

SVKM'S NMIMS DEEMED-TO-BE-UNIVERSITY

BALWANT SHETH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

BSSA REVIEWS

AUTUMN 2022 / ISSUE 001



Dean's Note / Dr. Kaiwan Mehta

We are very happy to bring to you all - students and staff, members of the University as well as parents of our students, and surely the professional fraternity at large - the first official newsletter of the school. As Balwant Sheth School of Architecture (BSSA) marks its' 15th year, it stands at a threshold of past successes and learnings, and new imaginations and ideas - and the school will move forward into the future, embracing 'change'. It is often said, change is our only constant, and cliched as it may sound, this is indeed true! Change allows us to review our own pasts critically, change allows us to think on our feet at all times, and not slip into complacency or unashamed self-adulation, change allows us to think afresh beyond the limitations of time or space.

We are living in interesting times! These are times in which the way we have been thinking and living in the past is dramatically changing. The built environment has always been the site within which life unfolds and human societies shape their histories as well as futures. From technology to culture, architecture is the embodiment of life and the wheels of time; from monuments to the houses we live in,

and from public spaces in the city to global network societies, architecture is the crucial site for shaping future worlds. In these times of change, we are actively debating today how architecture itself is undergoing a change, a sense of rediscovering itself, questioning the premise on which we design our environments - in space and time.

At such a moment in history, the places of education have a particularly vital role to play; education prepares you to act and think as a professional within a particular field - critically contributing to the present, as well as actively envisioning the future. So in these times of constant change, education can be the crucial platform for conscientiously debating the present while critically and innovatively thinking about the future. What will be the role and contribution of the architect in our world today, and in the coming future? This is the urgent question, more than ever before, for any school of architecture today.

What technologies will we equip the architect with, in these times of swift transformations and profound innovations? And, what abilities of critical thinking, empathy, and ethics

does the architect of the future need to be geared with? Choices in design are always a complex set of micro-decisions that combine our familiarity with the past and present of technologies as well as human relationships- aware enough to debate visions for the future of human societies and citizenship, understand the struggles between culture, nature, and histories, and be able to interpret through form and space, material and construction, drawings and sites, in the design of buildings and human settlements - so that we can have architecture that enriches our world for all humanity!

The coming few years will see further shifts in the way we understand as well as intervene in, and produce our built environments; the pandemic was probably only a trailer of the nature of unexpected experiences we may face. From climate change, to debates on migrations, and rights of different sections of the human civilization - the debates are deep and ranging across perspectives. Form and formlessness, spaces with diverse meanings, and the changing nature of 'living together' will be the key challenges for space designers in the years to come.

From Digital to Physical

In early 2020, the news of colleges shutting down came as a shock to everyone as neither the institutions nor the students anticipated the pandemic to worsen to such unprecedented levels. Consequently, the chattering corridors and classrooms became quiet for the subsequent period. This change of environment was surely enjoyable in the beginning; but it brought with it several setbacks. After a year-long online system of learning, a general decrease in performance could be noticed. Students yearned to return to college, to meet the faculty in three-dimension, to have lively interactions without fearing a glitch in the interface or the loss of sound or internet connection. Thus, when the hybrid classes began, it gave students and teachers fresh energy to meet each other in person and engage in discussion. Additionally, platforms such as The MiniMax challenge and the annual Freescape acted as melting pots for both faculty as well as students of all batches to interact with each other and bring back the dynamism BSSA is known for.

Arryan Singh, 4th Year

COVID-19 impacted academia across the globe, and Online Learning Environment (OLE) was one of the strategies adopted by academia. There were numerous challenges with OLE, further complicated by the discipline-specific nature of architecture education which is historically conducted in a studio-based environment. The architecture curriculum is a combination of design, technology and theory subjects, which require different mannerisms of conduct and varying pedagogies. When the Prime Minister declared a national lockdown on March 23, 2020, the sudden and complete shift to digital was very demanding for architecture schools.

Almost two years later, the state and universities worked out a phase-wise resumption plan for schools as well as colleges. The first phase was a transition from complete OLE to the Hybrid Mode where lectures / studios were to be conducted as a combination of OLE and Face-to-Face Learning, simultaneously. A complete shift to the latter was only possible after phase two.

