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The art of making a home

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In an ideal world, every individual would have a home; whether a shoebox or a mansion, 'home' is an intangible feeling of dignity and peace of mind. The Giant Dolls' House project truly does hit home. Café has the details

If Dr Catja de Haas ran the world,

every human being would have a house. Deeply moved by the idea of a home and community for all, the architect founded the Giant Dolls House Project, a collaborative art installation recently showcased at the Museum of Goa (MOG).

Dr Haas's London-based architectural practice looks at architecture on all scales: from buildings to pieces of furniture, art installations, urban plans, ideas and concepts. She believes that good architecture is when the project is considered in its context and the right questions are asked to come to a balanced proposal that makes the world a better place for everybody. A part of the proceeds from her practice go towards funding the Giant Dolls' House project she started in 2014.

The international non-profit collaborative arts project seeks to engage local communities and has raised money for organisations that shelter the homeless in Britain. The aim of the project is to make people aware of the importance of a home and community for all and to celebrate a united diversity.

Since its inception the Giant Dolls' House project has travelled to Dubai, North Carolina, Bournemouth and has been part of the London Festival of Architecture for four consecutive years. The installations created can be used as conversation pieces, to tell stories, or just to look at. Each installation is dependent on the different collaborators and demonstrates the diversity of the groups involved in the project. Dr Haas feels the dolls' house can be used to explore ideas of identity, both shared as well as personal, and that the dolls' house project is always a good reflection of the different people who have contributed.

In Goa, workshops with over 400 people from all walks of life were held to design and tell their stories of what Goa means to them through over 200 shoeboxes. Cutting across divisions of age, class, caste, race, gender etc, the shoebox became the uniting factor as the common medium of expression. Individual ideas, perceptions and love for Goa with the accompanying challenges facing it were all explored. Linked by ladders, ramps and ropes, the shoeboxes were attached on a giant black canvas. On opening night at MOG, Rochelle De Silva wove together the different stories into a larger narrative while eminent locals were invited to share their experience of constructing in Goa. Architect Hyacinth Pinto spoke of her practice in building with mud and rammed earth; Ricardo Rebello shared his vision of on creating a green and sustainable building in the city of Panjim while photographer David De Souza explained the nuances of his 'invisible' house - a dream he realised with his wife Charmayne in Goa.

Bringing these individual experiences and stories together along with the actual designed shoeboxes. The Giant Dolls' House project makes for a thought-provoking exploration of the idea of home. In Goa, it was aptly hosted by MOG, committed to taking contemporary arts to broader audiences.

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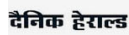
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