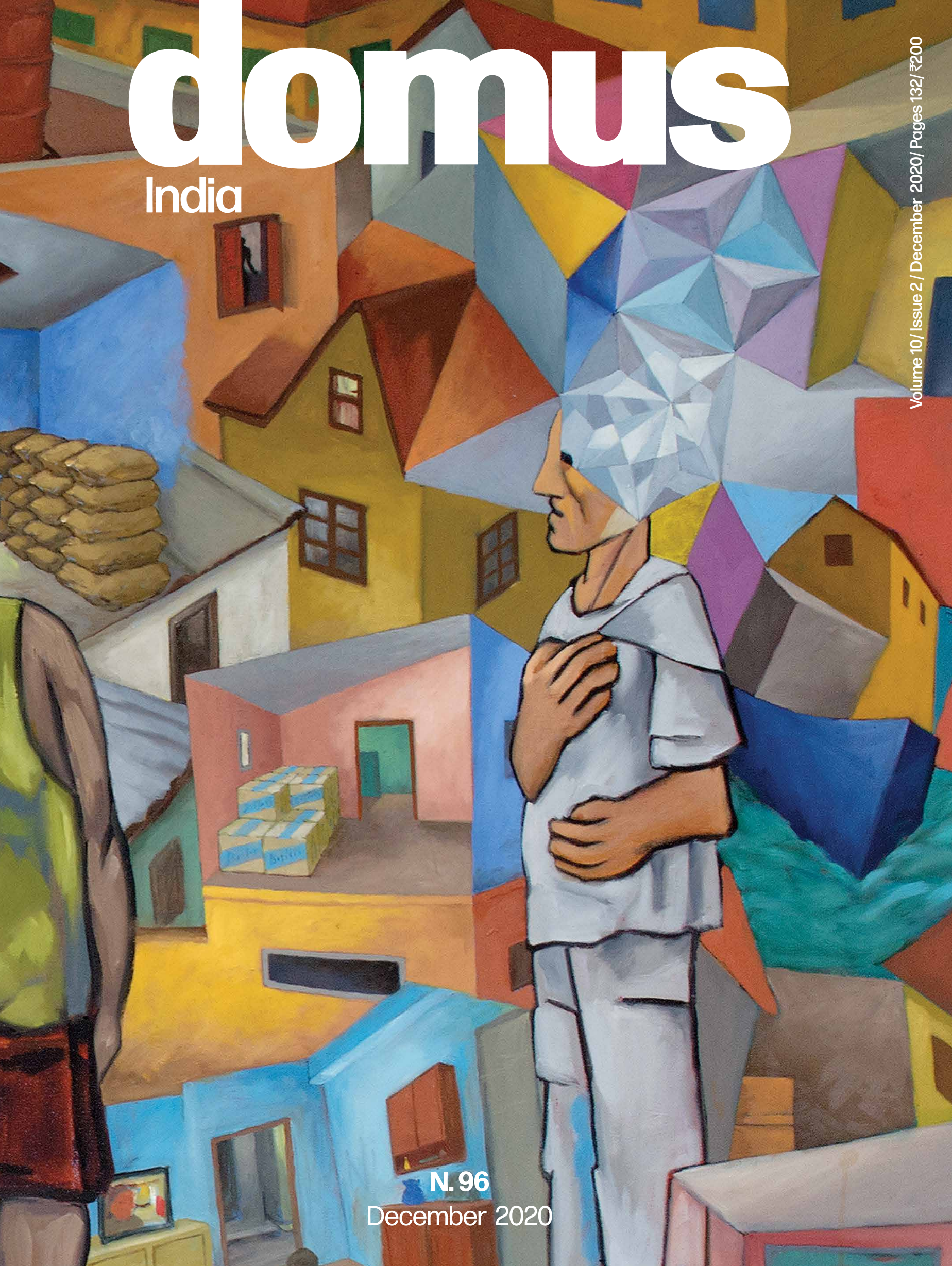


domus

India

Volume 10 / Issue 2 / December 2020 / Pages 132 / ₹200



N. 96

December 2020



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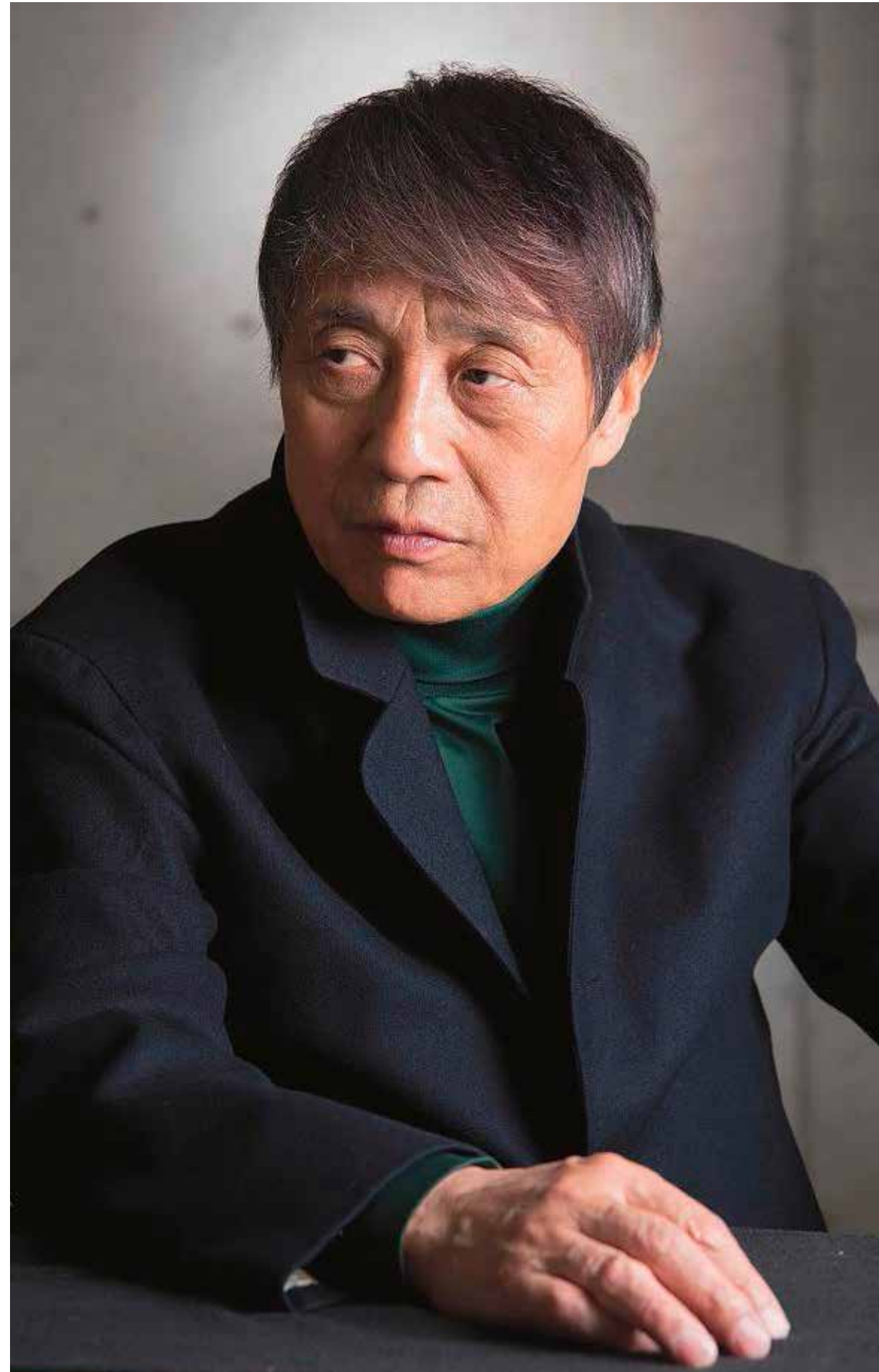
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Welcome Tadao Ando

Maria Giovanna Mazzocchi Bordone



In confirmation of our capacity for renewal by attracting protagonists of architecture and design from around the world, I am delighted to present Tadao Ando as the Domus guest editor for the year 2021. We are honoured to have the Japanese architect become part of our team. His presence reflects at once the global character of our magazine and the centrality of architecture and design in the contemporary debate. Now more than ever, as the Covid-19 pandemic poses questions that are partly new and partly old but forgotten, it is necessary to rethink the ways and forms of community life – how we manage public space, how we work and how we get around.

A few years ago, Domus devised the 10 x 10 x 10 formula (10 guest editors, 1 per year for 10 years, 10 issues each) to present a vision of the future – an invitation to not follow events, but reveal them in advance. I am certain that the lucid world-view Tadao Ando has held throughout his career will be a great opportunity for our readers and the civic society that gathers around our publication to gain knowledge, precisely as it has been with the first three guest editors, Michele De Lucchi, Winy Maas and David Chipperfield, whom I thank heartily.

Born and bred in Japan during the postwar reconstruction, Ando led a varied and poetic life before deciding to become a self-taught architect. Elements include a being a prizefighter and the absorption of his country's traditional way of thinking. Both converge in his idea of architecture, where his highly original sensibility for nature is channelled into visually expressed essentiality inspired by the absoluteness of beauty and the eternity of simple gestures and shapes. This Zen accent characterises Ando's oeuvre, which seeks not sensation or physical experience, but focuses on inner sentiment.

Like Ando, we too are convinced that architecture is able to change society, so we open the doors of our community to him and look forward to his arrival, his thoughts and the path he will invite us to share. Our very best wishes to Tadao Ando.



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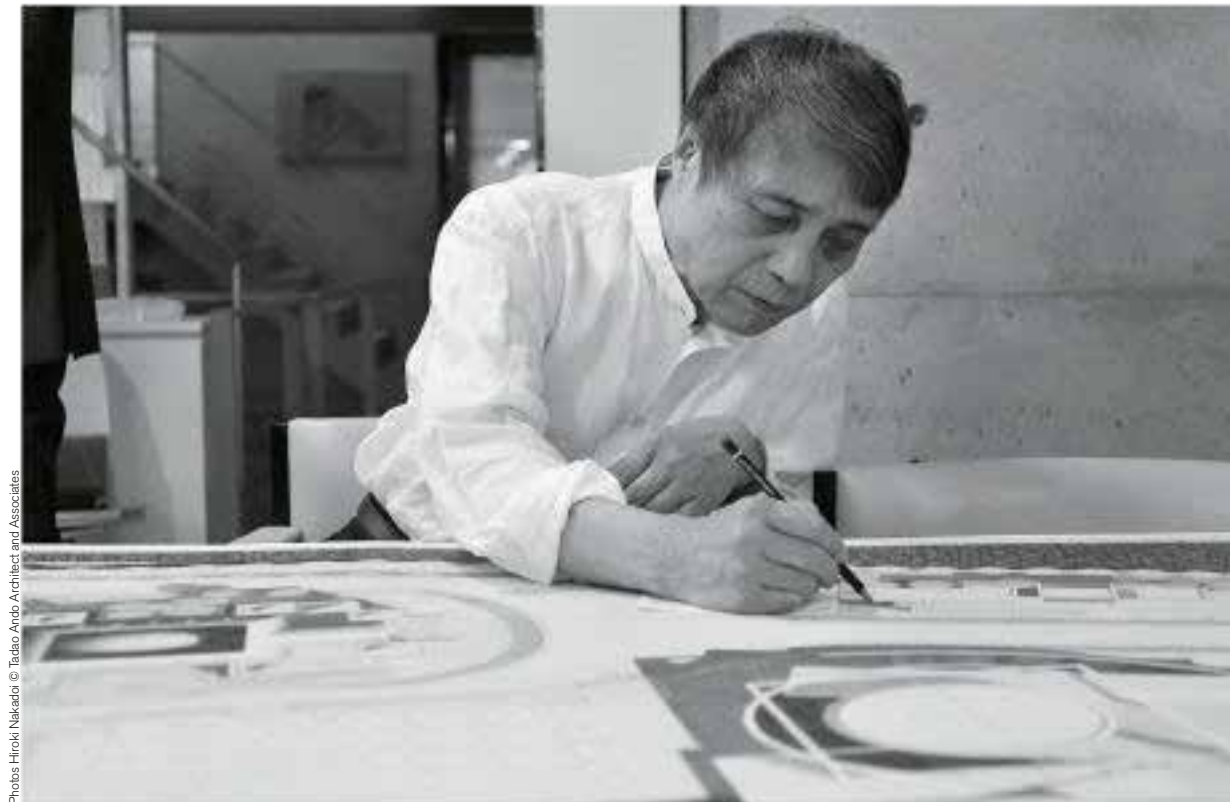
India's No.1 Windows & Doors Brand



As drastic as the changes underway may be, the fact remains that human beings are part of nature. We are ephemeral beings who delight in communion with others and live by our memories. Thus, the essential value of architecture must stay unchanged: to create a habitat for the human spirit, to hold memory and history, and to foster culture through the urban landscape," says Tadao Ando

Milan, 3 December 2020 - Domus continues its travels on the 10 x 10 x 10 route with Tadao Ando. The Japanese architect is the new guest editor, ready to creatively curate 10 issues of the magazine in 2021.

Tadao Ando is the fourth protagonist of the 10-year editorial formula by which 10 internationally famous architects will each be a guest editor for 10 issues of Domus magazine, leading up to its 100th anniversary. David Chipperfield is now passing the



Photos Hiroki Nakada © Tadao Ando Architect and Associates



Photo Ken Ferris © Tadao Ando Architect and Associates

Real-life problems need a real-life solution

A story of every household

Ever since it was launched 18 years ago, Fenesta has been the market leader and India's No.1 brand of windows and doors. Naturally so, when plans were afoot to do its first ever TVC, the team, instead of going to the drawing board, went and met the customer first. After all, that's been Fenesta's credo all along. The findings were along expected lines.

Sharma ji is our guy next door, the happy go lucky gentleman, a character that we all easily associate and relate with.



So what's Sharmaji's problem?

How many times have you dreaded the prospect of coming back to a dusty, messy home after a long vacation? Across the length and breath of the country, irrespective of where you live in the city, this is a problem, which everybody has to deal with. And this was the one problem that Fenesta overcame. Reason why, customer after customer sang paeans of just how their life transformed after they had Fenesta installed at home. Insulation from dust, noise and pollution were not just hollow claims of the brand but were for real.

Its the problem of every household with not so great quality windows.

How many times have you dreaded the prospect of coming back to a dusty, messy home after a long vacation?

Shot at the height of the pandemic, it was a first for the team to monitor a shoot digitally.

So go ahead and catch the commercial across various digital platforms and if you share your story of how you have evaded going out of town

because of this problem you could end up with a surprise hamper from Fenesta.

These were people who did not fear coming back to a locked house, whether it is after a week or a month. These were people who chose the best for their homes and Fenesta on their windows. These were people who had now become used to coming back to a spotlessly clean home - just the way they left it. No layer of dust. No rain water seepage. These were the people whose experience became the platform for the TVC.

This real-life problem is the narrative that drives Sharma ji's plight in the new Fenesta commercial that's just been released.

For the complete story just scan the QR code



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baton to Ando after having received it from Winy Maas, who succeeded Michele De Lucchi, the first guest editor to start the formula in 2018.

“We are honoured to have Tadao Ando on our team,” says **Maria Giovanni Mazzocchi**, the president of Editoriale Domus, and the recipient of an Order of Merit for Labour. “With the *Domus 10 x 10 x 10* formula, we wish to present each year a vision of the future – not an invitation to follow events, but to reveal them in advance. I am certain that the lucid world-view Tadao Ando has held throughout his career will be a great

learning opportunity for our readers and the civic society that gathers around our publication. Like Ando, we too are convinced that architecture is able to change society, so we open the doors of our community to him and look forward to his arrival with the anticipation and enthusiasm of a new adventure about to begin.”

As one of the best-known exponents of architecture in the world, Tadao Ando (Osaka, 1941) is distinguished by his capacity to evoke an inner world (a typical Japanese element) made in dialogue with Western techniques (like

fair-faced reinforced concrete and big walls of glass) while using a constant component of strong geometry.

His quest is not simply to create residential solutions; rather it offers a mental state, a spiritual dimension that depends largely on our intuition. Ando’s buildings bring us in touch with our “self”, with the here and now of reality. His code is basic, and it represents an ode to beauty and the eternity of feelings.

Ando has chosen eternity as the underlying theme for the ten issues of *Domus 2021*. In his editorship

manifesto he writes, “All things must one day weather and crumble. Architectural history is a trajectory of challenges against this truth. **I would like to make eternity, an idea that humans have been pursuing since time immemorial, the theme of *Domus 2021*.** Eternity here does not refer to the physical continuation or perpetuation of matter and form. Rather, it indicates the intangible emotions and memories that live in the hearts and minds of people. Eternity’s **universal nature is not innate but reliant upon humanity.**”

The human factor, the value of

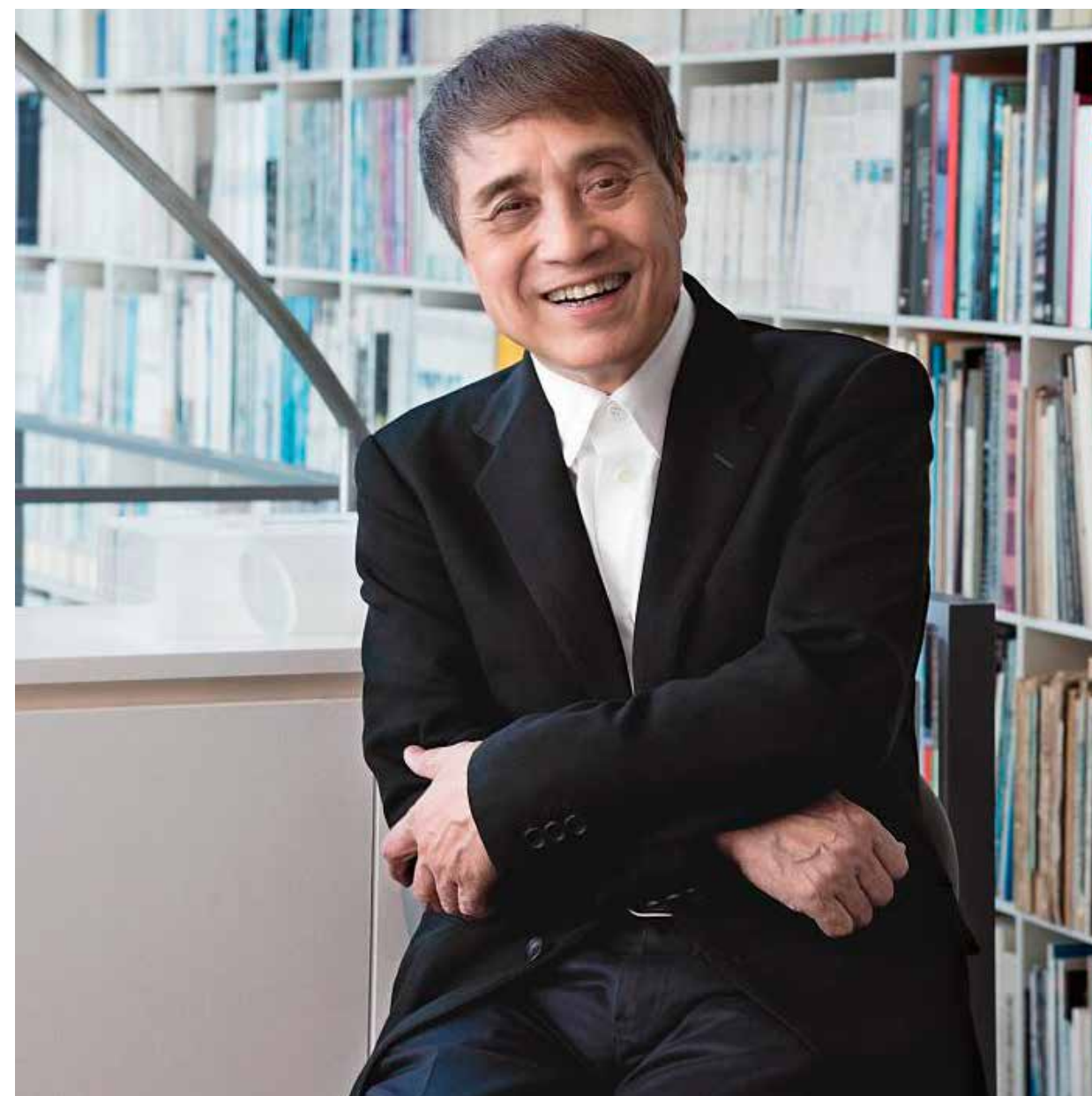


emotions and memories, the responsibility of the individual toward transformations, and our status as an integral part of nature – all are important components of the new guest editor’s approach to his craft. His manifesto refers to the complexity of the contemporary world and the strength and power contained in design and architecture: “Collective ideas of eternity sprout in response to the era’s atmosphere and continually blossom with the cultural nourishment produced by growing communities. Hence, these thoughts are forever preserved in our hearts and spirit. In other words, eternity is the product of an evolving zeitgeist.”

It is exceedingly difficult to understand what defines our era. The changes in the past ten years have been immensely rapid. Endless and drastic progressions in information technology have swallowed all of human society in the name of globalism, with network systems interwoven in every aspect of our daily lives. The Covid-19 pandemic, which forces people to implement social distancing as a countermeasure against virus infection, has accelerated these trends. **We are in the middle of an upward sloping graph of significant change,** like the industrial revolutions of centuries past. These shifts will likely continue to intensify and create a new world that we cannot even begin to fathom. **Architecture and design will likely undergo a remarkable transformation** in industrial structures, production systems and methods of expression. The signs of these changes are already evident. As drastic as these changes may be, **the fact remains that human beings are part of nature.** We are flesh-and-blood, **ephemeral beings who delight in communion with others and live by our memories.**

Thus, the **essential value of architecture must stay unchanged, to create a habitat for the human spirit, to hold memory and history, and to foster culture through the urban landscape.** It is precisely because the future is uncertain that we need to look at the very roots of creation, its eternal origins.”

Born and raised in Japan during the postwar reconstruction, Ando led a varied and poetic life – including a stint as a prizefighting boxer – before becoming a self-taught architect. The parallelism between the **discipline of sport** and the **discipline of tectonics,** and the importance of conscientious,



efficient conduct are lines of thought that our new guest editor peruses in the exclusive interview published in the Ando monograph, a supplement to *Domus* December.

“The tense moments waiting for the bell to ring in a boxing match are uplifting, yet nerve-racking. New building projects require the same mentality. In boxing, you must risk moving into danger in order to fully take advantage of your skills and eventually win the match. Creating something in architecture – not just building something, but creating something – also requires the courage to take risks. Taking that extra step forward into the unknown is vital. When you are a boxer, you prepare for years for rounds that will only last minutes. It’s a fight, basic and primitive. Architecture, on the other hand, is a very long match, much longer than three minutes, but the tension must be maintained just as in boxing. **Sometimes architects acquire a taste for fame and lose their discipline because they**

have forgotten the hunger of their early careers, when you are the only one you can rely on. Boxing is a sport of pure stoicism and solitude; in the process of pushing your body and mind to the absolute limit, power is generated. Architecture is the same. **Each project has a strict programme and budget and there might be little freedom to design. You must think through what is truly necessary and what needs to be built.**”

As always, the coordinator of the new guest editor’s work will be **Walter Mariotti**, the editorial director of the entire *Domus* structure and the continuity manager of the 10 x 10 x 10 initiative. “*Domus* is unstoppable; its route continues to evolve, amaze and stimulate; it is without peers on the international editorial scene. The arrival of Tadao Ando confirms how global and relevant we are, and how central architecture and design are to the contemporary debate. The year 2020 has further reminded us how

necessary and urgent it is to rethink the ways and forms of communal life – how we manage public space, how we work and how we get around. Tadao Ando is more than an immensely successful architect – he is an all-round intellectual, so for us, being able to count on his vision is a great honour. When I first asked him about his plan for *Domus 2021*, he answered, “Through architecture and design, I would like to provide an opportunity to think about the core essence of human culture, about the elements that should stay constant as the world around us evolves.” This is an opportunity that *Domus* is delighted to welcome and share with all its readers” says Mariotti.

The first issue of *Domus 2021* created by Tadao Ando will come out in early January.

A monograph about Ando is being printed as a supplement to *Domus* December, a special issue edited by Fulvio Irace titled “Recovering Italy”.

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Cover Design: The cover is a frame-extract from the work '*Nagrik*' by Sudhir Patwardhan. As Nancy Adajania explains: '*Nagrik*', four figures levitate above a cityscape like colossi rising from yet claimed by an Escheresque patchwork of buildings that alternately recedes from and advances towards us. It is not unusual to encounter ordinary citizens fashioned as monumental beings in Patwardhan's paintings. '*Nagrik*' measures the ascension of its colossi against a ground note of thairav, stillness: the scenes of domesticity to which its protagonists remain moored are vespertine or nocturnal, with figures at rest, asleep, or dreaming. (In the middle of this,) one of the *nagriks*, with one hand on his heart in a rhetorical gesture, manifests his resplendent diamond-faceted thoughts. They emanate from his head as a continuous unfolding of Platonic solids: signals from an altered consciousness, signifiers of perfection and an ideal world, they camouflage themselves into the roofscape. Does their seamless merging with reality lead to an easy correlation between the everyday and the miraculous? Or is the artist telling us that this is an uneasily achieved transcendence by four citizens who have not yet given up their nagrik-hood, their right to demand political freedom? Look at their bare feet, seemingly free of gravity, yet trying to find purchase on a tiled roof or the slippery glass walls of a skyscraper.

TIME and Now

Text Kaiwan Mehta

As the most difficult year comes to a close, we write with the hope for a future that is not only safe medically, but one that will shape a civilization and people built on the ideas of 'living together'. This year has again and again indicated to us how weak we are as a civilization when it comes to a crisis, but there are always moments when people come together tied with belief and the resolve to work, argue, and critically debate a future that is shared with everyone. We began this year amidst protests, and we are ending this year amidst protests - students and argumentative citizens came together a year ago, and today farmers and all who keep the courage to think and speak thoughtfully, with informed arguments have come together. In between all this the virus attacked not just our bodies and health, but our social fabric, our belief in civilization, and we saw often how the spaces of home became dangerous rather than comforting zones of safety, while homelessness, and labour without land and job, were denied even any acknowledgement - we now have figures for the former, and it was officially announced that there was no accounting done of the latter.

There is no doubt that whether in protest or in pandemic, art, literature, poetry, and various intellectual moorings kept us going, indicated the possibility of hope while expressing and discussing through forms of artistic and intellectual engagements. Reality of suffering, and those many good women and men either working in medical facilities or in keeping basic systems running, and helping the stranded and the suffering, need more than jingoistic noise-making. The reality of our systems of governance, institutions of public safety and good, need to be understood more deeply through the individuals on ground, the measures of the everyday life. And here it will be important to ask ourselves how design, architecture, and planning has either succeeded or failed. Design, architecture, and planning touch directly, even if these are not the only players, everyday lives by shaping the material realities of worlds we inhabit - and what have we produced in the past, what lessons have we learned - are important questions. Just debating 'sustainability' or 'heritage' or emotionally crying for it will not help, neither will blind faith in any of this help. Hiding behind new coinages such as 'new normal' will also be useless unless we have trained our eyes, mind, and heart to read reality beyond our profession but return to our profession and practice in ways of being effective, contributing, and building futures rather than spaces of indulgence, and fantasies of denial or helplessness.

We had to suspend publication of the magazine from April to September 2020, and lost out on five issues, but we returned in October, with digital publication only as of now. The last two issues of the *Domus India* we have debated our current situation from many perspectives and through many voices and mediums. This issue, especially as we close a historical year, a difficult year, a painful year, we focus on the idea of TIME. We lost out on spaces this year as travel and public-places faced a shutting down with lockdowns; but we have on the parallel seen how recovery of space and spaces is absolutely important for vibrant societies, that wish to debate and discuss their lives with powers-to-be. But in all this, this year was also the 'longest year' as some say, and the 'fastest year' as some other point - and it was both in that way, long yet speedy, lost yet located. In June 2020 itself along with TARQ Gallery in Mumbai I conducted a six-episode seminar on Time precisely going

by early experience and understanding of how this crucial value of human life and civilization is actually something that is undergoing a tumultuous phase this year. Time is often quickly and simplistically understood only as history or present moving towards a future, fantasies of future or prophetic about speed and growth, and then comes your sense of wanting to rush back or speed ahead. But what is most crucial and most challenging, is the ability to be inside 'now' and work with 'now', ask questions of, and about 'now'. Who can do that? From the seminar in June, to a semester-long studio at Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, titled *Time, Public, and Architecture*, and now this last issue of 2020 one has precisely struggled with this - how will we make sense of the contemporary, how will we see people and public as an idea of time-now, how will the present let us think, or not, and what will we think about the present, and how will we act-now, intervene and engage, be together with compassion for others yet be respectfully argumentative where we differ, shape and debate change together, in the NOW.

As an architectural community, we are currently in the throes of debating precisely this - Heritage and its idea and protocols, but without a clarity that the idea of Heritage and Conservation as a practice have very contemporary moorings in the present; Heritage as an idea and conservation as a practice are always about the contemporary. Those who blindly and emotionally defend Heritage are equally to blame as those who blindly and with differing ideology force demotions of any past and its vestiges. Many have compared the recently proposed demotions of the IIM Ahmedabad campus dormitories (the complete campus designed by Louis Kahn, and important architect for the world and for many architects in India, and history in modern India) with the arguments around the proposed and ongoing New Delhi Central Vista Redevelopment, as well as the perverse and dastardly demolition of the Hall of Nations at Pragati Maidan, in Delhi in 2017 - those who compare these three, clearly neither know their history nor their 'now'. These three are all symptomatic of the politics of 'now', but also the profession we are today, but they are all different arguments in the present. To cluster any happenings that on the surface appear similar clearly shows our lack of homework, and lazy thinking. What we inherit as a people, as a civilization is always the most valuable source and resource for many reasons, but if we do not know how to work with actively, what we inherit, evaluate it, debate it, work life into it with every 'now' and passing time... we either lose shabbily what we inherit, or we simply lose it by making shrines of those. And it is the responsibility of a profession and discipline such as architecture and design to develop frameworks of conversation and debate within its haloed precincts but also build exchanges of ideas within neighbourhoods of public engagement and public discourse. The planner, the architect, the designer is not complete without being part of public discourse as an equal, as a political and cultural being, as a human soul traversing the streets of everyday life, returning to the working desk or a discussion at the street corner with views and ideas that juggle thoughtfully between professional arguments as well as the practice of history and politics of our everyday lives. Today Time stands demanding from the architect, the designer, the planner.

Wish you a wonderful 2021!

Ghalib: Ghazal 163/ *Divan-e Ghalib*

Translated from the original Urdu by Ranjit Hoskote

*Dil-e naadaan tujhe hua kya hai
Aakhir is dard ki davaa kya hai*

Fool heart, what's wrong?
There's got to be some drug to ease your agony.

I'm burning for her, she couldn't care less.
God, what a mess it's turned out to be.

Small mercies: my tongue, it's still working.
If only she'd ask: What can the matter be?

Merciful Lord, if there's no one but You to oversee
all things, how did this chaos come to be?

Leaves and roses: where have these sprung from now?
What do clouds matter now, what is the air to me?

Imagine, I was hoping she'd keep faith with me
who has never grasped what faith might be.

Imagine, I'm throwing my life away for you
without knowing what a prayer might be.

Ghalib is worth nothing in the market, I agree.
But why complain if you get him for free?

*

Take your time

Sampurna Chattarji

for Sharon Morris

I

Take your time
into the open
if you dare
there, where a
gale is tearing through
the trees of an
unnameable forest
there, where the
fox is waiting in
his sharp-nosed pose
outside a cage
of birds unaware
the cage is their salvation

Take your time
across the fields
of wanting
what is not
yours
there where it warns
“Beware the bull”
there where the bog waits
to swamp you slowly
into submission
there where the sunken
bench marks childhood
there where the buttercup
gleams on your chin
take your time fearlessly
there where there is
no path no soul
for miles there
across the deserted mine

Take your time
along the seashore
walk along the promontory
of an unsettling wind
dislocate your knee
your “me”
throw your gaze away
unrib the cage you
carry inside
undo the knots
of hair tissue tendon
come apart at the
seams
this is a galeforce wind
pursuing you from coast
to coast

Take your time escaping
it and every other
act of eloquence

II

I want to turn back time into a looping hula hoops dance a quickfooted trance
I want to see rhombuses rhumba and polygons polka
I want to take time by the fetlock and prance
I want to start a circus where the keeper of time is a swan

●

III

In time the hostile stones will melt
This too is
unsayable

Everything starts with a river
Time has mended my
fright

I don't have a source
to go to

Why is the light so bright
even in the dark?

Who is writing these utterances down?

*I am gangrene
A Bengali Tiger in my backpack growling to be let out
I am the edible root of the word 'omen'
Dig me out of my burrow
I am a Hobgoblin brewed in Kent
Drinking from a source I still haven't found*

●

IV

If I could be still
as a stone
as moonshine
still as a monk in
a koan of stillness
as a pond
without water
still as a storm
in a teacup
If I could be still
as a pathway
in a garden of rock
still as life
in a painting
still as still here
still waiting

Sunset over Luxor

Mustansir Dalvi

7.

Karnak steals light the longest, then darkens, reluctantly.

6.

Temperatures invert on Hatshepsut's platforms. Hathor exudes maternal warmth.

5.

On the West Bank, every disturbed grave laments discovery.

4.

Ra's shimmering disc, like unhurried eons, fades over the Nile.

3.

Captains of feluccas lower sails, allow fire and water to bring them home.

2.

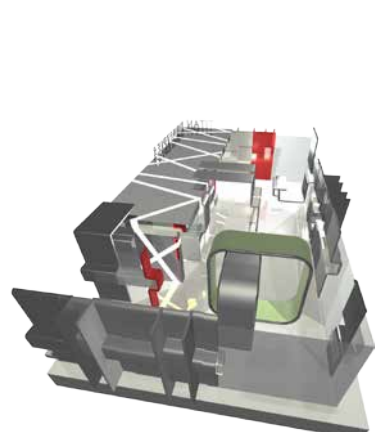
Tawrek and Sobek slip into the shallows without a ripple.

1.

The river reclaims its predestined role as a mirror of history.



Time and Architecture/
Photoessay (see pages
92 to 123)



Practice

In this section of the magazine we consider the practice of architecture as a process. In Affinities we ask a curator - Ellis Woodman in this case - to show us three new buildings that offer a potential direction in which the field might evolve.

Affinities

Effortful plans

Texts Ellis Woodman

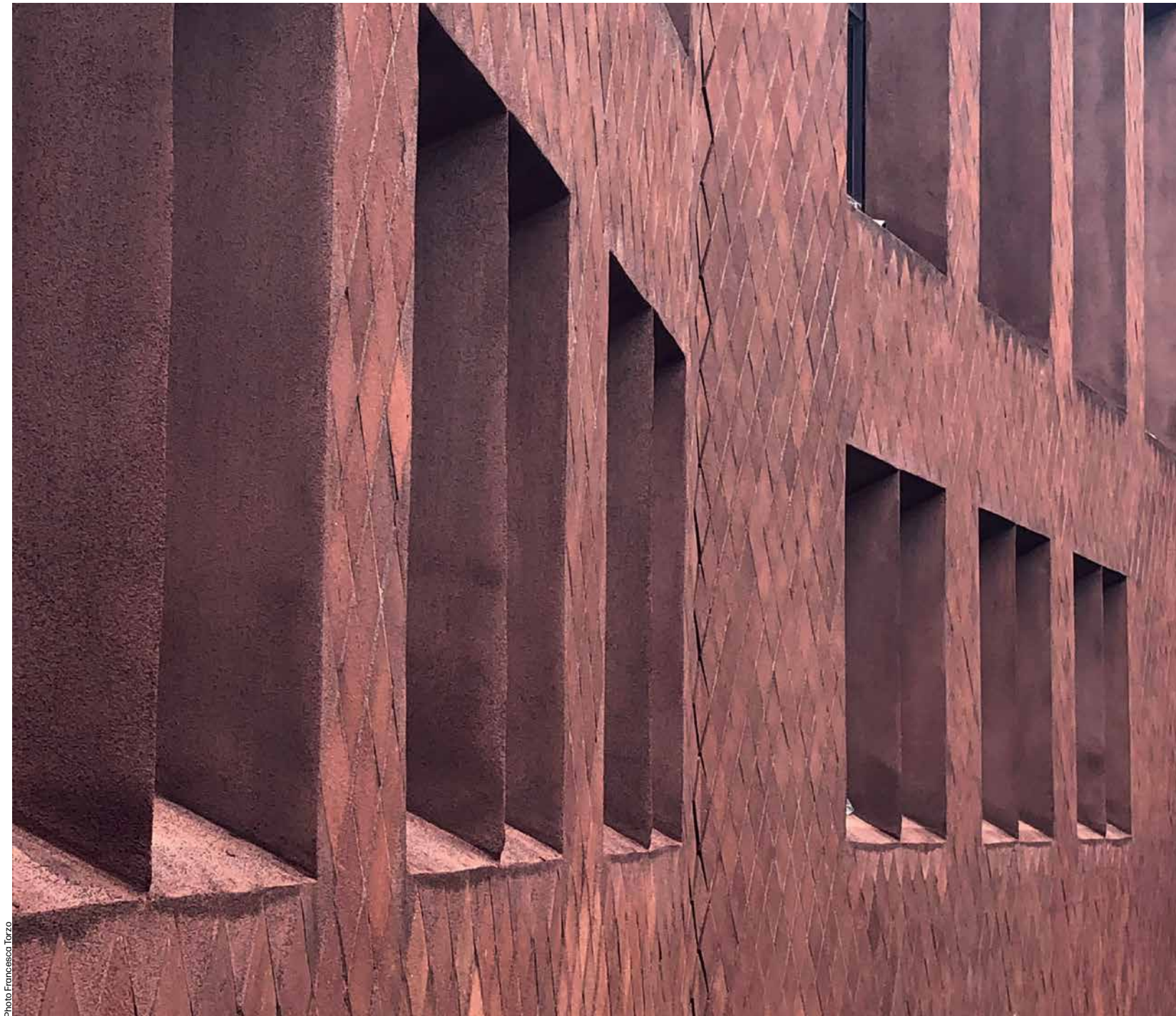


Photo Francesca Torzo

Selected by Ellis Woodman

We asked Ellis Woodman to choose our first three buildings for the Affinities section. Ellis is the director of the Architecture Foundation, a widely published architecture critic and the author of a number

of monographic publications, the most recent of which is *Temples and Tombs: The Sacred and Monumental Architecture of Craig Hamilton* (Lund Humphries, London 2019).

These pages: the projects chosen by Ellis Woodman. Opposite page: detail of a facade of Z33 House for Contemporary Art by Francesca Torzo architetto in Hasselt. This page, from left:

view of Moore Park Mews by Stephen Taylor Architects in London and of Park Pavilion by Monadnock and De Zwarte Hond in the Netherlands



Photo David Grandjean



Photo Slim Bolleert

Fundamental as the act of drafting a plan may be to the practice of architecture, the purposes to which architects direct that task vary significantly. On the one hand there are architects - and surely the vast majority - for whom the plan is essentially a record of previously settled agreements. Such drawings may go through multiple iterations but that process is essentially one of ironing out unforeseen glitches. The aim is a sense of effortlessness, a reclamation of the clarity that the project presented before the first line was drawn.

However, there are also architects for whom drawing offers a means of discovering a project. Rejecting the attractions of an architecture grounded in a single radiating idea, they employ drawing as a means of infusing an initial concept with a multiplicity of spatial and formal particularities. Alert to possibilities for complexity and even surprise, the plans they make are far from effortless.