In the words of Jim George, "Transitions themselves are not the issue, but how well you respond to their challenge." When academia shifted back to Face-to-Face Learning-interactions, discussions and learnings between faculty, peers, and students, which had reduced during the pandemic were restored. Shifting to digital platforms had made communication of ideas, thoughts, corrections, suggestions, difficult and limited. Responses from students had become diluted, focus and attention span had reduced - resumption ensured these concerns were overturned. Architecture involves learnings from site visits, case studies, and market surveys, all these avenues of learning were open again, taking the learnings beyond the four walls of a classroom. A dedicated work environment made teaching more meaningful, thus with Face-to-Face resumption, Faculty were also able to set up work-life balance. Internet connectivity was a major deterrent in communication and conduct during OLE; the shift to physical classes omitted digital miscommunication.

OLE had benefits too which cannot be ignored, as it was the safest mode to continue education programs in the time of crisis. Flexibility and convenience provided by online education has enabled the ability to choose from several courses, viewing recorded content at their own pace and watching videos multiple times. Some theory subjects performed better when conducted on the digital platform. Online teaching benefited academia as it resulted in a "digital revolution" across the education system.

The shift in architectural education from OLE back to Face-to-Face Learning has evidently restored 'life' to the program. However, the transitions helped us to explore and learn that some parts of architecture can be taken by way of OLE. Architecture can be taught in a Hybrid Mode depending on the subject requirements and engagements. Or may be??

I would like to end with a quote by Roy T. Bennett, "Life is about accepting the challenges along the way, choosing to keep moving forward, and savouring the journey."
Arti Daga, Assistant Professor

Orientation Week Programme June, 2022



Brinda Somaya



Ranjit Hoskote



Dr. Kaiwan Mehta



Brinda Somaya, Ranjit Hoskote, Dr. Kaiwan Mehta



Dr. Ramesh Bhat



Dr. Meena Chintamani

Orienting the Year: Directions and Diversions

This academic year (2022-23), BSSA initiated the annual Inaugural Twin Lectures - a set of two lectures to be conducted on the very first day of the academic year or within the first fortnight; one of the lectures would be delivered by a senior architect with a deep interest in architectural issues even beyond practice, and the other by a senior expert from an allied field such as the Humanities, the Arts, Technology, Urbanism, etc. As the school completed 15 years in existence, and as we returned to a fully on-campus mode of teaching after two years of a lockdown and home-bound survival due to the pandemic, the Inaugural Twin Lectures were seen as a way of setting the tone for a renewed beginning as well.

The twin lectures were followed by specially designed workshops for all students on campus. These workshops were not just a way to generate a transition into a new year, but also a means to work with different pedagogies while introducing the new academic year, before the studio- and seminar-based teaching would begin more formally. From introducing hands-on workshops- which many students missed due to online teaching, to exploring new media to think about architecture and design, to having very deep and curated interactions with practitioners, the school also indicated how at different levels of a student's graduation curve, they will encounter different directions, different pedagogical tools, and different questions of debate and decision-making. The Annual Orientation Week at the very start of the academic year is indeed a map of the directions and diversions the school will take and develop in the coming year, and the near future.

These workshops and lectures were also important supplements to the curricular teaching programmes; meant to either instigate a certain debate or discussion in specific courses, or to draw from them- learnings and inspirations towards constructing design arguments and methods. It is 'with a slant' that many intentions of the school vis-a-vis the education of an architect, that these lectures and workshops were designed.

Dr. Kaiwan Mehta, Dean

The first day of the new academic year was a foreshadowing of the incoming changes. It was a celebration of the BSSA student and faculty body coming together in person after almost two years, to learn and grow. The two chief guests for this greatly anticipated event were Dr. Brinda Somaya and Ranjit Hoskote. I had the honour of hosting this event.

