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Rave after rave: elrow debuts in Mumbai



📷 psychedelic themed One of the psychedelic themed parties by elrow that have a minimum of 6,00,000 people at any standalone event

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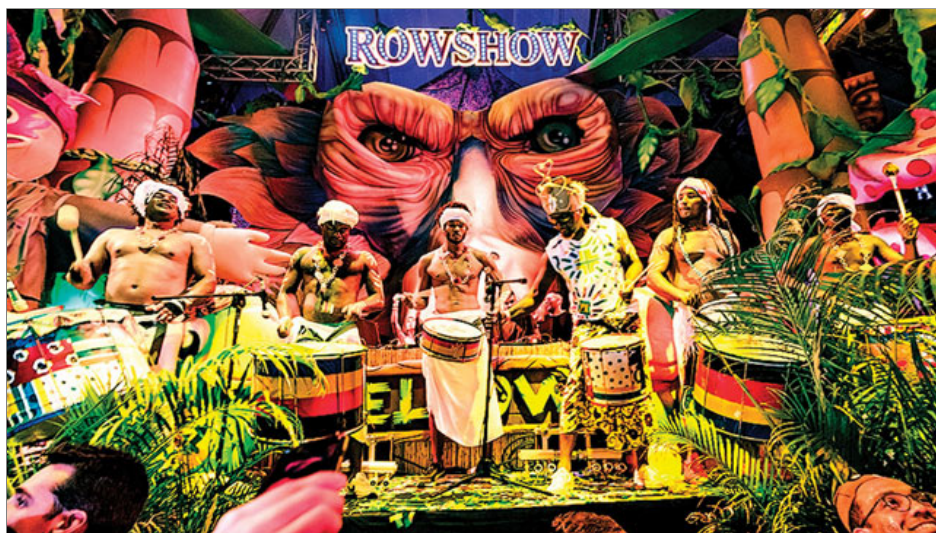
Yoshita Rao

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Saturday nights in Maximum City are rarely uneventful, but March 16 saw the debut of a globetrotting party at MMRDA grounds in Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai. The party, which started at 2 in the afternoon, had animal characters dressed up on stilts mingling, taking selfies with the crowd and a dimly-lit stage with DJs and performers dressed as 'jungle folk', to celebrate the theme: Brazilian carnival. Though previous editions of this

eight-hour long party called 'elrow' – an entertainment company founded by sixth-generation Cruz and Juan Arnau a hedonistic duo from Barcelona – featured enormous fly agaric mushrooms, with their red caps and white polka-dot exteriors hanging from the ceiling, along with mammoth-sized, artificial vegetation and colourful buntings, among a plethora of streamers. A cross between a dream and a music festival, these parties have unconventional themes like flamboyant pool parties with inflatables as giveaways; comic books come to life with characters on stilts; and psychedelic parties with zany and trippy symbols.

Elrow's website says their story began in the 1870s and took 150 years to arrive at the finished product. "The [Arnau] family had run casinos, restaurants, nightclubs and cabarets for many decades [in Barcelona]," lists Vicenc Marti, President of elrow, in an emailed interview. Cut to May 2008, when the 'junior' Arnau siblings (named after their ancestors), bought a club in downtown Barcelona, called Row, and christened it Row14. "This was because it was situated 14kms from Barcelona centre," says Cruz Arnau, owner of elrow. Row14 gave way to the name 'elrow', which, the owners add, was "easier to remember". "We are a family that has followed the history of electronic music and have lived and enjoyed it from generation to generation," says the 34-year-old, who thought the party scene needed changing. "The night started to become boring, dark and linear and people wanted to be a part of something new." What started out as a "small party in Barcelona" with dressed up crew and ceremonious showers of confetti, became a "polyhedral and poetic experience". The vivid imagery and performances, she adds is now "a remix of several worlds." After their hometown of Barcelona, elrow moved to Bristol, Shanghai to Cape Town, New York and now Mumbai.



(A traditional Brazilian drum

performance)

Life of the party

The Brazilian Carnival-inspired Mumbai party, like most elrow parties, was the fruit of six months of ideating and planning, says Marketing Director, Matthew Hoag. "An elrow show has several elements – production to animation, marketing, music, and therefore we have to ensure that all the elements are synchronised," he adds. "Hippy drinks" and finger food flowing out of food trucks are what awaits guests.

Held inside an air conditioned hangar, the Mumbai party saw performances by an international artist line-up, including DJs Marc Maya, Toni Varga and George Privatti, interspersed with the desi few like DJs Blurry Slur, Anish Sood and Ana Lilia. "We wanted to ensure that elrow's India party is equally exciting with an experience that forges its own identity," says Kunal Khambhati, Head, Live Events & IP, BookMyShow, who helped develop the concept-theme of elrow in India.

When asked about planning of these large-scale jamborees, Marti adds, "We work in a manner similar to the fashion industry." With 14 themed parties, and an average of four sets per theme, Marti says they work on getting the sets to the event a couple of weeks ahead of time. There are also multiple concurrent events happening in different parts of the planet. "Last week, we held parties in New York, Madrid, Rotterdam, Barcelona and Lisbon

simultaneously,” he says. To add to the multitude of events, where themes are not allowed to be replicated, co-owner and CEO, Juan, says, “Our creative team is inspired by various things and there is an entire creative process before we come out with a new theme.”

logistics talk

With nearly 150 events in 30 countries, Hoag estimates the employee headcount in the Barcelona headquarters to be 120, and more employees in their two regional offices at New York and Shanghai. But Marti begs to differ. “If you count the number of people involved in our shows in a 12-month period, including actors, still walkers, animation, logistics, actors, performers, musicians, that number goes beyond 5,000 [employees].”

But how much does it cost to host such events? Surely it must be an expensive affair. “While we do not disclose individual budgets for parties, it goes well beyond six figures in USD for a single event,” Marti says. With charges of Rs 3,000 per head at the Mumbai event, the company estimated a few hundred thousands to be present. “In 2018, elrow attracted more than 600,000 people in [all of] its standalone events,” he says, adding, “we expect a 30 per cent growth internationally for 2019.”

Party people

The age bar for entry is over 15. However, the admission ticket is sans the cocktails or any alcoholic beverages (permitted for those of the legal drinking age) and food at the event. CCTVs, high-end door frame metal detectors, hand-held metal detectors and trained security teams will also be at service.

MMRDA

Bandra Kurla Complex

Anish Sood

Blurry Slur

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jamboree

jungle folk

Matthew Hoag

Marc Maya

Toni Varga

George Privatti

Ana Lilia

Kunal Khambhati

<http://dnai.in/fZzX>

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