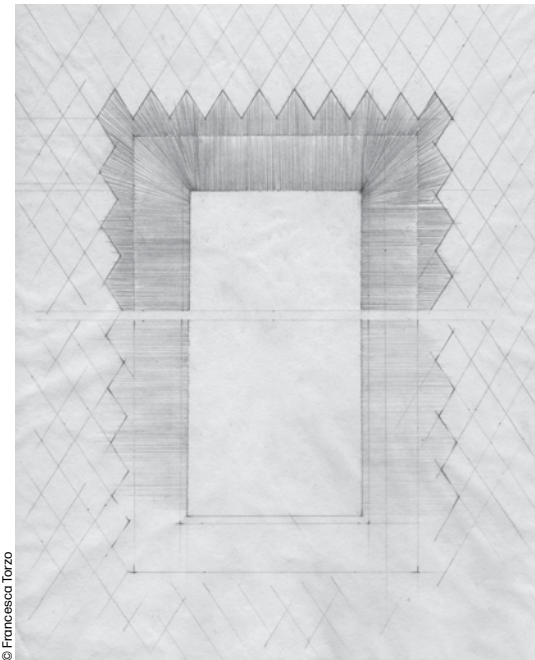
The architects whose work features in the following pages are all representatives of this second group. Each is notable for the freedom and invention that they bring to judgements of composition. Their buildings demand to be read as works of the individual rather than collective imagination. At the same time, these projects are each deeply rooted in the culture of Western architecture. The galleries of Francesca Torzo's museum invite association with the streets and squares of medieval Hasselt that lie beyond its imposing brick walls. Memories of the close-packed London yards characteristic of the novels of Charles Dickens are brought to mind by Stephen Taylor's cluster of houses. Monadnock and De Zwarte Hond's visitor centre draws on the model of the country house, in particular those of Sir Edwin Lutyens, with their pronounced rooflines and sophisticated reconciliation of the monumental and the intimate. In its collage-like and at times ironic appropriation of source

material, it is arguably this last project that comes closest to a postmodern sensibility. However, even in this instance, whatever references are at play are ultimately digested into an architecture of originality and conviction. The profound engagement with issues of construction common to all three buildings provides a critical foundation for their adoption of associative imagery.

Perhaps central to the appeal of each of them is their cultivation of a spatial experience articulated in layers. Long, distinctly painterly views structured by the intervention of built fabric and the effects of varied light sources are a common feature. Moments such as these suggest an intensely empathetic connection between the imagination of the architect and the experience of the individual visitor. These are buildings designed with an empirical spirit that communicates itself to us as an invitation to explore.

Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Hasselt

Francesca Torzo architetto



© Francesca Torzo

Photos by
Gion Balthasar
von Albertini,
Francesca Torzo

In the heart of the Belgian city of Hasselt lies a large triangular urban block of strikingly introverted character. Developed in the 18th century as a beguinage – a community of women who embraced a life of poverty focussed on the care of the sick – it frames a garden, accessed by a monumental gateway, while presenting an almost entirely windowless frontage to the outside world. Bombing in 1944 destroyed one substantial section of the perimeter which was subsequently reoccupied by a school and art gallery in the post-war period. Since 2002, the gallery has operated under the name Z33 – a reference to its address at Zuivelmarkt 33 – and under the artistic direction of its founder Jan Boelen, has developed an international reputation for a programme focused on contemporary art and design. When the adjacent school decided to relocate to another site in Hasselt, the possibility of undertaking a significant expansion arose and following a competition in 2011, that commission was awarded to the young and then largely unknown Italian architect Francesca Torzo.

The new building develops its startlingly laconic and monumental public expression from an interpretation of the materials and quality of introspection that characterise the adjacent historic buildings. To the street it presents a 60-metre-long wall, which like those alongside is in load-bearing brickwork but of an altogether more cultivated character. Each handmade dark purple brick presents a square face laid on the diagonal, so as to form a surface of densely

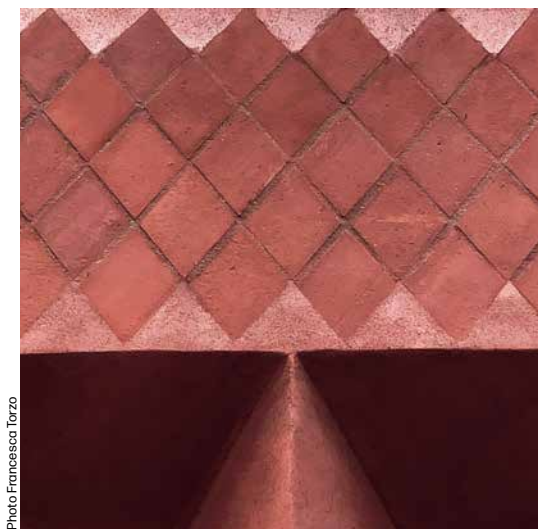


Photo Francesca Torzo

Top: study drawings of the windows of the gallery extension, with the diamond-pattern brickwork characterising the fronts. Above: detail of the facade. Opposite page: the continuous blind wall on the street front, 60 m long and 12 m high, built out of 34,494 handmade bricks



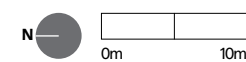
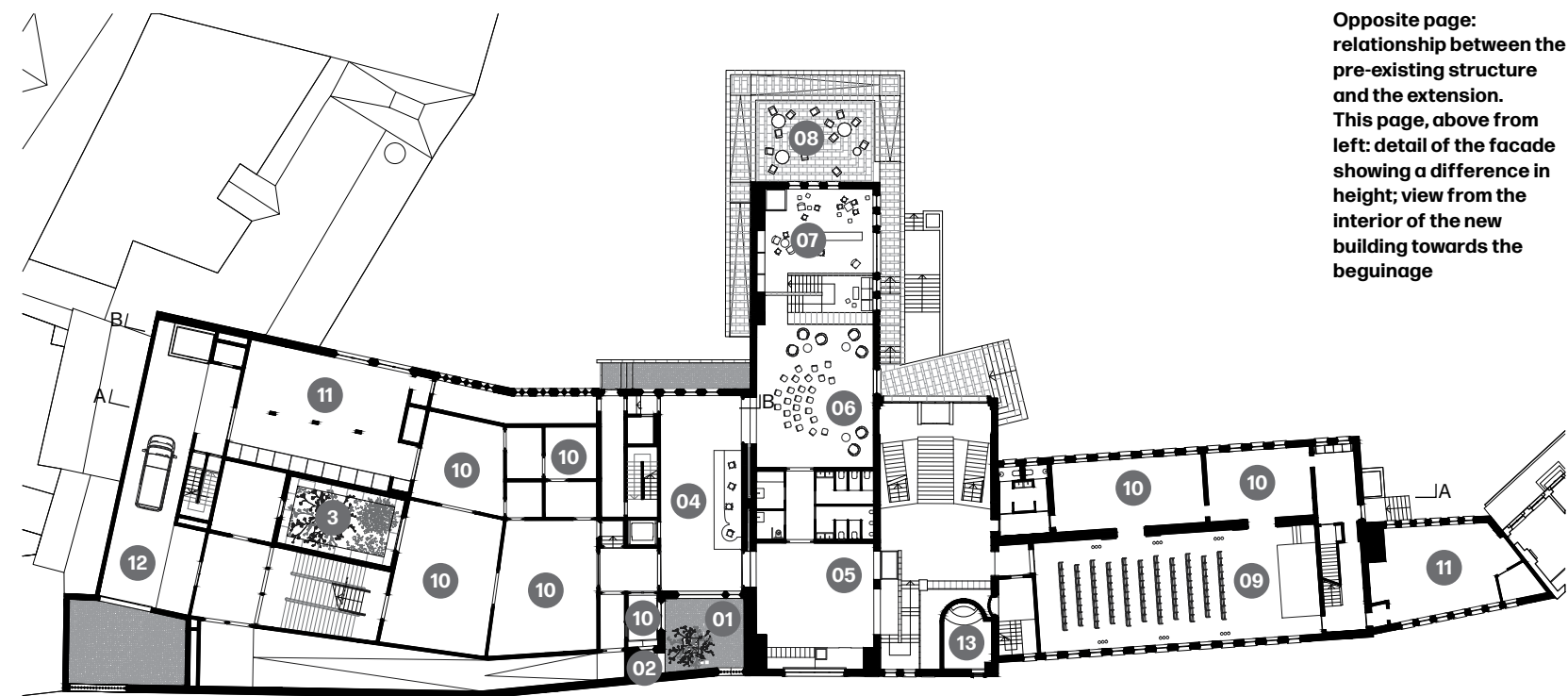


packed diamonds. Redolent of Roman methods of construction, the treatment imbues the facade with a determinedly antique quality but is realised with a precision and delicacy that also brings to mind Semper's conception of the facade as a form of built fabric. Holding fast to the medieval streetline, the wall buckles gently midway down its length while at either end a gated opening gives onto a patio that enables all doors and windows to be set back from the frontage. The patio sited at the end adjoining the original museum forms a new entrance to the expanded complex.

Offering a complement to the earlier building's axial enfilade of consistently daylight spaces, Torzo has conceived the new galleries as a constellation of rooms of dramatically contrasting proportion and illumination. A sense that they form a quasi-urban ensemble is strongly suggested by the first room that we encounter, a ramped, street-like volume that occupies the full length and height of the principal facade. The plan that unfolds subsequently is strafed by long diagonal views that are animated by variations in the colour and intensity of lighting from room to room. The complex coffering incorporated into the in situ concrete ceilings offers a further means of articulation, registering the fact that many spaces are non-orthogonal. The overall effect is of a contained and rather mysterious world, rich in particularity and of a grandeur that belies the building's stringent budget.



Planimetria/Site plan



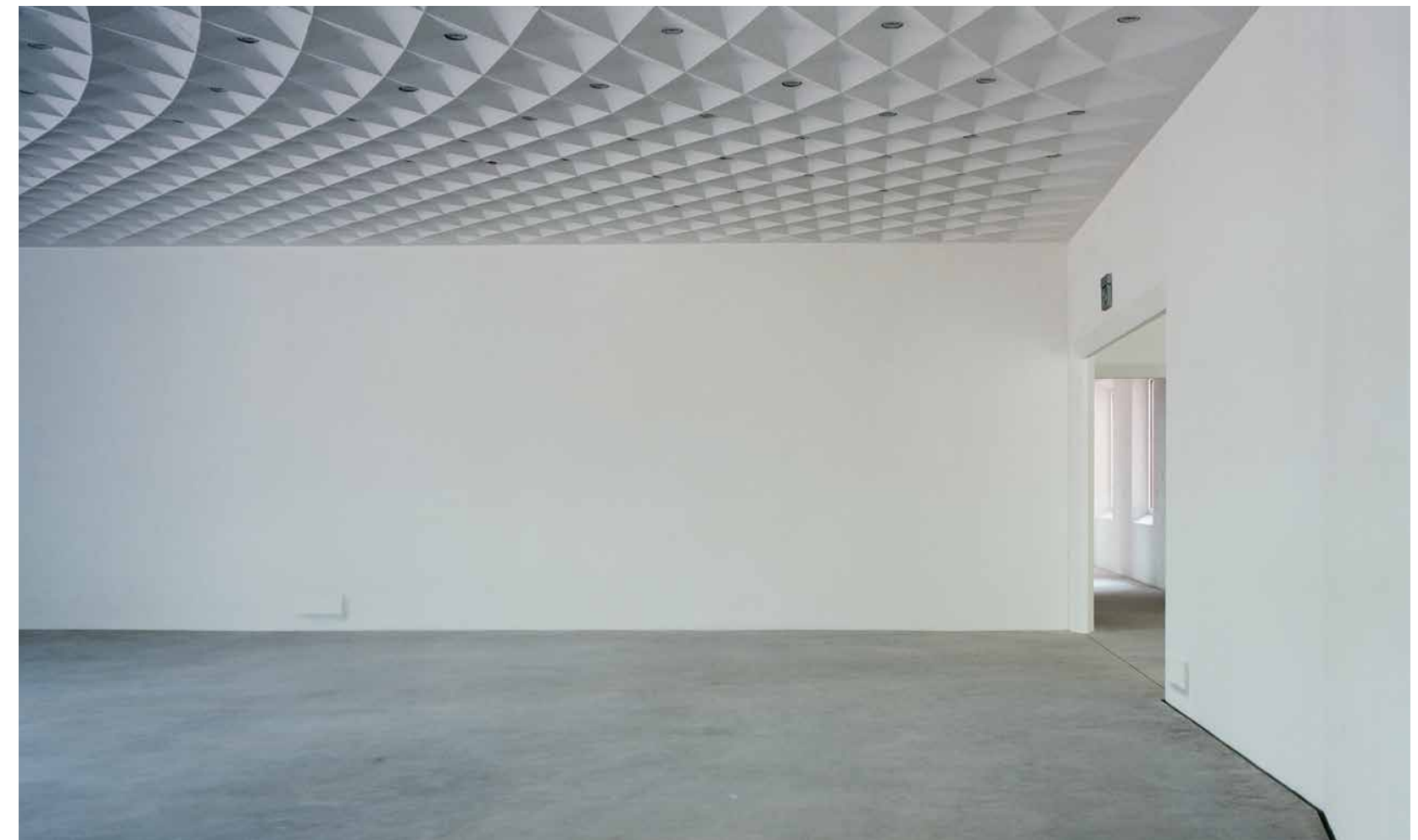
Ground-floor plan

- 01 Entrance patio
- 02 Fountain
- 03 Interior patio
- 04 Reception area
- 05 Locker and ticket office
- 06 Public area
- 07 Pavilion
- 08 Terrace
- 09 Auditorium
- 10 Exhibition rooms
- 11 Storage facilities
- 12 Logistics area
- 13 Pre-existing chapel

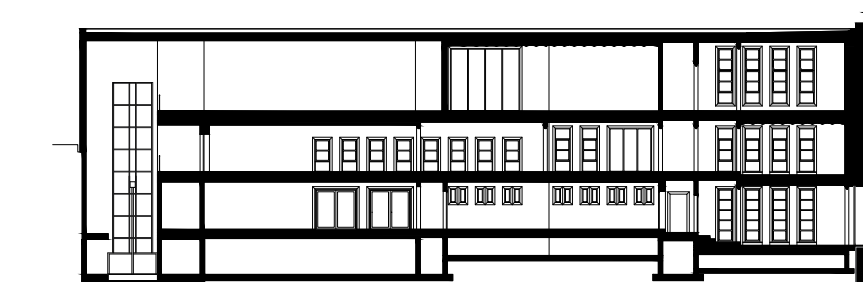
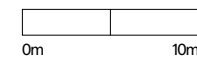
Opposite page: relationship between the pre-existing structure and the extension. This page, above from left: detail of the facade showing a difference in height; view from the interior of the new building towards the beguinage

Below: view from the interior towards one of the patios. The refined brickwork enables the formal vocabulary of the new development to engage with its historical setting.

Opposite page: one of the exhibition rooms. The interiors, which vary in size, proportions and quality of lighting, form a spatial sequence with a plurality of visual relationships



Section AA



Section BB

All project materials
© Francesca Torzo architetto

Z33 House for Contemporary Art

Project and site supervision

Francesca Torzo architetto

Design team

Marco Guerra (senior collaborator); Antoine Lebot, Liaohui Guo, Pablo Brenas, Anna Opitz, Riccardo Amarri, Lorenzo Gatta, Előd Zoltan Golicza, Cyril Kamber, Besart Krasniqi, Jovan Minic, Andrea Nardi, Anna Oliva, Costanza Passuello, Alessandro Pecci, Domenico Singha Pedrolì, Nicola Torniamenti, Gion Balthasar von Albertini

Structural engineering

Gianfranco Bronzini - Conzett Bronzini Partner; ABT België

Electrical engineering

Ben Boving

Mechanical engineering

Gattoni Piazza

Site supervision consultant

ABT België

Other consultants

Petersen Tegl, Bekaert,

Reynaers, Knauf

Client

Provincie Limburg, Z33

Site area 3,199 m²

Built area

4,664 m²

Cost

€ 7 million

Phases

2012-2016 (design);

2017-2019 (construction)

www.francescatorzo.it

Moore Park Mews, London

Stephen Taylor Architects



Photo Stephen Taylor Architects

This grouping of four intimately related houses in West London stands on a site that was previously occupied by a shed housing commercial activities. On all sides it is bounded by the compact back gardens of the 1880s houses that define the encompassing urban block – a proximity that raised myriad difficulties in terms of securing permission for the site’s redevelopment. Initially, five houses were proposed and the realised scheme was only granted approval after the developer, Baylight Properties, had submitted four planning applications and two appeals. Passing from the street under an existing carriageway we find ourselves at the widest end of the triangular site. Loosely ranged in a row extending to our left, the houses present themselves as variations on a common archetype: faced in brick, with clay-tiled roofs and pronounced chimneys, they have an almost

cottage-like appearance. That impression is reinforced by their deceptive scale. The access deck on which we are standing corresponds to the middle of three levels, of which the lowest and largest is effectively hidden from public view. Their picturesque qualities are also exaggerated by the fact that they take their orientation from different site boundaries. The result is a close-packed jumble of orthogonal forms, each of which remains detached from its neighbour but only just.

The threshold between each house and the access deck is richly articulated, with the upper floor being cantilevered out to provide a generous porch. The front door is set within a wall of colourfully painted timber panelling, while a mat of limestone takes the place of the concrete paving used more generally. Accommodating just a small bathroom and a single workspace or

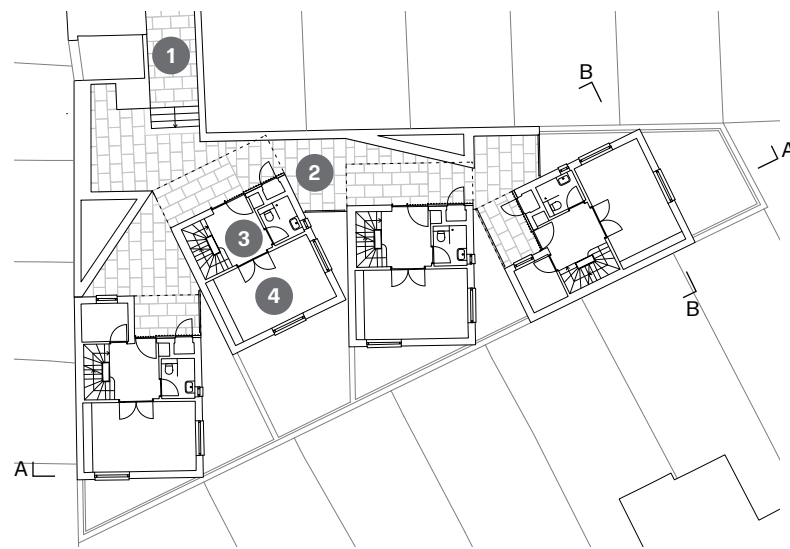
Photos by
David Grandorge

A sinistra: modello di studio. Sotto e pagina a fronte: la relazione fra i volumi delle quattro unità residenziali sviluppate su tre livelli. L'intervento, situato nell'area ovest di Londra, s'inserisce in uno stretto lotto triangolare



Top: study model. Above and opposite page: the relationship between the volumes of the four residential units laid out on three levels. The project, located in West London, is set in a narrow triangular plot





Plan of the entrance level



Plan at lower level

- 01 Entrance to the complex
- 02 Entrance level
- 03 Entrance hall to a house
- 04 Living room
- 05 Kitchen, dining and living area

bedroom, each entrance level is particularly compact.

In a number of instances, windows address brick walls of neighbouring properties set at divergent angles but extending within touching distance. The play of light on finely crafted brickwork compensates for the lack of a more conventional view. Upstairs a more expansive quality is achieved through the exploitation of the roof volume to create bedrooms of dramatic height. They are lit both by modestly scaled eye-level windows and larger ones set higher up that offer an experience of the sky.

The sunken, lower floor is another world again. Comprising a combined living, dining and kitchen area, it looks out onto its own paved courtyard, the walls of which are lined with light-reflective white ceramic brick.

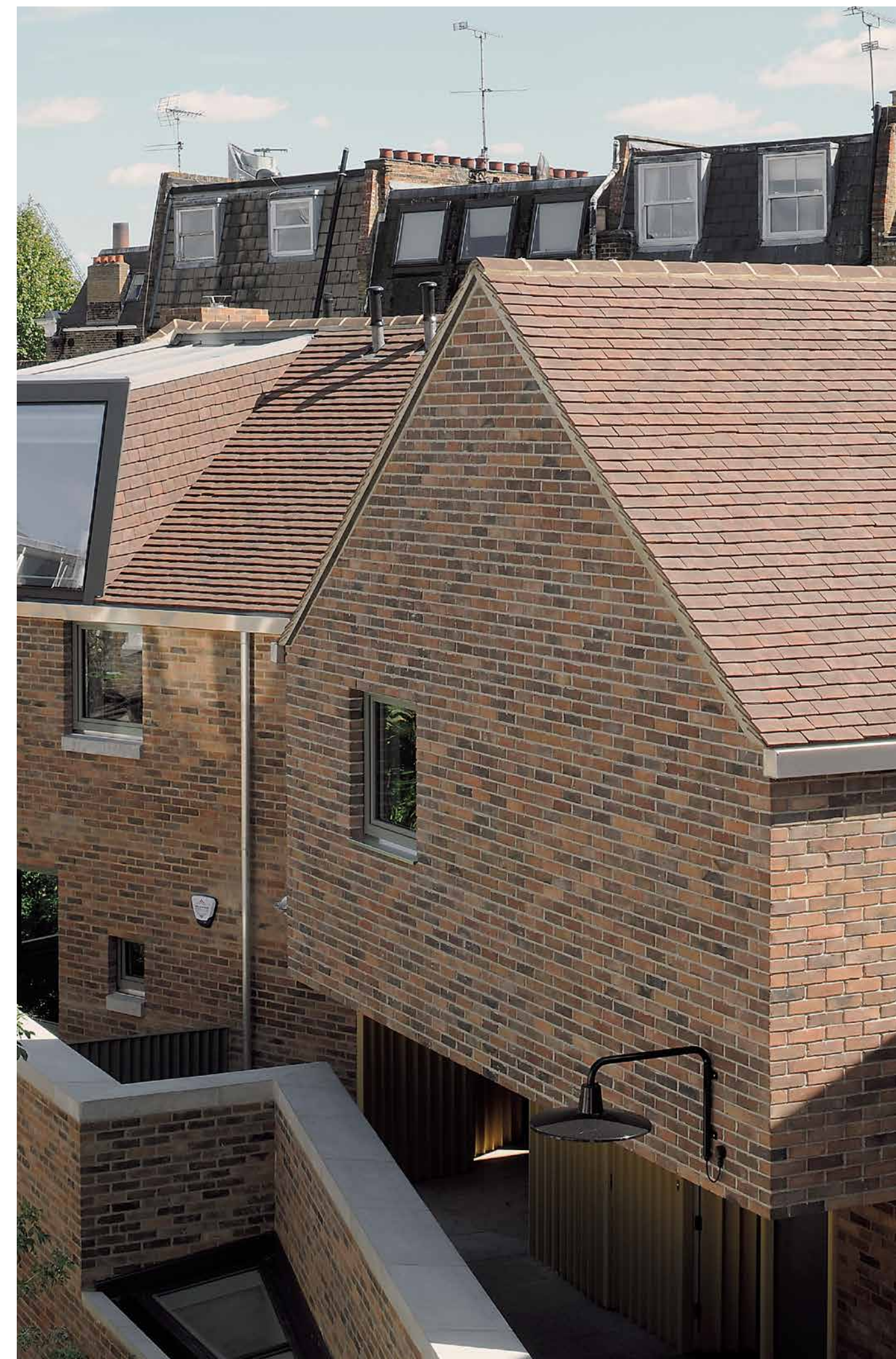
Equipped with full-width glass doors that admit views across the courtyard and out towards

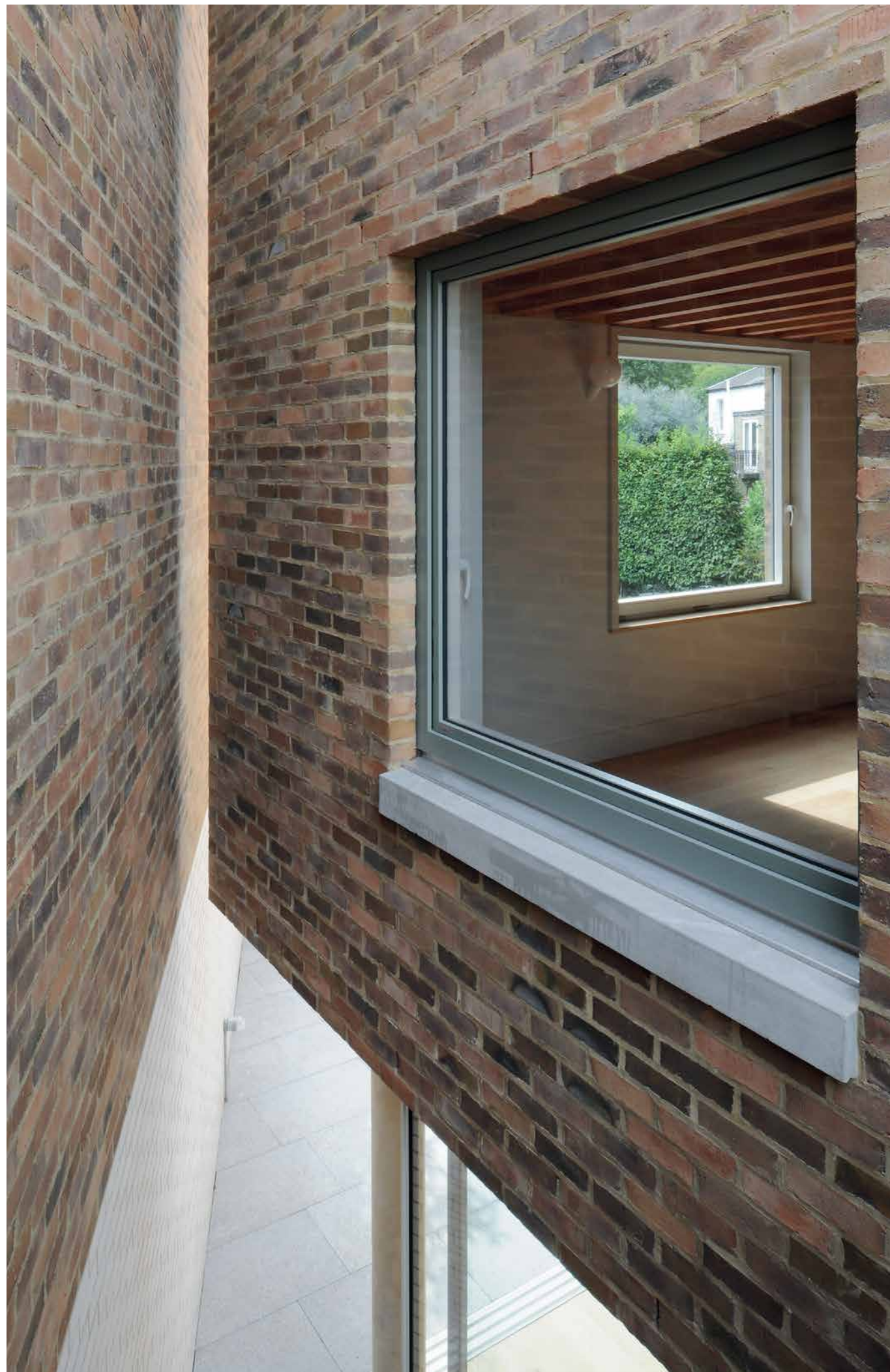
the encircling urban block, the interior conveys a powerful sense of multiple enclosure. House and courtyard stand at an angle to one another, with one corner of each house all but kissing the enclosing wall so that the courtyard is divided into two areas of triangular plan.

These are inaccessible to one another until the glass doors are slid back, at which point the whole extent of the property is transformed into a single territory where readings of interior and exterior are held in a deliberate state of ambiguity.



Opposite page: detail of the staircase and skylight of one of the houses. This page: view of part of the complex. The careful orientation of the houses enables each to have access to a private courtyard on one side, and on the other a communal passageway leading to the exit of the site. The density of the development, combined with the formal choices and use of materials, recalls the intimate character of the urban spaces and courts of 19th-century London





A sinistra: la vista di dettaglio evidenzia la composizione paratattica dei volumi, estremamente ravvicinati, ma mai tangenti.
Pagina a fronte. In alto: la zona giorno al piano inferiore delle abitazioni è in continuità di quota con la corte privata.
In basso: la sala situata al livello di accesso delle case è caratterizzata da un soffitto di travi di legno a vista

Moore Park Mews

Progetto/Project

Stephen Taylor Architects

Gruppo di progettazione/ Design team

Sam Holden, Theo Thysiades, Laurens Dekeyser (STA - Design Stage), Aaron English (STA - Construction)

Strutture/Structural engineering

Engineers HRW

Ingegneria elettrica/ Electrical engineering

Robinsons Associates

Ingegneria meccanica/ Mechanical engineering

Robinsons Associates

Direzione lavori/ Site supervision

Uprise Construction

Consulente/Consultant

Stature Limited

Committente/Client

Baylight Properties

Superficie del sito/Site area

434 m²

Superficie costruita totale/ Built area

602 m²

Costo/Cost

€ 4.7 milioni/million

Fase di progetto/ Design phase

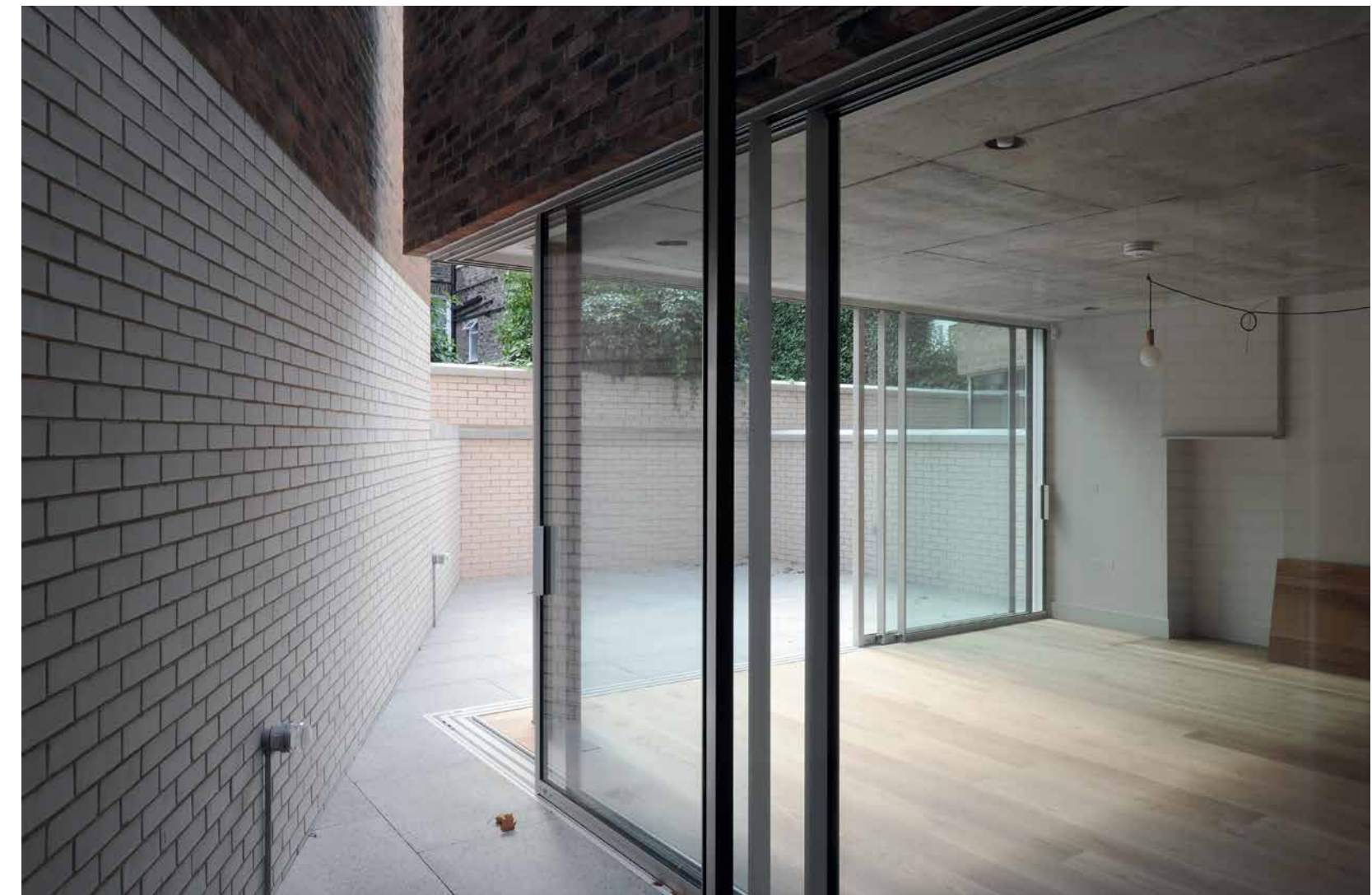
2013-2017

Fase di costruzione/ Construction phase

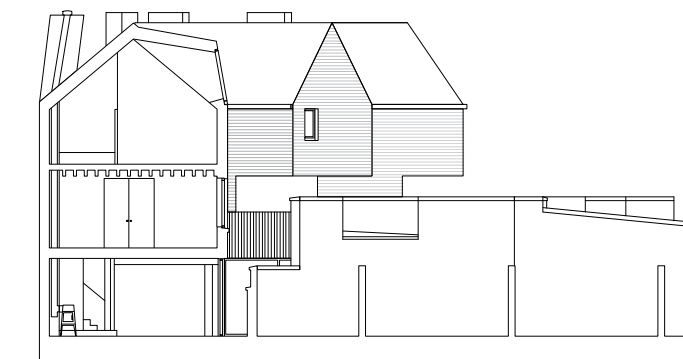
2017-2019

stephentaylorarchitects.co.uk

Tutti i materiali di progetto/
All project materials
© Stephen Taylor Architects



0m 4m



SezioneAA/Section AA



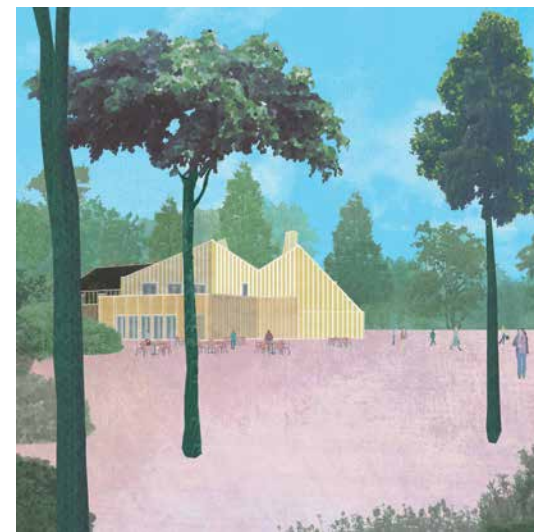
Sezione BB/Section BB



Opposite page: the detailed view shows the paratattic composition of the volumes, set extremely close together yet never touching.
This page. Top: the living room on the lower floor of the houses is continuous with the private courtyard.
Above: the room on the entrance level of the houses features a ceiling of exposed wooden beams

Park Pavilion, Otterlo

Monadnock and De Zwarte Hond



Photos by
Stijn Bollaert

This page, top and bottom: study drawings
Left: the facade of one of the two volumes of the building. Faced with anodised aluminium, it features semicircular glazing and vertical fins rising to the gable



Created in the early decades of the 20th century by the Dutch industrialist Anton Kröller, the Hoge Veluwe National Park comprises 55 square kilometres of woodland and sand dunes outside Otterlo in the east of the Netherlands.

Among the few buildings here are the St. Hubertus Hunting Lodge which H.P. Berlage designed in 1914 and also Henry van de Velde's museum of 1938 which houses the remarkable art collection assembled by Kröller and his wife, Helene Kröller-Müller. One further addition has now been made to this select grouping in the form of a new visitor centre designed by the Dutch practice Monadnock.

Serving the more than half a million tourists that visit Hoge Veluwe each year, it is located at the heart of the park, establishing a destination to which hikers and cyclists travel by car or bus before making their way into the surrounding landscape. Initially glimpsed across an elegantly landscaped expanse of car parking, the pavilion presents an immediately legible silhouette comprising a conjoined pair of monumental gables.

This north-facing elevation is the building's most formally emphatic but the composition nonetheless remains subtly unsettled. The roofline is asymmetrical while each gable is slightly buckled midway along its length. The predominant material is aluminium – anodised to a champagne colour that complements the sandy ground – but the gable to the right also incorporates a plinth of buff brick.

Both materials are employed to form a series of close-packed vertical fins that overlay a free composition of windows. In a gesture both graphic and enigmatic, the left-hand gable is

dominated by a large semicircular expanse of glass.

While the building's considerable bulk is hidden from this initial view, it begins to reveal itself as we approach the entrance which lies midway down the curving and very much longer east elevation. At low level this facade is fully glazed and negotiates the curve through the adoption of a zigzag plan, forming multiple bays which accommodate seating. On entering, we discover that the pronounced roofline that the building presents externally is concealed by a suspended barrel vault – the source of the semicircular window on the north facade – which follows a tightly curving course from one end of the building to the other.

It extends over both the cafe that lies to our left and the shop on our right – the curvature of the plan ensuring that, while there is no barrier between these spaces, each is largely hidden from the other. Ahead, a curvaceous top-lit stair in oak provides access to a suite of meeting rooms available for private hire.

The image of a country house provided a guiding reference for the atmosphere that the architects have cultivated most explicitly through the location of a large tiled fireplace at one end of the curve framed to either side by mounted deer heads.

Oak wainscoting effectively moderates the acoustic qualities of what would otherwise be a noisy environment while a series of chandeliers, incorporating LED lights, animate the surface of the barrel vault with an evocation of sunlight permeating through the branches of trees.