When I met Dr. Brinda Somaya, I was starstruck. I asked her how she would like to be addressed when I formally introduced her. She insisted on being referred to as "Professor" to imply her academic inclination, expertise and passion. However, she spoke extensively about what happens after one moves beyond the undergraduate academic bubble. The lecture was a run through of her life and career, how she found her ideals and values as an architect- a woman architect, an Indian architect and a global architect. She talked about the importance of finding a stand as a designer in your student life itself so that you apply that for the rest of your career. Her implementation of community involvement and conscious design, as well as her remarks on the pace of the government made a lasting impact. She also presented works of contemporary women architects- an aspect that exposed us to the different voices of women architects- who could serve as role models for the students.

Mr. Ranjit Hoskote's talk had a profound impact- his eloquence, simplicity in presentation and humour were extremely engrossing. His practice exists outside the sphere of mainstream architecture practice, but has a lot of parallels and interactions with architectural ideas. His main premise was the idea of culture and its aesthetics. His lecture brought out the significance of historical context and the layers of normalization that forge the way we think and how the world sees things. The most captivating part of his lecture was when he recited the two poems from his book *Hunchprose*. It felt cinematic.

I expected to be exhausted after the two sessions, especially since I had arrived early to help with the preparations. But I felt energised and inspired, I had a renewed sense of why I'm studying, what I am and how I want to make an impact in my own practice. I'm sure my classmates felt the same way as well. We were all thrilled to see what the rest of the year would have in store for us.

Aatmi Chitalia, 4th Year

Orientation Week Programme B.Arch. 2nd Year

- Day 1:** Close reading workshop with journalist, writer, and columnist Rachel Lopez, based on the book *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino.
- Day 2:** Close reading workshop with poet, writer, and academic Suhit Kelkar.
- Day 3:** Master Class in Visual Thinking with artist Sameer Kulavoor.
- Day 4:** Master Class in Visual Thinking with artist Sahej Rahal.

The Academic Year 2022-23 started off with an orientation program spread across a week, from 14th to 17th June. The B. Arch 2nd year workshop was themed around the book *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino. Structured as a fictionalized conversation between Italian explorer Marco Polo and the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan, the book is a collection of prose on fictitious cities. The workshop helped the students uncover underlying themes like culture, language, memory, death, etc- through different forms of analysis of the text.

The first day of the workshop, conducted by journalist, writer and columnist Rachel Lopez, exposed students to ways of reading a text, protocols of reading and interpreting a text, as well as developing creative thinking from a text. This exploration also allowed students to gain perspective on the ways in which they view their own neighborhoods and cities. The readings and the follow-up exercises helped the students delineate and discover the places they use in the city, beyond their first, apparent impressions.

The second day of the workshop, conducted by poet, writer and academic Suhit Kelkar extended the learnings from the first day. Through an in-depth reading of select chapters, the workshop helped students interpret the text and apply the learnings to exercises given in class. This exercise also helped students understand the different "characters" that make up their cities.

Artist Sameer Kulavoor's Master Class in Visual Thinking on the third day exposed students to visual translations of city spaces, people and infrastructure into visual narratives. Kulavoor's presentation of his process and his interpretation of the city and its constitution further exposed the class to different forms of city narratives. The construction of such visual structures as well as the concept of thinking through art, gave students access to a new medium of representation.

The last day of the workshop culminated with artist Sahej Rahal's Master Class on visual story-telling through different media. He used the medium of art, performance and animation as a means to build narratives through objects, bodies and scenarios.

The workshop and masterclasses acted as a precursor for the Design Studio in Semester 3, and helped the students develop design and thinking processes. The text as well as the visual translations were a means for the students to develop not only an understanding of the cities they have lived in but also how to abstract their experiences through the two media.

Dhwani Shanghvi, Assistant Professor

Day one of the *Invisible Cities* workshop, was conducted by Rachel Lopez, a journalist with Hindustan Times. She is also known for her Instagram page @thegreaterbombay, which documents the colourful patterns of the fabrics used on the inner roofs of *kaali peelis* (black and yellow cabs). We started off by talking about Bombay and listing the most liked views about the city and its sights. We were then asked to write a short note on the things we love about Bombay, without using the words we listed, or any closely related words. Through this exercise we discovered many interesting perspectives that we could all relate to only subconsciously, but now felt more real than the superficial points we had discussed in the beginning. Ms. Rachel spoke to us about ways we could alter our thought process or writing process just by eliminating cliches. We used these examples to analyse how different aspects of our city manifest themselves in the book *Invisible Cities* and how we could easily relate the text to reality. We ended the day with a twitter thread that spoke about unique things that people missed about the city during covid.

