

A lantern in the field

Under the verandah, with the nature
Nestled in a farm, away from the city
This new home: not just a new address
A celebration of the slow life

An hour drive from the city, the busy streets are slowly left behind. Tall buildings and taller billboards, which line the roads are now replaced by huge trees. A deviation from the main highway and you find yourself in an expansive large field. Not too far away, you catch a glimpse of a sloping roof adorning the horizon. You are eager to see this building, sprouting out from the ground, almost in between nothingness. You drive closer, and sitting amidst a farm, you see this house. You are instantly taken aback to a village life, but this house seems to have something strikingly different: a modern sensibility.

It's late afternoon when you reach and the scorching summer sun makes you long to enter the house. Three to four steps and your feet suddenly sigh a sense of relief. A sudden dip in temperature and you already feel relaxed. The image of walking into a temple suddenly flashes. The memories associated with touch are far stronger than you would imagine. The main door leads you to an internal corridor which opens into a courtyard. Amidst the greens in the courtyard, you find an idol of Lord Krishna, in brass. The idol, in scale, is quite small for the courtyard, but its aura rules the entire space.

A walk around this house, reminds you of being in a museum, each space has been curated to perfection by the mother of the house. The architect was quick to understand the mother's skill to add life to spaces. The design was thereby a product of providing her the blank canvas to unleash her art. The blank canvas in itself is a piece of art. Each material and process adds to this narrative of the building as an art piece.

The decision to conceive the built as a load-bearing structure was not coincidental. It was a method of articulating the temperament of the users. As a family that celebrated intricacies, it only seemed fair for the built to be left bare, without the ornamentation or layering that plaster or paint provides. The house without the roof imitates a tree, growing from the ground: the steps to the verandah like the roots extending from the ground to meet the trunk.

Each of the spaces have been envisioned both as a stage as well as a pause point. You could be lounging in the living area watching the rain stage its act or you could aimlessly stare at the courtyard, bringing in the outside. As you walk around the house, you cannot ignore the tactile nature of the design. You want to touch each wall, each door and each window sill calls you to sit by. In short the house is an embodiment of a slow life and its celebration.

The outside cannot be described distinctly since every plant, ever shrub has been thoughtfully planted. The first plant on the site, a Champa, was planted while the design was still being conceptualized on the architect's table. It was placed right outside the bedroom window, envisioning waking up every morning to see the plant bloom.

The site sprawling over an acre also houses an office space for the father as well as two rooms for the staff to reside. Each of these spaces are an extension of the house in both thought and materiality. The

exposed brick character is followed in both spaces and adapted accordingly to its function. These three builds line the site on its edges, safeguarding the inner plant sanctuary.

It is late evening when you finish the visit and get back to the city. As you drive away, the house has been lit and you cannot stop comparing it to a lantern: one visually as well as metaphorically lighting up the field