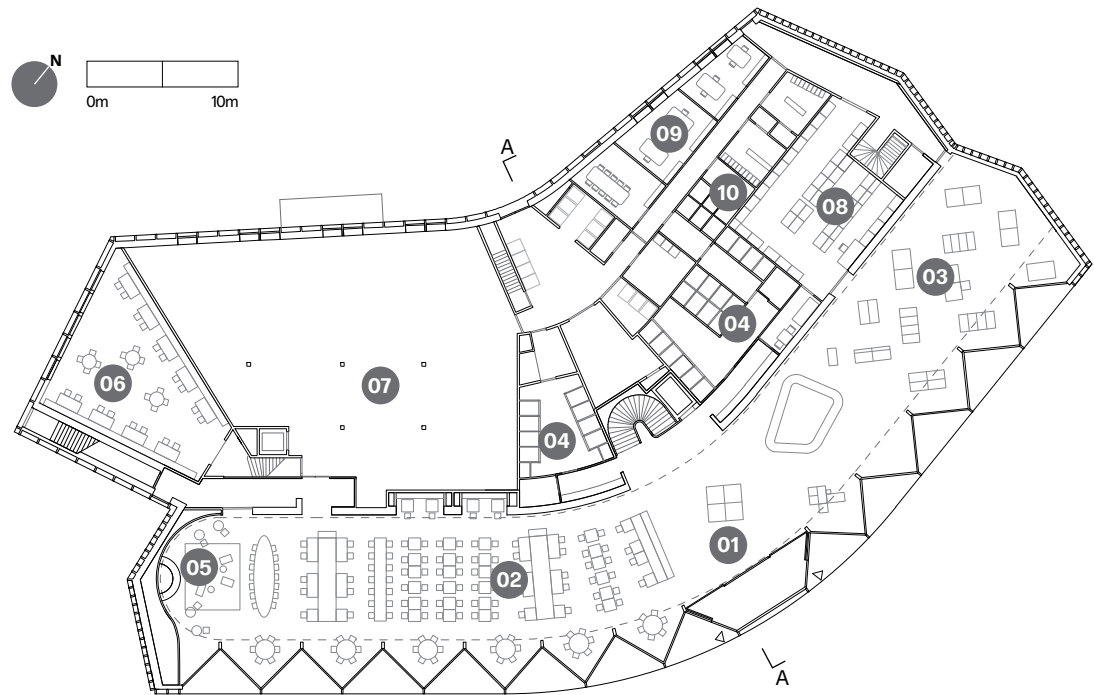
This page, top: the pavilion's main facade is slightly curved and fully glazed to create a close relationship with the surrounding natural landscape. The single floor and the strong presence of the roof – a reference to Eric Gunnar Asplund's Nordic architecture – endows the building with intimate spatial dimensions. Bottom: a general view of the rear facade. The lower volume forms a terrace on the upper level





This page: more views of the rear facade

- 01 Entrance area
- 02 Restaurant
- 03 Park shop
- 04 Toilet
- 05 Fireplace
- 06 Dining room
- 07 Kitchen
- 08 Storage
- 09 Offices
- 10 Cloakroom



Ground-floor plan





This page and previous page: two views inside the public area of the visitor centre, with wainscoting lining the whole interior and rising

to the barrel-vaulted ceiling. This continuous space mainly includes the lobby, catering area and the park shop

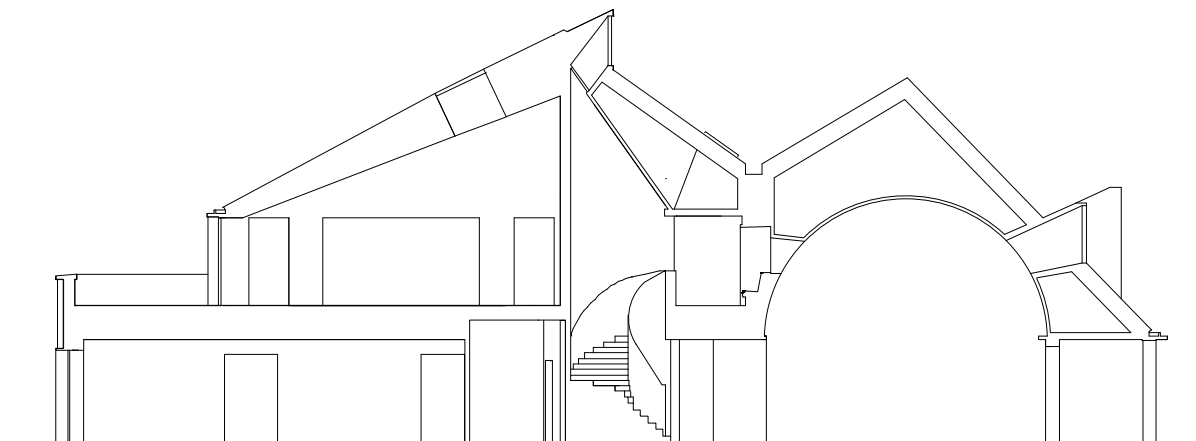
All project materials © Monadnock and De Zwarte Hond

Reflections

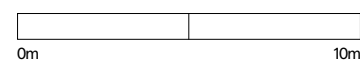
To see ourselves as others see us. Every month this section offered a series of original perspectives on how design and architecture is made and perceived. In this issue we look at the case study of a place with Will Wiles, and Rik Nys explores the changing imaginations and notions around the Column as an element and idea of architecture.

Park Pavilion, De Hoge Veluwe National Park, Otterlo, the Netherlands

Project Monadnock and De Zwarte Hond	Landscape design H-N-S	Lighting Beersnielsen Lighting Designers	Built area 3,300 m ²
Project architects Job Floris, Willem Hein Schenk	Interiors Monadnock, De Zwarte Hond, in collaboration with Bart Vos	Contractor Rots Bouw	Design phase 2014-2017
Project team Sandor Naus, Michael Maminski, Andre van der Slik	Furniture Bart Vos	Suppliers Bolidt, Hardeman Carpentry	Construction phase 2017-2019
Project management, construction, acoustics and installations Antea Group	Other consultants VDNDP Construction Engineers, Vibes Building Engineers	Client The National Park De Hoge Veluwe	



Section AA



Place matters

Where would we be without places

Spitalfields in London was not designed exclusively by architects but alongside a new profession. What happens when the “placemakers” take control?

Old Spitalfields Market, on the eastern fringe of the City of London, is a pleasant place. A former wholesale market with attractive 19th-century buildings, it has become a retail, cultural and dining destination. It's handy for my house in the East End, and I value it for its selection of child-friendly restaurants in an interesting setting. It's also a reasonable place to meet someone for coffee if you're a bit stuck for other suggestions. You can take your parents there. But as well as being a pleasant place, Old Spitalfields Market is also an exemplary “Place” - an early exercise in “placemaking” coordinated by the multidisciplinary cultural agency FutureCity, with “bespoke sculptural gateways” and “a kinetic light and colour wayfinding system”.

By such means, the magic of place is woven. The very word has a transformative power, it seems. Since the *Farrell Review* in 2014 (subtitle: *Our Future in Place*), “place” has become the dominant concept in the public discussion of planning and urban design. “Places affect us all” are the first words of the government's *National Design Guide*, issued in September 2019. It goes on to describe the benefits of “places”: we enjoy them, as occupants or users but also as passers-by and visitors. They can lift our spirits by making us feel at home, giving us a buzz of excitement or creating a sense of delight. They have been shown to affect our health and well-being, our feelings of safety, security, inclusion and belonging, and our sense of community cohesion.

Well, yes. Where would we be without places? Literally, where? “Place” certainly has a more wholesome and down-to-earth ring than the terms that used to be used in this context, such as “built environment” or “public realm”. But while those other terms are bloodless and bureaucratic, they are at least comprehensive. The agreeable warmth of “place” is based on what it quietly excludes.

It's not just the distinction between “places” and “well-designed places” that can be inferred from the *National Design Guide*. Not everywhere, it would seem, is a place - otherwise place-making would be a redundant exercise. The whole language of “place” suggests that much of the world is made up of places that aren't places: unplaces, or to borrow from the title of anthropologist Marc Augé's seminal 1995 study, *Non-Places*. Place doesn't just describe - it rebukes the portions of the built environment that fall short of placeness.

In the realm of architectural theory, the interest in “place” arose as post-war, functionalist “heroic modernism” was grinding into disillusionment and failure.

Text
Will Wiles

The functionalists had prioritised the deployment of space and hardly recognised a subjective quality like place. But their critics sought meaningful environments. “Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more,” wrote Team Ten's Aldo van Eyck in 1959. “For space in the image of man is place, and time in the image of man is occasion.” In 1976, Edward Relph identified the problem with contemporary urban planning as a crisis in place, which had given rise to a plague of “placelessness”, “the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places”. And he was far from alone, but instead part of a growing chorus calling for a more humane view of cities and planning.

Relph calls place “a source of security and identity”; Augé, identifying the characteristics that separate place from “non-place”, says that the former “want to be - people want them to be - places of identity, of relations and of history”. A quarter of a century on, this is echoed in the *National Design Guide*'s claim that place is crucial to our “our feelings of safety, security, inclusion and belonging”. The endorsement of “place” as the central concept in planning since 2014 has coincided with a new politicisation of geography. Successive Conservative governments, and others from elsewhere on the political spectrum, have tried to present many of the difficulties facing the country as the product of an ideological breakdown between a cosseted, cosmopolitan urban core unable to see beyond its own interests, and more rooted but neglected communities in a wider, “left-behind” hinterland beyond London and the other rich cities. This simplistic analysis - which is useful in allowing scions of entrenched power to present themselves, somehow, as anti-elitists - owes more to David Goodhart and Douglas Murray than Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl.

Place is a fount of authenticity, and a valuable political commodity. But here we come to one of the paradoxes of place. It's regarded as a locus of history and identity, where memory and meaning has had a chance to accrue and set down roots - but it can also be manufactured, with the right policy direction and a sampling platter of creative consultants. This is where the placemakers come in. As well as serving as a rebuke to functionalist design and planning, place has also been deployed as a rebuke against architects and planners. These, the consultants argue, are the professions that have screwed things up royally with their myopic focus on, respectively, individual buildings and rubbish truck turning circles. Which is good news for the people who can do place, the placemakers - a welter of developers, consultants and creative agen-



The Victorian wholesale market that once sold meat, fruit and vegetables was made over with shops, stalls and street-food kiosks

Treating places as attractions is a zero-sum game

cies who have cornered this desirable market: the very ones that have made Spitalfields into a very desirable market. It was already a place, of course.

The market was founded in the 17th century, but the wholesalers moved out to Leyton in 1991. When I moved to London twenty years ago, it was a fascinatingly grotty and gloomy quadrant, made ominous by Hawksmoor's Christ Church. A flea market happened sometimes inside the halls, and outside was one of only two places in London I've been offered sex on the street, by one of the last representatives of what had once been a vast East End industry. (The other was King's Cross, another place the placemakers have been at work.)

Not that I am yearning for yesterday's squalor, which would be hypocritical as I'm a fairly regular consumer at today's chain eateries. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that consuming is just about all Spitalfields is good for now. The market stalls are still there, and are now architect-designed, but prices have been adjusted to reflect underlying ground value. Its retained features are there to facilitate the spending of money; any desire to spend time there has been

nurtured to prompt the spending of more money. Is it all a place can be?

No, of course not - but this is what place is when it is left in the hands of developers and consultants. “Place”, as it is, is no more than a marketing exercise, designed to draw people to privately owned and managed retail and dining destinations, to sell and let flats, and to make government policy palatable. It can and should be more, and that must involve asking what places are for, other than zones of consumption given character by a branding strategy.

Treating places as attractions is a zero-sum game - if the only measure of success is attracting from a finite pool of consumers then not everywhere can be “a successful place”.

Will Wiles is the author of three novels: Plume, The Way Inn and Care of Wooden Floors all published by 4th Estate. He also writes about architecture and design.

Making architecture

The strength of the column

Text Rik Nys

Far from being a trope of classical architecture, the column is now a key component in the repertoire of the modern architect. We look at how this came to be

"The temples remained sacred to the eye, when the gods had long become ridiculous" Friedrich Schiller

In 1896, Adolphe Appia made one of his first drawings in a state of discontent with the staging of Wagner under the direction of Cosima in Bayreuth. Appia rejected scenography as a 2D illustration in favour of a set design that transcended into an expression of the performance itself. With this drawing he proposed for the Sacred Forest of Act One (in Wagner's *Parsifal*) to gradually morph into the temple of the Holy Grail. A transformation achieved primarily through lighting and slow movement of the main elements on stage. Unfortunately, most of his ideas remain locked in an exquisite series of drawings and were never realised. There is no drawing illustrating the final stage of this transformation but he explained: "The natural light of day will give way to the supernatural light of the supernatural temple, and the stone columns will gradually and smoothly replace the great shafts of the forest: Thus, we will pass from one temple to another." In ancient times the Greeks did build their temples in wood before understanding the potential of the rocks beneath them. Eventually going one better than the Egyptians who filled their awe-inspiring hypostyle halls with giant pillars to support the heavy roof slabs as they used only sand or limestone. The Hellenic builders discovered something under their feet that the Egyptians did not have: marble. The Ionians found out that marble gave them longer blocks capable of stretching half again as far than the Egyptians could ever have achieved with sand or limestone. Doorways got wider and columns thinner. The Romans discovered the usefulness of tuff while building the Port of Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli). They mixed the volcanic dust of Puteoli (*pozzolana*) with lime, and lime cement was born. In fact most Roman structures consisted of brick and concrete, and marble was relegated to a decorous material. Columns and architraves with all their intricate carvings became just the icing on the cake. These features displayed themselves as elaborate expressions but were almost entirely without the forces of gravity actually running through their veins. Vaults and arches really were the Roman's "thing" despite their desire to imitate the

Greeks. We tend to look at the column in an almost platonic sense as an element to carry the load above to the element below, or as an upright with a functional or quasi functional intention. The unfluted (stucco) pilasters flanking the central arch of Alberti's Sant'Andrea in Mantua serve no structural purpose but play an important role in the articulation of the facade. Just as a fallen and broken column, struck by the ravages of time and stripped of any purpose retains a good deal of its potency. The force that a column wields beyond its basic function has been widely understood and every epoch invented its own interpretations.

In the early 1520s Titian painted the Pesaro Madonna in the Frari Basilica in Venice (for a pittance). Thematically, it depicts a sacred conversation witnessed by six members of the Pesaro family to commemorate the battle of Santa Maura, which was a mere footnote in the history of the Venice Republic. Titian began by assembling his extensive cast in a symmetric composition under an open barrel vault, in turn, supported by square pillars echoing the San Zaccaria altarpiece by his master Giovanni Bellini. Dissatisfied with this static arrangement he started over with a more dynamic illusion, placing the arch on a diagonal, with the Madonna off-centre, seemingly turned towards the visitor approaching the altar. Still unappeased, he radically painted out the arch and the cloth of honour above his twisted Madonna and introduced the bases of two gigantic circular stone columns disappearing in the heavens above. This architectural solution makes no spatial sense and one shaft appears too slender to fit the perspectival construct, but at the time, the theatrical power of those towering – useless – columns must have seemed as miraculous as the Madonna herself.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini put the divinely scaled column to work for a more earthly purpose. Over a hundred years after *Pala Pesaro*, the exuberant Bernini astonished the world with another piece of theatre, but this time set in stone, and in the real world. Supported by Pope Alexander VII, he created the sublime colonnade in front of Saint Peter's in Rome. His columns, four deep, not only reach for the celestial as suggested by Titian but they also run forever embracing the entire world below. His columns are 18 metres tall, which is roughly double the average size of the ancients'. The colonnades not only enclose the visitor in the "maternal arms of Mother Church", but define and formalise the space in urban terms, underscoring the role of the Pontifex Maximus – the most divine ruler on earth.

The column, however refined, remains a basic tool to express absolute power. Indeed, the colonnade and arcade can serve equally well as an instrument of control, an expression of princely power, a trademark of colonialism, a symbol of regional culture, as well as a means of integration on a social and physical



Photo Louise Greenland

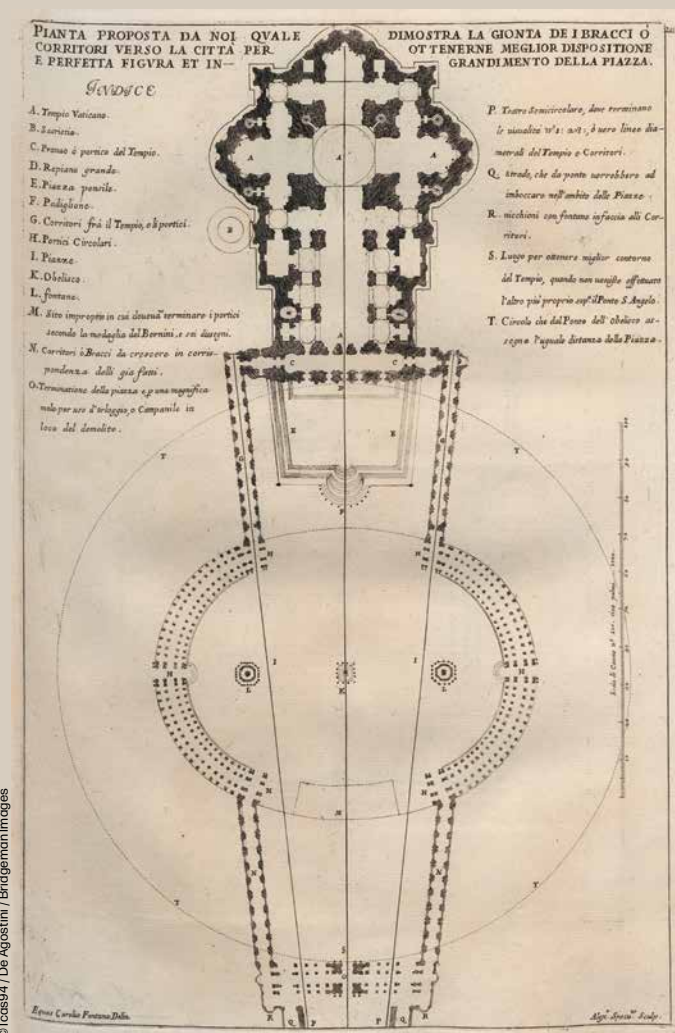


Photo © Raffaello Benacchi / Bridgeman Images

Every epoch invented its own interpretations of the column



© Fondation SAPA, Bern



© Iacobini / De Agostini / Bridgeman Images

level. Bologna luxuriates in over 30 km of arcades, by far exceeding any ancient city. They spread out from the old centre and have their roots in the founding of its university. The university had no buildings of its own at the time of its foundation, and all seminars and tutorials took place in the private realm or rented rooms. This turned the streets into the corridors of this ambulatory university.

By the early 13th century, the student number had risen to 10,000 and the city fathers decreed that all citizens had to build porticos in front of each house at their own cost. An ingenious system that eventually linked all residences to the lecture rooms (and churches) by means of covered walkways. The regulations not only defined their utility value and materiality but also prescribed the minimum height of 2.66 metres so they could be used by horses as well as pedestrians. The arcades combined the column with the Roman vault and arch. In answer to a physical need, they developed into a magnificent spider web with all sorts of spinoffs benefitting the users on several levels. On an urban level they achieved an astonishing cohesion regardless of form or style.

Fast forwarding, something similar was aimed at by Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani when he devised the masterplan for the Novartis Campus in Basel at the outset of this century. His building blocks are symmetrically arranged along the north-south axis (Fabrikstrasse) ending with a large sculpture by Richard Serra. The participating architects received precise guidelines for the individual buildings from the client, while the masterplan required comparatively very few. Each individual building should consist of 5 floors with a maximum height of 23 m, material choice remained undetermined and architects were encouraged to enter a dialogue with their neighbours. Crucially, however, all buildings facing the Fabrikstrasse, on the east side, had to have colonnades with a prescribed cross section of 4m by 6m tall. Both the main entrance to the building and the majority of prescribed public programme, for each building, should be located facing this arcade. Placing shops, restaurants and cafés on this new spine provided programme and formal cohesion simultaneously. A praiseworthy initiative in urban planning, demonstrating the indestructible power of the column in peristyle as understood by Bernini and the city fathers of Bologna. The venerable founders

of the oldest university city in the world, however, might have insisted for the arcades to march around the entire campus.

A little embarrassed by the woolly post-modernists, but nevertheless intoxicated with a small dose of nostalgia for an arcadian past, contemporary architects are once more grappling with the expressive potential of the column. They dare to look again beyond the purity of function melted into form and cleansed of all that became superfluous with the hard-line modernists.

The column in various shapes and configurations runs through the entire oeuvre of the guest editor's work not only as a formal proposition, but above all as a means of offering space to the general public where previously there was none to be had. For the Japanese architectural practice Sanaa on the other hand, the column - reduced to a bare minimum - helps to erode conventional hierarchies in buildings, dissolving the tension between the actual bearer elements and all spatial dividers or partitions. Structure is distributed across components with little presence. Occasionally, they adopt a uniform structural grid inherited from the Modern Movement but no sooner does the grid establish itself before it dissolves again. In plan drawings, these columns are marked by minuscule dots. Sanaa's work resides in a waiting room where the laws of gravity are apparently banished. Sanaa produce a particular aesthetic where the column is cast in a supporting role.

If the Saana team loves transparency, Hans Kollhoff feels embarrassed by clients desiring large expanses of glass. Kollhoff, sparked by Schinkel's genius and in pursuit of classical harmony, is currently interested in heavy masonry (or the appearance thereof). He does not hesitate to introduce a classic column to counterbalance an unwanted expanse of glass. The column he adopts - for a villa project in Munich for example, is an exact copy of an ancient Doric column, digitally cut out of a single piece of Carrara. "It does not make sense to design a new one" he states, adding that it now costs a fraction of what it used to, and it only takes a week to carve.³ He may have a point. Our contemporary cities consist of acres upon acres of flat glass. It leaves us with a bland and monotonous environment, lacking any visual interest but also with

inadequate facade systems facing the imminent climate change. Material mass does absorb the heat while orchestrated recesses with depth and relief create shadow supporting a cooling effect and create some visual relief.

Perhaps not an eco-warrior either, Valerio Olgiati finished a project for the municipality of Muharraq in Bahrain with a series of columns that operate on more than one level. (It is reviewed extensively by Bernhard Schulz on pages 48-60). A slender roof spans the site from east to west, supported by 75 columns just under ten metres tall, similar in height to most Greek temple columns. Different times, perhaps, but an interesting parallel can be drawn with Soane and Schinkel who also proposed chimney columns, be it for heating as opposed to cooling. Whatever their function, the columns take centre stage and create a modern temple celebrating the act of building just as the ancients did to honour the human presence and their interaction with nature, both divine and otherwise.

Rik Nys is an architect and freelance writer based in London. He has taught architecture and collaborated with David Chipperfield Architects for many years.

Previous spread: detail of SANAA's Koga Park Café in Ibaraki, Japan (1998). Opposite page. Above: detail of the Sala dei Giganti painted by Giulio Romano at Palazzo Te, Mantua (1536)

Below: plan of St. Peter's Square in Rome and Bernini's colonnade with the third arm. The engraving is from *Templum Vaticanum* by Carlo Fontana, 1694.

This page: Adolphe Appia, drawing of the stage set for the *La forêt sacrée*, 1896, in Act I of Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*. Charcoal on beige paper, 47.7 x 62.3 cm

Time

As the year closes, a devastating and disturbing year to say the least, we visit a key fundamental concept of our existence - TIME - a concept that probably was most challenged in the periods of lockdowns that followed the Covid-19 pandemic. Time as season, Time as travel, Time as four walls of a home (if you have one), Time as city, the one you denied the most, Time as migration and death, Time as hunger and walking on hot roads back home, Time as citizenship, Time as sowing and reaping the land, Time as taxes and elections, Time as speed, Time as quarantine, Time as incubation, Time as loss, Time as hope, Time as screen, Time as words on a page...

The special section in the last month of 2020 is a humble memory of Time and the year, through various artistic and architectural persuasions we have always had with Time - measured, poetic, drawn, cast, rendered, ego, memory, review, and learning. The poems that follow the editorial in this issue are part of this section - we begin with Ghalib, and we close this issue with Barahmasa... and in between somewhere there are lines, forms, materials, and colours, and what you saw, and what you may have forgotten or never realised, and the written word.

Ways of Time इ is for Itihasa

Text and photographs Anuradha Shankar and Sudha Ganapathi



इ is for इतिहास / Itihasa. Today, we think of *itihasa* as history, as the written story of the past, a record of an or events at a particular point in time. But *itihasa* did not always mean history. In fact, in Sanskrit *itihasa* means “it happened thus” or “so indeed it was”.

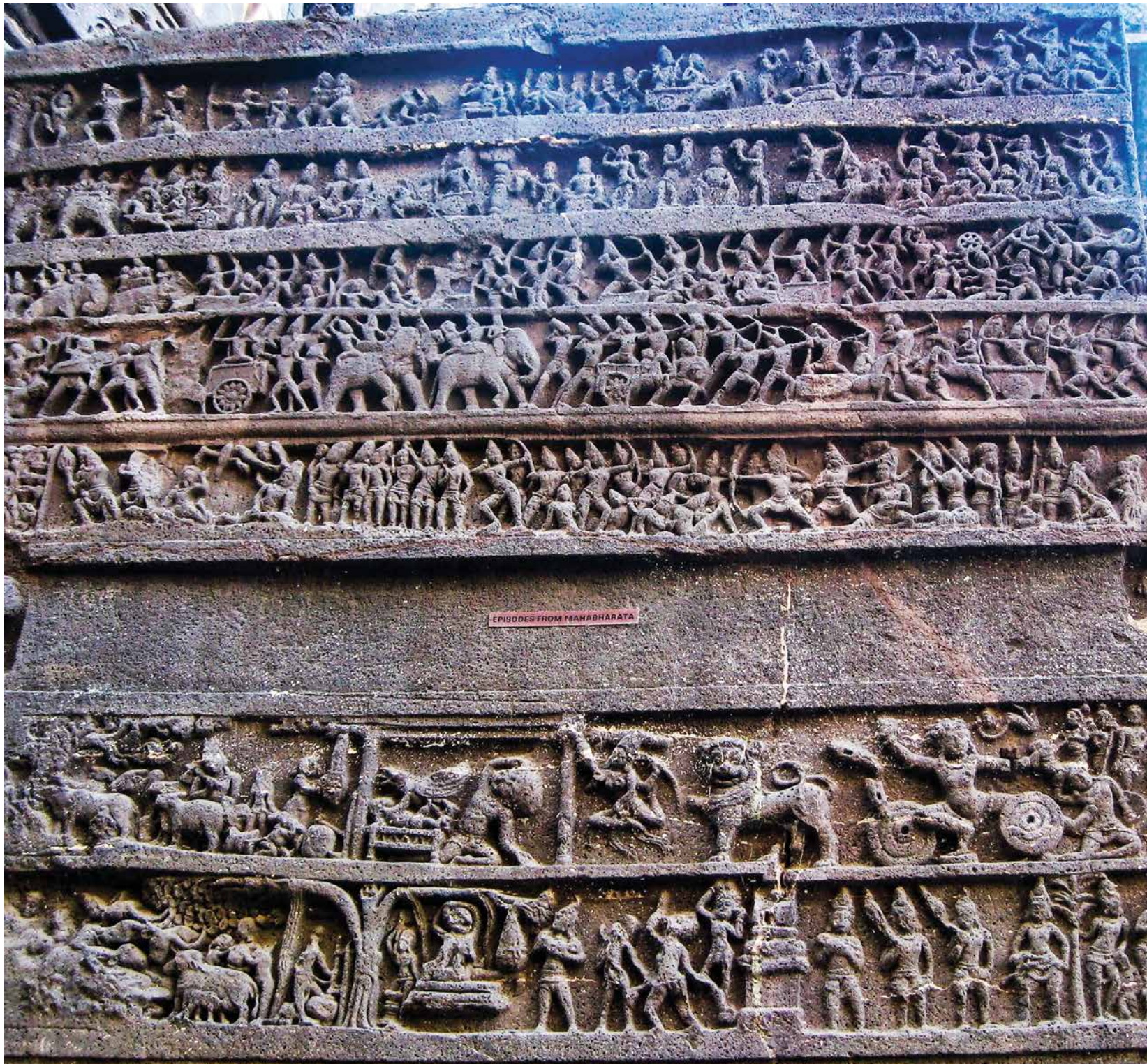
Therefore, in its truest sense, *itihasa* is what is written or narrated by one who has witnessed an event. Time was not as important as the person who wrote or narrated it. Thus, in the Indian tradition, the epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata - are *itihasa*s. They were written

This page above: Close up of the Mahabharata Panel, Ellora (8th century CE), showing Abhimanyu's last moments, as he fights, holding the wheel of his chariot as a shield.



This page below: Mahabharata panel, Kailasa Cave, Ellora, 8th century CE. The top 5 rows depict different scenes from the war, while the bottom two rows which are separate, show episodes from Krishna's life.

Left: Mahabharata panel from a temple pillar at Pattadakal (7th/8th century CE), showing Bhishma lying on the bed of arrows.



This page above: Kiratarjuniya, Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu (12th century CE). This relief sculpture depicts a popular story from the Mahabharata - the fight over a boar between the Pandava prince, Arjuna (left) and Shiva (right) who is disguised as a Kirata or a hunter. Below: Ramayana panel, Kailasa Cave, Ellora (8th century CE). The narrative starts with Rama, Lakshmana and Sita starting their exile, on the top left, and shows various episodes during the exile and the war at Lanka.





This page above left: Ramayana panel from a temple pillar at Pattadakal (7th/8th century CE). All the four rows are to be seen from right to left. The top row depicts the Surpanakha episode, the next one the war with Khara and Dushana, and Surpankha going to Ravana for help, the third row has the golden deer, and the fourth row, the abduction of Sita.

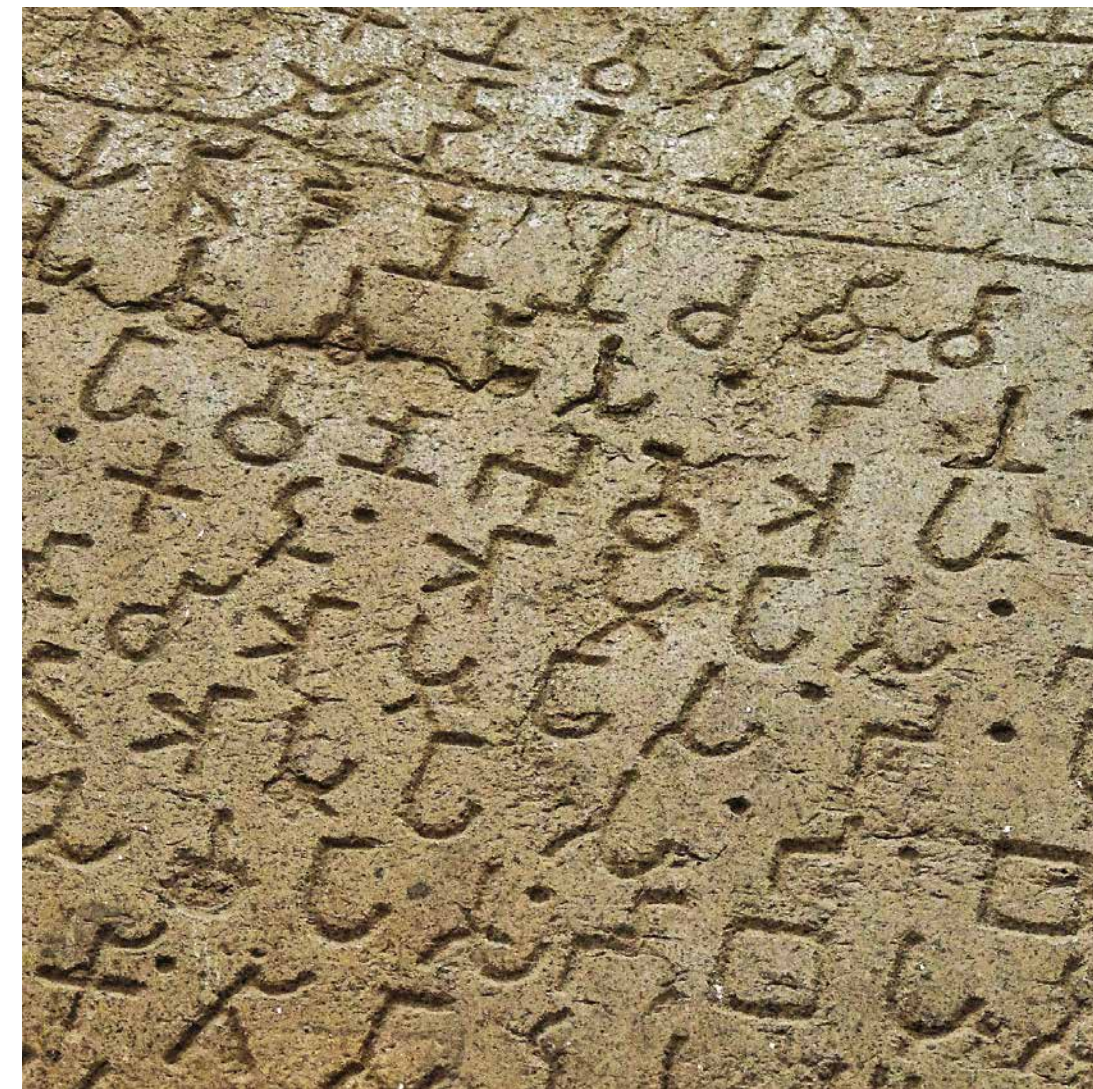
Above right: Vali and Sugriva engaged in fighting, Hampi (15th century CE). Right: Ceiling painting of Rama's Pattabhisekham or coronation from Azhagar Koil, Madurai (c. 18th century).



by the sages Valmiki and Vyasa, respectively, both of whom were present during the events that occurred.

Both these epics are popular themes in Indian art, and are seen in most temples as narrative panels, with some of the best known ones at the Kailasa Cave at Ellora, the temples at Pattadakal and the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu. Individual scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata can be seen on carved on pillars or painted on ceilings in temples.

Itihasa in the more modern sense is also seen in the ancient art of epigraphy, in the inscriptions recording donations, mentioning

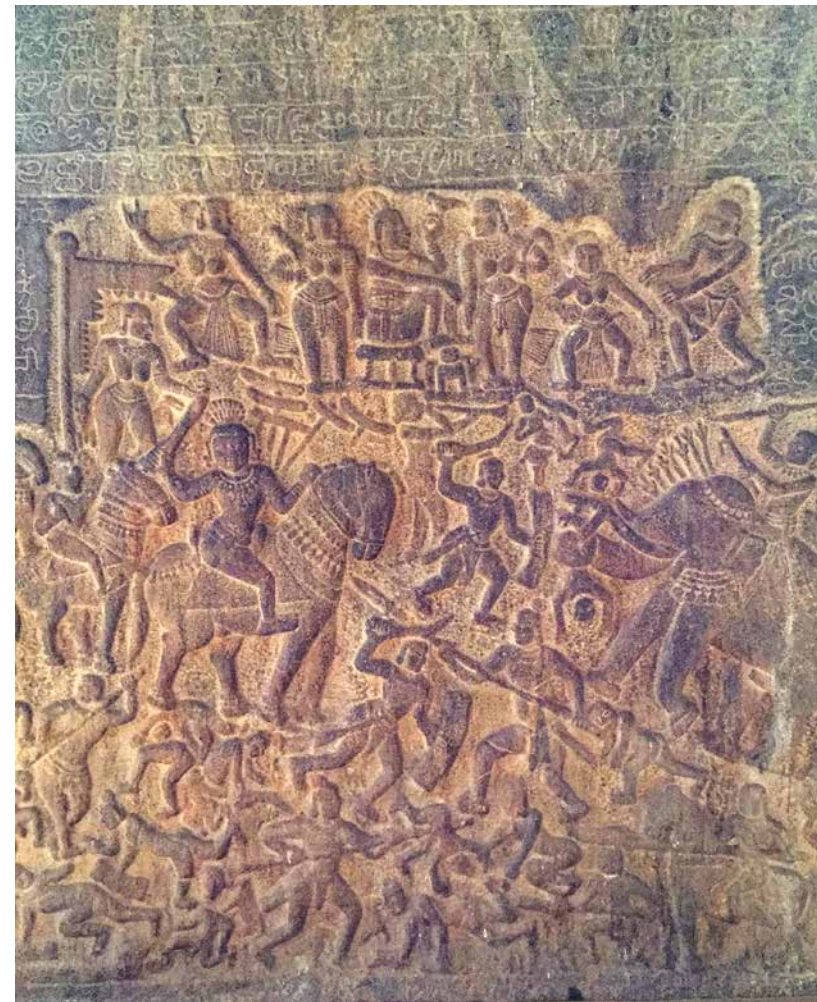
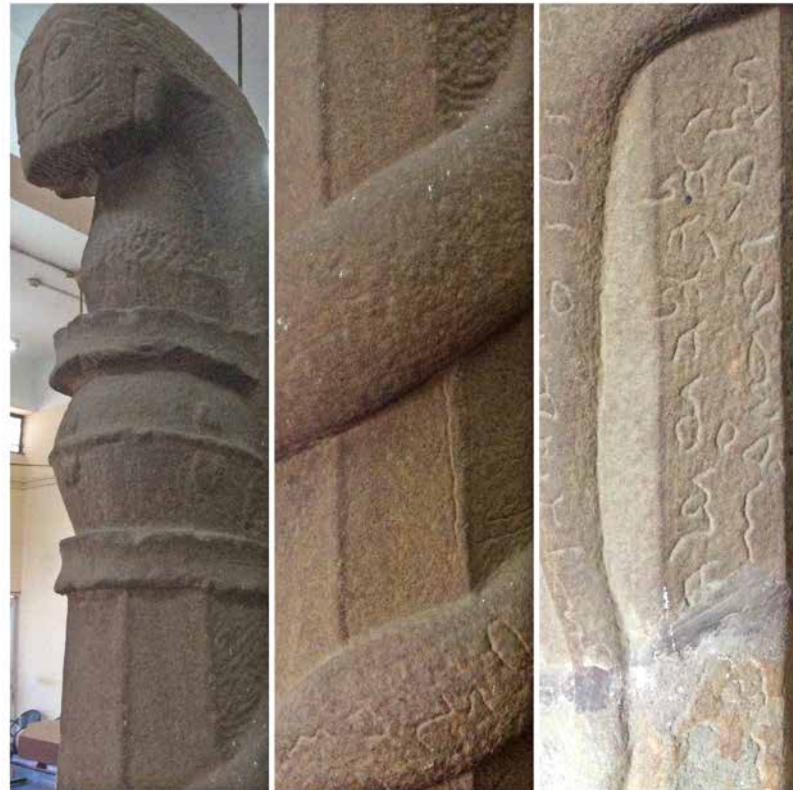


This page, above: The Junagadh Inscription, Gujarat. This rock has inscriptions of three great rulers of India. The earliest inscription is an Ashokan edict, dating to the 3rd century BCE. The second is by the Western Kshatrapa ruler, Rudradaman I, who writes about the maintenance and restoration of a lake around 150 CE, and the 3rd is of Skandagupta, around 450 CE. This rock, thus, provides us with historical information over more than 500 years! The Rudradaman inscription is also the earliest inscription written in classical, poetic Sanskrit (*kavya*), and thus provides information about language as well. Left: Close up of the inscription, showing the Brahmi script used.

Next page, above: The Hathigumpha inscription, of King Kharavela of Kalinga (2nd/ 1st century BCE), at Udaygiri Caves near Bhubaneswar. This is one of the earliest biographical sketches of an Indian king, which narrates his achievements over 13 years of his reign. Next page, below left: Snake pillar inscription in Ahom script and language (1st century CE). The inscription records the declaration made during the reign of Swargadeo Suhummong (1498-1539) where the Mismis would give four baskets of poison to the Ahoms in exchange for being allowed to live in the hills. The inscription recorded on both the 20 feet tall pillar and the body of snake that is wound around it.



This page, right: The Begur inscription (c. 890 CE) has the earliest reference to the name Bengaluru. The inscription, which is now housed in the Government Museum at Bengaluru, is in Halegannada (or ancient Kannada), and refers to the 'Bengaluru Kadana' (battle of Bengaluru) that took place between the Gangas and the Nolambas (Shaivites). The stone slab, which has the inscription also has a scenes from the battle carved on it.

