

CONSTRUCTION

It takes about 45 minutes to put the plaster

Decorative plaster: The new finishing trend

BY RITAH MUKASA

With the growing innovations in the construction industry, owning a unique dream home becomes easy each passing day.

Commix decorative plaster is one of the latest finishing concepts that will give your house a classy touch.

Deogracius Mwesige Bakole, a business development engineer with Builder's Yard, Kampala, says decorative plaster gives an architectural beauty on a small budget.

This plaster comes in all colours. All one needs is a special trowel application to pull off a classic texture with a thickness of about 2-3mm.

However, Bakole recommends applying the plaster on cement-based render mix type-II (BS 5262) which is rough finished using either a wooden or plastic float.

"Where the render has to be applied over dissimilar backgrounds such as concrete and block work, it is important that the substrates are sound, free of undue shrinkage, structural, tensile and thermal movements," he explains.

Render is the first coat of plaster applied to a brick or stone surface.

How to mix the plaster

Anil Sankaran, a plaster expert, says the rendered background should be cured with water for two days (3-4 times daily) and allowed to harden before applying



Application takes a short time

commix decorative plaster.

The composition includes white portland cement, marble chips, hydrated lime, non-fading colour pigment and chemical improving agents.

The mixing ratio is 11 litres of water per 50kg bag of plaster covering 13m² at 2.5mm thickness.

Commix decorative plaster has a shelf life of 12 months from the date of production when stored under dry conditions.

Working time is about 45 minutes for curing.

"The background for application should be clean, free of dust deposits, loose mortar, chemical impurities like salts and sulphates," Sankaran says.

He adds that contaminations may adversely affect adhesion and cause variation in colour of the plaster.

It is essential to neutralise the suction of the background before the plaster is applied.

This is done by applying water evenly on the surface.

A short time should elapse to allow the free water to disperse before applying plaster.

"On no account should the plaster be applied over wet backgrounds as this will cause de-bonding and variation in colour of the finished product," he explains.

The commix supplied in 50kg bags must be mixed with water only, in a clean plastic bucket.

To ensure a homogeneous and uniform mix, an electric agitator must be used.

The amount of water to be added is approximately 11 litres per 50kg bag of commix (22% by weight) and should be constant for every batch.

"Add commix to water, turn the contents of the bag carefully adding small amounts at a time into the container," Sankaran recommends. He adds that you then stir frequently and mix each batch for the same period of time.

Once mixed, allow to stand



Decorative plaster on a building



Pulling off the designs

According to Bakole, mixed commix should be applied on to the prepared background to a thickness of approximately 3mm.

Float finish with a plastic float, working over the surface in circular, horizontal or vertical directions to achieve an even and textured decorative plaster.

Depending on the method of plaster application, you can get different designs.

"Commix demonstration team will assist in these procedures upon request," he says.

Bakole says this plaster has to be protected from direct wind, sunlight and rain during

application.

Besides, it should be applied in one continuous operation up to angles, features or in panels to prevent joints showing on the finished surface.

Also, Commix must be stored in a dry place, off the ground and well covered.

"Hard or lumpy material must be rejected. The customers should satisfy themselves by checking with the company that the product is still current at the time of use," he cautions.

The cost

Bakole says they plaster structures at shs25, 000 per square metre.

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PERKS OF DECORATIVE PLASTER

1 "The main advantage of decorative plaster is that it bonds to the rendered wall and cannot peel off," says Anil Sankaran, a plaster expert.

2 The decorative coating is able to breathe and does not trap moisture. The trapping of moisture is the major cause for peeling of the paint.

3 The plaster also lasts as long as the life of the building.

4 It is applied quickly and requires minimal pre-finishing work

compared to the ordinary plaster.

5 The material is cheaper than other types of walls finishing. All that is needed is water to mix the powder and apply.

6 It also protects the walls and rooms from mold and dampness.

7 Apart from giving the room additional textural depth due to its structural fillers this plaster is highly resistant to mechanical stress, extremes of humidity and temperature.