Anoushka Fonseca, 2nd Year



Interpretation of the various workshops by Ridhima Jayakar, 2nd Year



Sameer Kulavoor



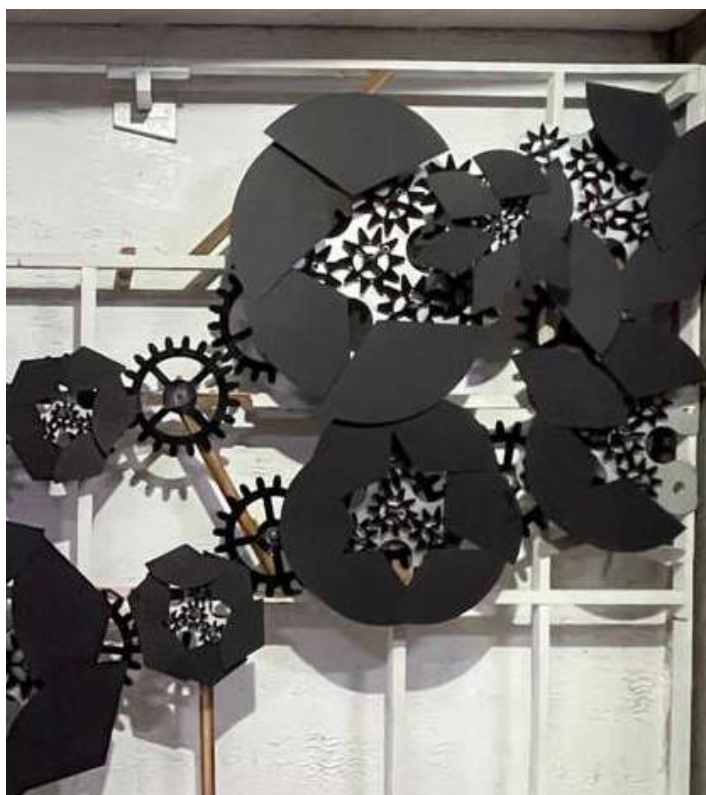
Rachel Lopez

The final day of our orientation week introduced us to Sahej Rahal, an artist whose work inspired us to ponder new and innovative forms of expression of art, architecture and life. He began by presenting some of his work, one of which was an AI that moved around a particular virtual environment, picking up limbs for growth while exploring the terrain. He introduced us to the idea of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the different types of triggers that affect AI. In the AI called *Liberation of the Machine*, sound is the trigger that makes the form move at varied speeds depending on the amount of sound the system hears. We saw a multitude of his creations and he spoke about how he would leave pieces of art around the city to initiate a curiosity in wandering minds. Sahej spoke about one of his exhibitions of 2014 in Kochi called Harbinger in which he created art of the emergence of a civilization by peering into primitive forms of art. He uses these to create sculptures of objects like an anchor, an ancient blade, an array of astronomical devices, monoliths, visors and ceremonial masks. He wanted to bring out inherited histories with these primitive forms of performative