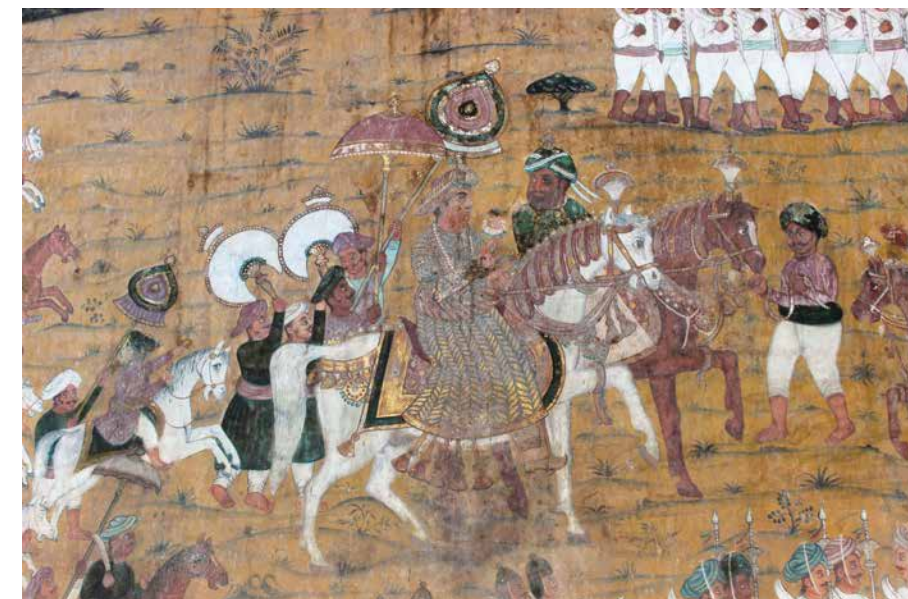


Above: A selection of coins, from British India to Independent India, including an unidentified sikka, and coins of two princely states - Gwalior and Travancore.

Below left: Wall painting (c. 1790) of Tipu Sultan on a horse at the Dariya Daulat Bagh or Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace at Srirangapatna. Here, Tipu Sultan holds a

flower in a pose reminiscent of Mughal emperors
Below right: Sketch of Emperor Jehangir meeting an officer, by Rembrandt (c. 1656-1661),

Holland, British Museum. Seen at the "India and the World" exhibition at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya.



This page: Veergal or Hero Stone, depicting the death of a hero in a naval battle, as suggested by the presence of the ship. 12th century CE, Goa Archaeological Museum.



lineages and preserving information for posterity. It is also seen in the coinage produced by kings and queens over the centuries; in the veergals or hero stones that are found scattered across the country; in the portraits or regents and emperors; among others.

Itihasa can also be contentious as in the case of the 12th century chronicle of Kashmiri kings, *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* by the poet Kalhana. Scholars are divided over whether it is an epic poem or whether it is history since it is taught as both in universities across India.

Itihasa is not only the written word or a stone sculpture or a painting; it is also the oral tradition, the stories told by our grandparents, the Ramayana or the Bhagavatham narrated in temples, in the folk songs of heroes sung by bards in various languages.... *Itihasa* is all this and more. It is not history, as much as “our story”, the story of where we came from, our faiths, our beliefs, and our ideals.

Itihasa is as much about timelessness as it is about time.

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This page: Directory of Sangneri Prints (Silk Dupion, Block printing with khaari gold print, Rajasthan). This directory, which was made by Radha Mohan in 1986, is part of the collection of the National Museum of Handlooms and Handicrafts. A compilation of all the Sangneri prints ever created, it is has a sense of timelessness and is *itihasa* of a different kind.



Public Time

SEEING TIME: Public Clocks of Bombay

Text and Photos Chirodeep Chaudhuri

I have regularly been asked about how I found these buildings. I could say – with tenacity.

But, perhaps, I should just say that it was a combination of observation, legwork and sometimes, a feeling in the gut. As a photographer of the streets it isn't uncommon to develop an instinct for a somewhat 180 degree vision of happenings on the ground. My peculiar pursuit, however, with time trained me to include in my line of vision the additional 90 degrees of the vertical plane. Quite regularly, in the middle of a conversation, while walking, my eyes would involuntarily travel up the facade to the pediments of buildings. Over the years I started to identify certain features of buildings –

Victorian, Neo-Gothic, Art Deco, or even Bombay's vernacular – which seemed to be likely locations to find a clock.

Sometimes I would enter a lane following the spire of a church or the minaret of a mosque spotted from a distance. On occasions I would make a detour, just to double-check, if I remembered a building that had a dynamic elevation or stood at an important junction of roads, like the Majestic Building opposite Regal Cinema or the Guru Singh Saheb Gurudwara, a short walk from Dadar T. T. Last year, I spotted a clock when I casually turned to look out of a taxi while stuck in traffic on Duncan Road, my road blocked by a tangle of laden handcarts. I

Opposite page:
Sassoon-Docks-@-
Colaba





I often felt as though Bombay's clocks were following me, teasing me, just as I was hot in pursuit of them.



Public time



Opposite page, top:
Reay-Road-Station
Below: Fulchand-Niwās
This page: Roopwala-Terrace-@-Mahin-W

had passed through this road before too but this was, perhaps, to be my day of revelation. Serendipity, as you see, played no small a role. Another time, I chanced upon a scan of a vintage postcard pinned on a soft board in my friend's office and discovered that the Dwarkadhish Temple had a clock.

I often felt as though Bombay's clocks were following me, teasing me, just as I was hot in pursuit of them. My mother one day, informed me about the Prince's Triumphal Arch, an arched gateway which stands at an awkward angle, surrounded by hawkers' stalls and its clock concealed by a tree, near Cadbury's junction.

Now, it seemed people around me, those not really in the habit of 'seeing', had also begun to get infected with a bit of my madness. But, mostly, people informed me of ones that I had already spotted.

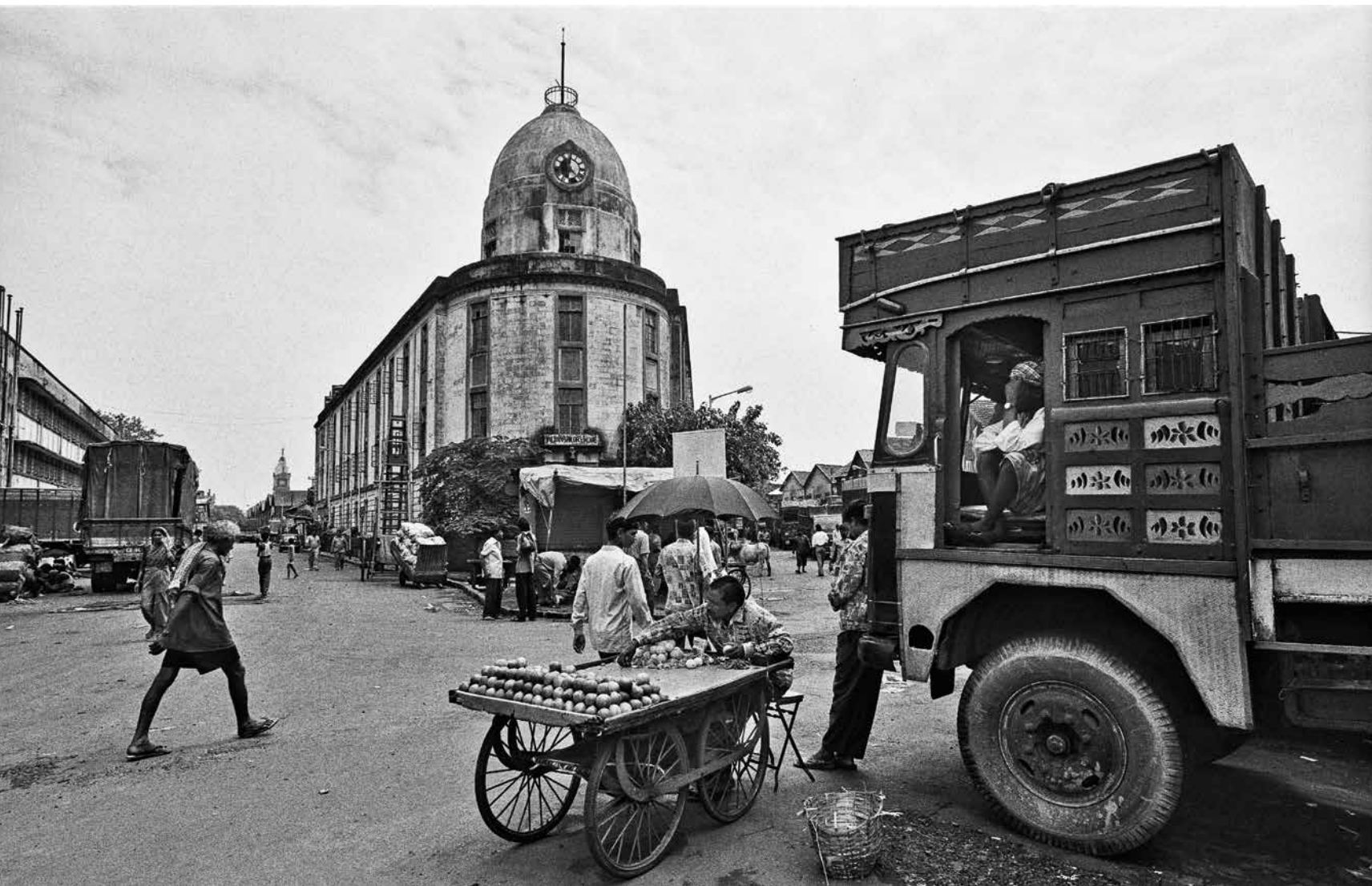
Then in early 2016, I put up a social media post requesting friends to keep a look out. That led me to being alerted about a sundial at the Kamala Nehru Park, the clock on the Gramdevi Devalaya at Gamdevi and an unusual one above the elevator door of the Punjab National Bank Building on P. M. Road. A friend remembering her childhood in the back lanes of Sion told me about Shanti Sadan Apartments, popularly known as



This page, Top:
Dwarkadhish-temple@-
Kalbadevi
Below: Indian-Sailors-
Home@-Masjid
Opposite page: Keshavji-
Nayak-Pyau-Clock-
Tower@-Masjid-W

'Ghadiwala building' by locals. That clock no longer exists. Mrs. Shah, on whose terrace the clock once stood, these days, puts out a bowl of water there for the birds.

In late 1996, by the time I had begun photographing Bombay's public clocks, most of them were in a state of disrepair, their purpose one could argue, already redundant. Some were lost to callousness, others to apathy. A dubious fire burnt down the Swadeshi Mills at Kurla and its clock tower in 2004. For years I argued with myself whether the square clock above the entrance of the Kaivalyadhama Yoga Center on Marine Drive would fit my definition of a public clock. Then one day the clock was gone and I have,



since then, scolded myself for over-thinking rather than shooting that photograph. Monsoon time leakages, the scourge of the city's buildings, corroded the iron parts of the Aurora Cinema clock in the mid-80s. Glass panes cover the hole on the dome of the Indian Sailor's Home where I had once photographed a clock. That clock was sent for repairs and no one bothered when it never returned.

For nearly 23 years I have walked around Mumbai as though looking for my daily fix. I now have a list of 80 on an excel sheet. A significant percentage of these are in the Fort precinct – the original business district in colonial Bombay



Glass panes cover the hole on the dome of the Indian Sailor's Home where I had once photographed a clock. That clock was sent for repairs and no one bothered when it never returned.

This page, Top: Hallai-Mahajan-Bhatiwadi-chawl@-Kalbadevi
Below: David-Sassoon-Library
Opposite page:
Sassoon-Clock-Tower@-Jijamata-Udyan



where appointments must have been important and time might have been money. The rest are scattered and exist in clusters in the residential and mercantile localities through the city and the reasons for their existence range from desiring a landmark to serving the neighbourhood or simply to know when to pray to ones Gods.

Chirodeep Chaudhuri. January, 2020.



This page, top:
Chhatrapati-Shivaji-
Terminus

Below: Industrial-
Assurance-Bldg



This page: Khoja-Shiya-
Imami-Ismaili-
Jamatkhana-@-Masjid-W

The exhibition Seeing Time: The public clocks of Bombay is on show at the Project 88 Gallery, Mumbai from 19th November 2020 to 30th January 2021.

Time and Image

The shadow trapper's almanac

Artist Tanmoy Samanta Text Ranjit Hoskote

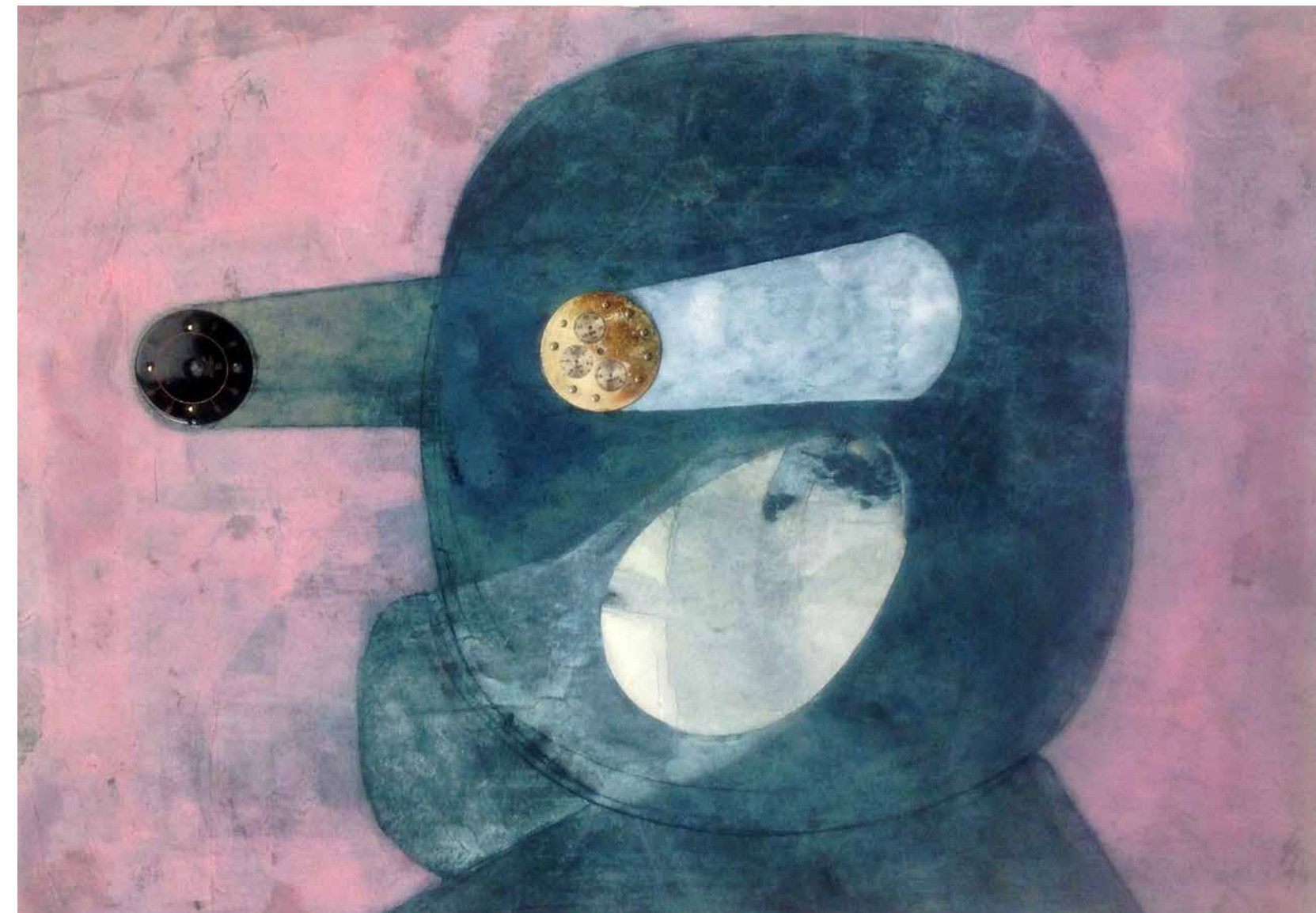
“The universe has many paradoxes, one among which is that where there’s an extensive landscape, endless sky, dense clouds, a deep feeling, in other words in a place where the eternal is manifest, there its appropriate companion can be only one person. Infinity and one person are both evenly balanced in relation to one another – both deserve to sit on their individual thrones face-to-face.”
-Rabindranath Tagore [1]

I imagine Tanmoy Samanta as a jeweller working in a cone of light, his desk secured against a darkness that spreads out in every direction and has many names: war, forgetting, genocide, fear, exile. Samanta makes images that we may set as talismans against this many-named darkness; finely tuned and delicate as they seem, observe that these images have sharp images on which unsuspecting viewers may



Tanmoy Samanta
THE GLOBE
Gouache on Rice Paper
12 x 17 inches
2013

Tanmoy Samanta
**A PORTRAIT OF THE
ARTIST AS A
YOUNG MAN**
Gouache on Rice Paper
10 x 12 inches
2014



cut their hands. The edges of rusting machines that have not lost their power to hurt or heal, serrated blades, a plough with dragon’s teeth: these occupy Samanta’s gouache paintings on rice paper. Alongside them, we find instruments calibrated to weigh infinitesimal volumes of air or sediments of gathered dust, just enough in the pans of the scale to shift the delicate counterpoise of forces that governs the planet.

Samanta’s paintings are a laboratory for the staging of enigmatic events. Here, the artist tests the balance between object and emptiness; here, also, gravity and flight contest one another’s claims. Intriguingly, given that his is primarily a painterly practice, Samanta demonstrates formal preoccupations that might seem more germane to the sculptor’s domain. He addresses the binaries of volume and void, relief and surface, container and content, in his paintings as well as in his more properly sculptural engagement with altered or recycled books. Both suites of work are represented in

‘The Shadow Trapper’s Almanac’, the artist’s first solo exhibition in Bombay.

Samanta is fascinated by the cabinet and the mirror: these act, in his paintings, as repositories of secrets, asides, the ephemera and the detritus of history. They bracket clouded memories, crystalsharp dreams and forking futures. One of Samanta’s cabinets frames the ruins of factories and the trajectories of dive-bombers; one of his mirrors holds a vertebral column belonging to the lost specimen of an endangered species, the singularly insipient and ill named *Homo sapiens*. The box, another favoured image in the artist’s visual dictionary, condenses the chronicles of erased centuries and the imprints of mountains into the briefest of moments. Samanta’s paintings encode memoirs of war and industry, doomed heroism and auguries of invasion, the predicament of the individual self confronted and overwhelmed by systems. We come upon a robot mastiff in one of the present paintings, a guard dog run amok;

another painting invites us to consider a pair of twinned weapons swimming in a glass bowl, a sinister aquarium fraught with the potential for apocalypse.

Intimate as Samanta’s paintings are, it is within them that he confronts infinity face-to-face, as Rabindranath Tagore suggests in the passage that I have chosen as the epigraph to this essay. Samanta elaborates his gouaches on rice paper as exquisite disarrangements of the everyday world and its architecture of objects, motives and consequences. He plays with latent correspondences, activates affinities among objects not otherwise closely related. Crucial to his enterprise is the need to get through the maze of subterfuges and delusions to the interiority of things. In one of the paintings in the suite, a rabbit sits outside rather than inside a loosely arranged labyrinth, as though mesmerized by the structure, hoping to enter rather than escape it. In another painting, the artist portrays himself as a cyborg or armoured



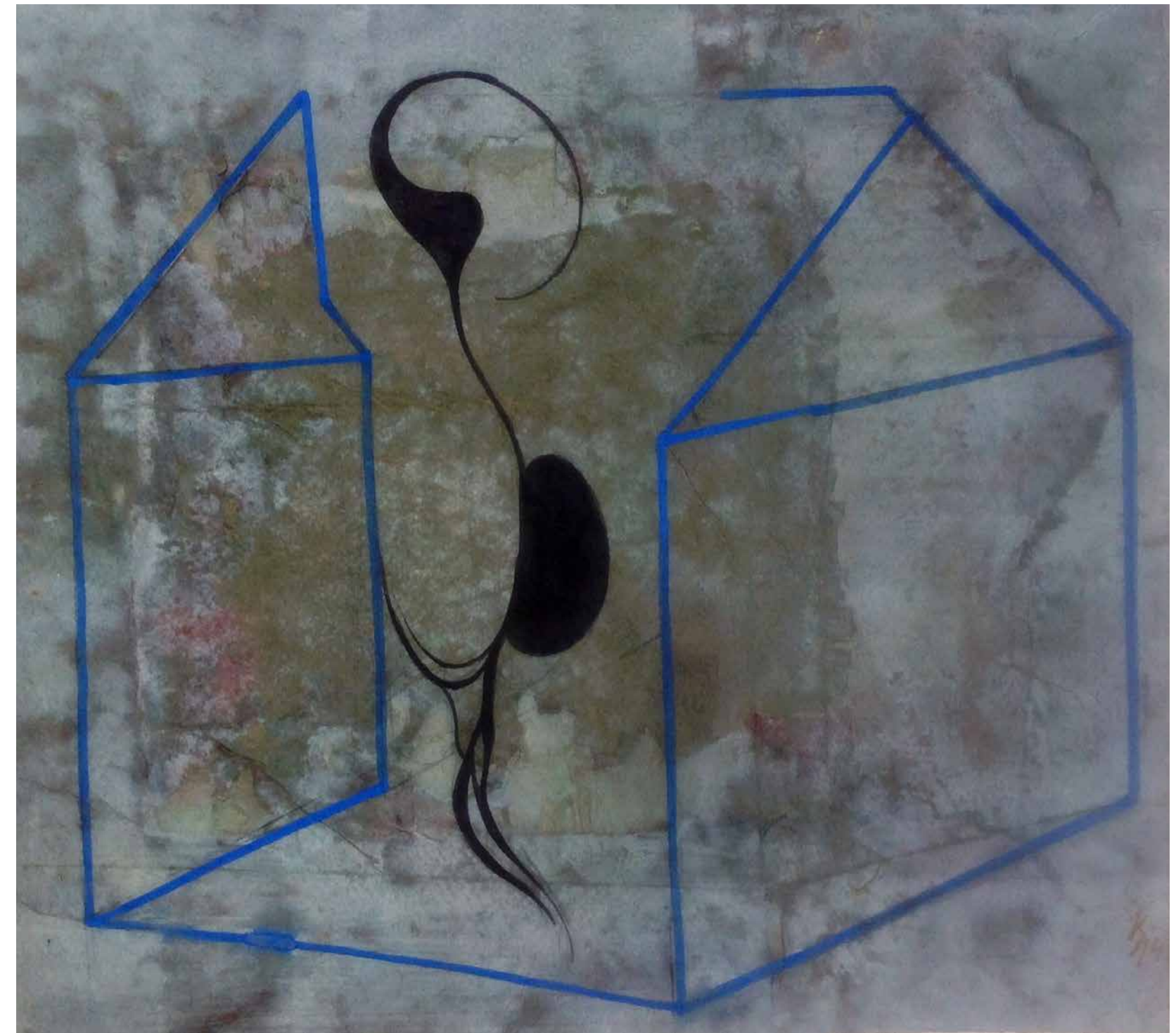
diver with periscopic eyes; wryly, too, he reduces the homeland or nation to a piece of land splintered and set afloat, an island torn from its conventional moorings.

I see Samanta as a trapper of shadows, trawling elusive sensations and fugitive thoughts, mysterious signs and half-glimpsed visions in his net. Yet, having collected these, he arranges them in what I regard as an almanac: a record of seasons and tides, schedules for sowing and harvesting, an itinerary of the sun's rhythms and the moon's, the pattern of equinox,

solstice and eclipse. The most likely derivation of the word 'almanac' is from the Andalusian Arabic *almanaqq*, a table of climatic conditions, a way of finding direction through life and its natural circumstances. It serves those who work with the hoe just as it does those who steer by the astrolabe; in Samanta's artistic practice, we discern both the farmer's patience and the sailor's intrepidity.

Born in 1973, Samanta, who lives and works in New Delhi, was raised in an environment rich in literary and artistic experience. Both

his parents were participants in the Bengali 'little magazine' movement; he grew up to savour the Tagorean ethos of Santiniketan, developing his practice there and later in the collegial setting of the Kanoria Arts Centre, Ahmedabad. Early in his career, he taught at Rajghat, the Krishnamurti Foundation's school in Varanasi. He found the philosopher J Krishnamurti's approach congenial to his own temperament, with its emphasis on a wide receptivity towards the world, the flowering of creativity without the oppression of canon or dogma, and a generosity



Opposite page, above:
Tanmoy Samanta
THE EYE
Gouache on Rice Paper
30 x 42 inches
2013

Opposite page, Below:
Tanmoy Samanta
THE VOID LAND
Gouache on Rice Paper
30 x 42 inches
2013

This page: Tanmoy
Samanta
HOUSE ON FIRE
Gouache on Rice Paper
10 x 12 inches
2014



This page:
Tanmoy Samanta
STILL LIFE
 Gouache on Rice Paper
 30 x 42 inches
 2013

Opposite page, above:
Tanmoy Samanta
Seer
 Pigment and rice paper
 on canvas
 24x30 Inches
 2006

Opposite page, below:
Tanmoy Samanta
The Time Hive
 Gouache on Rice Paper
 9 x 10 inches
 2013

of spirit when dealing with the unpredictable variety of cultural manifestations.

As an artist active in what the philosopher and art critic Arthur C. Danto memorably theorized as a 'post-historical' period, Samanta has framed his own genealogy, his own sources of inspiration and points of reference. The advent of the post-historical has emancipated artists like him from the anxiety of defining and contextualizing a practice in terms of the contention between such arthistorical phases as 'modernism' and what was for a time loosely and unhelpfully spoken of as 'postmodernism', and from the teleological understanding of art history that endowed such an unstable periodization with academic value.

Elements of cutout and collage surface in Samanta's work, persistences of Surrealist and Dada practices: he is an heir to Max Ernst, Schwitters, Chirico and Magritte. Equally, with his quiet insistence on exploring the miniature

and its potential for compressing epic narrative and psychic material into idiosyncratic signals, he draws on the legacy of Gaganendranath and Rabindranath Tagore. Samanta's sleight of scale, the sophisticated visual and conceptual games that he offers his viewers, and his philosophical preoccupation with the interplay between phantasm and palpability also put us strongly in mind of the legendary Bombay painter Prabhakar Barwe (1936-1995).

Samanta's studio practice has, also, several points of affinity with that of the classical miniaturist: dexterity, patience and epiphany are combined here in equal measure. While crafting a distinctive vocabulary of stylized forms, Samanta has also evolved a specific array of techniques. When preparing a painting, his first move is to paste the thin rice paper that serves as his pictorial surface on the thicker paper that acts as its base; once this layering has been accomplished, he builds up the painting in

a sequence of layers, beginning with dark and moving successively to lighter colours.

Through his adroit use of scumbling, the earlier, darker layers often show through the later, lighter ones, imparting both a chromatic and a textural richness to his paintings, transmuting them into palimpsests. Samanta experiments with a palette of sap green, mulberry, chalky pink, dusty metal blues, shadowy jade and celadon, and blood-pricked reds; his muted tonalities evoke the spectral presence of burnished heirlooms, inherited shawls, parchments bearing ancestral histories, and time-stained walls; the interiors, perhaps, of the grand feudal-mercantile palazzos of Jorasanko that have decayed in architectural reality but retain their vivid presence in the imagination.

The interplay between the visual and the literary has led Samanta, in recent years, to experiment with the form of the book. He



explores with various avatars of the book, including, as we shall soon see, the *kitab*, the *muraqqa*, and the *laporetto*. In another departure, he reconstructs the book through the use of altered or recycled materials, blurring the distinction between the page and other modes of recording and annotating experience, such as the map, the clock or the weather chart. These works bear an affinity with sculpture, and articulate the recurrent fascination that he demonstrates for such devices as the chronicle, the labyrinth, the atlas and the almanac.

In this context, I imagine Samanta as a librarian, a dramaturge of memory: archivist sifting among the scrolls and folios; custodian of parchment, vellum and birch bark; questor of the book as talisman promising protection from the all-too-easy descent into a contemporary savagery and ignorance exacerbated by the increasingly sophisticated technologies that make these conditions possible and sustain them. The artist experiments with various scales and formats. He presents his books as acts of homage to the *kitab* of the Perso-Arabic global ecumene that once stretched from Spain to Indonesia, laid on a rihal or traditional carved bookstand, shaped as a foldable X. Or he arranges them as a sequence of discrete images reminiscent of a *muraqqa* or Mughal album of miniatures, originally convenient to the mobile Turko-Mongol cultures and eventually integral to the hybrid visual universe of the Company School. He also draws them out in the beguiling form of a *laporetto* or accordion book, with the pictorial narrative unfolding section by surprising section.

Samanta's altered and recycled books enshrine the complexity of the experience of reading. They invite us to read together with him; which means, also, to be baffled by what seems illegible or weathered yet demands decipherment. Through this gesture, we, as viewers, become the artist's colleagues, linked to him quite literally by the etymology of this term as fellow readers. With him, we attend to the paradox of knowledge: its expansion is proportionate to the expansion of what remains unknown. In 'The Cartographer's Paradox', the more the atlas embraces, the more the continents escape its grasp; the world remains egg-like, a generative principle rather than an object of study.

With him, again, we attend to the mutability of time, its ability to inhabit a spectrum of scales from the instant to the aeon. 'The Time Keeper's Manual', a set of four books moulded in paper that has been through a baptism and remade, we confront the dials of watches, the faces of the hours, arranged to suggest different directives of visual order or cosmic patterns: the grid; the beehive; the constellation; and a pair of eyes uncannily reminiscent of those of a great Hindu deity, perhaps the Devi. Reading with him, also, we reflect on the perennial, formative tension between the works of humankind and the cycles



This page, above:
Tanmoy Samanta
The Time Keeper's Manual a, b, c, d
 (set of four)
 Old Book, Rice Paper,
 Discarded
 Watch-dials
 10 x 12 inches
 2013
 Left: **Tanmoy Samanta**
THE CARTOGRAPHER'S PARADOX
 Old Book, Rice Paper,
 Atlas Maps,
 Wooden Eggs
 10 x 12 inches
 2013

of nature: 'Melancholy Sky' 1 and 2 are laporetos or accordion books, one in red tonalities and the other in shades of grey, both mobilizing the forms of architecture and human endeavour against a gathering storm.

In 'Random Birds', we find the artist making field notes as he watches birds build nests: in this sequence of paintings, we savour stylized profiles reminiscent of the hoopoe, the kite, the duck, the stork, the macaw and other denizens of the air, rendered in parchment against textured purple surfaces. This is an extended meditation on habitation, belonging, the framing of a space to call one's own, and indeed, the gradual transformation of space into place. In terms of the mise en scene of the exhibition, it has been a stimulating challenge to devise a way of framing or hanging these works: they defy the conventional viewing arrangements of the white cube, organically connected as they are to an earlier relationship between viewer and

image, where the folio was held in the hands and admired, not located at a distance on a wall.

To my eye, 'Random Birds' not only invokes the *muraqqa*, but also constitutes an elegant homage to a specific example of the form: the memorable and historically important compilation known as Lady Impey's album, comprising more than two hundred gouache paintings on paper by Shaikh Zayn al-Din, Bhawani Das and Ram Das, the stellar artists of the so-called Company School. These exquisite and meticulously detailed studies in natural history - most of them representing birds but also including some animals, fish and reptiles - were commissioned by Mary, Lady Impey, wife of Chief Justice Sir Elijah Impey, and created between 1777 and 1782 in Calcutta.

Perhaps it is our fate, in the post-historical moment, to be connoisseurs of the fragment, to retrieve the epic through the lyric and the encyclopaedia through the episode. Even so,

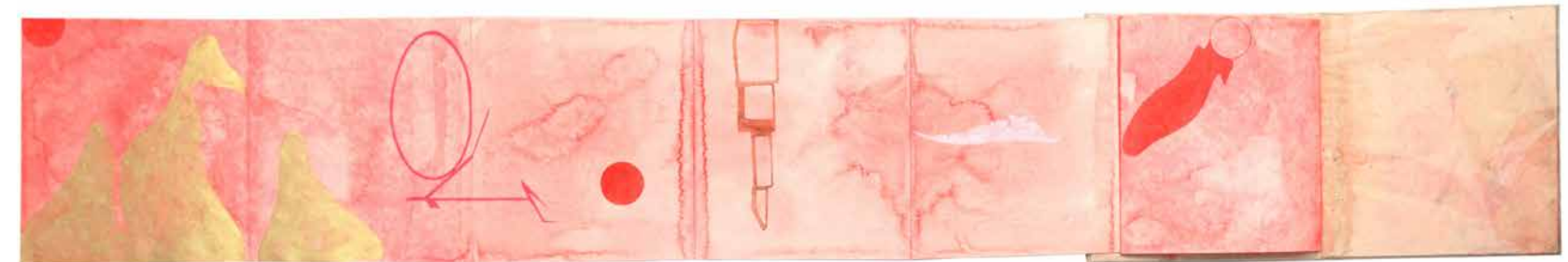
this is an invigorating and productive fate to embrace; in identifying and gathering fragments, we recreate the world through a kaleidoscopic, ever-changing set of relationships among parts that exceed the whole. In this sense, Tanmoy Samanta's works, with their combination of exhilaration and menace, formal playfulness and philosophical depth, remind us that art is not an escape from the world, but a route that leads us back, replenished by dream and vision, to the perplexities of the everyday.

(Bombay: October 2014)

Notes

1. *Rabindranath Tagore, Letters from a Young Poet, 1887-1895* (trans. Rosinka Chaudhuri; New Delhi: Penguin, 2014), p. 113.

All material courtesy TARQ Gallery.



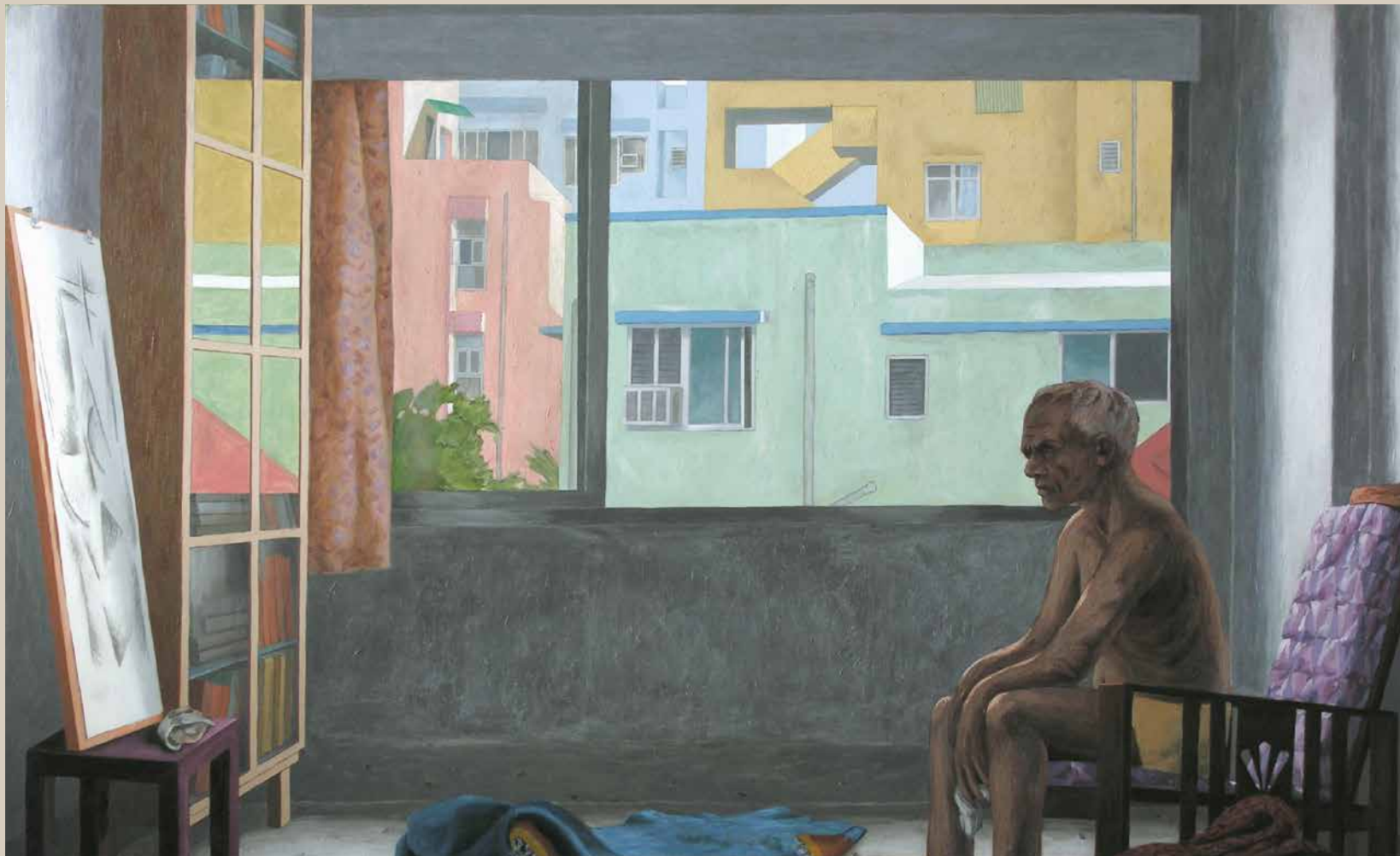
This page, above:
Tanmoy Samanta
MELANCHOLY SKY 1
 Old Book, Handmade
 Paper,
 Watercolour
 14 x 18 x 36 inches
 2013
 Left: **Tanmoy Samanta**
MELANCHOLY SKY 1,
 detail
 Old Book, Handmade
 Paper,
 Watercolour
 14 x 18 x 36 inches
 2013

Space, Time, and Artist

Walking Through Soul City

Ek Sair Ruh ke Sheher Mé

Text Nancy Adajania



Abstractionist, 2005,
acrylic on canvas,
48 x 78 in.



Accident on May Day
1981 oil on canvas
48 x 72 in

Sudhir Patwardhan: A Retrospective

The drawn curtain hides the lake, shimmering like a web of diamonds in the afternoon sun. In his home in Thane, Sudhir Patwardhan unveils his new painting, *'Nagrik'*. In it, four figures levitate above a cityscape like colossi rising from yet claimed by an Escheresque patchwork of buildings that alternately recedes from and advances towards us.

