

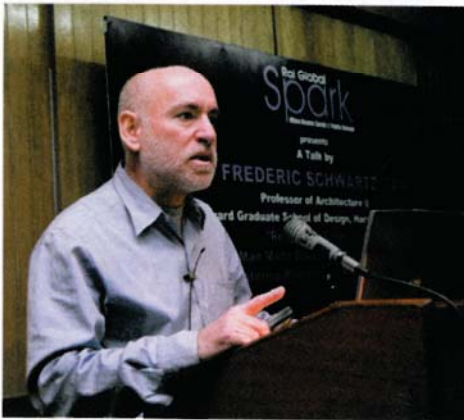
In Town

Frederic Schwartz, professor of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and founder of the THINK team that collaborated on the design of the internationally acclaimed World Cultural Center at Ground Zero, visited three Indian cities to address and interact with architects from 25 March-April 8. Schwartz is better known as the man who dared the city (New York) to think again.

Hosted by Rai Foundation under its Rai Global Spark programme, Schwartz spoke on 'Rebuilding cities after natural or man made disasters: Specific areas of post Katrina planning for New Orleans' at public domains in Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai.

Three of Schwartz's projects are memorials for 9/11 victims. One is called The Rising, New York; the other, Portrait of Hoboken, New Jersey and the third, Empty Sky, New Jersey

THE RISING: Kensico Dam Park, Westchester County, New York. Westchester County lost 109 people on 9/11. 'The Rising' draws the community together in an unbroken circle of 109 representative engraved granite stone slabs at its base. From here 109 intertwined stainless steel rods soar 80 ft up. The rods are bound literally (like a DNA-helix) and symbolically to exemplify the community's strength. The reflective quality of the stainless steel changes constantly in daylight.



KALYAN CHAKRAVORTY

PORTRAIT OF HOBOKEN: Pier A Park, Hoboken, New Jersey. On September 11, 2001 the community of Hoboken, New Jersey lost 57 loved ones. The sculpture frames two communities (Hoboken and Lower Manhattan) linked by the river. An open-air, stainless steel frame (45x90 ft) supports cable-hung ramps and a continuous, stainless steel handrail is engraved with names of Hoboken's departed. The frame captures a constantly changing view. As the community participates and populates the frame, they create a dramatic and constantly changing portrait.



As a witness to the 9/11 tragedy from his apartment 10 blocks away and having to cope with the towers' absence day after day from his desk, Schwartz pinned down failings in the governmental systems and began a debate to create public awareness. On a more abstract plane he pointed out that such events are important junctures in history to introspect and ask some

fundamental questions: How do architects act as urban caretakers during times of chaos, crisis, exodus and change? Why and who do we rebuild for? In his interactions he urged the audience to engage 'universities in public-private ventures and action-oriented programmes for our decaying inner cities and suburban rings'.

For Schwartz, visiting Lutyen's Delhi and

Corbusier's Chandigarh—the works of his academic idols—was like a 'pilgrimage'.

Schwartz has won numerous international and national competitions including the new Staten Island Ferry, Fortune World Tower, Shanghai; but the ones that emerge most poignant in their concepts are the three from the September 11 Memorial Competitions.



**DT MET UP WITH SCHWARTZ;
EXCERPTS FROM THE TALK:**

"From the beginning, I have seen the process of rebuilding Ground Zero (left) as an opportunity to redefine and re-think our cities to reassert the democratic values taught by our parents—the values of truth and honesty, of community and neighbourhood, and of giving instead of taking—values that the terrorists attacked in our country."

"Who owns this sacred ground and who are we rebuilding it for?"

"Do we rebuild for the children of my friend Paula whose husband drove their three boys to their first day of school and never came home?"

"Do we rebuild for my dear friend Phyllis, a mother who lost her son?"

"Are we rebuilding 10 million sq ft of commercial office space for multi-billion dollar real estate moghuls?"



EMPTY SKY: Liberty State Park, New Jersey. 'Empty Sky' honours the memory of 742 people who died here. The names are randomly engraved on two (30x200 ft) long brushed stainless steel walls separated by a 9 ft x 11 inch-wide paved pathway. Dimensions of each wall are proportional to the Twin Towers. The twin walls divide the mound that directs the sightline to the empty sky above Ground Zero—peeling back the earth to reveal a powerful perspective. In a cycle of strength and renewal, blossoming cherry trees distinctly reflect the seasons. Empty Sky's strength lies in its simplicity and ability to resonate as it honours not only those lost but also New Jersey's witnesses, survivors and volunteers.