

Clips from Pierre-Jean Giloux's 'Invisible Cities' at Pepper House • Solang & the artist © Giloux P J

ARTY SOUL, ARCHITECTURAL MIND

• Deena Theresa

Pierre-Jean Giloux's heart and soul might be that of an artist, but his mind is ruled by an architect. Obsessed with construction and discovering solutions, one could say that Pierre's mind yearns and lives. Rooted in future. The French artist-in-residence with the Kochi-Muziris Biennale has exhibited 'Invisible Cities', a video installation interspersed with computer-generated and real images, forming an almost utopian universe. The video works will be on display at the Pepper House, Fort Kochi, until April 11, and are presented by Alliance Francaise in Thiruvananthapuram along with the Embassy of France and the Institut Francais, in association with the Kochi Biennale Foundation.

The installation comprises four videos on Japan, where the artist spent a lot of time. Titled 'Shrinking Cities', 'Metabolism', 'Japan Principle' and 'Stations', the works are an ode to the urban spaces and architecture in the country. "In the first video, I start with reality and then move on to creative fiction. The concept lies in the fact that a majority of Japan's population is growing older—a depopulated Japan. People

are having fewer children now. And in 'Shrinking Cities', you have abandoned buildings. There's no one to live in them. The video is filmed in a train and takes the viewer from Tokyo, a cityscape with activity, to Osaka, wherein the impression of ghost-like buildings is given," Pierre explains.

'Japan Principle' is primarily an aerial video where Pierre revisits the architectural principle of the shoji (sliding door). One of the founders of the Metabolism movement, Japanese artist Kisho Kurokawa works have been rather a strong influence in Pierre's 'Invisible Cities'. "Architecture and sketches in the 60s were re-adapted with new technology and produced to picture a contemporary Tokyo," says Pierre.

During his sojourn in India, Pierre has researched and unravelled biometric architectures in Kerala and other parts of India. "I was at IIM, Ahmedabad, to study architect Bal Krishna Doshi's architecture. I've shot a few videos, taken photographs and even recorded natural sounds such as that of birds singing, to suffice as a background score for my upcoming footages. The work will be an amalgamation of reality and fiction," the artist quips.

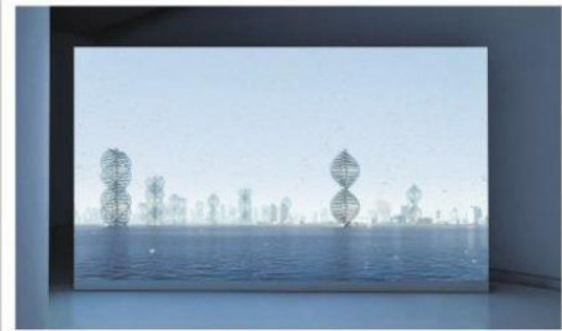
A man of the future, Pierre stresses on green architecture incorporated with urban finesse.

"There are various possibilities to assimilate vegetation with architecture. In countries like India where the weather is hot and humid, buildings have been constructed to adapt and be in sync with the climate. I visited Madurai and all I could think of was the kind of structures I can propose to reduce heat. But as an artist, I can solely make propositions," he says.

How was his experience shooting in India? "It was rather hard. Of course, I had help from the Biennale and Alliance Trivandrum, but I had to seek permissions to shoot in several places. Eventually, the current installation on display and the one I'm about to produce will be highly contrasting as India has a different aesthetic—I found the buildings more eclectic than urban," Pierre says.

For a man in love with architecture, one can't fathom why Pierre chose to be an artist. He laughs and talks about a professor who guided him.

"He told me that the profession would be exciting initially but is likely to lose creativity. Also, to construct the kind of buildings according to my aesthetic, I would have to be among the top 10 architects in the world. My professor told me that I would have more freedom if I were to be an artist who talks about architecture," Pierre smiles.



French artist Pierre-Jean Giloux's video installation titled 'Invisible Cities' is an ode to Japan's urban spaces and structures

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