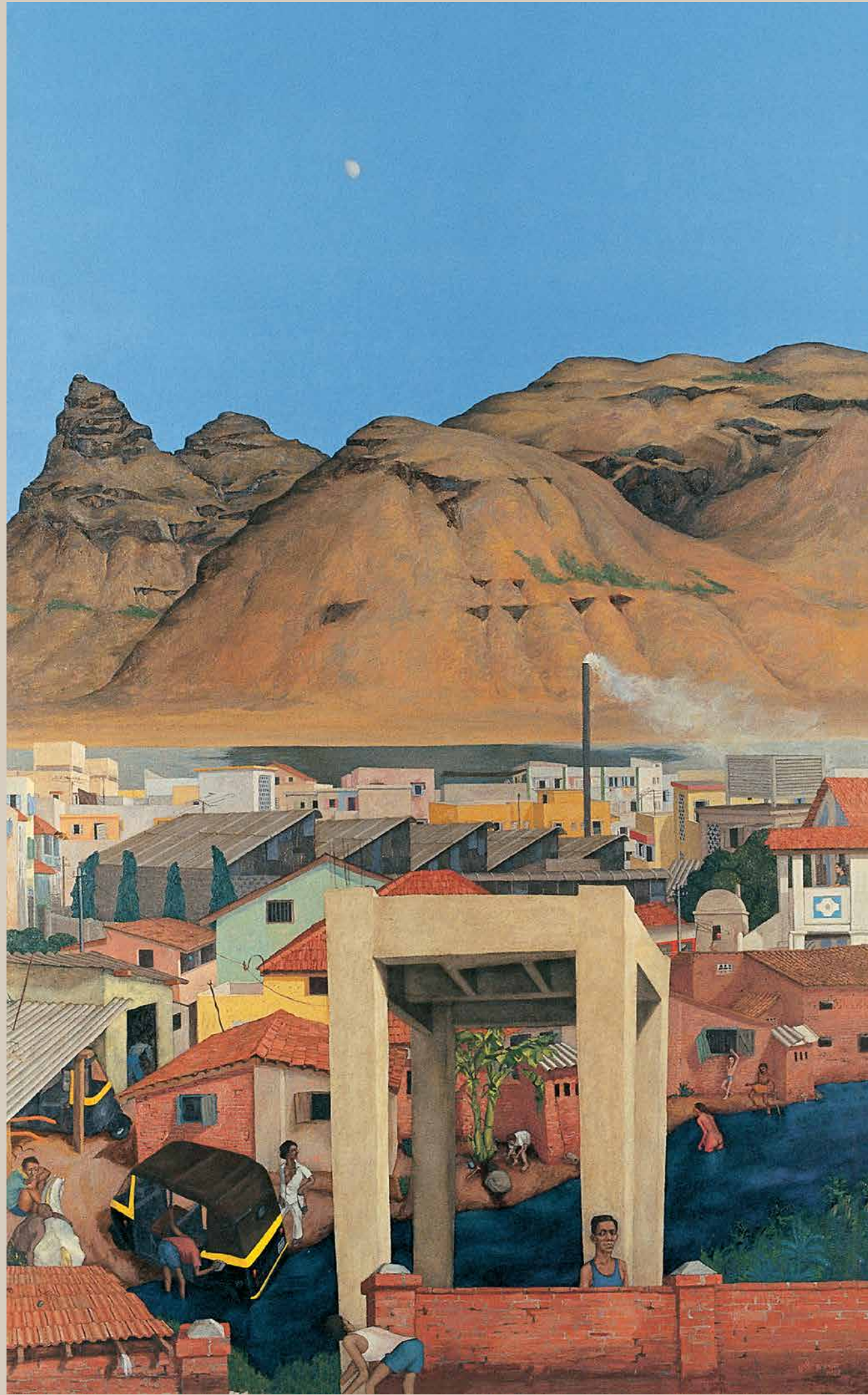
It is not unusual to encounter ordinary citizens fashioned as monumental beings in Patwardhan's paintings. *'Running Woman'* (1977) is one such, inspired by the larger-than-life figures in Mexican murals and offered as testimony to the resilience of the working woman. But what we encounter here is more than a simple valorization of the subaltern body. These figures who float above

rooftops have released themselves, however momentarily, from the hegemony of social structures.

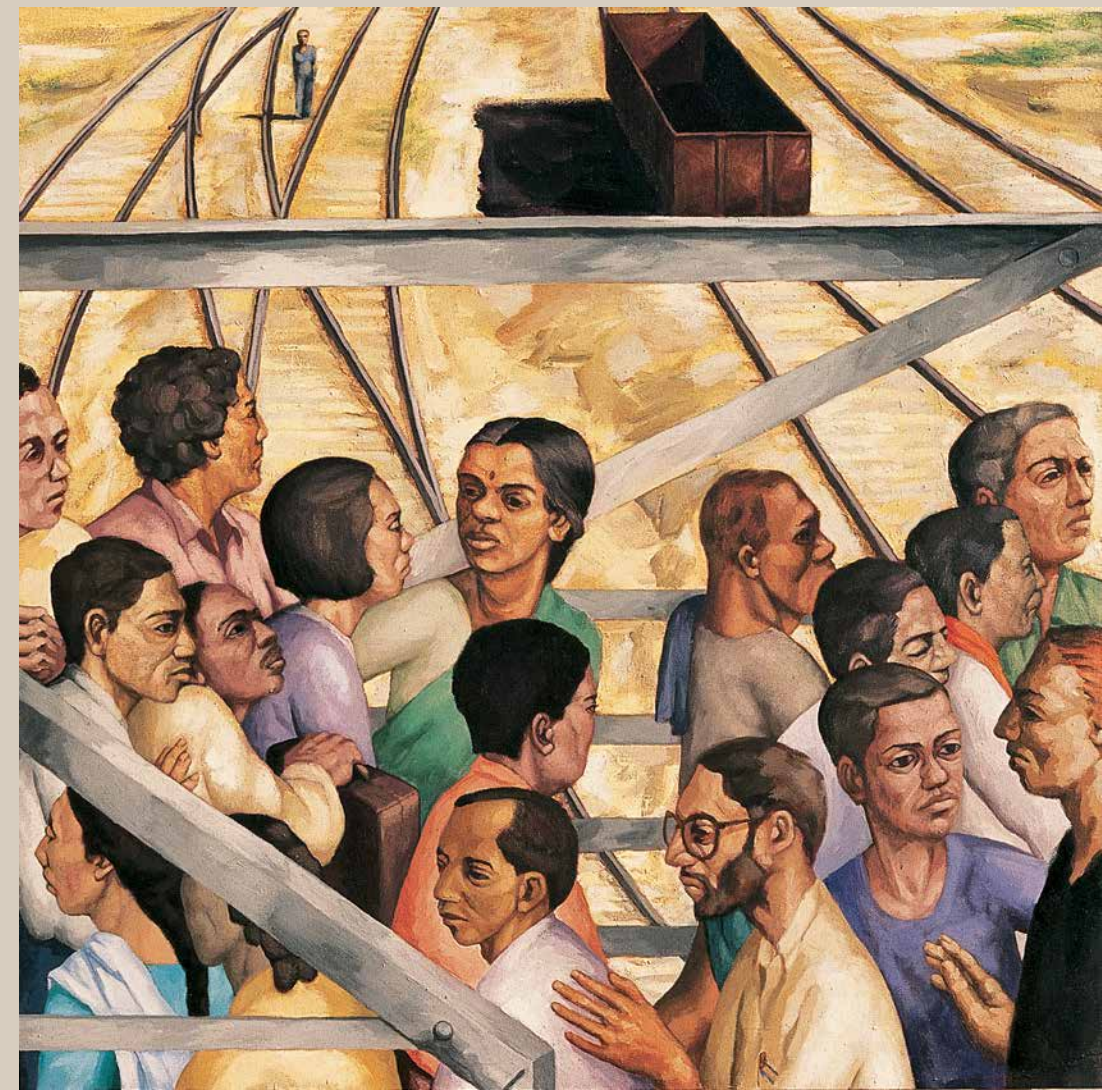
At first glance, these *nagriks* or citizens seem to have much in common with Benode Behari Mukherjee's medieval artisan-saints, commingling with ordinary people in the riverine procession of everyday life depicted by the Santiniketan master in his grand Hindi Bhavana mural (1947). This is a work that Patwardhan loves. However, there are important differences between the two tableaux. The Hindi Bhavana mural is premised on *laya*, a continuous, pulsing rhythm that propels its figures onward in time, place and diurnal activity. *'Nagrik'* measures the ascension of its colossi against a ground note of *thairav*, stillness: the

scenes of domesticity to which its protagonists remain moored are vespertine or nocturnal, with figures at rest, asleep, or dreaming.

In the middle of this, one of the *nagriks*, with one hand on his heart in a rhetorical gesture, manifests his resplendent diamond-faceted thoughts. They emanate from his head as a continuous unfolding of Platonic solids: signals from an altered consciousness, signifiers of perfection and an ideal world, they camouflage themselves into the roovescape. Does their seamless merging with reality lead to an easy correlation between the everyday and the miraculous? Or is the artist telling us that this is an uneasily achieved transcendence by four citizens who have not yet given up their *nagrik*-hood, their right to demand



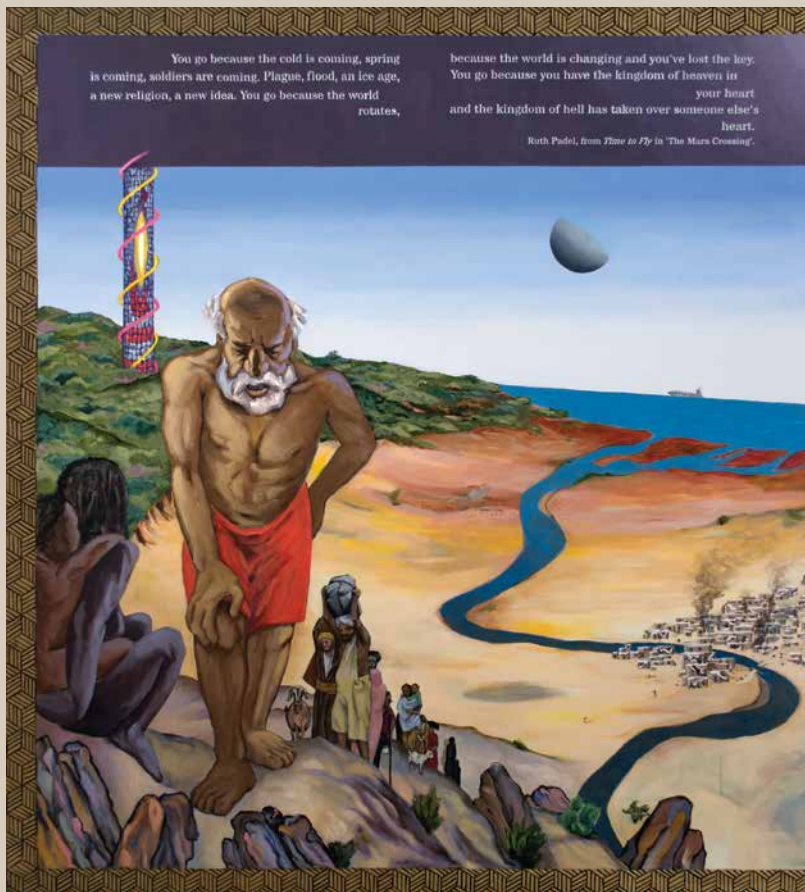
Nulrah, 1985, oil on canvas, 72 x 44 in.



People on a Bridge
1996 acrylic on canvas 40x40 in



Station Road 1996
acrylic on canvas
40x48 in



This page and opposite page, above: **Building a Home, Exploring the World, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 66x180 in triptych**



political freedom? Look at their bare feet, seemingly free of gravity, yet trying to find purchase on a tiled roof or the slippery glass walls of a skyscraper.



It has been a privilege to curate Sudhir Patwardhan's retrospective at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai. Titled 'Walking Through Soul City' ('*Ek Sair Ruh ke Sheher Mé*'), it covers the long arc of five decades of practice, including a rare group of early works. Patwardhan's engagement with the changing urbanscape and the labouring body, occasionally punctuated by an epiphany, is legendary. Why, then, do I insert an apparently metaphysical qualifier into the otherwise materialist proposition that Patwardhan has usually offered to citizen-viewers as the city? The dissonance is momentary: it is rooted in language, and solved by translation. The Indian mind, on hearing the word 'soul', is apt to think of the Sanskrit *atman*, which would indeed be at odds with Patwardhan's materialist, non-religious worldview. I would prefer the Urdu *ruh*, which is less soaring soul and more homeless phantom, voicing that "sigh of the oppressed creature" that a thinker who knew well the dynamics of misery, religion and revolution wrote of. Coincidentally, *ruh* also appears in one of Patwardhan's favorite Hindi film songs: Sahir Ludhianvi's '*Yeh duniya agar mil bhi jayein toh kya hai*' ('Even if this world were yours, what would it matter?'), an anthem of romantic revolt from Guru Dutt's 1957 film, *Pyasa*. The lines '*Har ik jism ghaya/Har ik ruh pyaasi*' ('Every body wounded, every soul thirsting'), following the refrain, enhance the melancholia of a song that has become ingrained in Indian popular culture.

As we course through five decades of Patwardhan's practice, we realise that on the one hand, he brings his scientific training to bear on his artistic practice, with his scalpel-like observation of physical abnormalities and reality. But equally, he brings to his works an intense hope for a unified field, a rendition of the everyday that does not romanticise it but endows it with a numinous

idealisation, as in 'Nullah' (1985), 'Construction worker washing her face' (1998) and 'Ulhasnagar' (2001). In his more recent works, too, he demonstrates an affinity for Platonic solids, as in 'Nagrik' (2019) and impossible objects like the Penrose triangle in 'Compass' (2017) and 'Enigma' (2017), which are all the more real for being optical illusions. *I would argue that Patwardhan's art is propelled by the constant interplay between a palpable materialism and a philosophical idealism.*



Walking is a form of meditation and discovery. Patwardhan spent his peripatetic childhood in diverse places, from the ethereally blue hills of the Nilgiris to the flat, rocky terrain of Khadki marked by thorny *babool* trees (since his father was a scientific officer in the Ordnance Department's ammunitions factories, they lived in the cantonment area). These early experiences of sensing the topography through the act of walking made him approach the landscape, not as a preordained artistic construct, but as an enactment of strolling and meandering. The artist recalls rolling his toy cars over his father's sleeping body: a mountain range peaking in soft mounds of flesh. It was his mother who instilled in him a love for films, theatre, music and literature.

In his breakthrough paintings of the 1980s - 'Town' (1984) and 'Nullah' (1985) - Patwardhan constructs a hybrid scape of gorgeous arid mountains being reduced to a backdrop to upcoming townships in Thane. Built like miniature paintings, with a cellular structure distributed over multiple foci, these works offer us a plethora of nested stories, none tainted by a hierarchy of representational value. Patwardhan creates conceptual maps of the places he chooses to paint. These are, of course, re-constructions of the place he has either observed firsthand or has recalled from memory; no viewer can grasp the actual landscape or cityscape from the innumerable perspectives provided by the artist in one sweeping gaze. But this artifice is not just a formal



subterfuge. It has major implications for the contending recensions of reality, and the versionality of that slippery thing we call truth.



Patwardhan began to take art seriously while studying at the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in Pune in the late 1960s. How did he deal with the tension between purportedly 'objective' scientific observation (although we know that science is not free of ideological underpinnings) and the projections of the artist's demons onto the subject of his representation? Between evening classes in painting at the Abhinav Kala Mandir and an introduction to Marxist thought and the philosophy of dialectical materialism by his friend Sandeep Pendse, an activist, Patwardhan was initiated into a language of painting mainly premised on a colonial art pedagogy, and a political position that prompted him to recognize social contradictions.

Meanwhile, in the early 1970s, young people in India were forming self-organised groups to critique the forces of imperialism, and to highlight the rights of the disenfranchised. They were inspired by the civil rights movement and the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) in the US and the anti-Vietnam War protests across the world. Around this time (1972-1975), Patwardhan contributed illustrations to the Marxist Marathi publication *Magova* ('Road Map'), a significant offspring of the Little Magazine movement in Maharashtra. The *Magova* group - Sudheer Bedekar, Praful Bidwai, Suhas Paranjape, Anant Phadke, Dinanath Manohar, among others - brought together activists, engineers, doctors, novelists and social scientists, who foregrounded questions of social justice and equality.

The illustrations carry the impress of Ernst Barlach and Käthe Kollwitz's

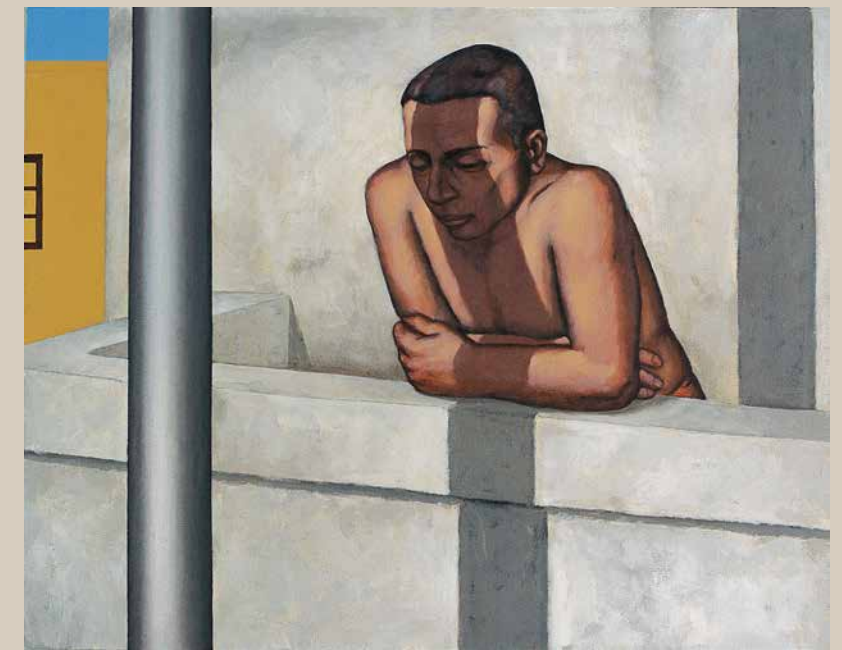


Artist with Cycle, 1992, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in.

Patwardhan's addressing of the deep structure of Indian society, with its mechanisms of authority, coercion and violence, does not come at the cost of missing out on the unpredictable sensuous and affective traces that he gleans from his love of Trecento or Renaissance art, Chinese landscape painting, and so on.



Killing, 2007, acrylic on handmade paper, 54x42 in.



This page, left: Running Woman, 1978, oil on canvas, 55x33 in
Above: Balcony, 1999, acrylic on canvas, 32x40 in.
Below: A Normal day 2019 oil on canvas, 40x72 in.





This spread, above:
Ulhasnagar, 2001,
acrylic on 4 canvases,
40x168 in
Below: Nostalgia 2010
acrylic on canvas,
34x96 in.

tortured but resilient bodies, as well as the revolutionary spirit of the Mexican murals and Soviet magazines that Patwardhan saw at Manney's bookshop in Pune. One of the 1972 Magova covers made during a period of famine, *dushkaal*, has a sketch constructed like a peasant *trimurti*, a trinity, with faces marked by deep fissures like parched earth. Another cover, made in March 1975, is a collage of newspaper items with an image of the Parliament tilting sideways. The eruption of various grassroots movements – the militant activism of the Dalit Panthers and the revolt of the landless adivasis in Shahada in which women played an important role – helped shape the artist's burgeoning political imagination. As an important aside, I would like to say that despite this formative encounter with the issues of caste and adivasi identity, Patwardhan's paintings only addressed the issue of class. The distance between the Marx endorsed by the English-reading Brahmin Leftists and the 'Markus-baba' of the subaltern activist (I quote this locution from a poem by Narayan Surve) remained unbridgeable.

man who sits untouched by the noise of this spatial bewilderment, sipping extra-sweet orange tea, the elixir of the proletariat, from a saucer. It was while working on 'Street Play' (1981) – a stitching together of different spatial constructs ranging from the D N Road arcades of Bombay's colonial quarter to its mill lands – that Patwardhan started to reevaluate his ideological position. In the painting, he stands behind a pillar, witnessing a Leftist theatre group's street performance. The actor with his hands outstretched like a crucified Christ is, in turn, split between the scene and its reflection. Once again, the viewer is perplexed by the crisscrossing of gazes and planes in a painting that seemingly quotes familiar sites. But the real confoundment is created by the difficult questions raised by the artist. Does he want us to consider how ideology instrumentalizes art to radicalize people? Do the actors/artists become martyrs at the altar of ideology, or can they seek artistic autonomy? And what kind of realism is proposed by such an art, uneasily wedded to the ideals of socialism?

After graduating in medicine in 1972, Patwardhan came to Bombay. In 1974, he married his college sweetheart from the AFMC, the gifted Shanta Kallianpurkar, who was studying dance. By 1975, he began to practice radiology while continuing to paint in his free time. He would walk endlessly, familiarizing himself with the city's denizens and bylanes. The sight of the maimed, crushed but unbroken citizen, provoked a psychosomatic reaction. Even as he painted distorted figures and bodies with an expressionist urgency ('Lamenting Woman' 1976 and 'Room on Forjett Street' 1974), he felt his own muscles tensing and knotting up. Soon he realized that a projection of his middle-class existentialist angst onto the working-class figure would only result in an unproductive behavism. Instead, his dialectical Marxist approach, coupled with his exacting scientific training, brought him to the awareness that by working in the mid-ground of perception he could negotiate questions related to autonomy and intimacy in the act of representation.

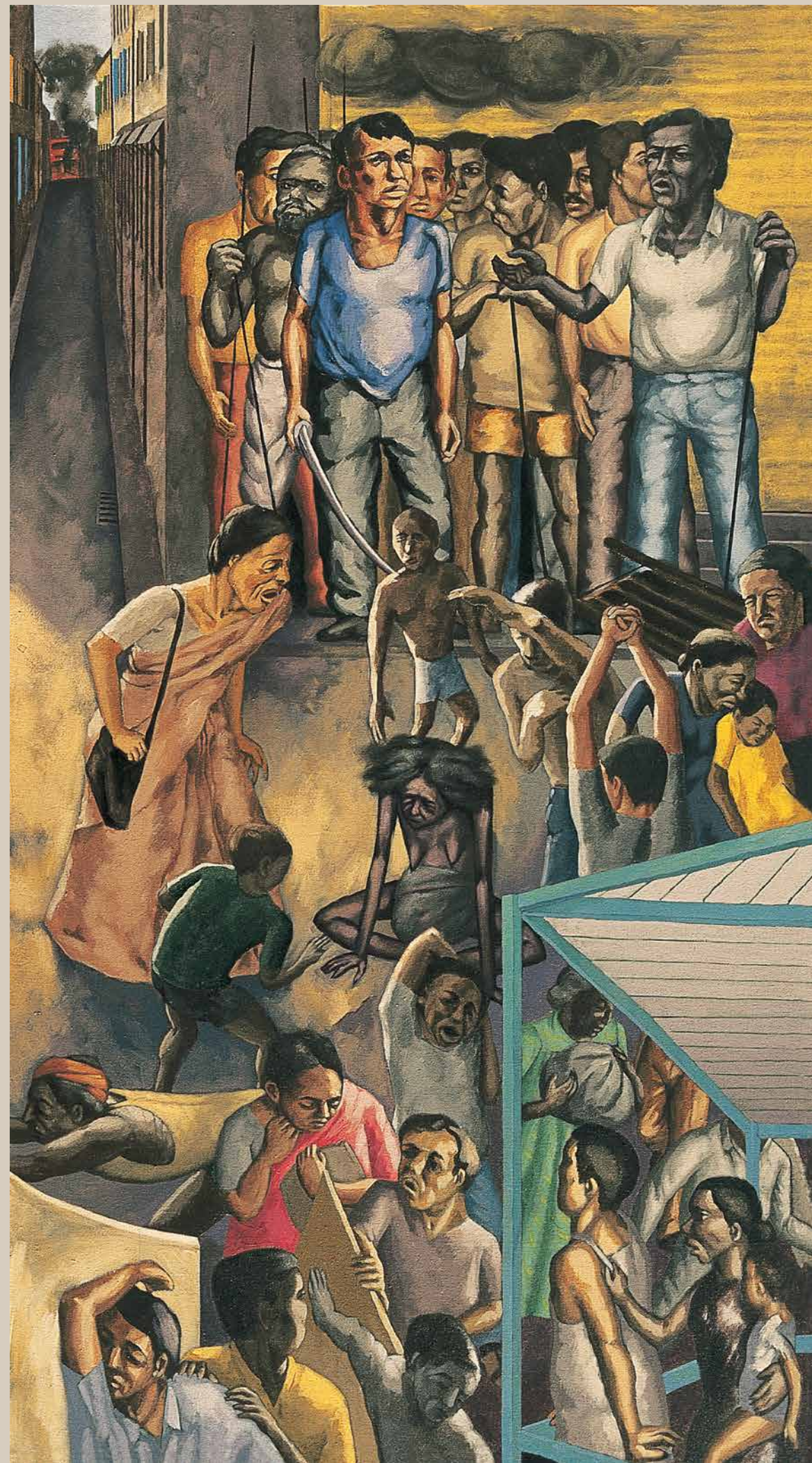
Realism resists universal definition. It is often confused with naturalism, a simple seeking of retinal verisimilitude, or a focus on the gritty everyday. Perhaps realism is best understood as that register of artistic expression which conveys the most urgently and palpably felt experience of the real, in any given society or period. Paradoxically, it can do this through a combination of capacities: on one hand, a grasp of the formative structure of the historical moment, with its tensions, conflicts and solidarities; on the other hand, an ability to bring a range of illuminating references from other contexts to bear on this scrutinized present. What realism makes possible is the building of a plausible nexus between the individual's perplexities and joys, and the larger anxieties and pleasures of the collective – a bridge that can also be a seesaw. Patwardhan's addressing of the deep structure of Indian society, with its mechanisms of authority, coercion and violence, does not come at the cost of missing out on the unpredictable sensuous and affective traces that he gleans from his love of Trecento or Renaissance art, Chinese landscape painting, and so on.

In retracing the artist's journeys, we approach his work through detours into paradox and ambiguity. In 'The City' (1979), Patwardhan plays with different spatial planes and levels in a café to produce a pattern of foci – the feet facing in, against a staircase pointing out, and the grill looking out to a street that is in close and disorienting proximity to the interior. But the central focus is a

In 1981, the magisterial critic Geeta Kapur, along with artists Vivan Sundaram, Nalini Malani, Jogen Chowdhury, Gulammohammed Sheikh, Bhupen Khakhar and Patwardhan, organized the pathbreaking exhibition, 'Place for People'. They deployed ingenious strategies of narration to conduct heuristic probes into



Roit, 1996, acrylic on canvas 60x33 in



House across the Street 2000, acrylic on canvas, 48x48 in



society. During one of the discussions held at Sheikh's house in Baroda, the incubator of narrative-figurative art, Kapur and Patwardhan critiqued what they saw as the visiting scholar Timothy Hyman's overemphasis on the personal element - rather than on historical forces - in his study of Beckmann, Kitaj and Leger. Patwardhan cautioned that a return to the self would only 'circulate anguish.'^{1]}

By the late 1980s, Patwardhan grew dissatisfied with merely representing the collective, which is itself a heterogenous assembly of contending needs. He wished, also, to engage with the reception of art, with his viewers. Plagued by the question of how to bring art closer to the public, especially those who had never had an opportunity to visit an art gallery, he decided to exhibit his works in the same environment that had inspired the making of his paintings - which, in this case, happened to be Pokhran, then a peri-urban neighbourhood in Thane (today unrecognizably absorbed into its metropolitan fabric). Rather than holding an exhibition in a neutral white cube space, he showed his 'Pokhran' series in a factory shed, a cycle repair shop and a school.

That people should connect with each other despite the everyday violence exacted by class asymmetries is Patwardhan's heartfelt wish. In his paintings, chappal-clad feet produce the warmth of movement, sweaty bodies coexist in crowds, not only because they are deprived of space but because the contact between accidentally touching bodies reminds us of the rub of humanity, a stubborn stain that cannot be washed away so easily. But with 'Riot' (1996), a meditation on the violence suffered by the Muslim community in the wake of the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu-majoritarian militants in 1992, we witness a different pathology of the crowd. Instead of the proverbial pillar or pole at the centre of his paintings, which stands for the *axis mundi* around which people congregate, we see a woman crazed with grief. Surrounding her are raised fists and groups of people united only by their fear and hatred for the Other. In *The Complicit Observer* (2004), Ranjit

Hoskote makes an astute point: "He [Patwardhan] no longer had a model of the collective to deploy after Ayodhya and Bombay 1992."^{2]}

At 60, Patwardhan made an appearance in 'Family' (2009), as an affectionate grandfather surrounded by a circle of love. But outside the window, the evening refuses to set quietly; a blazing orange trail streaks the sky. The artist has not embraced a Habermasian 'privatism', but he *has* chosen to return to the self (to adapt what he said to Hyman many years ago) with a certain anguish. In his most recent solo in 2017, Patwardhan seemed to be walking through the labyrinth of his mind, tracking through his home with a camera as if it were a film set. In these cinematic paintings, dream time collides with real time, the dead and the missing pile up in the bedroom. Are they really dead or are they chimeras? The artist appears grey and vulnerable, furiously rubbing at something in the air with a rag. He is still the painter of the people, but the spectres of his mind are also real. Not more than something else, just real.

Nancy Adajania

[Excerpt from the curatorial essay published on the occasion of the Sudhir Patwardhan retrospective held at the NGMA, Bombay, 30 November 2019 - 12th February 2020]

Notes:

1. See Timothy Hyman, 'Indian Scenes and Concerns: New Figurative Painting in India', in *London Magazine* (June 1982), p. 16.
2. Ranjit Hoskote, *The Complicit Observer* (Bombay: Eminence Designs/Sakshi Gallery, 2004), p. 26.

Curatorial Structure and Wall Texts

The Personal and the Political

We begin the exhibition with the portraits of the artist's parents - 'Aai' (1972) and 'Appa' (1982) and 'Marx' (1973) and 'Gandhi' (1971). His political parents, especially Marx, gave him the freedom to craft his own destiny by forging alliances across classes. As a student of the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in Pune, in the late 1960s, Patwardhan took hobby classes in painting at the Abhinav Kala Mandir. Alongside, he was introduced to Marxist thought by his activist friend Sandeep Pendse. An autodidact, but a rigorous one, Patwardhan gravitated towards the post-impressionist language of Cezanne. In 'Mutha Ghat', 1971, we experience the sheer delight with which he engages in mark-making. From Cezanne, Patwardhan had intuitively grasped that painting is not the simple reportage of retinal reality but that it is a self-conscious act of representation. The pattern of light and shade in 'Mutha Ghat' transforms nature into architectural elements and architecture into an organic geometry.

The Impossible Object

In recent years, Sudhir Patwardhan has punctuated his realistic paintings with 'impossible objects', pure mathematical forms that do not have a three-dimensional reality and can be visualised only as optical illusions. The Penrose triangle in 'Enigma' (2017) is one such mathematical conundrum that provokes the viewer to ask: Which is the model and which is the reality? Patwardhan pushes the question of representation to the extreme through these 'impossible objects', questioning and critically expanding his commitment to realism, based both on sensate experience and the life of the mind. In the manner of MC Escher, he perplexes his viewers through an optical sleight-of-hand, turning recessed and advancing planes inside-out. In the panoramic painting 'Another Day in the Old City' (2017), we see the same location from various angles and perspectives simultaneously. This painting is also animated by the artist's memory of being taken on a buffalo ride by his uncle, as a child, along the river Mutha in Pune, and the way the city revealed itself in segments as the buffalo bumped along on the path. This multiple vision recurs in 'Compass' (2017), a painting that reveals the interiors of Patwardhan's home and studio in Thane. Next to the serene vista of the lake, outside the window, we encounter the Penrose triangle again. But this time, the mathematical conundrum is accompanied by the drawing of a figure in a foetal position. Is this the desire for a new beginning, a newly crafted consciousness? Or is it a residual memory of perfection from the waters of the womb?

A Visceral Anguish

When Sudhir Patwardhan came to Bombay in 1973, he was shocked to see so many people living on the street in horrific conditions. On the one hand, his Marxist conscientisation made him acutely aware of class asymmetries. He felt the other's pain in his own body - a form of psychosomatic bonding. On the other hand, an existentialist sense of alienation from this disorienting environment, exacerbated by his reading of Sartre, Camus and that master of ethical quandaries, Dostoevsky, led him to an expressionist rendering of human figures. His paintings of the 1970s progress from a generic portrait - 'Sakhubai' (1972) - to the 'Lamenting Woman' (1976), where the figure of the woman sitting on her haunches is so distorted that it almost comes across as an abstract piece of flesh.

We see the distorted figure along a spectrum of abstraction from 'Room on Forjett Street' (1974), in the form of a convulsive blur, to 'Chair' (1975), painted during the Emergency, in which a spectral leg is entwined with furniture yet seeks to release itself.

At the hospital where Patwardhan worked, and on the streets which he scoured endlessly, he saw the embattled body fighting its brokenness. One of his breakthrough works from this period is 'Green Torso' (1975) - still expressionist in its rendering of toxic green skin with an underlayer of dried blood, but already contemplating a Legeresque machine-like body.

On Killing

Sudhir Patwardhan has never shied away from depicting violence. As he observes, the artist must "feel the force of evil inside him and then give it form on paper". It is not unusual for him to make such a candid confession. Consider the way in which 'Killing' (2007) is choreographed, a magnificent tableau vivant straight out of an Old Master painting but also a homage to theatre. Strangely, the bodies of the killer and the victims are entangled. It is almost as if they would fall if they did not hold on to each other tightly. This moment of ambiguity in an obviously agonistic situation shows that Patwardhan does not conceal the stigmata of reality. In fact, he puts his finger even deeper into the wound we call humanity.



This page, above: installation photo (top) 2nd level showing Mumbai Proverbs Left: installation photos Ground level.

The Spectre of History or...?

Compare the closeup of stampeding feet in 'Marchers' (2019) with 'Accident on May Day' (1981), another tightly cropped image of workers at a railway station. Except for a poetic pause produced by the glimpse of a landscape between two train compartments, the mood in the latter painting is tense. A worker whose face we cannot see is being carried away on a stretcher, held between the parentheses of a Communist flag and the policeman's baton.

What if we were to see 'Accident on May Day', from the 1980s, in close proximity with 'Erase', painted a few years ago. By 2017, the artist had long retired from his medical practice and had shifted his studio into his home. He depicts himself as grey and vulnerable, furiously rubbing something in the air with a rag. Are these the spectres of history demanding answers of the revolution that did not take place? Or are these the chimeras of the artistic self that refuse to leave him alone? Or is he erasing us, the viewers (who form the fictive fourth wall), from this scene of artistic crime?

The Post-Industrial Sublime

'Mumbai Proverbs' (2014), an ambitious seven-panel mural commissioned by Anand and Anuradha Mahindra, maps Bombay/Mumbai's history through a discontinuous chain of cityscapes that do not segue but fit uneasily together. The axis mundi that held people together in Patwardhan's paintings has long vanished. In place of solidarity there is hyper-mobility, projected through a distorted wide-angle lens. There are the inevitable juxtapositions between local train and plane, slum and mall, but the intense density of built landscapes and inhabitants has created an uncontrollable hypertrophy. Within these proliferating scenarios of urban life, passing from documentary precision to speculative simulation, we are brought to an abrupt halt at the edge of an abyss, a large shaft dug into the earth. It may well be a deep foundation for a skyscraper, in the midst of a shantytown. It arrests our gaze, this emptiness at the heart of a monumental tableau of hyper-capitalism - looking into it, we are seized by the horror of a yet-unnamed Sublime.

Things Fall Apart

Sudhir Patwardhan structured 'Street Corner' (1985) as a honeycomb of everyday revelations, revealing the intimate realities of people's lives, as a building is seen from the point of view of a person passing by in traffic. The dreams, fantasies and routines of strangers are presented through the benign voyeurism of a documentary eye. Nearly a decade later, 'Riot' (1996) records the explosive tearing apart of a society. In this meditation on the violence suffered by the Muslim community in the wake of the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu-majoritarian militants in 1992, we witness a different pathology of the human collective. Instead of the proverbial pillar or pole at the centre of his paintings, which stands for the axis mundi around which people congregate, we see a woman crazed with grief. Surrounding her are raised fists and groups of people united only by their fear and hatred for the Other. As Ranjit Hoskote observed in his book *The Complicit Observer*, after the 1992 Bombay riots, Patwardhan found it difficult to deploy the model of collective solidarity in his paintings, because reality had splintered such possibilities of collective action.

Redemption Deferred

The diptych 'Bylanes Saga' (2007) plunges us into a dystopian late-industrial townscape. Its three main tableaux are drawn from everyday life; beneath their workaday surfaces, they crackle with tension. A Muslim woman holds on to her child, not yielding it to an old man who seems to ask for it. A man has slumped to his knees; have the men who surround him rushed to his rescue, or did they knock him down in the first place? At the centre of the composition is a clearing, a rare open space in a contemporary Indian town; a forlorn child sits in the distance.

As we take in these details, we realize with a shock that these scenes have travelled a long distance to inhabit this frame: the Madonna and child come from a Presentation in the Temple; the fallen man belongs in a pictorial account of the Deposition of Christ; and the abandoned child in the clearing recalls to mind da Vinci's portrait of St Jerome in the wilderness. The structure of the diptych is precarious, with the scenes just discussed balancing on another stratum of depiction,

showing ordinary citizens passing in the street. This precariousness is deliberate; the painting mirrors the structure of Matthias Grünewald's paintings for the Isenheim altarpiece (1512-1516), with its main panel and wings balanced on a predella or threshold panel. These images, transiting between mediaeval Christian iconography and present-day Thane/Bombay, build into a parable about hope lost, redemption deferred, and people driven into a spiritual no man's land.

The Everyday Heroism of the Body

In his art, Patwardhan has long valorised the labouring human body, the body at rest after strenuous effort, the body as defined by its everyday tasks yet assuming a heroic monumentality. In the iconic 'Irani Restaurant' (1977), as well as 'Dhakkha' and 'Truck' from the same year, he develops a figure with a squat, muscular physique, sometimes sweatily engaged in work and at other times white, spectral and in repose. In 'Woman Holding Plait' (2002), the visible effort that the protagonist puts into pulling her own plait brings a tensility into evidence, as though she were holding on to herself, giving herself anchorage in a world that offers her no guarantees.



Installation photos (Top to Bottom) Dome level, 4th level, 3rd level.





this page, above:
Installation 3rd level,
ground level,
bottom projection into
dome.

Place for People

The now legendary works 'Train', 'The City' and 'Street Play' were first shown in 'Place for People'. It was while working on 'Street Play' (1981) – a stitching together of different spatial constructs ranging from the D N Road arcades of Bombay's colonial quarter to its mill lands – that Patwardhan started to reevaluate his ideological position. In the painting, he stands seemingly inside a pillar, witnessing a Leftist theatre group's street performance. The actor with his hands outstretched like a crucified Christ is, in turn, split between the scene and its reflection. The viewer is perplexed by the crisscrossing of gazes and planes in a painting that seemingly quotes familiar sites. But the real confoundment is created by the difficult questions raised by the artist. Does he want us to consider how ideology instrumentalizes art to radicalize people? Do the actors/artists become martyrs at the altar of ideology, or can they seek artistic autonomy? Is Patwardhan playing here on the interplay of similar sounding words – 'shahid' (witness) and 'shaheed' (martyr)? And what kind of realism is proposed by such an art, uneasily wedded to the ideals of socialism?

Who Are Our Viewers?

The collective is not a monolithic whole. Inflected by class and caste differences, it is constituted from antagonisms and affinities, rival voices both consensual and dissenting. By the late 1980s, Patwardhan did not find it convincing to merely represent the collective in his paintings. He wished to engage with his viewers, especially those constituencies which were left out of the gallery circuit. The people and landscapes of Pokhran – then a peri-urban neighbourhood of Thane – became his subjects. He showed his 'Pokhran' series in the neighbourhood: a factory shed, a cycle repair shop and a school. Unfortunately, the gulf between his practice and the cultural assumptions of his new viewers could not be bridged.

In a bid to remedy the pedagogical deficits that exclude large segments of the public from the appreciation of art, Patwardhan curated a survey exhibition of modern and contemporary art, 'Expanding Horizons', in 2008-2009. The show travelled to a number of cities across Maharashtra, accompanied by talks and panel discussions encouraging both structured and impromptu dialogues on the subject.

'Boy' (1988), which appears in the documentation of the 'Pokhran' series that was shown in public spaces, is paired here with 'Cloud', painted a year ago. In the latter work, Patwardhan depicts himself as a boy wearing his sacred thread. This is indeed a surprise for an artist who rejected caste as a Marxist. Or may we read this image as representing an acceptance of the various, possibly paradoxical lineages from which each of us fashions her or his selfhood?