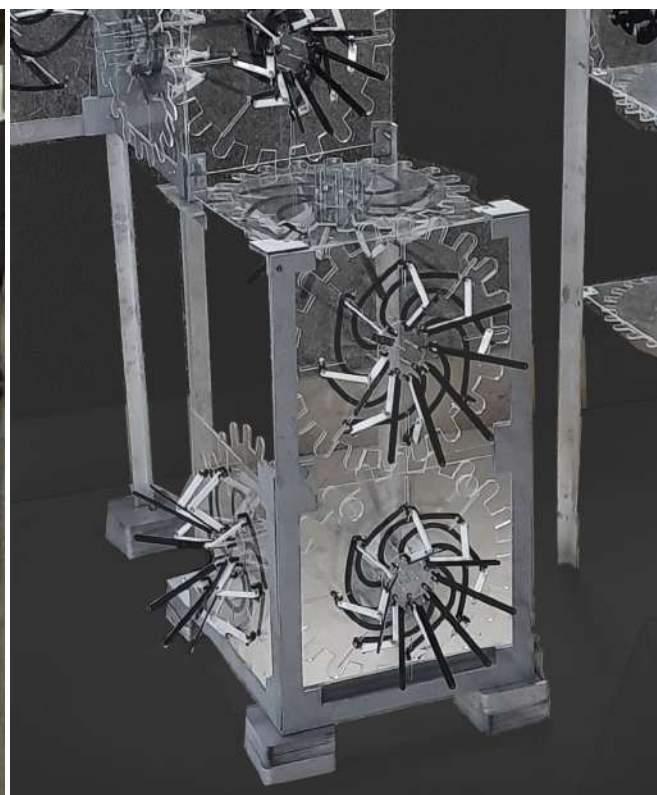
sculpture. He wanted his work in this exhibition to express a form of humour and absurdity to orient the viewer to have a conversation with the vast expanse of history.

Sahej also showed us Juggernaut, which explored an abstract world aspect of Vishnu and infinity. He created an imaginary civilization that is complex in nature. He tries to create an encyclopaedia of what resides in the back of our minds. His sculptures were designed with material that is expensive in its history but worthless to an untrained eye. He created a vantage point from which one can converse with the alternate civilization. By the end of the presentation, we were overwhelmed and speechless with the oceanic wave of innovative ideas and thoughts that flooded our mind-space making us numb to speak. Our orientation ended with us imagining invisible cities in a far more unique manner than before and helped us find a way of breaking away from the stereotypical understanding of our civilization.

Monish Hedamba, 2nd Year



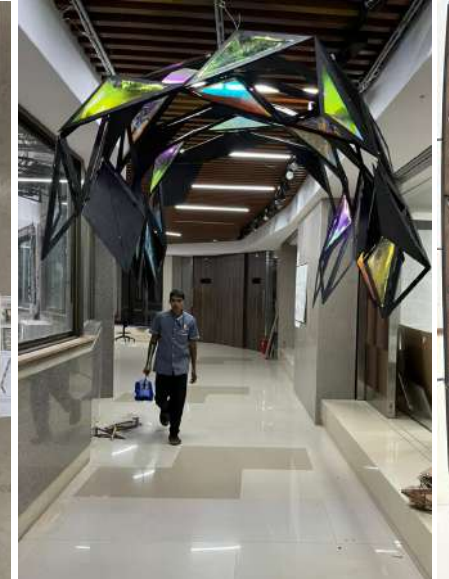
Anika B, Dhruvil B, Divya D, Viri D, Tanishka M, Naitik M, Mahek N, Disha D, Shivraj S



Kunwar J, Neha M, Deepika N, Helly P, Anushka S, Etasha S, Mannan W, Rohena C



Anika A, Soumya C, Mrinalini G, Ammar R, Palak D, Antara C, Samruddhi Y



Sahil B, Aarushi H, Rajvi R, Akshat S, Prithvi S, Mahak T, Disha D, Nikhil P



Dishant P, Aditi S, Riddhi V, Ishita A, Kriti A, Riddhi B, Sara S, Shrivani S

Orientation Week Programme B.Arch. 4th Year

Theme: Engaging with practice / architecture of practice.

Day 1: Architects Mayuri Sisodia and Kalpit Asher of MAD(E) In MUMBAI.

Day 2: Architects Mahesh Waghdhare, Mansi Sahu, and Sarfaraz Momin from Studio POD; Two Boons in Life by Ramanan Balakrishnan (Associate Dean at School of Branding and Advertising, NMIMS University) on strategy and planning a Practice.

Day 3: Students visit the exhibition titled: de(Coding) MUMBAI with Architect Sameep Padora of sP+a.

Day 4: Architect Nitin Killawala of G7 Architects and Planners; Architect and Curator Kaiwan Mehta on Anatomy of architecture practice in India; Architect and writer Suprio Bhattacharjee on addressing architecture practice in India.

