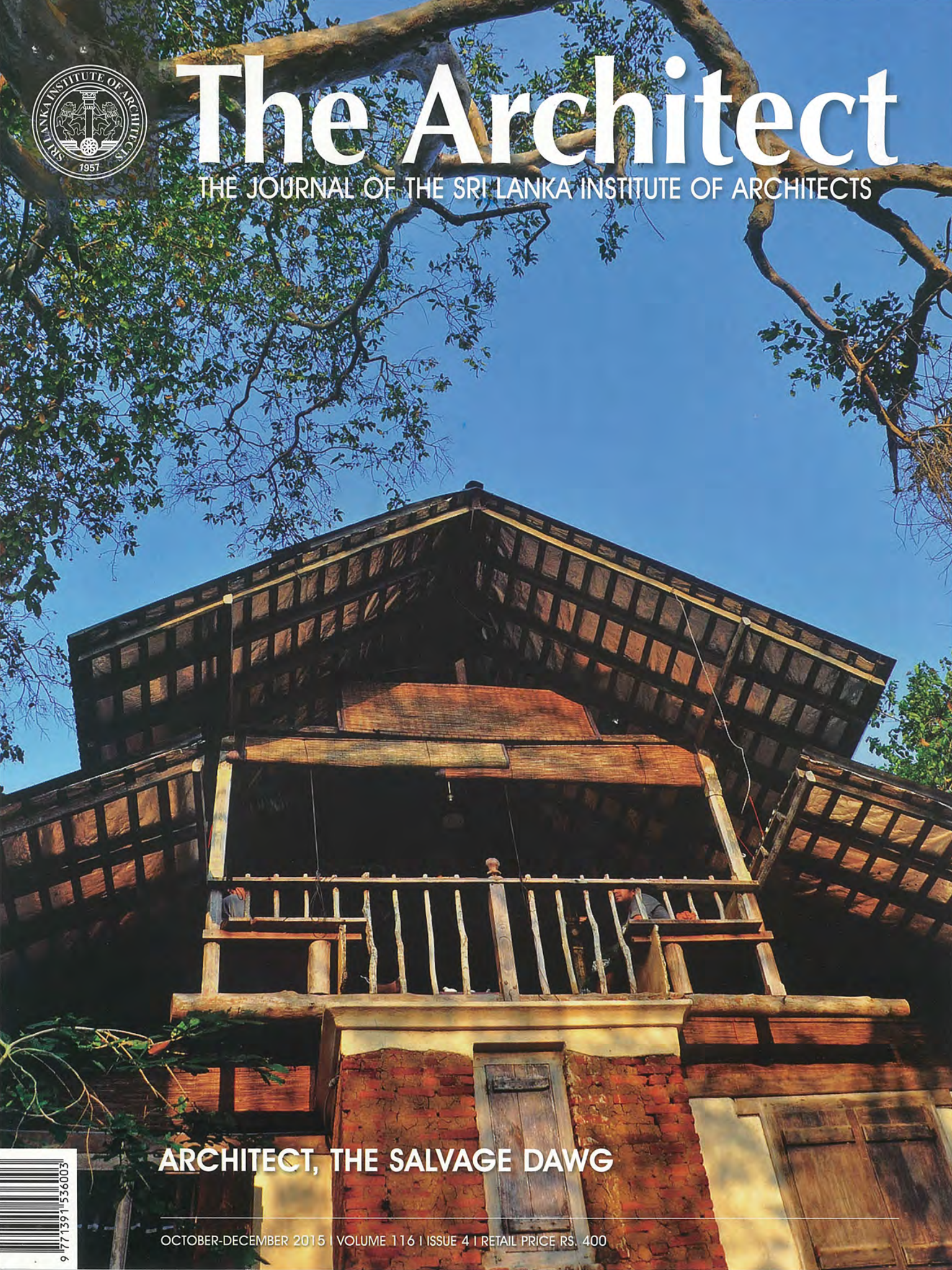




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The Architectural Heritage of Sri Lanka

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Dominic Sansoni (Photographer)

A book that launched a thousand stories

BY Khadija Zoeb



Appreciating architecture is one thing, but recording it over the course of 30 years through travels and drawings is something that only world-renowned architect Anjalendran would do.

Compiled as a collection of over 100 meticulously measured and drawn buildings, gardens and furniture of Sri Lanka, the book (titled *The Architectural Heritage of Sri Lanka – Measured Drawings from the Anjalendran Studio*) was officially launched at Barefoot in Colombo, on 8 August. Attended by over 300 guests, the event began with a book signing by the three people who made this publication possible – architect and writer David Robson, photographer Dominic Sansoni and Anjalendran himself.

The book consists of a wide selection of temples, *kovils*, churches, mosques, *ambalamas*, houses, landscapes, furniture and also a few of Anjalendran's own projects.

Amidst fellowship and refreshments at the launch, it was indeed a pleasant surprise to discover drawings of different generations of architects and students have been included in the book. The publication of their drawings

would have been a mere dream before the book was conceived.

Taking a much-needed break from the seemingly never-ending line of people waiting to get their copy autographed, David Robson gave a brief introduction to the book, while Anjalendran thanked the Talisman publishing team in Singapore and other individuals who made the book a reality. When asked about the rationale behind the selection of buildings for the book, he replied: "Any building or space that makes me go 'hmmm' is worth recording."

The book is indeed a one of a kind masterpiece, and is perhaps the only record of many cherished architectural entities that have now disappeared, fallen apart or been ill-modified. As Anjalendran observed: "We hope the book will help reverse this trend."

The launch was a great success, having sold over 350 copies in one night. This came as no surprise, for as Michael Ondaatje aptly notes in the foreword, *The Architectural Heritage of Sri Lanka* can be thought of as "an alternate history of our country – its mythology, its art, its buildings, its gardens and numerous other aspects of its culture."

PHOTOGRAPHY Sebastian Posinger



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