Imaging the City

The city has, for five decades, been one of the most important protagonists in Sudhir Patwardhan's paintings. He has engaged with it in all its avatars and phases, as metropolis and emerging township, rising industrial city and collapsing inner city, through the evocation of construction site and post-industrial landscape. In Patwardhan's treatment, the city is always more than the sum total of its parts. In 'Ulhasnagar' (2001), a multi-panel painting that suggests a contemporary revisiting of Brueghel's peopled and built panoramas, we focus on the whirlpool of effluent that reminds us of how human intervention can shape a landscape. Yet, despite the cycles of industrialisation and pollution, life goes on regardless. In 'Lower Parel' (2001), the documentarian eye bears witness to the macro-level shifts in economy and society with the passing of the mills and the rise of the malls. In the diptych, 'Untitled 2' (2006), where the artist stitches together visions of various parts of megalopolitan Bombay, we encounter the city as a series of floating fictions, falling apart yet holding together tenaciously.

The Stranger in the Mirror

In the rotunda, we immerse ourselves in the artist's journey, with all its contrary demands and delights, as a life in full. Here, we trace Sudhir Patwardhan's lifelong balance between family and studio, belief and self-doubt, his preoccupation with the couple as a subject, the shared life as a theme, and the vulnerability of the ageing body as an increasingly important subject. Patwardhan testifies both to the pervasive violence of society and to the constancy of water as a source of renewal.

The rotunda has been mapped along two major axes here. One axis connects the charcoal drawings, 'Rack' and 'Back' (2008), emphasising the manner in which the self is stretched, constrained and placed under pressure by external forces. The other axis draws an imaginary line linking 'Self-portrait with Brush and Camera' (2016) with 'Journeys', suggesting the artist's simultaneous movement into a reflective interior space of stillness and an outer world of social relationships and travel.

In the sky of the exhibition, we project a sequence of Patwardhan's images on the intrados of the NGMA dome. 'Encounters in Time', a speculative series from the 1980s, brings together space traveller, ascetic and courtier, referring to Old Master drawings, Mughal drawings and science-fiction cinema, collapsing boundaries of time and place. Standing under the dome, looking up at these images, we recall Patwardhan's favourite line from Solaris, a futuristic novel by the Russian writer Stanislaw Lem: "We don't know what to do with other worlds. We are searching for an ideal image of our own world."



Nagrik, 2019, oil on canvas, 48 x 72 in.



Credits

Walking Through Soul City,
Sudhir Patwardhan:
A Retrospective
Curated by Nancy Adajania
29 November 2019 to
12 February 2020
at National Gallery of Modern Art,
Mumbai
Exhibition supported by The Guild

All material for this feature courtesy
The Guild Art Gallery.

Time and Architecture

'Roots and Routes'

Curated Kaiwan Mehta

Architecture is always quickly associated with space and place - a preoccupation of the modern phase that got forced onto all understandings of architecture across the past and future. But from the rediscovery of the past as a shaping of the Renaissance in Europe, to the arguments of the Postmodern, Time has in fact been a silent or subconscious, but active engagement for architecture. From the idea of the Stupa, its axis-mundi and the many narratives on railings or scrolling paintings on Chaitya walls, to the intricate ornamentation on Shikharas (which is the mainstay of temple architecture and not the overrated axis), to the ways in which ornamentation and geometry play a jugalbandi in Sultanate and Mughal architecture - all are compositions in Time, all are notions of capturing or releasing Time. In more recent times we have reduced Time to locked arguments around historical monuments or heritage preservation - rather than see Time as an evolving concept even if architecture is cast in stone as structure and form, our ways of seeing are integral to the form and shape of buildings as much as form and space, or order and structure.

We invited a series of architects to send in a project or two to us from their studio - which

they think engages with the concept or idea of Time in some way. We received a wide range of projects, from the idea of heritage and context, to the idea of materiality, permanence-impermanence, as well as the changing states of processes in a design journey. It is interesting how all the contemporary projects we present in this photoessay work with different elements and aspects of architecture right from the ground beneath our buildings and shaping foundations, to materials of transparency or opacity woven into stone and brick colours, the play of sight through screens or the crafting of public environments with installations that slide between sculpture and architecture, or the coming together of materials and memory, details and knowledge in transition. We close the photoessay with views of India's urbanscapes and how the visibility of urban landscapes talk about changes as a civilisation and the notions of time and speed, movement across space and speed as shrinking of space, clustering of habitation. This annotated photoessay is a way of thinking through Architecture as an idea of Time, with buildings and the design processes that have shaped them or the journeys of materials, and elements, landscapes and built fabrics.

Opposite page: The graphic designed by RMA Architects, for the cover of *Domus India* no. 85 (June-July 2019) juxtaposes an image of the New Children's Museum at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) in Mumbai with foundation drawings that involved a detailed mapping of existing tree

roots around which the building was designed. Also incorporated in the collage is a 35-year-old dolphin skeleton discovered during manual excavation. As the footprint available for building overlapped exactly with the location of the oldest trees on the site, the challenge involved incorporating a structure while

safeguarding the integrity of the trees. Through a detailed study of the existing tree root system, the architects protected and preserved the trees on the site, some of which are a century old. The foundations were then carefully designed amidst the roots, ensuring holistic growth within and around the New Children's Museum

building. The collage represents the resulting footprint of the building which is a response to the existing trees to construct a built form that subtly intervenes and creates a verdant atmosphere for users of all ages to enjoy within the space of the Museum.



New Children's Museum at CSMVS, Mumbai

RMA Architects



Photo Tina Nandji

In our practice, we see heritage conservation and engagements with questions of historic buildings as part of the same set of activities and not as siloed or isolated from our making of contemporary buildings. For us, the making of new architecture and the conservation of historic buildings and, by extension, urban districts as well as the research and writing this entails are part of the repertoire of practice. And I believe that on account of this approach, engaging with the practice of conservation as an architect and urban designer (and perhaps not as a 'conservation architect' per se) over the last three decades has been extremely challenging as well as productive for RMA Architects.

Our approach was clearly to create a dialogue between the old and the new, to challenge ourselves with the idea that how do built artifacts

from different centuries coexist? How do you make contemporary interventions in a historic campus and spatially negotiate the adjacencies between the new and old? For us the most important question is how the architect, even if encumbered by the definition and related expectations of what conservation practice may mean, is also an agent of change and not just one who resists change. Of course, the challenge in this situation is how the integrity of both the new and old is maintained and actually reinforced. This is such a beautiful problem!

The impulse is to broaden the interpretation of our Heritage for contemporary relevance and this is what became extremely important for us in the practice. The practice of conservation then is considered in its broadest sense, of extending the life of environments as resources that have embodied energy both in terms of their

materiality as well as memory and association. This 'critical' view of conservation as a practice facilitates its engagement across the scales of architecture as well as urban planning. For, it is critical to see conservation as but one instrument of planning, where the significance of the area of the city and its space is continually reinterpreted. In the context of a historic space for the planner, architect, or conservation architect, the challenge is how to grapple with change and evolving significance but also keep the illusion of the architecture or its physical context as intact as possible. Finally, conservation is illusory, in that it is like the smile of the 'Cheshire cat' whose grin extends beyond the moment of its existence!

Extracted from an interview conducted by Kaiwan Mehta with Rahul Mehrotra in the Domus India no. 85 (June-July 2019)

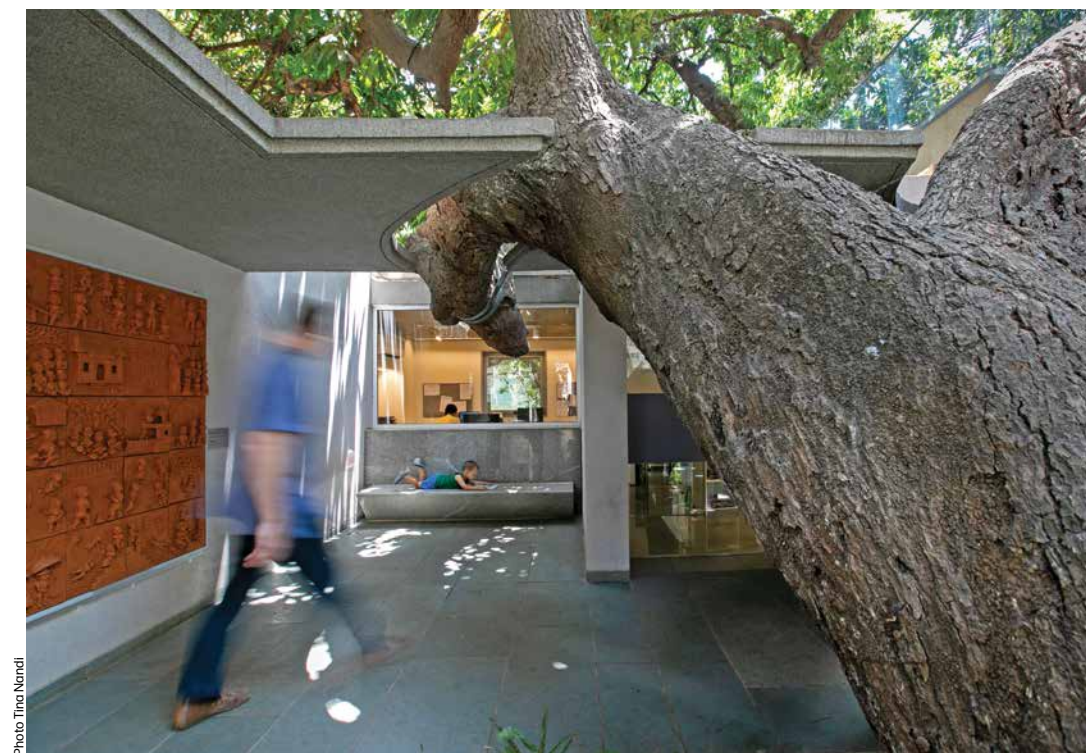


Photo Tina Nandji

Opposite page: Adjacent to the Natural History Society building, the New Children's Museum at the CSMVS, Mumbai, is on an oddly-shaped site. The construction was carried out in a way so that the large existing trees were included within the available footprint

This page: A minimal visual intervention of steel and glass is added to house a contemporary art gallery on the pavilion of the Lalbaug estate in Ahmedabad; bottom: a view of the exterior of the Lalbhai Gallery

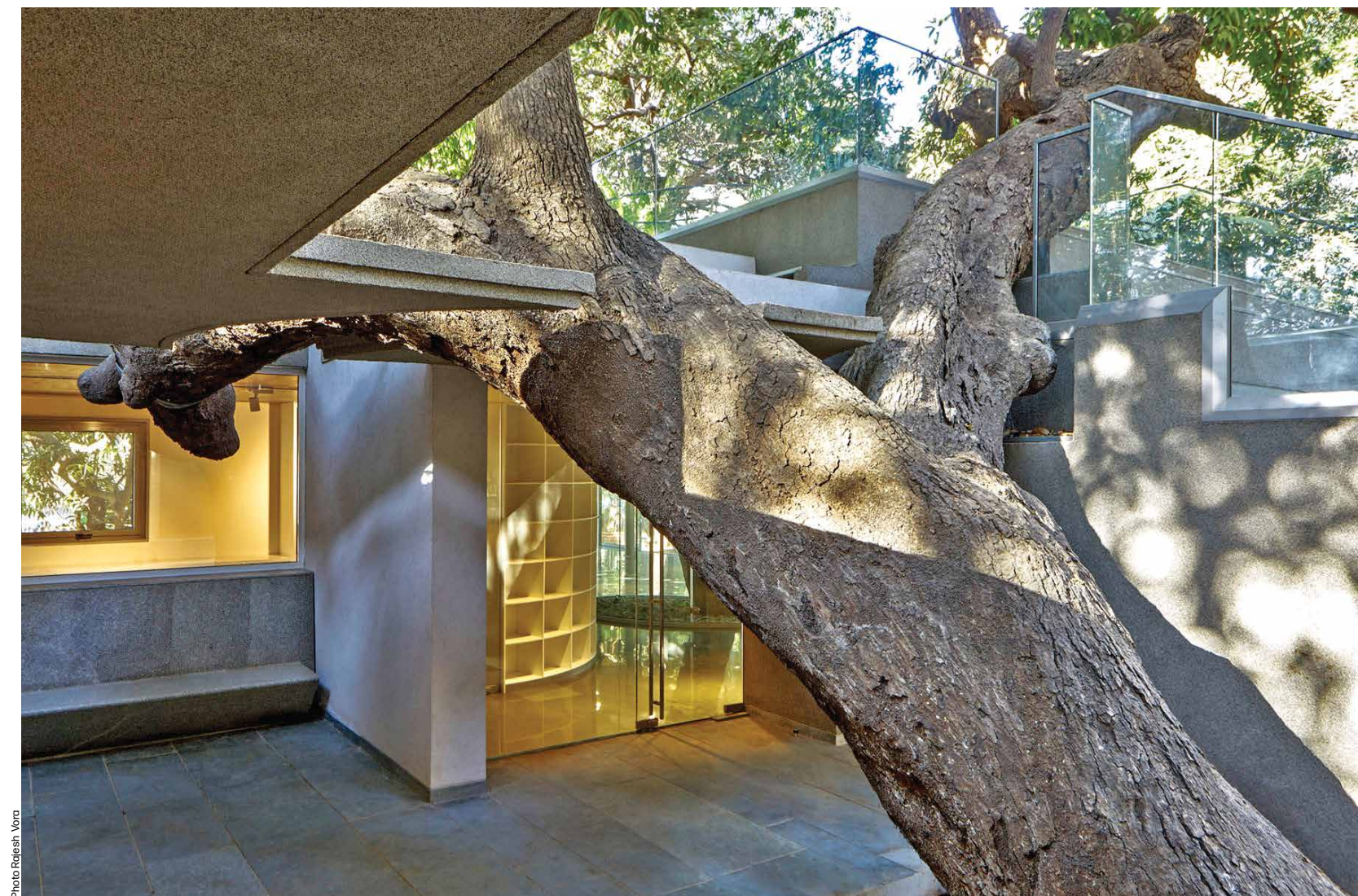


Photo Rajesh Vora

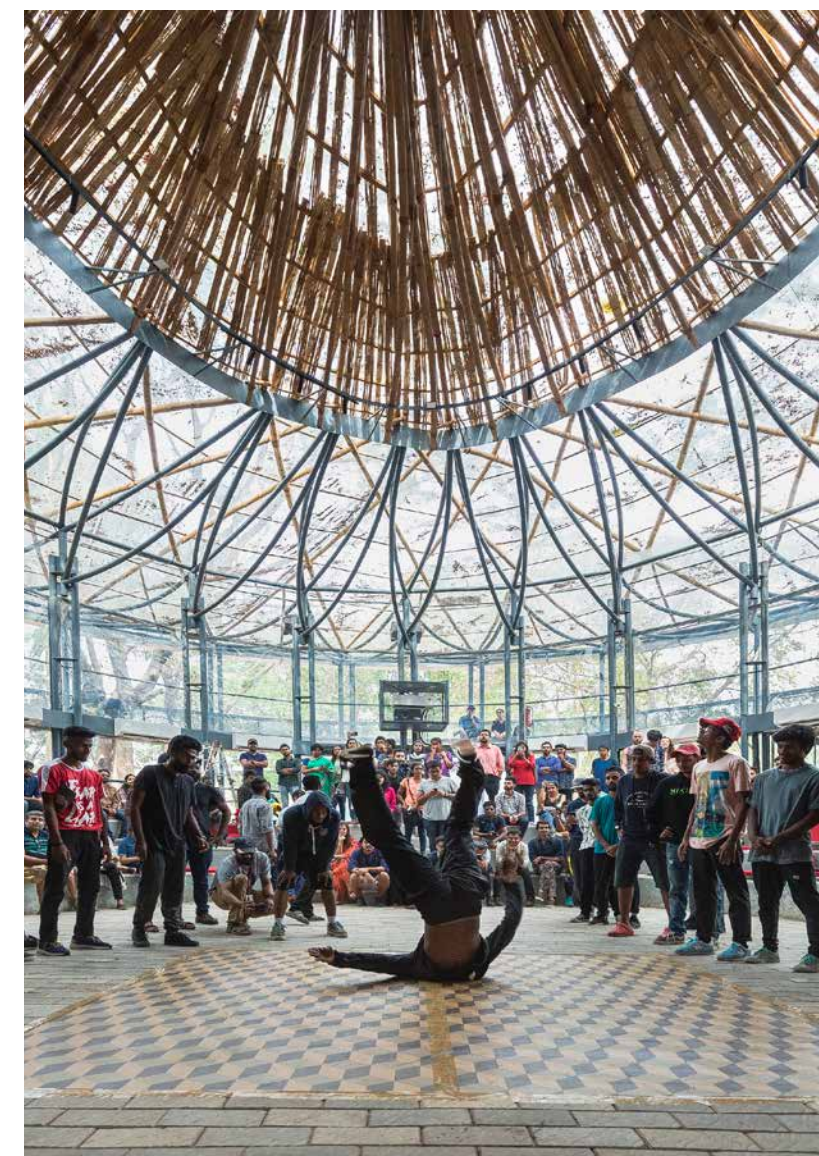
Koodaaram : The Pavilion for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2018-19

Anagram Architects

This project converges various trajectories, of imperatives and motivations, of Time and Public. The most prominent was an elaboration of material and construction temporality in response to the Biennale itself being a time bound event of exuberant and permeating publicness in abandoned industrial infrastructure. We chose to respond to this imperative by considering it within the cycles of Cabral Yard's dormancy (and

natural reclamation) between biennales. Thus, on site, the disassembly of the built, into reusable material, was equally important to the design as was its timely and robust material assembly. Motivated by evidence on site of previous biennale occupations, we envisaged a temporary occupation that could eventually leave "without a trace", emphasising the "now-ness" of being at the Biennale we were building for.

Parallely, the design also investigated formalism in a performance space. From the inclusion of audience in art to the incidental-ness of contemporary art performance, we considered t altering notions of territory, occupation and visual intrusion as a political de-centering of the traditional blackbox theatre.



Gallery House, Bansberia

Abin Design Studio



Brick, the humble building block, has evolved through time from being a functional unit to an artisanal means of expression. The Gallery House is a juxtaposed manifestation of tradition and contemporary. This public space, rendered timeless through the use of this usual material, feels relatable to a wider spectrum of its users. The space, having created such a positive impact during the process of its construction, prompted the client to update its utility from a private space to a public one.

The client procured a parcel of land across the street from his home as a parking lot for his vehicles. ADS was approached to provide for a garage structure with staff quarters above. Given its simple program, ADS convinced the client to use this opportunity for doing a lot more and think of how it could give back to the community.

The Gallery House was then planned as a garage on the ground level with a multi-purpose activity space on the upper level intended to be used by the neighbourhood as well. Encouraged to maximise the public utility of this building, its design was conceived to extend into the street, both visually and physically.

As a decision to introduce another architectural expression to the community, the building took cues from Bengal's terracotta temples. Exposed brick-masonry walls inlaid with ceramic blocks define the building character as a contemporary expression of the inspiration. Collaborating with a ceramic artist, rejected ceramic blocks produced for industrial use, were collected. Terracotta bricks were procured from a river-side brick field located nearby. These two were combined, using locally prevalent finesse of building masonry.

Inspired by the way the building was coming up, the client decided to let go of his initial requirement of a garage and embraced the suggestions of re-purposing the ground floor has a community hall while the upper floor houses a multipurpose-room, a sitting area and a pantry. The multipurpose-room was to be used primarily for providing tuition classes and yoga sessions to the local community. At night, this space functions as a dormitory for resident staff. The client enjoys a sense of pride and joy of ownership seeing the space put to good use.

Every year this locality holds a festive procession along the narrow, winding neighborhood lanes, as a part of a cultural celebration. Reciprocating this, the building steps down towards the street forming a gallery for the onlookers to sit, who gather at the street-side during this event. Through judicious planning and play of voids in volume, the integral space of the building was shared with the neighborhood people as a humane gesture of giving back to the local community, without disrupting the privacy and security of inner functions.

Behala Nutan Dal Puja Pavilion,
Behala and Newtown, Kolkata

Abin Design Studio



From ephemeral to everlasting, the Unbox installation is a re-interpretation of the temporary 2018 Durga Puja Pandal of Behala Nutan Dal that was a net-zero pavilion installation made with 100% recyclable materials. The main pavilion was made using mild steel wireframe cubes, intended to be dismantled for reuse. The idols were made of foraged scrap-metal and have since been retained for private collection or displayed in art galleries. Other construction elements included bamboo and ply-board, also to be reused for other future pavilions. The intent was to create a temporary sculpture whose

elements are specifically designed for adaptive reuse at a future point in time.

The 'Unbox' installation is re-interpreted to break the typology of visual sculptures, to create an interactive public art form that merges its urban perspective with sensory exploration. Utilising the raw material from the temporary pavilion, the installation challenges the conventional idea of rigidity of material/thought and explores their inherent ability of transformation into fluid form/awareness. While exploring the different properties of steel, the installation - in its rigid form, its mesh visibility

and the reflectivity of stainless steel - captures reflections of the city, its people, and the environment.

Reflecting the context of a smart city, where technology serves the needs of human comfort and ambition, the break from convention and stereotypes - unboxing the box - invites participants to live and interact with urban art. Distorting the reality in its true form, this installation creates an ever-changing collage of life, transforming with each instant of time - a dynamic art form.



Baradari, City Palace Jaipur

Studio Lotus

Representing Jaipur in the context of today

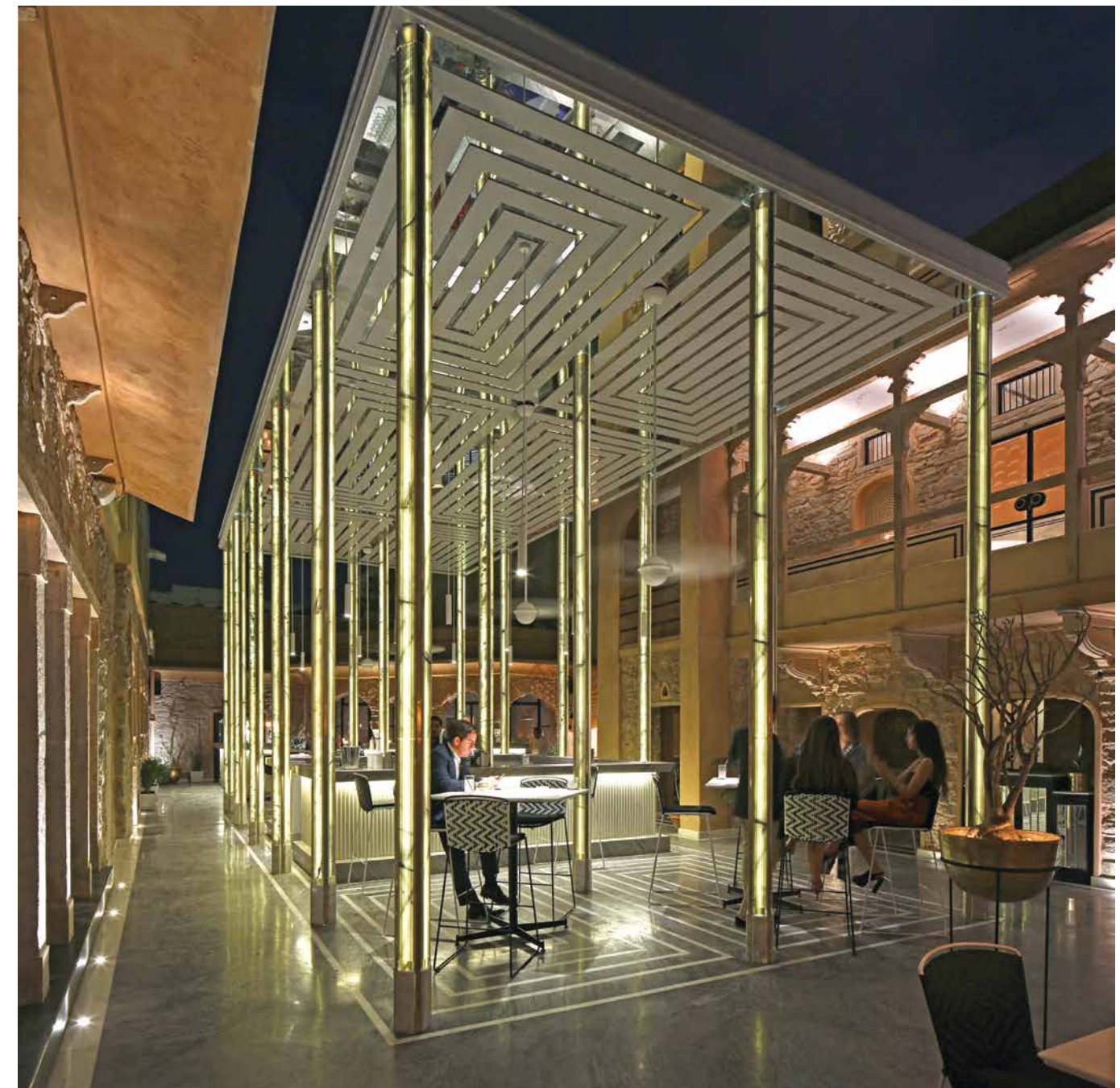
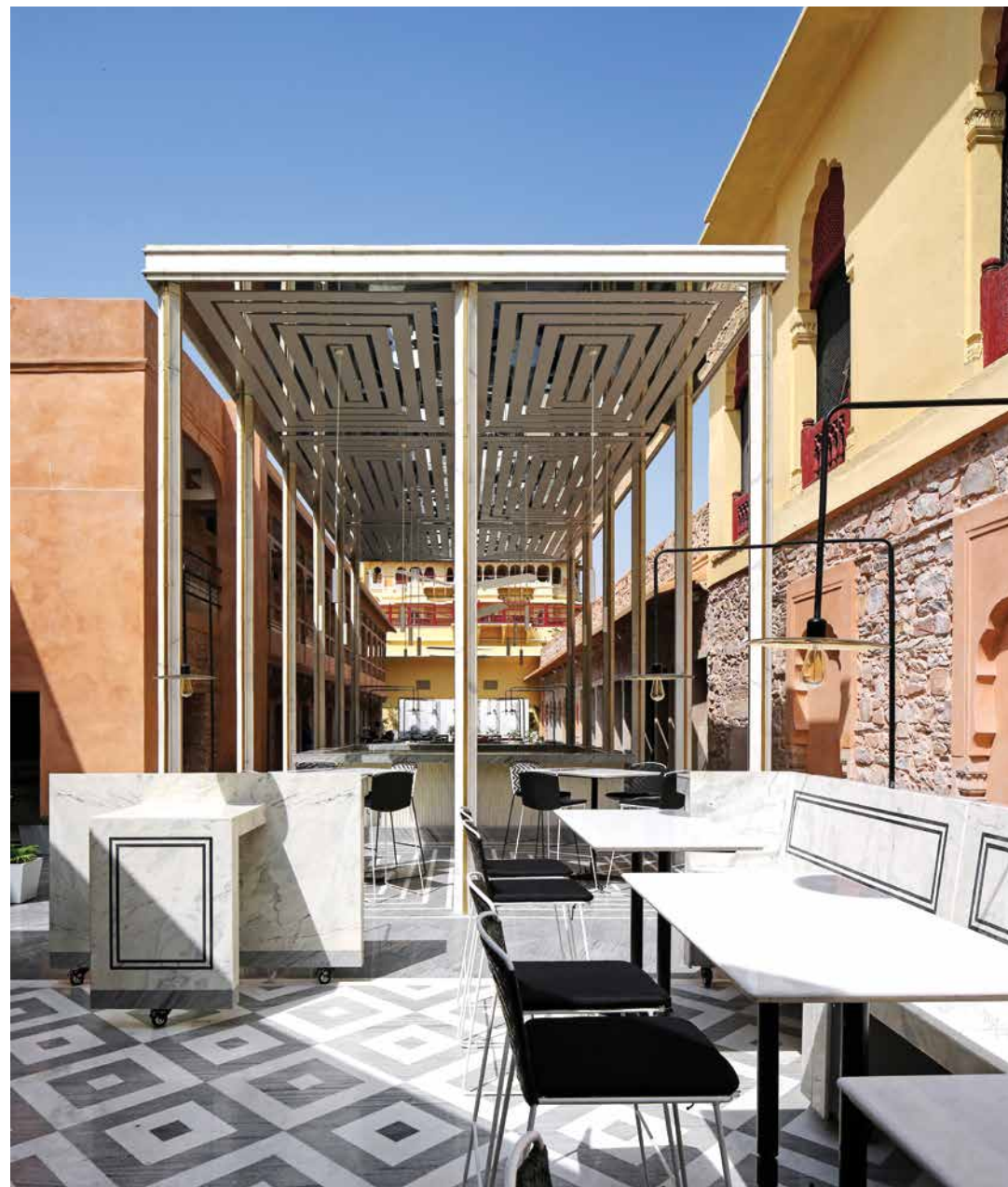
Sitting within the oldest walled quarter of Jaipur, at the City Palace Museum (built in the 18th century), the Baradari, designed by Studio Lotus is a remodelled museum café and restaurant that explores contemporary design and architectural language within the framework of age-old structures.

The project was undertaken as an exercise in exploring whether it is more important to recreate and preserve or to find new meaning for traditional and historic craft and artisanal skill, which is still alive in a few countries such as India. This manifested itself through two key gestures: the reveal of the original structure and its distinct materiality, and the creation of a spatial node through a markedly contemporary take on the archetypal Rajputana built element; a Baradari, the twelve-pillared free-standing pavilion.

The Baradari functions as an anchor between the city and the museum. Its light and contemporary expression creates a counterpoint to the surrounding heavy historic structures and becomes a marker of today in the building's timeline.

Old layers of cement plaster and paint were stripped to reveal the original rubble masonry. The structure was then repaired and restored using lime mortar—its natural texture and intricacy of construction, giving the shell a rich texture. The design creates a balanced interplay of historical revelations and contemporary additions: both drawing from and interpreting the underlying Indo-Saracenic influences of Jaipur's architectural history. Traditional crafts of Jaipur like Thikri work have been worked upon in this new idiom—whether it was through finding new form or uniquely using them for a new use.

The project illustrates how countries such as India—with a living heritage, characterized by a continuum of rich architectural history woven into the fabric of our everyday lives—can allow us to sensitively conserve, restore and repurpose existing buildings from a material, historical, and cultural perspective.



Concept Pavilion For Tittan Industrues

Collaborative Architecture

'Architectural Space' by definition suggests an enduring set of images and axioms. It is precisely these theoretical premises the 'Concept Pavilion' tried to question and propose radically different co-ordinates for spatial definition and appreciation.

The primacy of architectural space with its undisputed purpose of 'tangible engagement' is replaced for a metaphorical 'event-space', which is whole less dependent on conventional space defining parameters for its formal expression.

Sense of time is definitively spatial

The pavilion is a complex exploration of spatial conditions, where 'time', the fourth dimensional

theoretical construct, formed an innate part of the program and a tangible spatial index.

The design apart from the architectural and the programmatic agenda had to address, vital issues of construction, transportation and other site related logistics.

The layout is a spatial matrix with an area of 1450 sqft on raised level, with distinct domains for the different brands the company represents, which are in turn unified by the powerful spatial the narrative. The pavilion is designed to maximize the interface between the audience and the products, prodding the participants to be the part of the entire narrative, as the pavilion unfolds before them.

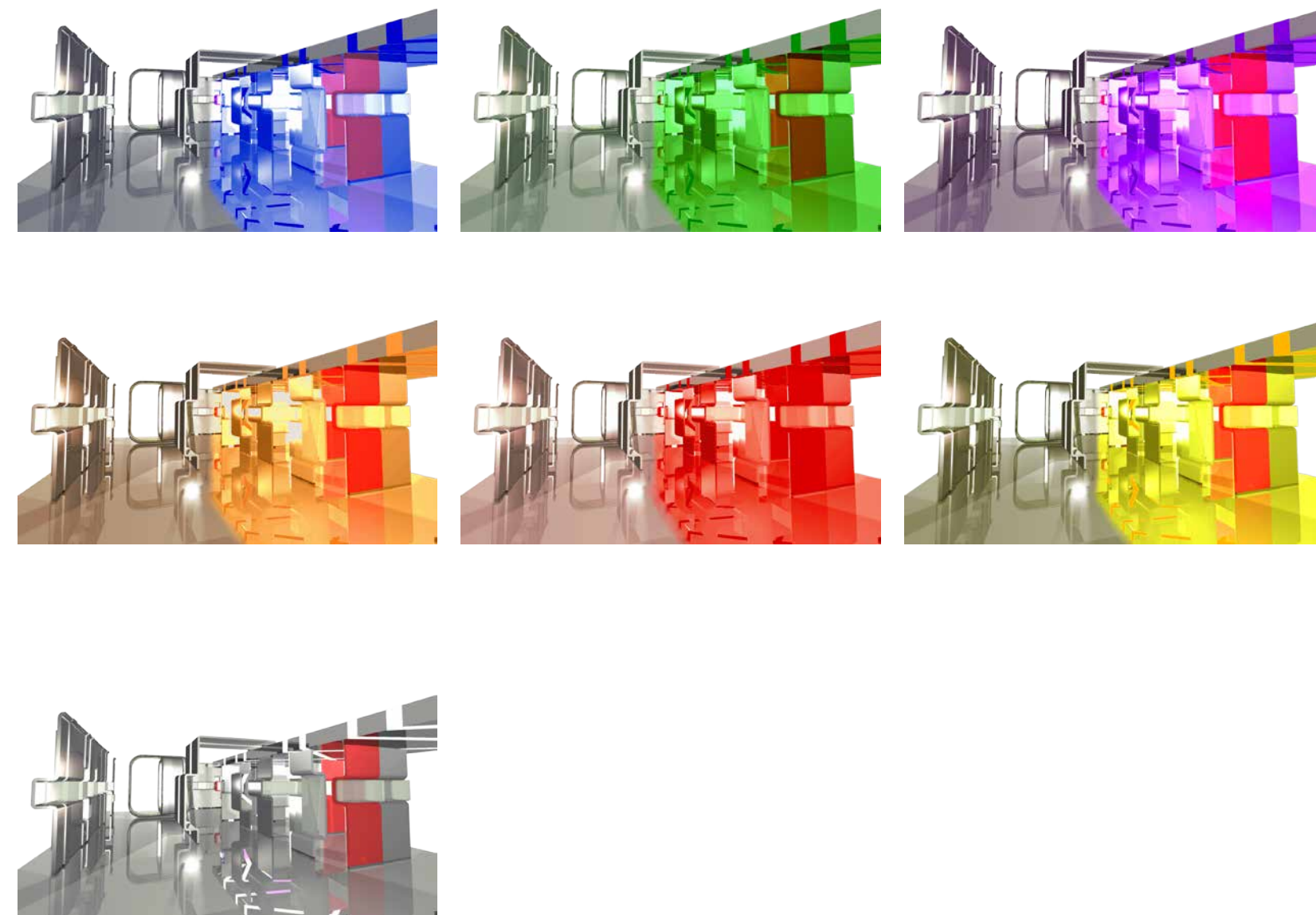
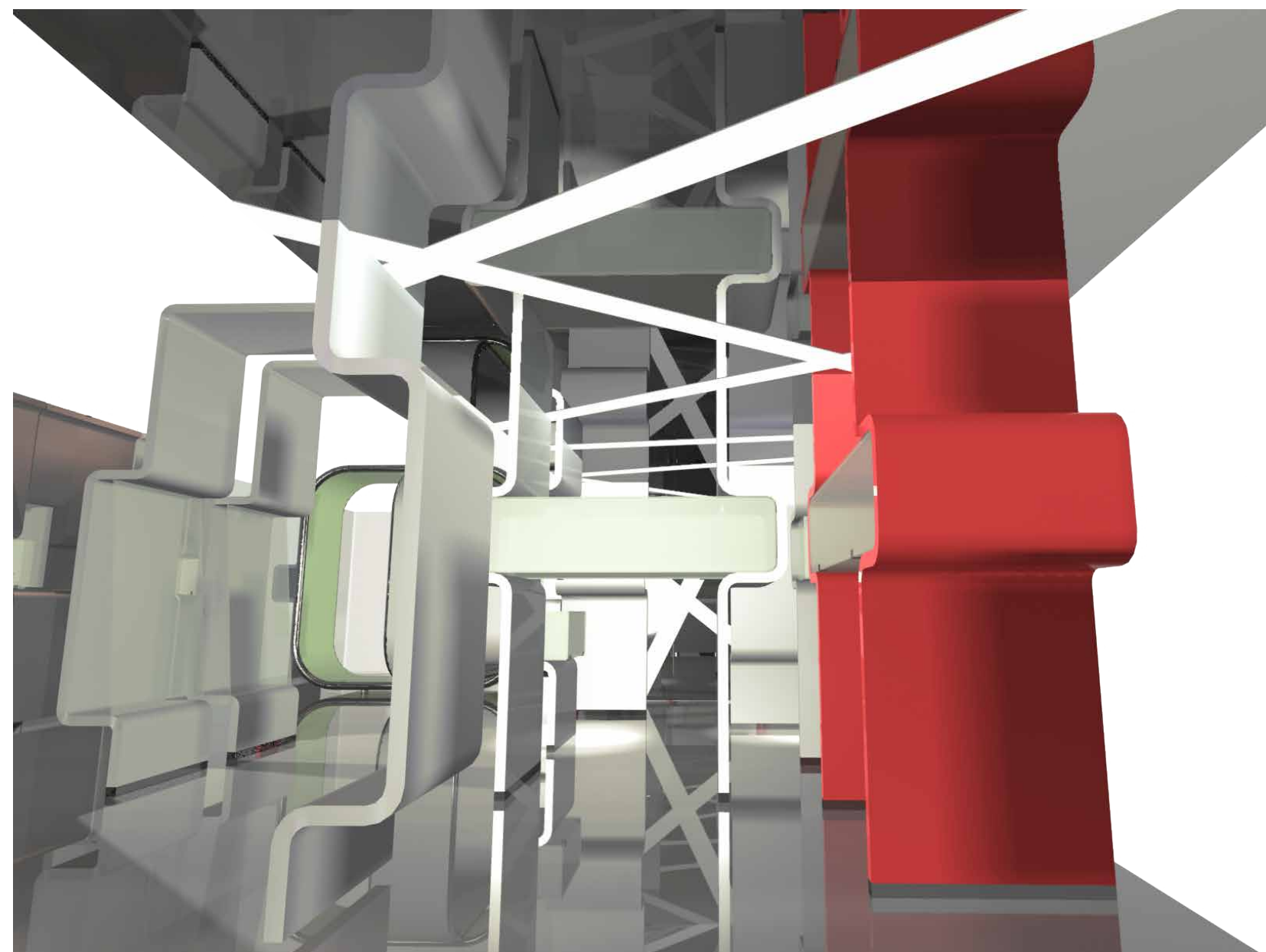
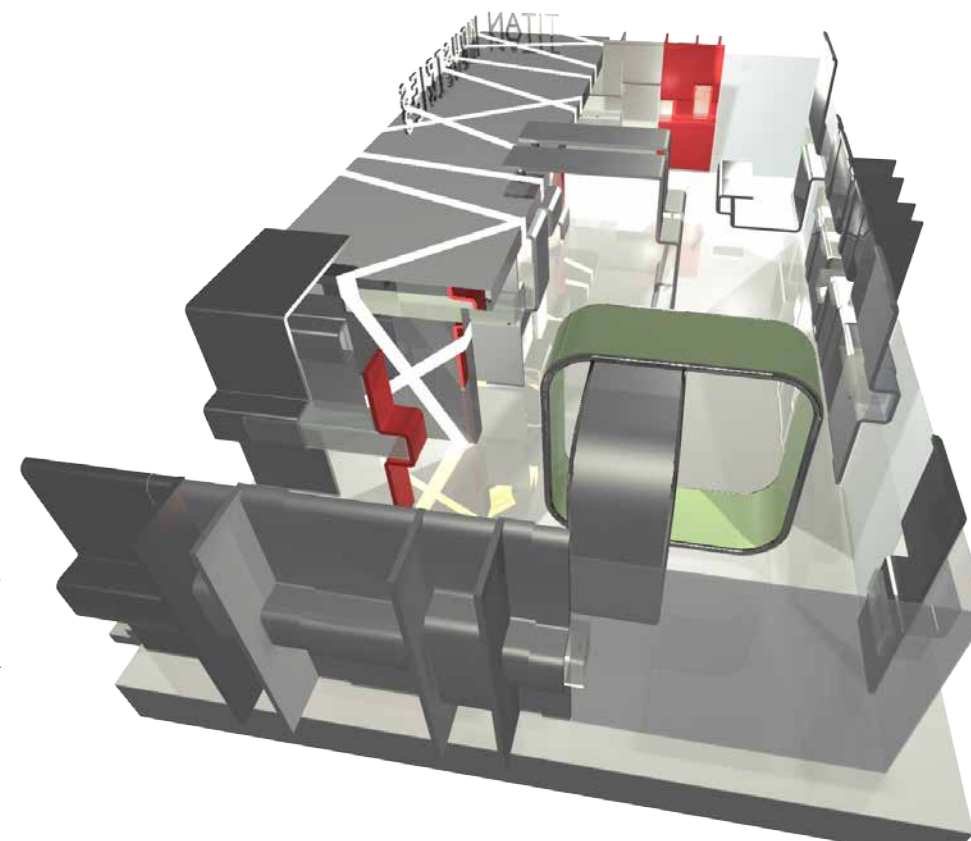
The **TIMEZONE** is loosely knit, creating fairly independent 'Sub Zones'. The **'Sub Zones'** ensure brand autonomy and maximum visibility to each brands present. The modular linear system facilitate to narrate a story about a brand or to highlight remarkable exemptions / achievements in the case of **'Hour Roof Zone'**

The displays maim the window shopping (eye level), island (shallow & horizontal), and wall (center) to create varied visual stimuli and display sequence, avoiding the general 'art gallery effect' to the participants.

