



556 N.M.JOSHI MARG BYCULLA WEST
MUMBAI 400 011 INDIA

T +91 22 55 777 560/61/62/64 F +91 22 23 012973
mail@studiomumbai.com www.studiomumbai.com

Bibliography

Belavali House

Belavali, Maharashtra, India
2008

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

House on Pali Hill

Bandra, Maharashtra, India
2008

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Research Center

Pune, Maharashtra, India
2008

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Trinity Guest House

Kochin, Kerala, India
2008

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Utsav House

Satirje, Maharashtra, India
2008

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Leti 360 Resort

Leti, Uttaranchal, India
2007

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Palmyra House

Nandgaon, Maharashtra, India
2007

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Bungalow 8

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

2006

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Tara House

Kashid, Maharashtra, India

2005

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Kapadia House

Satirje, Maharashtra, India

2003

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain

Reading Room

Nagaon, Maharashtra, India

2003

Principal Architect: Bijoy Jain



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Curriculum Vitae

Bijoy Jain was born in Mumbai, India in 1965. He received his M. Arch from Washington University in St. Louis, USA in 1990. He worked at Richard Meier and Partners in Los Angeles from 1989 to 1991, and formed Bijoy Jain + Associates in 1996 in Mumbai. Studio Mumbai was founded in 2005. The studio's pursuit is to use the Indian landscape as a resource; to create spaces formed by local climatic conditions, materials and technologies. Recent works include private residences, an urban community space, biotech research centre and a retreat in the backwaters of south India.



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Studio Mumbai

Born in Mumbai in 1965, Bijoy Jain studied abroad, in St Louis in the US, and worked for several years in Los Angeles. But he never really left India. "I decided to come back in 1995. I feel at home here, I know the traditions, the place." Some might say his decision was prompted by opportunism: the economy was and is growing at an exponential rate, as are the numbers of building sites. In India, though, something like a short circuit has also occurred between reality and expected roles: the staffs of call centers imitate British accents, while innumerable engineers work on outsourced master projects emailed the next day to the West. Their professionalism is certainly excellent, but without roots such designs are bound to be photocopies. The bottom line is that with growth rates rising on average by nine per cent per year, the only thing that really matters is speed. "In this country they give you a week to finish a project; ten days later they are already building it. This is a slight exaggeration of course, but I realized straight away that a fine set of drawings is not enough to obtain the quality which I consider to be indispensable. Instead, I need to oversee the building site: to explain to clients and workers how things had to be done."

The search for the so-called enlightened client is thus interwoven with a strategy of resistance to the way things are, which is what drove Bijoy Jain to create "a sort of human infrastructure". He gathered together a task force of bricklayers, stonemasons and carpenters: skilled craftsmen with whom he designs and builds his own works directly. With a two-fold result: he shelters behind their proven experience while recapturing local material and traditions. As the architect's alter ego, his craftsmen are the only ones capable of keeping the original project intact all the way through: by taking all the time they need. They are well aware that it is not only about building a holiday home, but also about interpreting the spirit of the place; of coming in terms with materials, but also with the presence of nature through the succession of seasons and monsoons. These people have no formal education to be sure, but they relate to an anonymous architecture which Bijoy Jain recognizes as being just as important as the work of the celebrated Geoffrey Bawa. Among them is also a highly skilled stonemason aged 76.

The Indian architect's stance, albeit not overtly, is in fact critical of the world around him. "Often, when I drive through the city, I realize how little I can do as an architect. For that matter, the government is more interested in creating infrastructure than landscape: there are other priorities." It is, however, the only city that has so far enabled him not to stoop to compromises. When asked if he's afraid of shutting himself inside projects that are of high quality but incapable of improving society and the urban landscape, his answer is that the only way of practicing architecture he knows is by exercising the strictest control over each and every part of it. But now that he is designing a large centre for a pharmaceutical company, Bijoy Jain reflects daily on how to proceed. It is certainly going to be a big change of scale, but he is determined to be the one who dictates its conditions and aspects.

Excerpt from article by Laura Bossi | Domus #914