaction with their works. We have the added advantage of the captive audience who will on a daily basis engage with the art works within their working environments as well as the public outside our immediate community. Our Foundation is committed to cultural activation and we wish to build communities to create opportunities for engagement and dialogue through the medium of art.

**How much have you spent on creating the public art inside?**

We use our own funds to run the entire Foundation and it is not for profit. The artists have been supportive enough to ensure a balance between the outlay on art and the project requirements.