The panels are modular, with standard height of 3000 mm and 2400mm, with modules of 150, 300, 450, 600, 900 & 1200 mm in width. These

could be put together in a multitude of ways to create desired display systems.

'Hour Roof Zone' is the specialty area, where the very first and the very best are displayed to create a compelling narration of the past, present and future of Titan Industries. The zone gets its name from the unusual canopy, that hovers above it, which changes color as hours pass by, depicting the very essence of time and spatiality. (Unfortunately the LED lights were compromised for fluorescent lights due to budgetary constraints)



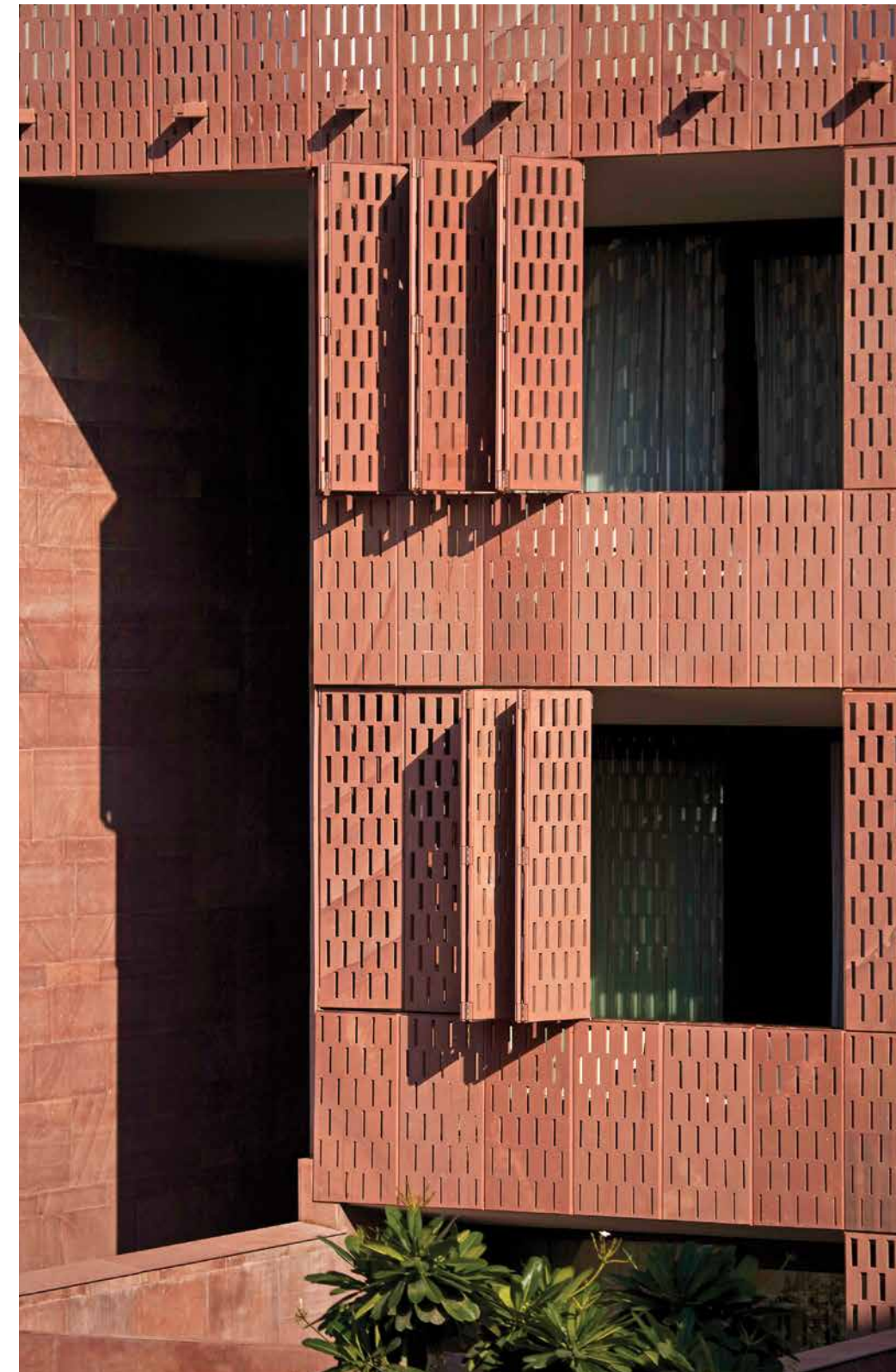
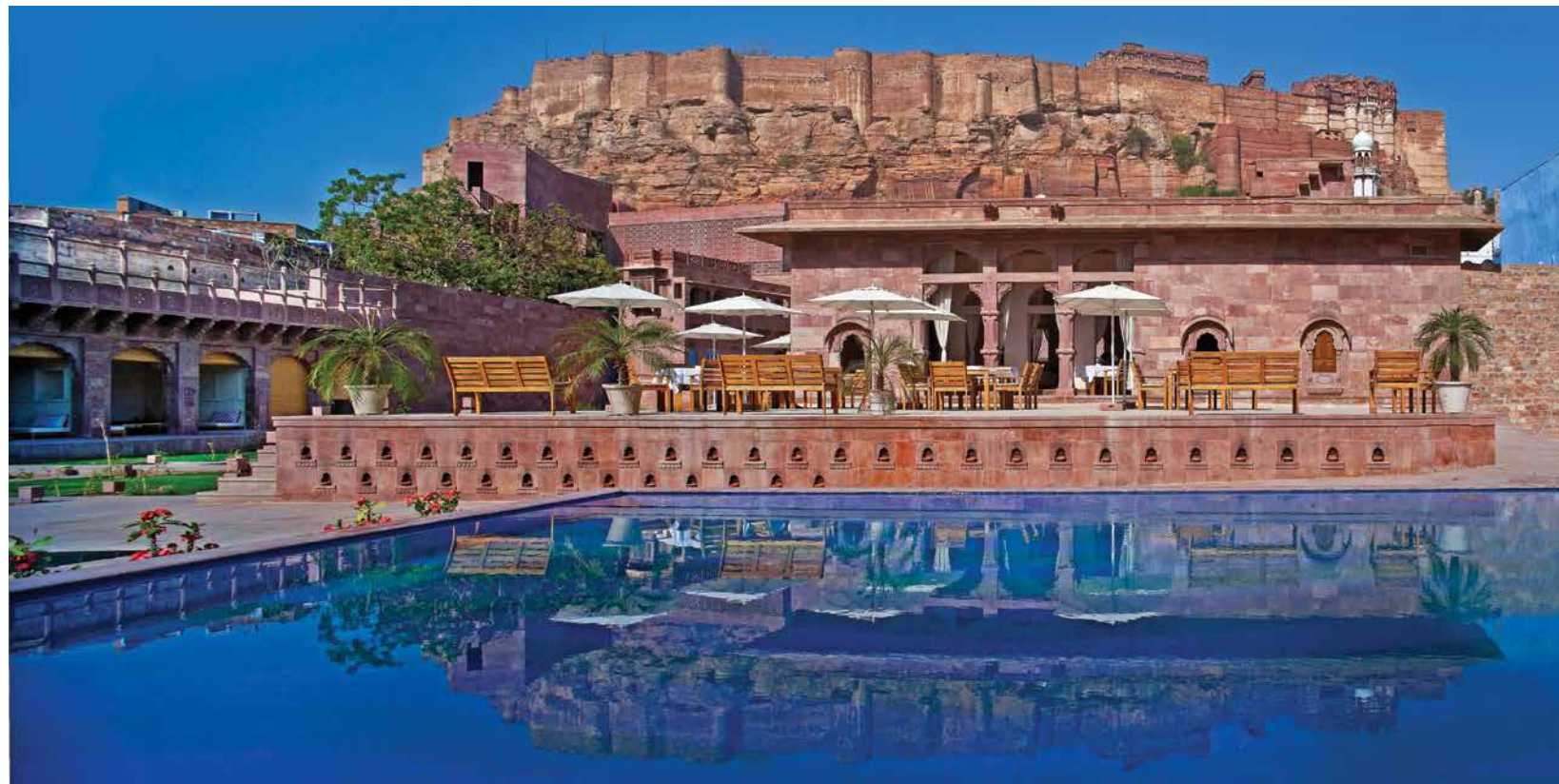
RAAS Jodhpur

Studio Lotus + Praxis

Set in the heart of the walled city of Jodhpur, Rajasthan, RAAS is a 1.5-acre property uniquely located at the base of the Mehrangarh Fort. Designed by Studio Lotus in collaboration with Praxis Inc, the key spatial interventions at the 39-key boutique hotel are expressed in a contemporary vocabulary to ensure that the additions sit distinctly yet gently against the historical structures, subservient to the original while forging a meaningful connection with the site.

Three inherited period structures set in a large courtyard anchor the RAAS experience; the new buildings serve as framing elements and as contemporary counterpoints to the site and the fort. Original materials such as lime mortar and Jodhpur sandstone have been reintroduced with the help of local artisans through time-honoured practices to restore a sense of luxury predicated on the authenticity of craft and materiality.

The remaining thirty-six rooms are spread over contemporary buildings that become framing elements to the site and respond strongly



to the context. Age-old materials and skills are manifested as a modern and understated graphic form derived from multiple functional and programmatic parameters. The new buildings are inserted into the site to highlight the spatial and formal relationship among the old buildings and the Fort, creating a dialogue between the historical and the contemporary.

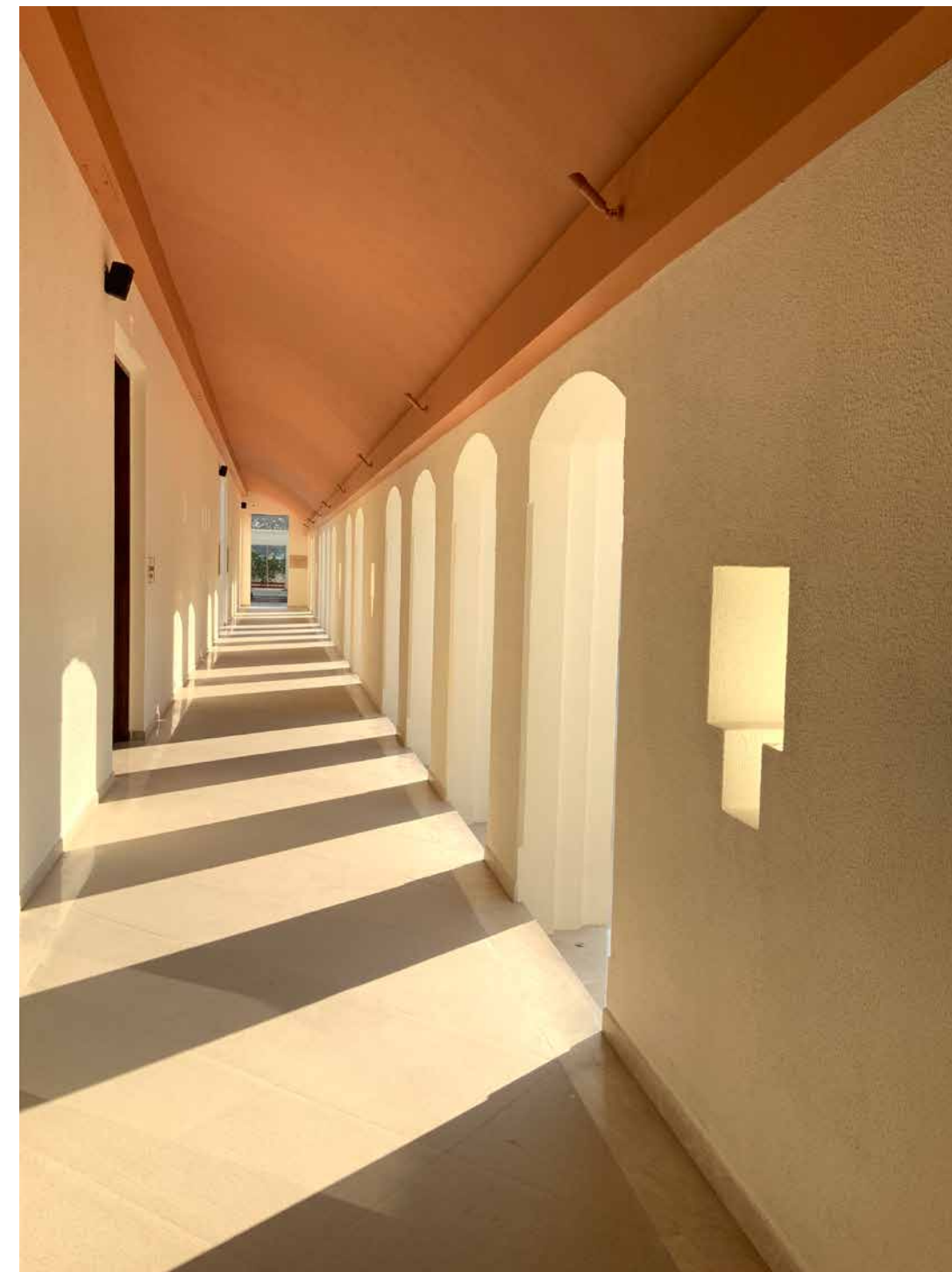
Inspired by the ancient double skinned structures of the region, (the traditional stone latticed jharokha form of Rajasthani architecture, which perform multiple functions of passive cooling and offering privacy to the user), these buildings act as lanterns framing the site. This experience was facilitated through the adaptation and integration of local stonework. Working closely with the region's artisans for several weeks, we explored contemporary expressions of the quintessential stone jaali as the overarching gesture that would bridge the modern with the historical. Arriving at a minimalist, geometric design—which would allow for ease of execution for the labour as well as enable material savings—the team crafted a sandstone screen to wrap around the new blocks. By asserting a distinct yet understated visual identity, the new interventions at the site tie together the retained structures and make them the visual as well as spatial focal points on the site.

Photo Credits: Noughts And Crosses Lip / André J Fanthome

Hotel at Bodhgaya

SJK Architects

The Bodhgaya project draws from historical references of brick buildings in that area and that era. There are contemporary translations of various such elements in the arches, the jambs the corbelled brickwork and the coloured concrete arches, but together with the courtyards and the country tile roofs there is a timeless quality to the buildings. It won't be easy to date the building over the years. It refuses to conform to the "less is more" of the modern movement or the emulation of historicity. But if buildings can be repositories of identity and memory, they become timeless.



The Verandah Clubhouse

S+PS Architects

The project is situated within a larger housing scheme in Lonavala, Maharashtra. The site used to be a Parsi Sanitarium, which in its new avatar was to become community housing. Since the first day when we saw the existing structures we were keen to reuse them as part of the project in some form. The buildings were simple tiled gabled roof structures with load bearing walls and verandahs in the front. Over time they had been expanded with lean-to roofs at the back. These structures were nothing overtly special but had good character, large volumes and were made of resilient materials. They were representative of their time but more importantly along with the large mature group of trees around them had a wonderful vibe and atmosphere marking a special place on the whole site. The preservation of our past as markers of our history is important for the future generations to see. Thus it was important to retain these structures

and we proposed to the clients that we could convert this ensemble into the amenities wing with all public leisure and recreation facilities housed here. The rear extensions were not in good shape and it was decided to demolish them. We also realized that the remaining area was not adequate for all the programs required and would need extension.

It was decided to amplify the character of the existing buildings with careful restoration and renovation but also add the new components representative of our time. The first step was to interlink all the three parts by joining and extending the verandah to connect all the new buildings. There is nothing better during the monsoon time than to sit under a verandah and watch the rain. Components like the stone plinth; stone column base, wooden columns and rafters were rescued, recycled and reused from other similar structures on the site. Layers of paint

was stripped off all the woodwork and polished highlighting the beauty of old timber. Windows were restored and in-filled with colored and patterned glass. Heritage tiles on the floor are laid as if light streaming through the windows has highlighted them and made them come alive.

Secondly a raw concrete box seems to pierce all the 3 parts interconnecting them internally and adding all the service spaces and wet cores in the gaps between the buildings. Exposed board formed concrete was the single material used on all 4 sides - inside and out. This piece is raised and appears to float off the ground - contrasting with the existing rooted buildings. Round skylights punctuate the spaces bringing in light from above. There are strategically placed built-in wooden benches in these interstitial spaces offering a pause between activities and a view outwards through carefully calibrated openings at seating height.



The existing buildings had loadbearing walls right in their center, and for them to be used efficiently for their new programs like the gymnasium or the indoor games room this would have to be addressed. Back to back steel I sections were joined to create built-up sections that spanned across the width of the structures opening up the centers for beneficial use. The central bay had a larger steel mezzanine and stair inserted over the steam room and changing rooms for accommodating the library and reading room. Here again the center was opened up not only at one level but

also along the full height and involved complex structural juggling where the load of the existing wooden trusses was transferred onto an interconnecting steel hanger column. The reading room overlooks the lounge space below from where the stair originates.

The final step was to add the Multipurpose Hall to the ensemble. A group of three trees prevented immediate continuity of the concrete box. We decided to repeat the exact same size and footprint as the existing building but with an inverted roof with the same angle and slope as the existing buildings. This along

with other gestures completely inverts the spatiality of the older buildings. The space goes from being dark to one filled with light from above. The division between the 2 parts is implied but it is really one space at floor level. Space that is inward looking and centered in the old building is here inverted to become extrovert and flows diagonally to the outside.

All these varied elements are brought together by the articulated ground plane and plinth that ties together all the existing trees and buildings - both old and new.

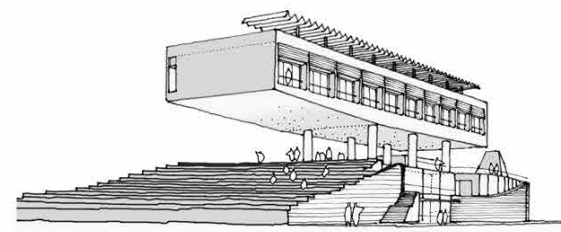


Bangalore International Centre

HUNDREDHANDS

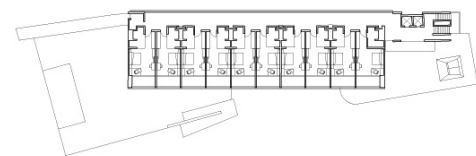
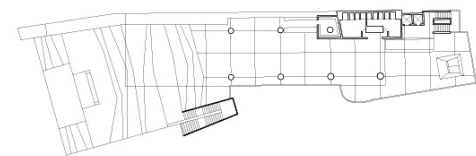
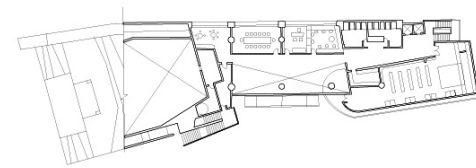
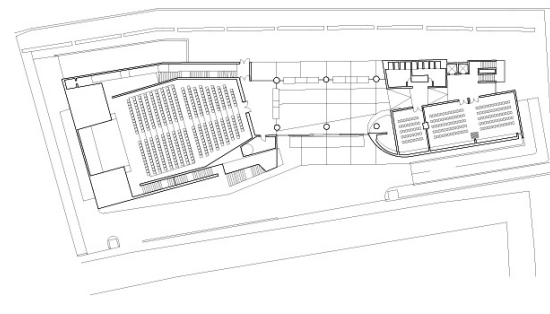
In 2005 a group of senior career bureaucrats and city intellectuals came together to set up the Bangalore International Centre. They modeled it on the India International Centre in Delhi, as a place for informed discussion, public discourse and cultural engagement. Housed for the first 14 years of its existence within the Sanjay Mohe designed TERI offices, the Centre held a variety of public events, many in TERI's small 80 seat auditorium, the crowds often spilling out onto the lawns and streets outside. At the core of its mandate was the idea that these events hosted by the BIC would be free for all and not just for its members. Membership was seen more as a token contribution to allow the Centre to pursue its egalitarian and democratic mission.

In 2012, the Centre invited proposals in an open competition for a new facility they were planning to build on a half acre civic amenity site in Domlur, in the eastern part of the city. The site had been allotted to the BIC for a subsidised price and the building was going to be built using funds raised through private donations. This unusual idea, of a public, open institution built with the help of private contributions, and managed by the membership in the interest of the larger community is the foundational principle of this project. We won the competition and our proposal, a dramatic assembly of the mixed-use program, articulated to respond to its small scale residential context and the neighboring park was received with much acclaim and some derision. An astute BIC member, in a lengthy letter written to the Building Committee, observed that modern architecture (or the Starship Enterprise, as he called it) had landed in Domlur. This response may have been because of the particular massing strategy used on the competition scheme (1). A floating mass cantilevered (out by some 16m!) over a wide amphitheater and a two storey plinth, expressed in iconic fashion the public agenda of the BIC. This open verandah above the tree line from where one surveyed the city and onto which the city projected its aspirations had incredible rhetorical flourish, capturing both the heroic ambitions of the BIC and its open, transparent and public mission. Soon though, this heroism gave away to pragmatic considerations, including the ever increasing requirement for 'enclosed' rentable space, odour from the adjoining storm water drain and mosquitoes. We plodded along for nearly two years negotiating the Committee, site challenges and working out how to make



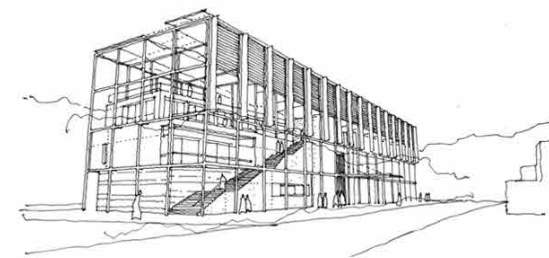
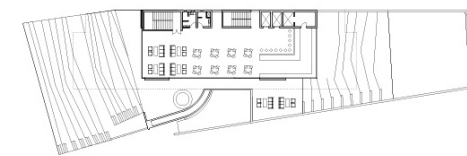
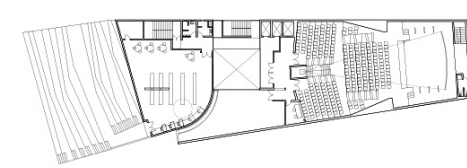
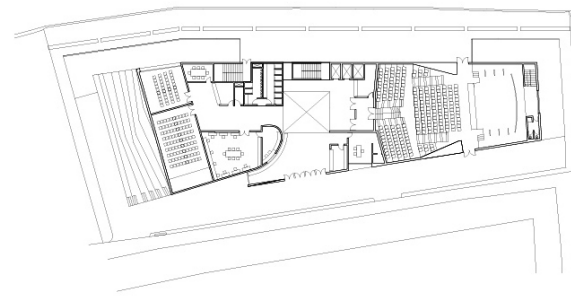
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July 2012



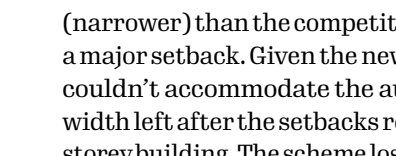
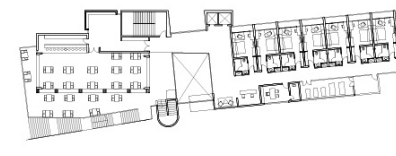
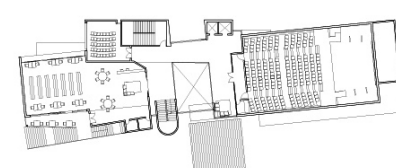
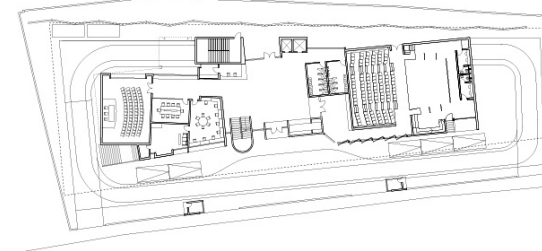
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January 2013



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October 2014



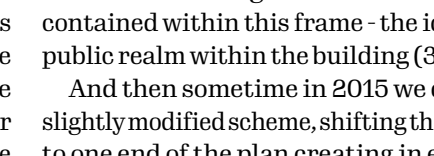
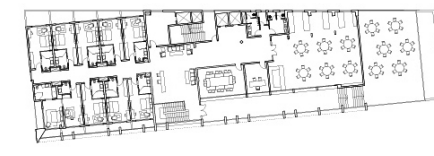
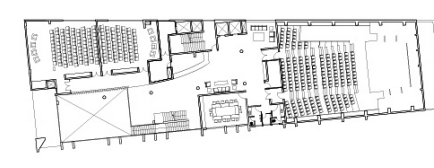
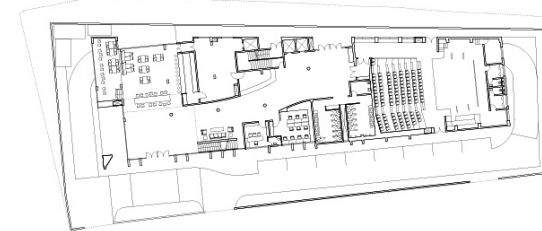
that humongous cantilever, arriving finally at a scheme ready for building permits in 2014 (2). While preparing the permit drawings we realised that BIC's actual site holding was smaller (narrower) than the competition site. This was a major setback. Given the new dimensions, we couldn't accommodate the auditorium in the width left after the setbacks required for a four storey building. The scheme lost a floor to reduce setbacks, and (guess what?!) that wonderful central idea, that space with no program, a symbol of the institution, was sacrificed.

We continued to pursue the same general organisation - a central entry with program distributed on either side and were close to finalising the scheme - a parti that didn't really



4

January 2015



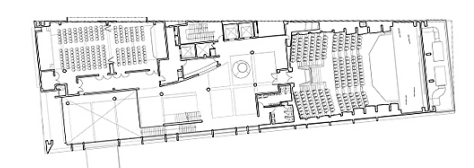
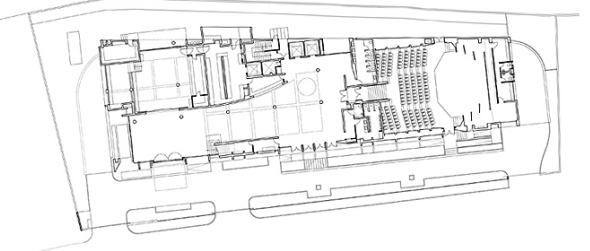
excite any of us. We proposed encasing the building in a frame - to retain the scale of our earlier iterations and began moving towards the idea of finding a series of shared spaces contained within this frame - the idea of a rich public realm within the building (3).

And then sometime in 2015 we developed a slightly modified scheme, shifting the main entry to one end of the plan creating in effect a long promenade within the building, connecting the different program components (4). This fundamental change in the circulation strategy meant that now on each floor the distinct rooms were part of this articulated, and generous public space which was connected across in section, offering places to gather and for prospect. The



5

May 2016



public life of the building, rather than being isolated on one level as it was in our competition scheme, became the core organising principal of this new scheme. Rather than merely a rhetorical idea it now was a lived, experienced condition - with adjacencies and connections. Subsequent iterations of the plan cemented the importance of this common shared space, as program was removed from it, the restaurant was moved to the ground floor extending this public realm and new connections were made to the wide setbacks on the east and west (5). This inner shared space seemed intimately connected to the world outside through large openings and ample glass facades. It was like being in a deep verandah.

Gairola House(2009),
Kindred House (2013) and
Cleft House (2018)

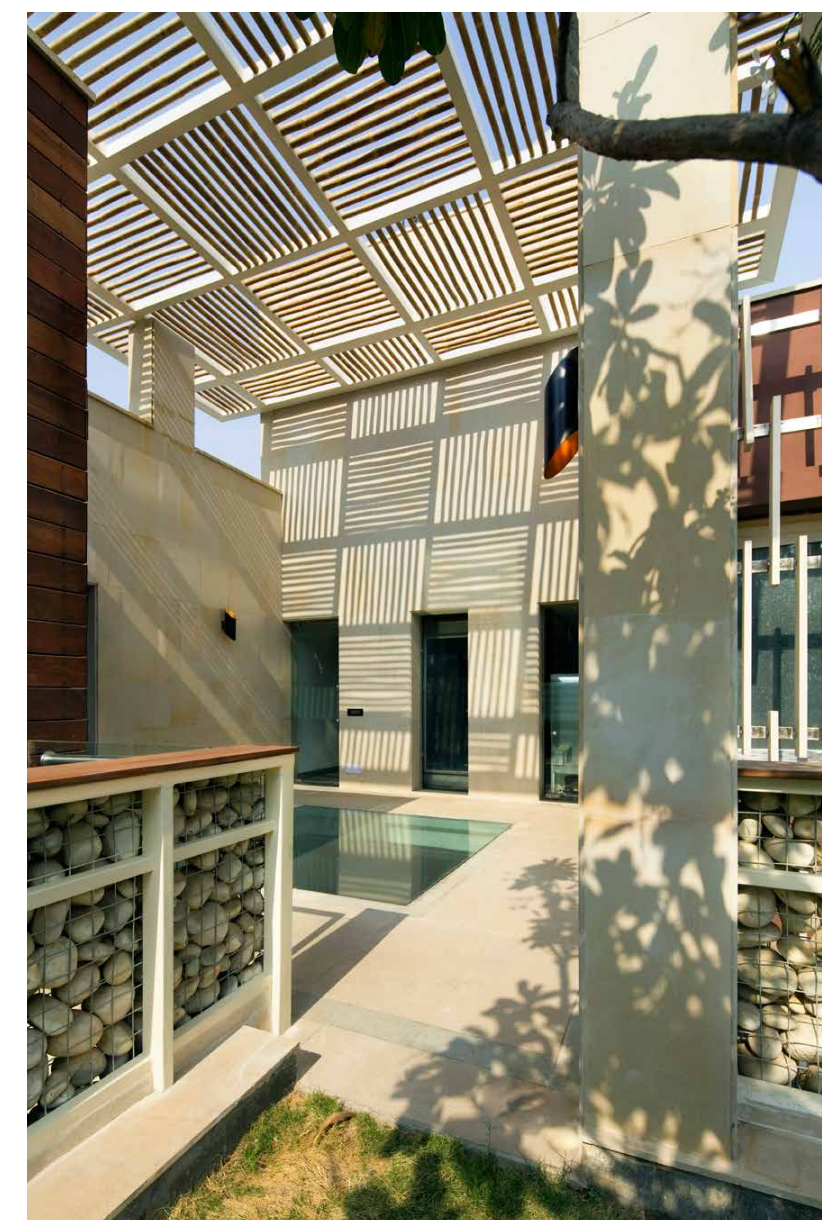
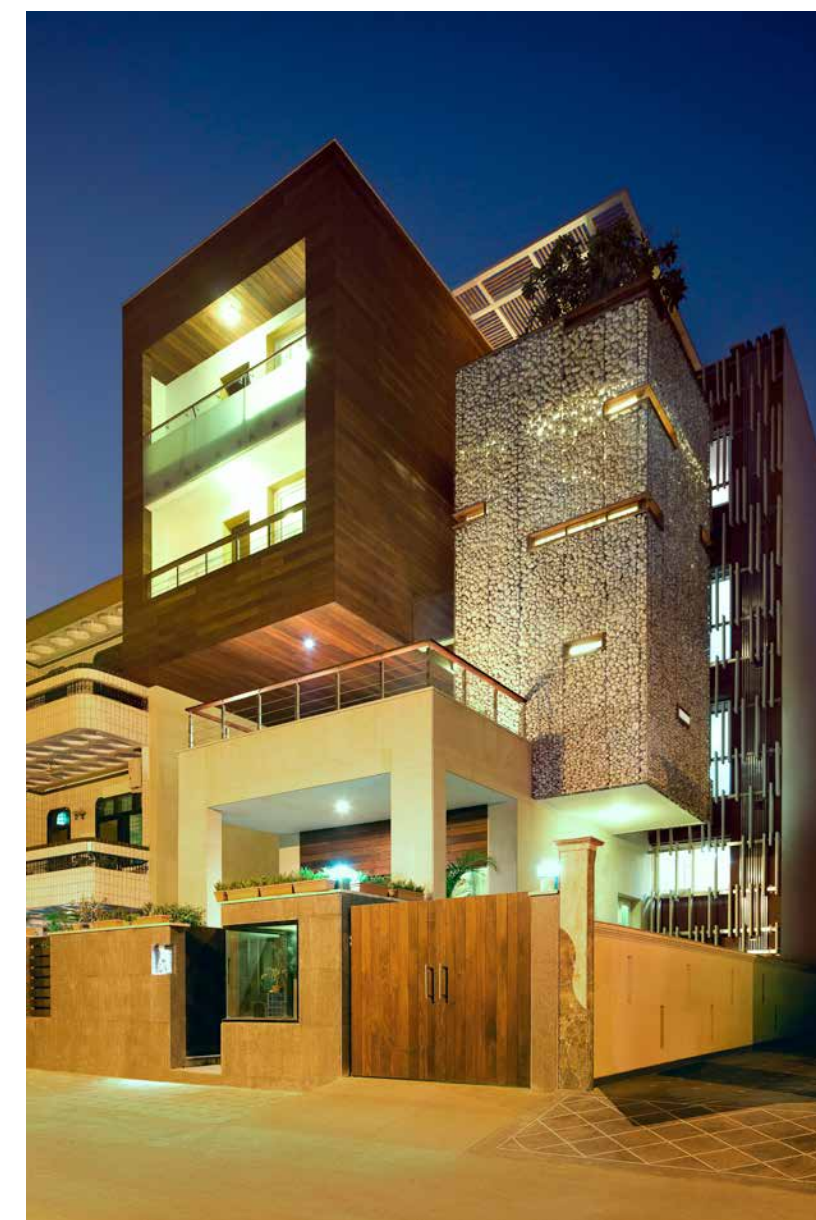
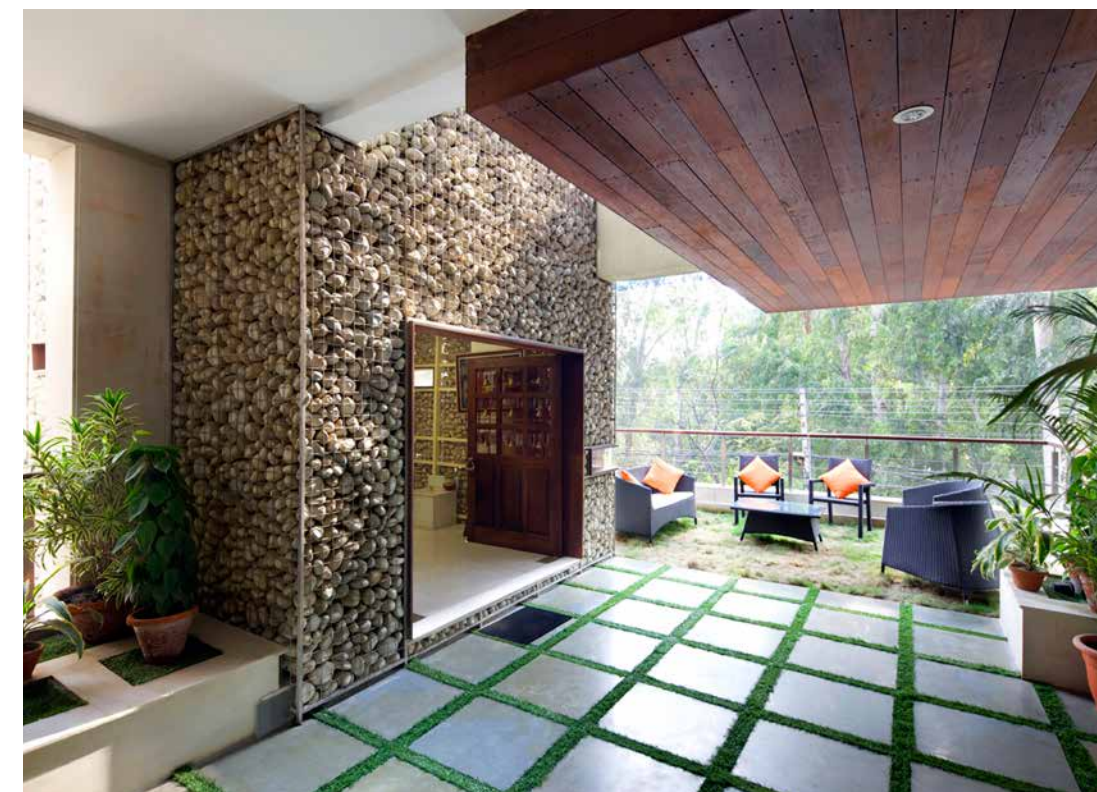
Anagram Architects

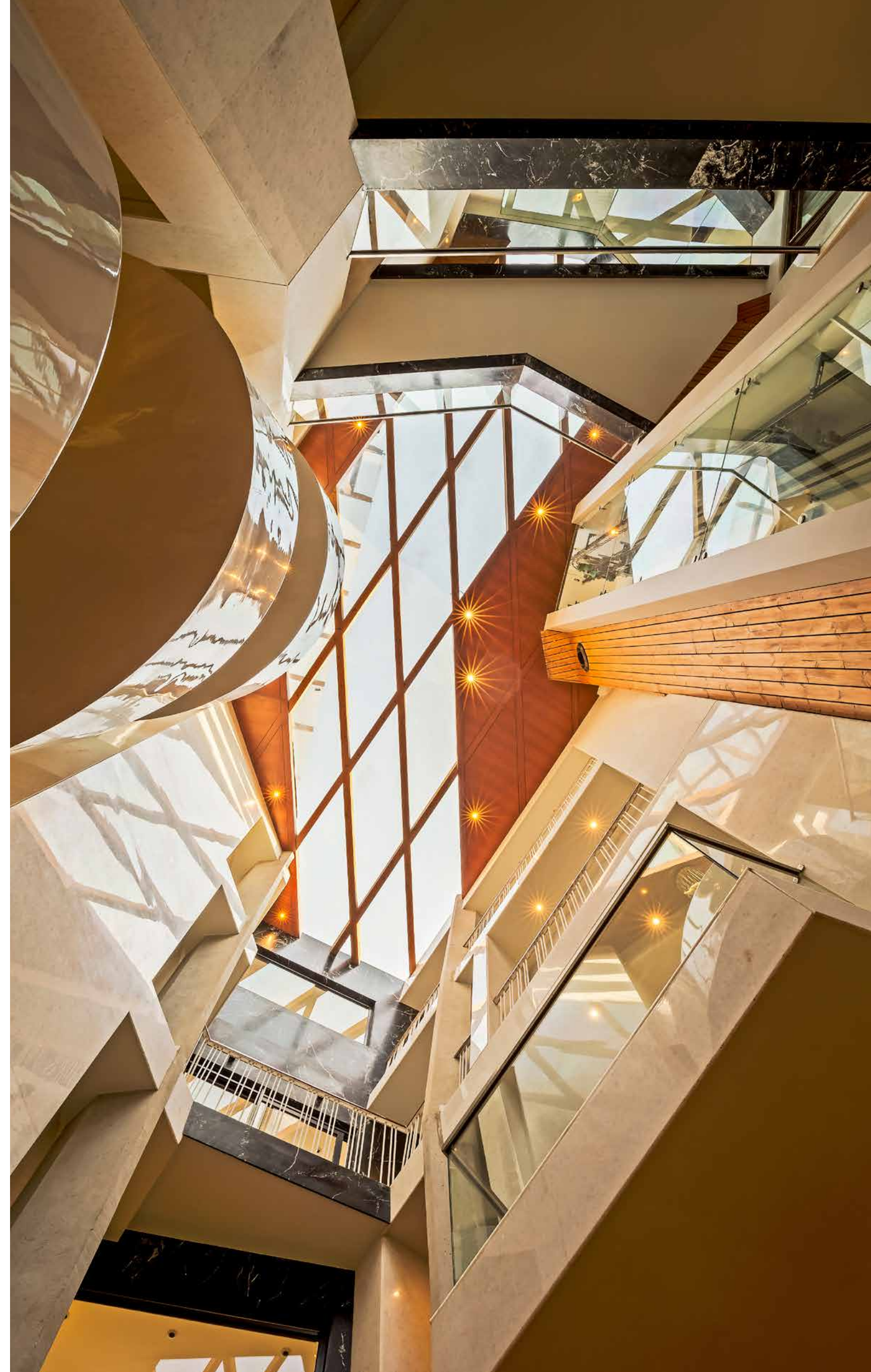
These are three residential projects built across a decade (2008-2018) that elaborate our understanding of the evolving sociabilities of the urban Indian home and its residents. All three projects are built on residential plots of ~300 sqm in and around Delhi. In our experience, this is the smallest plot size where we have been able to offer bespoke designs directly to the client, who self-finances the project.

