

REAL ESTATE

Urban expression

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Landscape architecture blurs boundaries and holistically provides an opportunity for reflection



Landscape architecture is a form of expression which explores our relationship with nature. Art, on the other hand, appeals to transcend the physicality of the space and transports us into a self-reflective world. More often than not, these forms of design are closely intertwined to holistically provide an opportunity for natural self-expression and reflection. Similarly, when art becomes an integral part of architecture, it blurs boundaries for us to define spaces as mere structures to live, work, learn or play, but experientially to create another layer of profound impact on the built environs.

In urban design and master planning, the placement of sculptures and artworks strategically within the city makes for expressions of power, identity, meaning, cultural celebration and unique urban expression. Large sculpture works are often married to landscape architecture that clears the urban fabric and creates natural settings for them to be enjoyed by the public. Much research has demonstrated that art has psychological and mental health benefits on people who are surrounded by it, particularly in a natural setting.

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of nature inherently allow for an observer to pause from the mundanity of daily life with awakened senses. Such presence and mindfulness is perhaps the purest way to enjoy art in its various forms. Furthermore, we have seen some extraordinary works by artists, sculptors, landscape architects and horticulturists blending the two, where art is nature and nature is art sans boundaries, to create an interesting interplay of these two forces. Needless to say that the blend of these two forces have the ability to positively transform both the mental and physical wellbeing for all ages in a sustainable way.

Progressive developers are now integrating both art and nature for placemaking and wellbeing of communities. Sensitive integration of public art and sculptures with legacy artifacts are being used while responding to context. Entire developments have the possibility of being treated as a space or canvas to co-create multiple expressions of art within verdant nature as well as the built environment. This is about creative expression, identity, interpretation, reflection, therapy, enjoyment, possibilities, hope and much more – something that has this incredible ability to evoke and awaken the senses in unique ways.

First-hand accounts from communities that have seen such integration confirm that both nature and art have become a celebratory part of their daily lives. This idea has been true from time immemorial for any of the great cities, streets, plazas, neighbourhoods that one can fondly recall from across the world, where art is an integral part of life, architecture, nature and placemaking.



Spire by Anish Kapoor. | Photo Credit: special arrangement

If one compared projects, where art was integrated as part of the enterprise for development with those where it was absent, one would clearly observe strong identity formation, community diversity, high social and cultural quotients, better productivity and wellness, and overall strong economic indicators for the long-term in the former than the latter.

Investing in art is therefore like investing in a long-term value creation, which helps transform the health and wellness of those who live, work, learn and play around them.

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