

Mud Play

Inscape Insider Stanzin Phuntsog, Samyuktha

It is said that a wide range of tangible and intangible forces behind architecture draws its spirit and tactility from the natural environment. Mud, the most adaptable and astonishing material for construction has inspired and moulded numerous marvels across our planet in miraculous forms. The harmony of living in a mud abode imbibes an opulence of well-being and refreshing vein to its inhabitants.

This is the story of two unique self-taught nomads behind the indigenous studio Earth Building. Stanzin Phuntsog and Samyuktha, hailing from Ladakh and Coimbatore, have explored and carved an exciting niche in the craft of mud architecture and its practices in and across India in stirring formats and sustainable drives. They design and execute natural homes, welcoming comfortable living in the modern era. Literally from two ends of India, their stories and travel have enthused them to envision innovative structures that are functionally sound and adaptable.



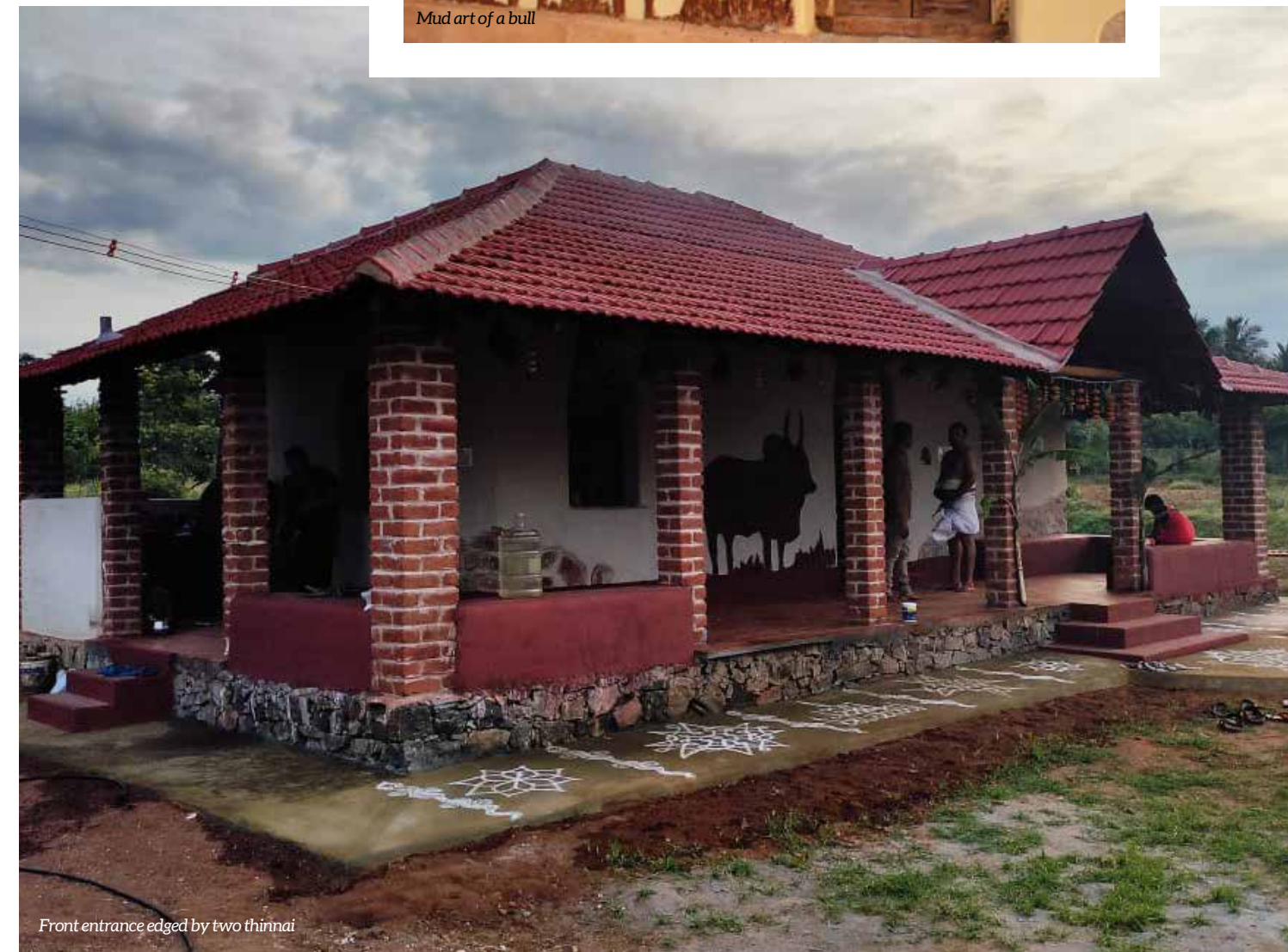
Adobe Farmhouse

Odaiyakulam, Pollachi, Tamilnadu, India

A simple sloped roof studio cottage of cob, adobe (sun-dried bricks) and stone masonry infused to unravel locally sourced mud spaces in harmony. The foundation is bounded by random rubble masonry and the plinth is dabbled with dry stone masonry with the help of local artisans. A layer of lime and surkhi crete envelopes the coping. The frontage opens to two 'thinai' edged on either side of the entrance portico. The interior spaces comprise a large room attached with a bathroom and open to an outdoor kitchen with a traditional fire stove and cob oven. Niches and load-bearing lintel arches



Mud art of a bull



Front entrance edged by two thinai



Simple and elegant interior spaces



Slabs pierced into the adobe walls

