

# MAN OF FLOWERS

THE INTERNATIONAL FLORAL DESIGNER TOMAS DE BRUYNE TALKS ABOUT HIS RECENT FLORAL ART INSTALLATION, INDIAN ARTISTS AND CHALLENGES HE FACED WHILE WORKING IN INDIA

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**I**n India, the art of arranging flowers has played an important part in embellishing the environment of any public or private ceremonies. Be it beautifying the ambience and the décor, or showering the newlyweds with petals, flowers are the first choice for the hosts as well as for the designers. Adding to the marvellous list of experimenting and decorating the places with flowers is acclaimed international floral designer Tomas De Bruyne's floral utopia at Phoenix Marketcity in Kurla, which he has created along with over 500 domestic artists.

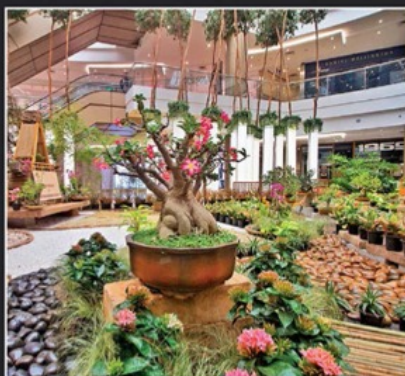
To turn the place into a visual spectacle, Tomas has used over five lakhs flowers and 1,000 plants. He has also used another 30,000 flowers to raise a magnificent 30 feet Tree of Prosperity. "Sometimes, people go only for numbers and forget the gestalt and magic of the visual impact," says the Belgium-based floral designer who doesn't believe in counting the flowers he uses for a design, but for this project, it was the curiosity among others that led to the counting.

In love with flowers, Tomas believes that he did not choose to be a floral designer. Instead, it was the floral designing that chose him. A creative person at heart, flowers are his medium to create something new. "I love feeling, touch-

ing, smelling and seeing flowers. It is a magic that comes to my hand," muses the designer. Over the decades in his journey, Tomas has come to believe that flowers are an important element to connect with people. "I have learnt that everything is connected in life. Flowers and nature are an important element to connect with people," he adds.

Known as a poet among the floral event designers, Tomas' original style and personal urge for everything that is beautiful make his creations extraordinary. Capable of creating magical floral installations, Tomas plays with space and design while combining the functionality with aesthetics in his artwork. "I focus on the approach and personality of the event and play accordingly with the right elements. My customized combination of elements makes my work different, unique and personal to my clients," explains the artist. Along with being a floral designer, Tomas has also authored over 15 books and has won multiple international awards.

Blending unseen creativity with functionality and perfect execution, Tomas' designs mostly become the signature stamp of class, finesse and unbridled passion for perfection. Ask about the key behind his exceptional work, he insists, "I just stick to what I am good at and that is communicating through flowers by making a concept more complete." While the designer is largely known for doing multiple large-scale floral installations, he is also a



senior advisor for the Olympic games in Beijing. Although Tomas believes in creating designs within the customers' commercial framework, it has to have flowers. "If clients want something other than flowers, I am happy to introduce them to people who do not work with florals and are better than me for the job. For me, it has to be with florals because I am good at it," he explains.

It is no doubt that many foreign artists get hooked to India after

displaying their work even once as it provides them with a platform to experiment with their art. Talking about his latest experience in the city while working with Indian artists, the designer feels overwhelmed with the art and craft of India. "I have a deep and huge respect for India as the art and crafts here is extremely prolific. The art and craft festivals in India are on a much higher scale than anywhere else. I hope an opportunity will rise to work with such Indian artists in the future," elucidates Tomas and shares that a local paper artist created an amazing installation with an element as simple as paper, which he kept looking at for 15 minutes. "It was beautiful and minuscule, I have deep respect for him."

When asked about any chal-

lenging aspect of working in the city, Tomas first praises the country as "No country on the globe as India," and rues that time management is a challenge here.

"I had to adapt myself to the local mindset and multiple times I went in a *jugaad*-mode. Deadlines are easily moved but unfortunately only forward." Sharing one of the incidents, Tomas recalls that a client asked him to finish a task at 5 pm but on hearing that a prominent person was coming at 11 am he shifted the deadline 6 hours earlier. "Planned work for 150 people at 6 hours in the pipeline, you can imagine what that brought in. But as said, everything is possible in India with the right mindset," concludes the designer.

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International floral designer artist Tomas De Bruyne