

HUNDREHANDS PRESENTS DOSHI A FILM BY PREMJIT RAMACHANDRAN

IN A NUTSHELL

Bijoy and Premjit Ramachandran have made a documentary feature on Balkrishna Doshi, Architect, Academician, and Philosopher. The film presents Doshi's architectural work, his role in the setting up of arguably the best school of architecture (Center for Environmental Planning & Technology, CEPT) in India, and posits these roles within the larger narrative of his philosophies on life and his relationship with people. The film is not a biopic, but a series of conversations around his projects and it serves as an insight into the way Doshi approaches life.

ABOUT THE FILM

Two monographs have been published on Doshi's work and he is regularly published in architectural magazines. The scope of these printed articles is limited in capturing the spatial and qualitative aspects of his work and do not adequately present Doshi's unique personality and his philosophy. Film is the perfect medium in which to capture architecture - it covers the spatial narrative and sequence, the quality of light and the impact of movement. It is also the best way to engage a person like Doshi. Having a conversation with him is to immediately understand his appeal and the reasons for his unique success. Not only is his work as an architect seminal but his contributions to academia through the setting up of the school of architecture in Ahmedabad and his own Vastu Shilpa Foundation are unparalleled. These successes are primarily due to his ability to communicate to and inspire the people around him, and his rigor as an architect. Both these aspects can be satisfactorily captured only on film.

The film will not only introduce people to a truly great modern architect, but also to an evolved, cultured human being and help redirect our attention to the truly important questions of our time.

His approach to the work, and the story of his practice would be great lessons for younger architects who struggle to negotiate the pressing commercial demands of running a practice with the 'ideal' project/process. Doshi's constant search for alternative ways in which to articulate persistent themes in his work, like community, layering, fragmentation, and rootedness set him apart from many of his contemporaries, and this is particularly relevant today, where often the underpinnings of formal and spatial compositions are merely stylistic.

He will also appeal to the non-architect as he talks about his work within the context of his philosophies about life. The film transcends the model of the architectural documentary focussing also on the person and not only on the architect. I believe his philosophy has universal appeal and his work demonstrates a way to simultaneously be modern/contemporary, local/of the place and sustainable.

ABOUT DOSHI

Dr Balkrishna Doshi, a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Architects was born in Pune at 1927. After initial study at the J J School of Architecture, Bombay, he worked for four years with Le Corbusier as Senior Designer (1951-54) in Paris and four more years in India to supervise his projects in Ahmedabad. His office Vastu-Shilpa (environmental design) was established in 1955.

Dr Doshi has been a member of the Jury for several international and national competitions including the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts and Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Apart from his international fame as an architect, Dr Doshi is equally known as educator and institution builder. He has been the first founder Director of School of Architecture, Ahmedabad (1962-72), first founder Director of School of Planning (1972-79), first founder Dean of Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (1972-81), founder member of Visual Arts Centre, Ahmedabad and first founder Director of Kanoria Centre for Arts, Ahmedabad. Dr Doshi has been instrumental in establishing the internationally known research institute Vastu-Shilpa Foundation for Studies and Research in Environmental Design. The institute has done pioneering work in low cost housing and city planning.

ABOUT BIJOY RAMACHANDRAN, THE ARCHITECT

Born in 1971, Bijoy Ramachandran is an architect and urban designer based in Bangalore. His firm, **Hundredhands** (hundredhands.com) is an internationally recognized practice and has been featured in Architectural Design (UK) magazine's survey of contemporary Indian architecture (*'Made in India'*, January 2008). Other awards include an official selection for the Project South Exhibition and the Leone di Pietra at the *Venice Biennale, 2006*, and the *Cityscape/Architectural Review Award in 2005*. *'Architecture & the City: A Bangalore Perspective'*, a documentary feature he made on professional practice in the city in 2005 is now part of the curriculum in schools across India. He has been a panelist at the annual all-India undergraduate thesis review, the Kurula Varkey Forum, at CEPT, Ahmedabad, in 2005. Bijoy also writes a regular column on architecture and urban issues for the Times of India group.

ABOUT PREMJIT RAMACHANDRAN, THE FILMMAKER

Born in 1975, Premjit Ramachandran is a filmmaker/musician/graphic designer based in Bangalore. This is his first full length documentary feature. Prior to this he has worked on several experimental projects. Of particular interest is a short film called *"Look here, Kunigunda"*, which was shot in the deserts of Dubai and was officially selected at the Rome International Film Festival, 2006. While living in London, he worked on a compilation of fusion music which is now being used as the score for the film on Doshi. His graphic design work has earned him global recognition such as inclusion in the international art book *"PLACE"* and his website www.100hands.com has been featured and reviewed on reputed design portals such as k10k, designiskinky and Shift Japan.
