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PRESENTS



BECAUSE 100 IS NOT JUST A NUMBER... IT IS A MILESTONE



Benny Kuriakose

BENNY KURIAKOSE

THE ROOTS

Calling his entry to architecture an “accident”, Benny Kuriakose recounts, “If I had not met Sri Laurie Baker during my studies, I would not be what I am. I have learnt my basic lessons of architecture from him.”

THE NURTURING

At the University of Kerala, Trivandrum, Kuriakose studied civil engineering at the degree level. After receiving the Charles Wallace India Trust award for an MA in conservation studies at the University of York, he received his doctorate from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (now Chennai). Besides Baker, Kuriakose finds the works of Geoffrey Bawa and Frank Lloyd Wright powerful, and the writings of Le Corbusier inspiring. His friends from the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad – and Dr MP Parameswaran in particular – have also shaped him as a person and as a professional.

training programmes for architectural and civil engineering degrees and diplomas. He worked in Kerala till 1991, doing projects on cost-effective techniques, and even returned to his village to design furniture. He started practising architecture again from 1993, during which period he designed many residences. 1994 was a landmark year when, after the Latur earthquake, he was commissioned by the Malayala Manorama for the rebuilding of Banegaon village.

1996 brought him to Chennai as the designer for the Kerala buildings and the public buildings in Dakshinachitra on the East Coast Road to Mahabalipuram. The extraordinary project of transplantation of old buildings to sites juxtaposing new ones, was a challenge that spurred him on to set up an office in Chennai; and this opportunity helped him build his repertory of projects. “We have done projects starting from a plinth area of 125sq-ft to a master plan running into lakhs of sq-ft,” says the architect who has authored a book on conserving timber structures in India and co-edited *Guidelines for the Preparation of a Heritage Management Plan*.

THE FRUITS

Kuriakose worked with Laurie Baker for less than a year, after which he has largely been on his own, from 1985 onwards. On his return from the United Kingdom, Kuriakose joined the Integrated Rural Technology Centre, Palakkad, and worked with the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra, coordinating

THE TURNING POINTS

Kuriakose is known more for his work on the master plan of the Muziris Heritage Project. But he also counts actor Mammooty’s house, the Tsunami Rehabilitation project in Tarangambadi and Dakshinachitra public buildings on Chennai’s East Coast Road as milestones.

THE DESTINATION

“I finished my doctorate three years ago. After that, I have been trying to do better quality projects; and I hope to design the best projects during the coming years. One of my dream projects is to design housing for old people,” he discloses. **AAI**



- ◆ A built structure that gets a perfect score in your opinion... and why. Padmanabhapuram Palace. A beautiful complex of timber buildings which uses local materials, built to suit the local climate.
- ◆ An Indian practice that you would give a perfect score... and why. COSTFORD, the NGO firm which follows Laurie Baker’s principles to the maximum possible extent. It trains youngsters in their path and, at the same time, has made significant contributions in increasing the architectural heritage of our country.
- ◆ An international practice that merits a perfect score... and why. Peter Zumthor’s practice. He runs a small architectural firm by giving due importance to creativity, art, context and history.