are sculpted with adobe and mud mortar and terracotta tiles are laid on the floor. The windows and doors were reclaimed from old houses and Kadappa stone was topped on the walls bringing together and acting as a barrier between mud and wood for termite protection. The hipped roof is composed of palm wood rafters plated by reused Mangalore tiles. Lime plastering was carried out for both interior and exterior, and tadelakht plastering for the bathroom and lime surkhi plaster for the external walls.

Cob Car

Leh, Ladakh, India

Something peculiarly striking and fascinating is the perception of an unused car reinvigorated as a cottage. This uniquely low-cost structure was built entirely using local resources and recycled materials. It was a student project completed in two months from an alternative school SECMOL in Ladakh, aiming to reuse a car's body as half of the structure and



An innovative idea to turn a car into a home

Earth Bag Cottage

Talavali, Maharashtra, India

An earthbag round abode with interior décor explored in cob and polished mud with modern concealed lighting facilities. A cob bed stands apart in its creativity with a headboard, along with other furniture such as a cob couch and shelves knitted in wattle and daub. These cob elements were finished with burnished lime clay plaster and the finishes were rendered using linseed oil and beeswax polish. To add an artistic character addition of sculpted trees, nests and birds enliven the



Experience the car and home in unity



Ladder stepping down into the living spaces

the rest scoops into an underground space for escaping from the summer heat. Major fragments of the structure were sculpted using cob (clay, sand and straw) as the key ingredient and the adobe finished in a rough texture using clay cow dung, sand and apricot pulp. Materials such as wood, glass, bottles and tyres were also reused to envision this intriguing little project.