Gairola House(2009): The plot in Gurugram belonged to an NRI client who wished to build homes for the rental market. Our research indicated that the greatest and most stable rental returns accrued to homes for single executives, young double-income families and pre-retirement empty-nesters. The mix implied a non-cookie cutter plan which was organised to build “neighbourliness” around a shared staircase and a shared courtyard.



Kindred House (2013): The plot in Delhi was inherited by two brothers who wished to live together with their families in one home (in a sense as a hybrid between a nuclear and a joint family, hence the name “Kindred”). The home was designed to accommodate the different social relations and diverse tastes of and privacies between the different members of both families.





Cleft House (2018): A middle-aged, successful businessman and his housewife wished to build a home for their family, of two teenagers and his mother, and a large social circle, of relatives and friends, whom they enjoy hosting at home. The design catered to their express desire for a “remarkable” home that emphasised a vivacious sociability within that is insulated away from an industrial estate across the very busy road.

Airplane and the City

Robert Stephens

Above: The organic outline of Mumbai's rocky, western foreshore from Worli (foreground, left) to Malabar Hill (foreground, right).
March 2013

Below: The post-reclamation profile of the island city's western foreshore, making way for the Mumbai Coastal Road.
November 2020



Ahmedabad's Sabarmati Riverfront, a recently completed reclamation project accommodating new freeways, pedestrian promenades, building plots, and public gardens atop the waterway's former right of way.

"The eye of the airplane is pitiless. This time we have the actual record of reality. What an appalling thing!"

Le Corbusier
Aircraft: The New Vision
1935

In November 2018 the Bombay Municipal Corporation commenced construction on the controversial Mumbai Coastal Road, and within a few dozen months the irregular contour of the city's western waterfront (Fig 1) would be transformed into a gentle, monolithic sweep of reclaimed earth, (Fig 2) paving the way for the straight-line-loving motor vehicle (with a few public parks thrown in the mix). The formal transformation is but one example of an ongoing tryst with modern, high-speed transit-corridors around, through, under, and above urban India's organically textured settlements. As the

technology of transportation germinates in the petri-dish of time (with an admixture of human ambition sprinkled generously), the macro-aesthetic of the city continues to undergo a visual shift, as exemplified in the recently completed Sabarmati Riverfront (Fig 3). Similarly, where jagged edges, twists and turns once dominated the landscape, a modernist's delight of straight lines now sweep through the scene, as seen in Chennai's 21st-century above ground metro network (Fig 4). Ruthless, unforgiving, and always straight to the point, the lines of time are rapidly redrawing our cities before our very eyes.

Chennai's overground Metro as it slithers through Vadapalani.
February 2015



Aesthetics and time

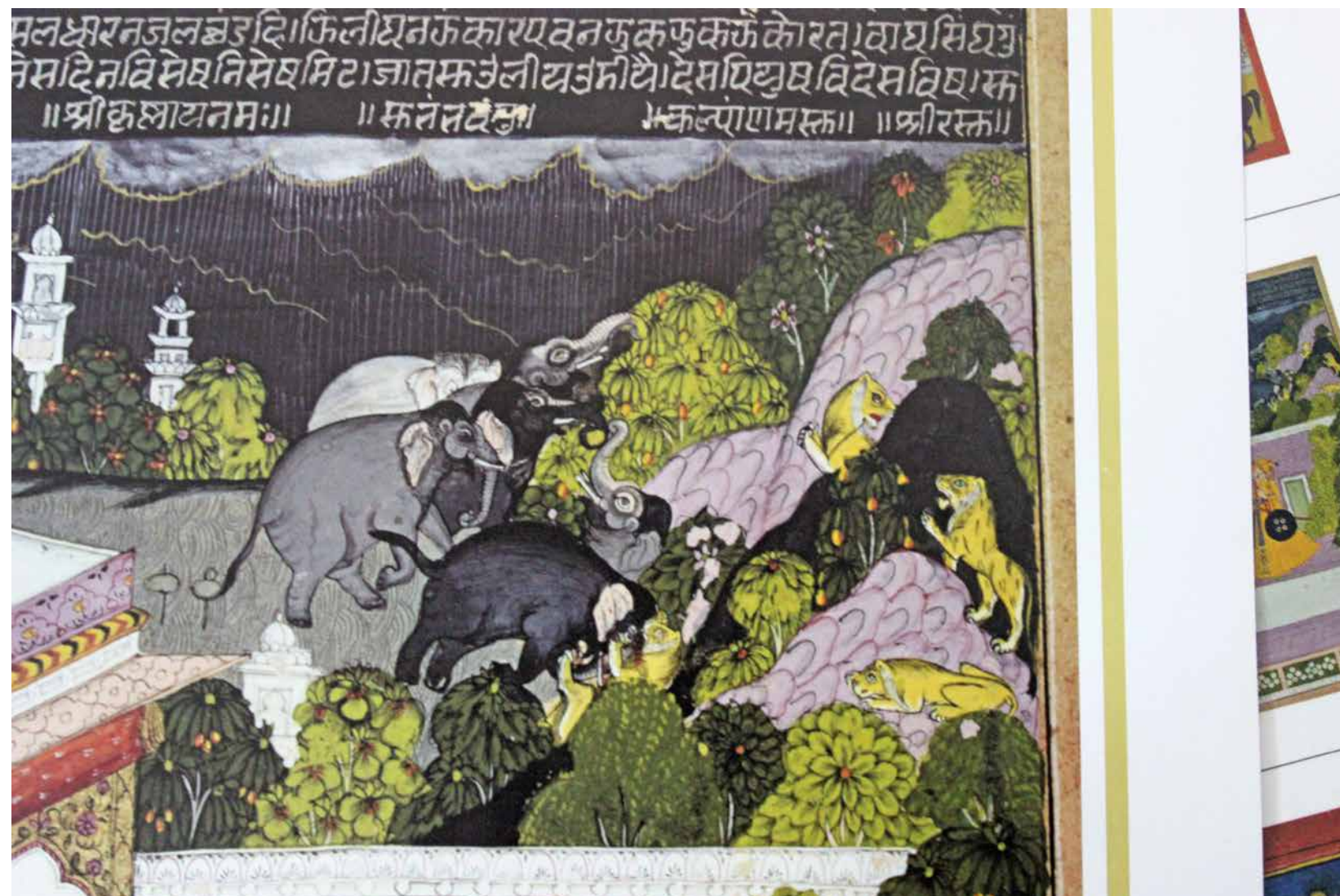
Moods. Seasons. Nature

Text and photographs Sudha Ganapathi

Barahmasa



This page: Detail of the Surya and his horses wrapped up in a shawl
Opposite page: Detail of a folio representing Bhadon or Bhadrpada, the month of dark clouds and torrential rain. The sun is hardly seen and sometimes there is little to differentiate between night and day. The dark clouds and the sheet of rain show a dynamic representation of Bhadon



Songs that are part of the oral tradition of the Indian subcontinent, particularly in north India, find expression in myriad forms of music and art.

The 'Barahmasa' or 'Baramasa' (and other variant spellings) are songs that are part of the oral tradition of the Indian subcontinent, especially in north India. Literally, it refers to the twelve (*barah*) months (*masa*) as per the Hindu lunar calendar and is used to describe the changing seasons and the moods and emotions it evokes. There are songs which describe *chaumasa* (four months), *chaymasa* (six months) or the *ashtamasa* (eight months). Of these, the *chaumasa* is quite common with the other two being relatively rarer; however, all these are considered as part of the larger body of the barahmasa. The earliest references to the changing seasons appear in the Rigveda, which mentions five seasons, while the later Brahmapurana enumerates six seasons.^[1] Kalidasa devoted an entire body of work, the *Ritusamhara*, to the six seasons and "how each... season brings about and alters the mood and behaviour of a person in love".^[2] Over the centuries, a rich body of literature on the barahmasa emerged from Punjab to Assam through the poetry of Valmiki, Kalidas, Jaideva, Keshavadas, Bihari, Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Guru Nanak and Buleshah, among many others.^[3]

Types of Barahmasas

While barahmasas can roughly be divided into two categories – the oral or folk tradition and the literary or written tradition – they can be classified into five different types:^[4]

- 1 Religious barahmasa, which is more like a month-wise catalogue of festivals celebrated through the year.
- 2 Farmer's *baramasa*, which describes the agricultural cycle and the labour involved and also a peasant's life.
- 3 Narrative barahmasa, which is part of a larger body of work, like the Mahabharata.

4 Viraha barahmasa, which is about the pangs of separation the wife suffers when her husband is away. This type of barahmasa was popularised by Vaishnava poet saints in the 15th century CE, and is perhaps why the maximum barahmasas are of this type.

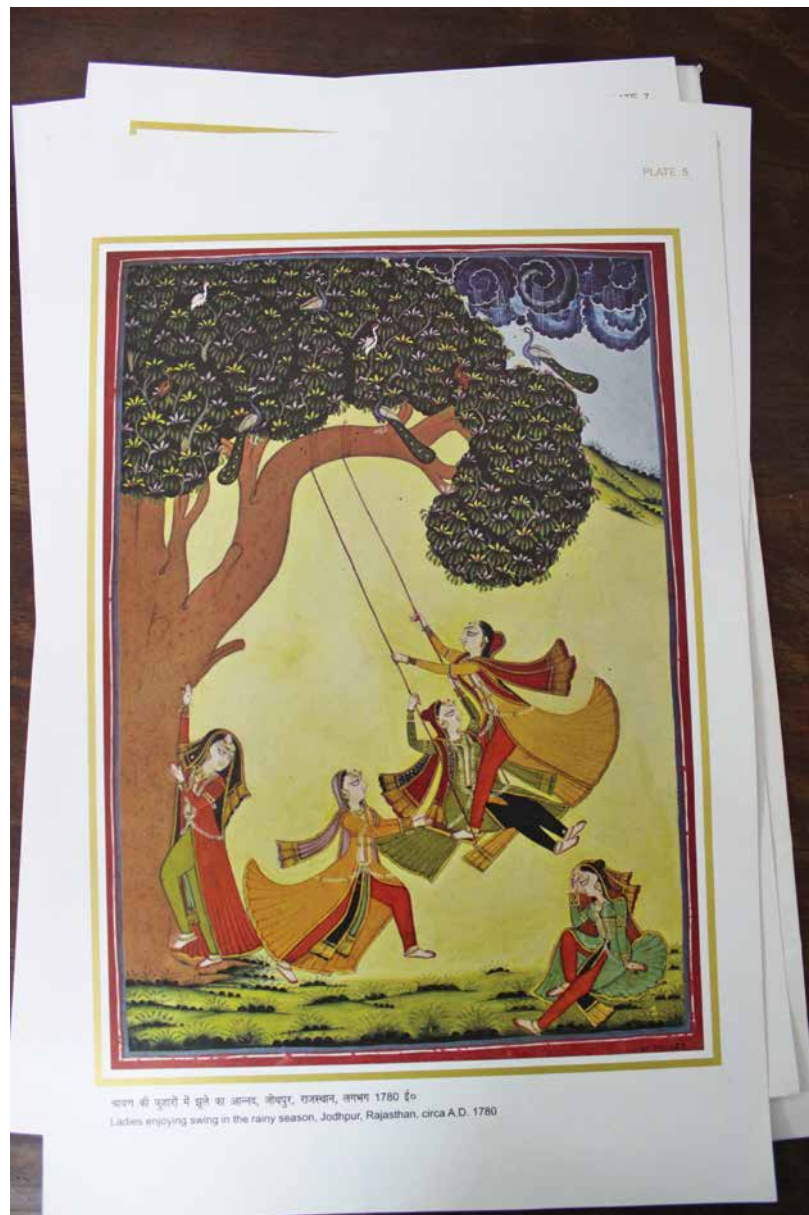
5 "Trial of chastity" barahmasa, which is a trial or temptation imposed on a young wife separated from her husband.

Barahmasas across India

Religious barahmasas were used by the Jain monks, the Vaishnava saints and, and Sikh gurus for propaganda, especially to a peasant audience.^[5] The Barahmasa has been the favourite theme of religious and secular poetry of Punjab with the earliest reference made by Guru Nanak (1469-1538) with the vivid descriptions of nature being likened to remembrance of God.^[6] By contrast, the Barahmasa (or Baramaha in Punjabi) that Riaz discusses is firmly rooted in the rural landscape of Punjab far away from the romantic depictions of Radha and Krishna or of the divine. "There are no niceties of an idyllic countryside here; only life as it is lived by hardened people battling for survival."^[7] In other words, these are farmer's barahmasas.

The barahmasas or barahmahi of Bengal and Assam are primarily about human relationship with nature.^[8] But thanks to the influence of Vaishnavism, there are also references to love and pangs of separation between two lovers. The barahmasa was a common theme in art in other regions of Central and North India like Malwa, Chamba, Garhwal and Kangra.^[9,10] However, the Deccan region as well as the rest of south India have virtually little known Baramasa paintings.^[11]

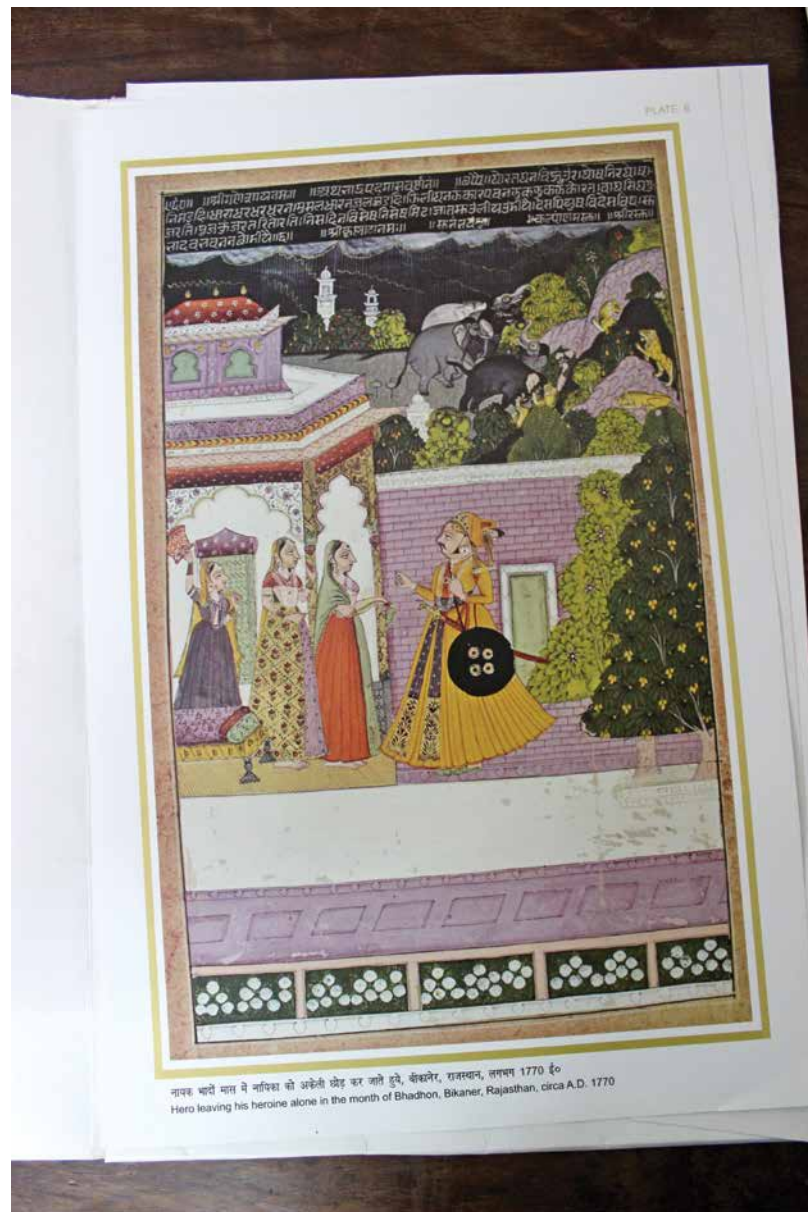
It is interesting to note that Baramasas per se have not found favour as a theme in either music or art in South India. The Tamil month of Margazhi (mid-December to mid-January) is the only exception with songs and art in the form of kolams dedicated to it. The Alvar saint Andal's Tiruppavai, containing 30 *pasurams* or verses and describing her devotion to Vishnu/Krishna are sung through the month of Margazhi.



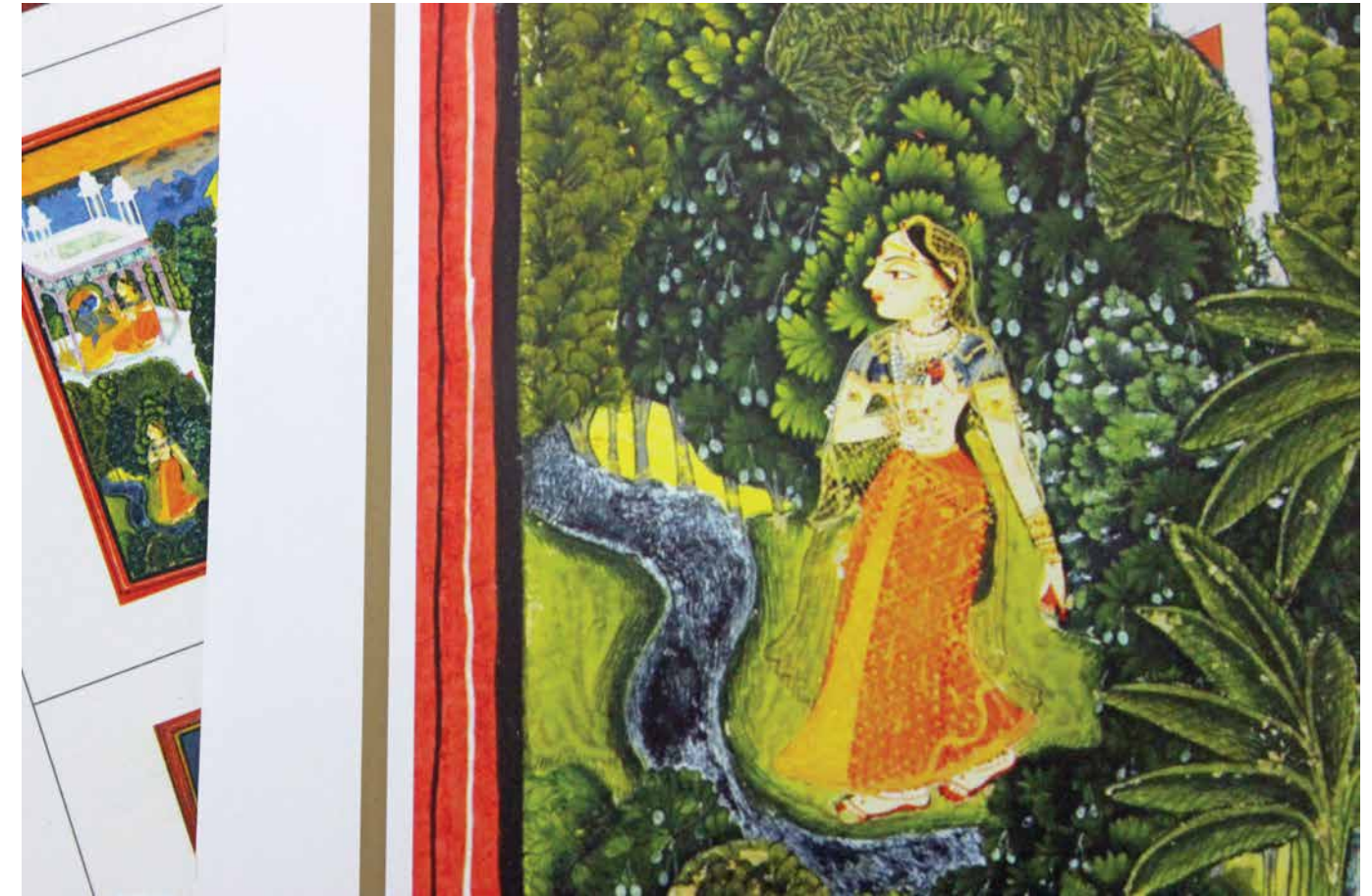
This page, top: Shravan or Saawan is the month when the south-west monsoon arrives in full force in the Indian subcontinent. The rains bring cooler weather and the young women shown here are making the most of it. There is something compelling about the different expressions of the five women in the painting captures the emotions associated with the monsoon in India – the wait for the rains, the joy of first rains, and then the despair over the

destruction that the monsoons often bring. Right: Bhadon or Bhadrapada is the month of dark clouds and torrential rains. The sun is hardly seen and sometimes there is little to differentiate between night and day. The dark clouds and sheets of rain in the painting show a dynamic representation of Bhadon. In the foreground a woman bidding goodbye to her lover, as two of her attendants look on. The liberal use pink/lilac helps to throw the greys and blacks into sharper focus

Isn't it time for a new Barahmasa language or theme to emerge to reflect contemporary times? Considering the regional variations across the country, the possibilities are endless



This page, right: Detail of a folio representing Ashadha, the beginning of the monsoon season in India. Below: Phalguna is the last month of the Hindu lunar calendar and is marked by two major festivals – Shivaratri and Holi. This painting depicts both days of Holi celebrations; the background has Holika Dahan (burning of Holika), which occurs on the eve of Holi, while the foreground shows the actual Holi celebrations with Krishna and Radha, as well as Shiva and Parvati. It is unusual to see Shiva and Krishna in one frame as also Shiva with a white beard, contrasting sharply with Krishna's youthfulness. Artistic license or something else?

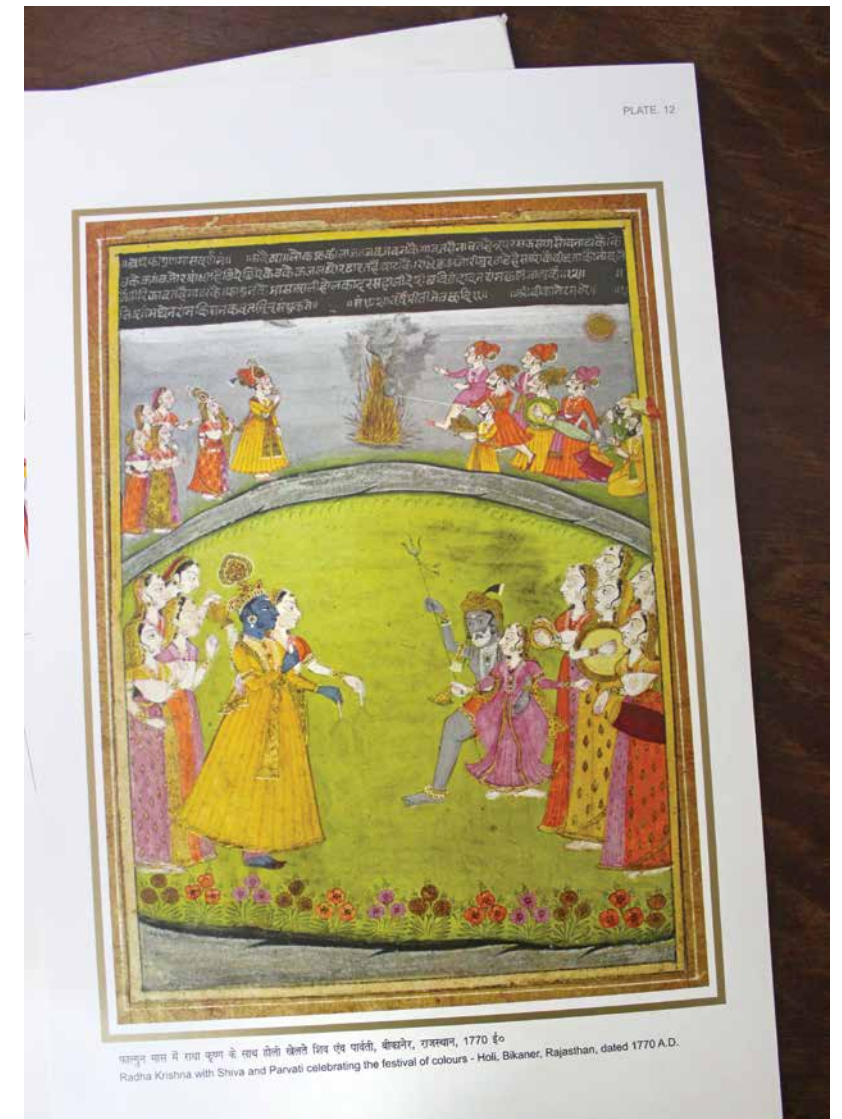


Barahmasas in art: A folio from Rajasthan

It not surprising that barahmasa poetry found expression in music (folk songs) as well as art (paintings), both exploring the moods and emotions associated with this genre. The Vaishnava movement, which brought to fore the passionate love of Radha and Krishna, had a deep influence on the representation of barahmasa in art. It is for this reason that whenever lovers are shown in such paintings, they are depicted as Radha and Krishna.^[12] The Kavipriya of Keshavadas has an entire chapter devoted to the life of people in different seasons, including festivals and rituals. His poetry became the basis for many artists to depict the barahmasa in paintings, including the ones accompanying the article, where 7 of 12 paintings feature Radha and Krishna.^[13] While Radha and Krishna appear to take centrestage in each of the paintings, it is the small details – usually in the background – in each of the 12 paintings that convey the mood and emotions of a particular month. For example, the sun peeking out from a mountain heralding Vaishakha or summer; a cobra, a tiger and an elephant in listless proximity due to the hot month of Jyeshtha; elephants and lions trying to seek shelter from the relentless rain of Bhadon; the full moon of Ashvin and a moonlit village; the new moon on Deepawali day in the month of Kartik depicted as a grey orb blending into the smoky grey sky; a shawl-wrapped Surya in the cold month of Pausha, and the flowering trees of spring and so on.

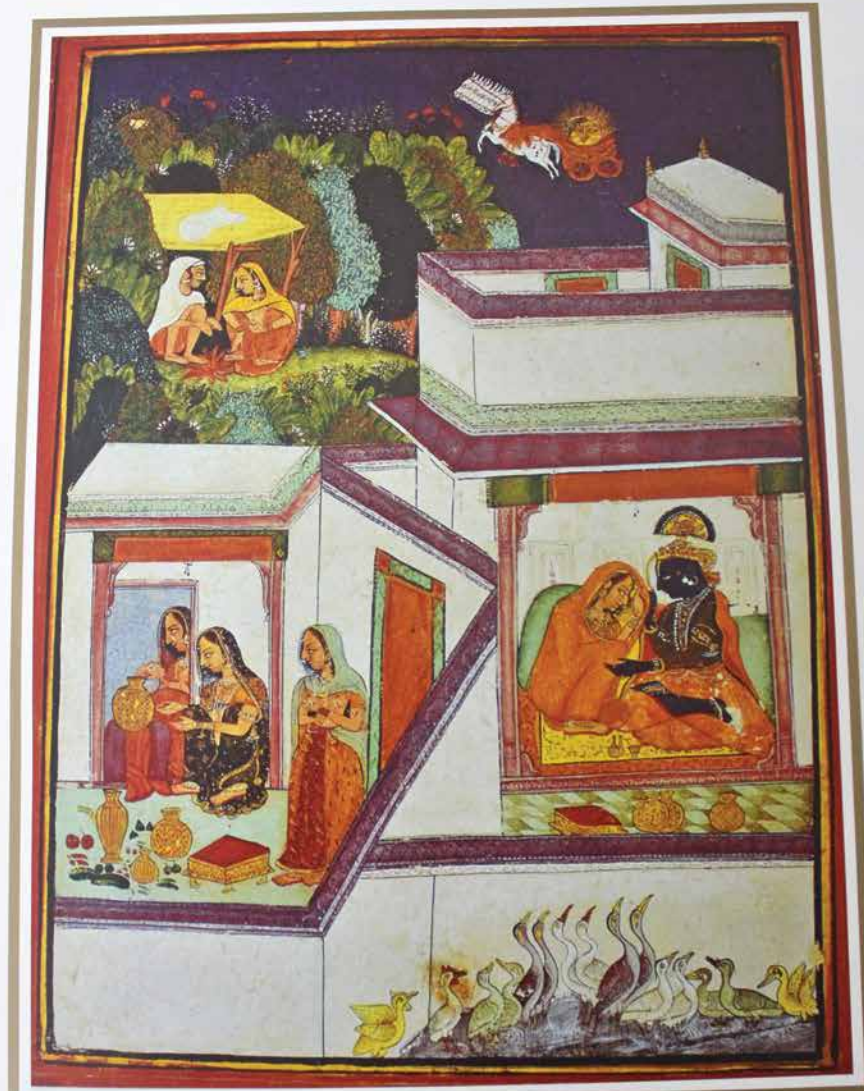
Re-imagining Barahmasas

Though the barahmasa has been around for centuries, it's representation in art has not changed much or gone beyond Radha and Krishna taking centrestage. One of the reasons could be that no new or significant works



While Radha and Krishna appear to take centre stage in each of Keshavadas' paintings, it is the small details – usually in the background – in each of the twelve paintings that convey the mood and emotions of a particular month

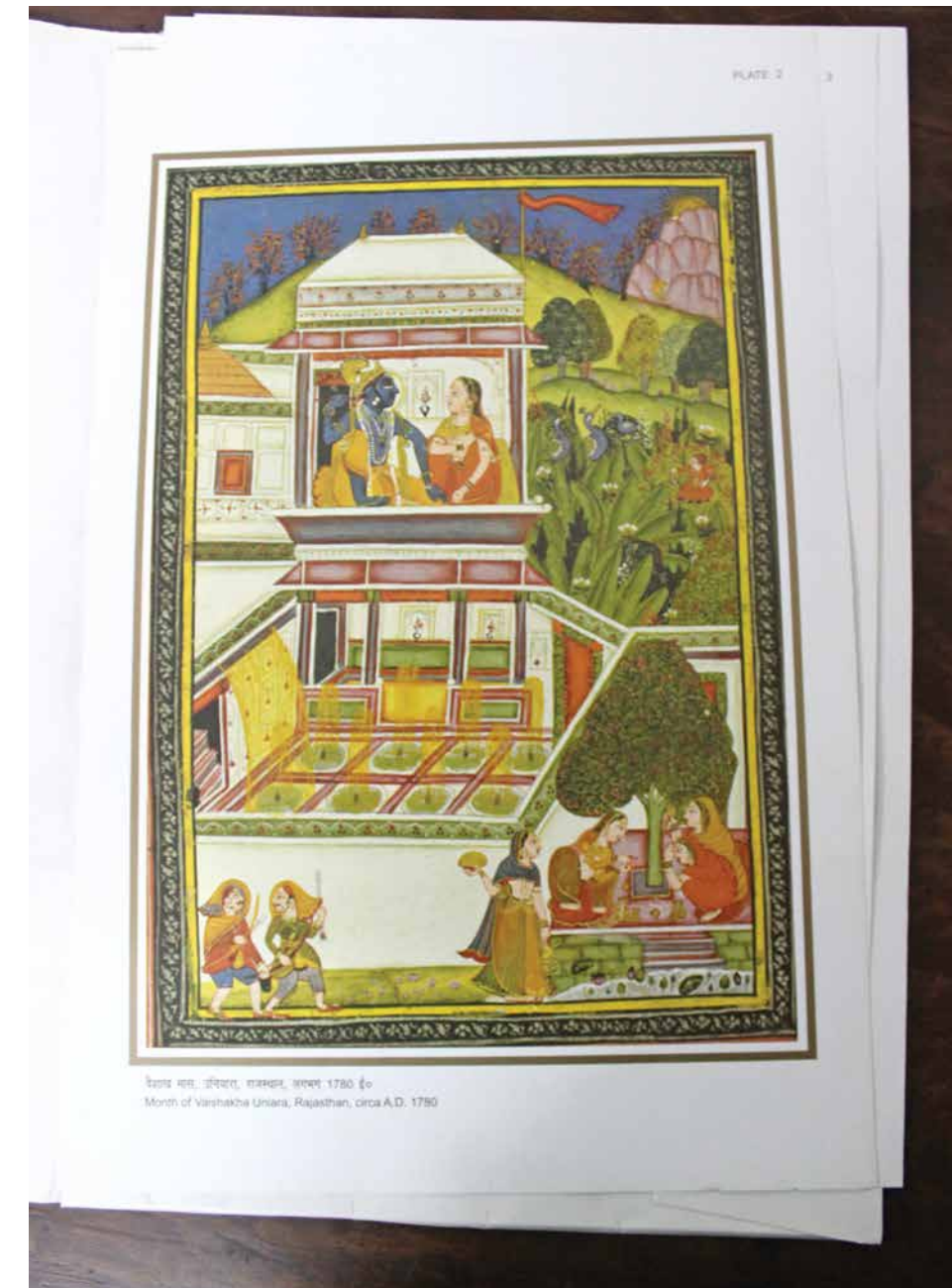
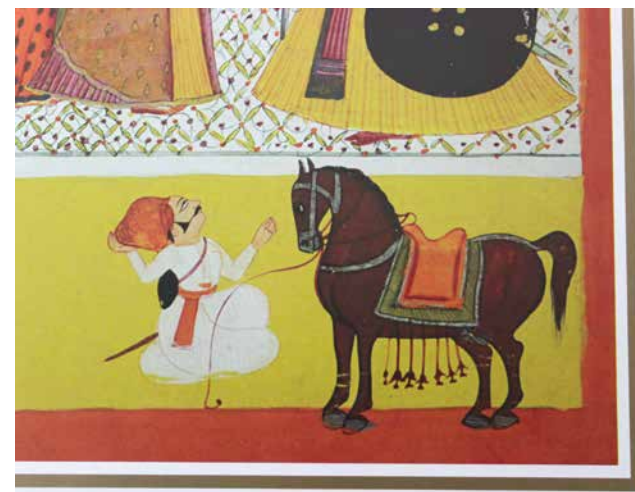
This page, right: Detail of a folio representing the month of Ashvin
 Below: Vaisakha is the first summer month. The eye is drawn to the courtyard of a mansion where coloured, and perhaps scented, water flows to keep it cool. Radha and Krishna are seated in a chamber in the upper portion of the mansion and gazing into each other's eyes. A fluttering flag indicates a breezy day even as the sun peeks out from behind a hill. In a grove outside the mansion, a tiny figure gets ready to aim an arrow at two peacocks-. He looks like a hunter, but is he Kamadeva, the God of Love?



पौष मास, उजियारा, राजस्थान, लगभग 1780 ई०
 Month of Pausha, Uniara, Rajasthan, circa A.D. 1780

This page, left: Pausha is the second winter month of the year with short days and long nights. It is when humans and animals alike seek warmth or huddle together to stay warm. Krishna and Radha are in their chamber, while Radha's attendants are filling pots with coal for warmth. Outside the mansion, a couple warm

themselves around a fire. Birds too are gathered together. Even Surya, the Sun God, is not immune to the bitter cold; he has wrapped a shawl around himself and his horses! Below: Detail of a folio representing the month of Jyeshtha



वैशाख मास, उजियारा, राजस्थान, लगभग 1780 ई०
 Month of Vaisakha Uniara, Rajasthan, circa A.D. 1780

Notes:

1. National Museum Delhi [no date]: The painted romance of the Indian seasons: A folio of 12 paintings.
2. Ibid
3. Charlotte Vaudeville (1986): *Barahmasa in Indian Literatures*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
4. D. Zvabitel (1961): The development of the Baromasi in Bengali literature. *Archiv Orientalni*, 29, pp. 585.
5. Charlotte Vaudeville (1986). *Op cit*.
6. Ghulam Fariduddin Riaz (2002): *Baramasa: Seasons of Rural Life*, Karachi: Oxford University Press.
7. Ibid
8. R.N. Saletore (1984): *Encyclopedia of Indian Culture (Part IV)*, New Delhi.
9. Ananda Krishna (1963): *Malwa Paintings*, Varanasi.
10. M.S. Randhawa (1962): *Kangra Paintings on Love*, New Delhi, 1962, p. 132.
11. The National Museum Delhi has a 19th-century Baramasa from the Andhra-Karnataka border area.
12. R.N. Saletore (1984): *Encyclopedia of Indian Culture (Part IV)*, New Delhi.
13. Produced by the National Museum Delhi, the twelve paintings in this folio date between 1750-1780 CE and are from Uniara, Bikaner, Kishangarh and Jodhpur in Rajasthan.

depicting the barahmasas have been commissioned or made since the late 19th or early 20th century.

With changes happening at the local, regional, and global levels – not to mention climate change – it would be interesting to see how a contemporary Barahmasa would look like. For example, can we re-imagine the Jaipur Literature Festival for the month of Pausha; the Music season of Chennai for Margazhi or Mrigashirsha; Durga puja in Kolkata for the month of Ashvin; Pandharpur wari in Maharashtra for the month of Ashadha; and the annual flooding in Mumbai for the month of Shravan?

Isn't it time for a new Barahmasa language or theme to emerge to reflect contemporary times? Considering the regional variations across the country, the possibilities are endless.

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