Sculptural works in the interior decor



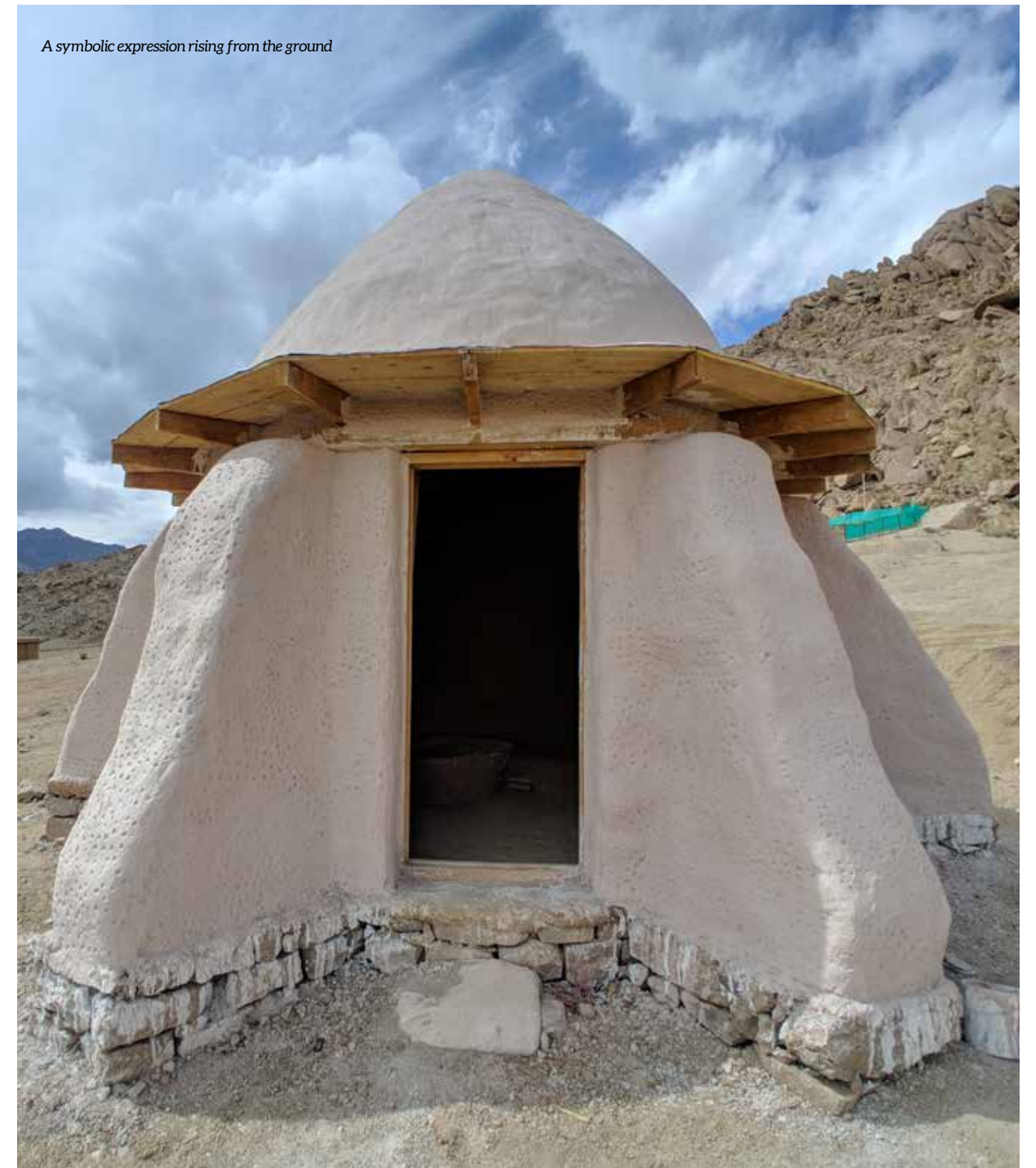


A mud bed to sleep into serenity

Himalayan Institute of Alternatives Dome

Ladakh, India

A small mount with buttressing features is an earthbag home built in HIAL. For a location of dry and low rainfall, an exposed dome sounds suitable and favourable. Gauging 11 ft diameter and 15 ft height stacked and supported by four buttresses, where



A symbolic expression rising from the ground

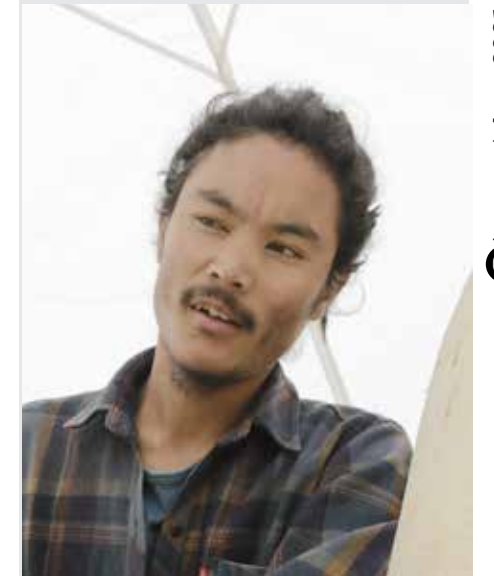


ambience. To increase the stickiness of the mud, the sculptures in cob blended additives of kadukkai, jaggery and wheat paste. A few nests were sculpted using sheep wool and mud. The wool nests integrated woven lamp fixtures and concealed lighting. Mud plastered interiors, lime plastered exteriors and techniques in the bathroom were used as final touches.

Arched openings into the buttressed dome



two makes the welcoming entrance. The exterior is finished with lime plaster and the interior is dabbed using earthen plaster. The design of eaves all about the dome ensures protection for the openings from rain and scorching sun in summer.



STANZIN PHUNTSOG



SAMYUKTHA

EARTH BUILDING STUDIO

Earth Building is an eco-endeavour to entwine the natural building techniques to sculpt, carve, craft and reuse from time immemorial to an innovative visualization. The young architecture quirks Stanzin Phuntsog and Samyuktha hailing from the north and south of India brought an indigenous blend of using mud as their main construction ingredient to envision spaces that breathe and bloom. The expanding and evolving team adheres to their core motto to keep designs eco-friendly, aesthetic, functional, unusual and thermally comfortable. The design team looks forward to reviving ancestral knowledge and procedures of building to use it to the best of their abilities in a contemporary fashion.