The orientation week for 4th Year B. Arch and 2nd Year M. Arch broadly covered conversations and discussions with architecture studios/practices working at various urban scales. Architects Mayuri Sisodia and Kalpit Asher of MAD(E) In MUMBAI presented typological investigations in Public Sanitation through "The Toilet Manifesto". The students were exposed to the method of research to identify issues in existing public toilets, proposed suggestions and technologies. Architects Mahesh Waghdhare, Mansi Sahu, and Sarfaraz Momin from Studio People Oriented Design had an engaging conversation about their intervention in One Green Mile at Parel Baug. They relayed their experiences on how to interact with the local authorities and stakeholders. Ramanan Balakrishnan (Associate Dean at School of Branding and Advertising, NMIMS University) held a workshop on strategizing and planning a practice through a completely different lens. An off-campus session was conducted with Sameep Padora of sP+a at IF-BE, Ballard estate. The session was held at the exhibition titled de(Coding) MUMBAI, which showcases the current research project of the studio on the relationship between building codes in Mumbai and



Students with Architects Mayuri Sisodia and Kalpit Asher of MAD(E) In MUMBAI



Students visit the exhibition titled: de(Coding) MUMBAI by Architect Sameep Padora of sP+a and team

their relationship with architecture design, through 18 case studies. Back on campus, Nitin Killawala of G7 Architects and Planners presented how he has seen the change in practice through his 30 years of work experience. The concluding session of the orientation week delivered by Architect and

Orientation Week Programme B. Arch. 3rd Year

Theme: Deployable Planes by Janki Shah and Rohit Anchan. The intent of the workshop is to explore various materials and geometries to create modules that cohesively come together to form deployable surfaces. The structure-surface or skin-tectonics work with the idea of movement and dynamic systems, developed by combining system design and detail-joinery design development.

From online classes, hybrid mode, and all the uncertainty the pandemic brought to us, we began the new academic year with an appreciable effort to recoup. The Batch of 2025 had a workshop for orientation, called "Deployable Planes." This workshop aimed to create an installation with interconnected repeating units of a deployable plane. From the design conception, and mechanization, to the full-scale execution of the project, the workshop was filled with new learning experiences. While the short timeline filled the process with roadblocks, it was valuable to partake in problem-solving as a collective in a design studio.

As a batch, our goals were higher than what we had achieved, however, the memories and intangible by-products of the workshop exceeded all expectations. Additionally, the workshop continues to give, as we understand the practicality and maintenance requirements of a project of this scale over a one-year period. We have also learned how to fine-tune and maximize our output within a given budget.

A shortcoming we faced in the workshop would be the lack of focus on design and the process of reaching our design. Time limitations are to blame in part, however, execution and formality of the installation were valued over its functionality and purpose. A design studio to back what the installation is derived from would make the design more holistic, as one is left questioning a design without a purpose except for being ornamental. That being said, this opportunity to execute our installations is one we are truly grateful for. We begin our year with a new impetus!

Deepika Nayak, 3rd Year

Solar Decathlon India Challenge

The Solar Decathlon India (SDI) challenge is a national level competition run in collaboration between *The Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)*, *Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS)* and *Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE)*. The competition is an opportunity for the students to work on developing solutions on the challenges of climate change and sustainable development. It is a multi-disciplinary collegiate competition where teams design affordable net-zero-energy-water buildings which are climate resilient, affordable and market-ready by partnering with developers, clients, or other real estate proponents on real projects. Students are provided training and technical resources in building-science and high-performance integrated design. The competition runs over the academic year from July to April, where students develop detailed design and validate performance with simulations and cost estimates. The competition parameters include energy performance, water performance, resilience, affordability, scalability and market potential, innovation, comfort and environmental quality, architectural design, engineering design and operation.

Students of BSSA have been participating in the competition since the last two years. We have had three teams in 2020-21 and 4 teams in 2021-22 participate in the SDI. They have worked on educational institutions, multi-family housing, an office building, and a community resilience shelter. We have partnered with Eco-First (a TCS subsidiary), Agami Developers, Harisiddhi Developers, Sacred Heart School, Ramkrishna Sarada Samiti (NGO), Ruby Mills and Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal in these two years. Five teams have made it to the Design Finale, of which we have had two teams awarded for their Movies on the project and two have been selected for the *Climate Launch Pad Incubation Program*.

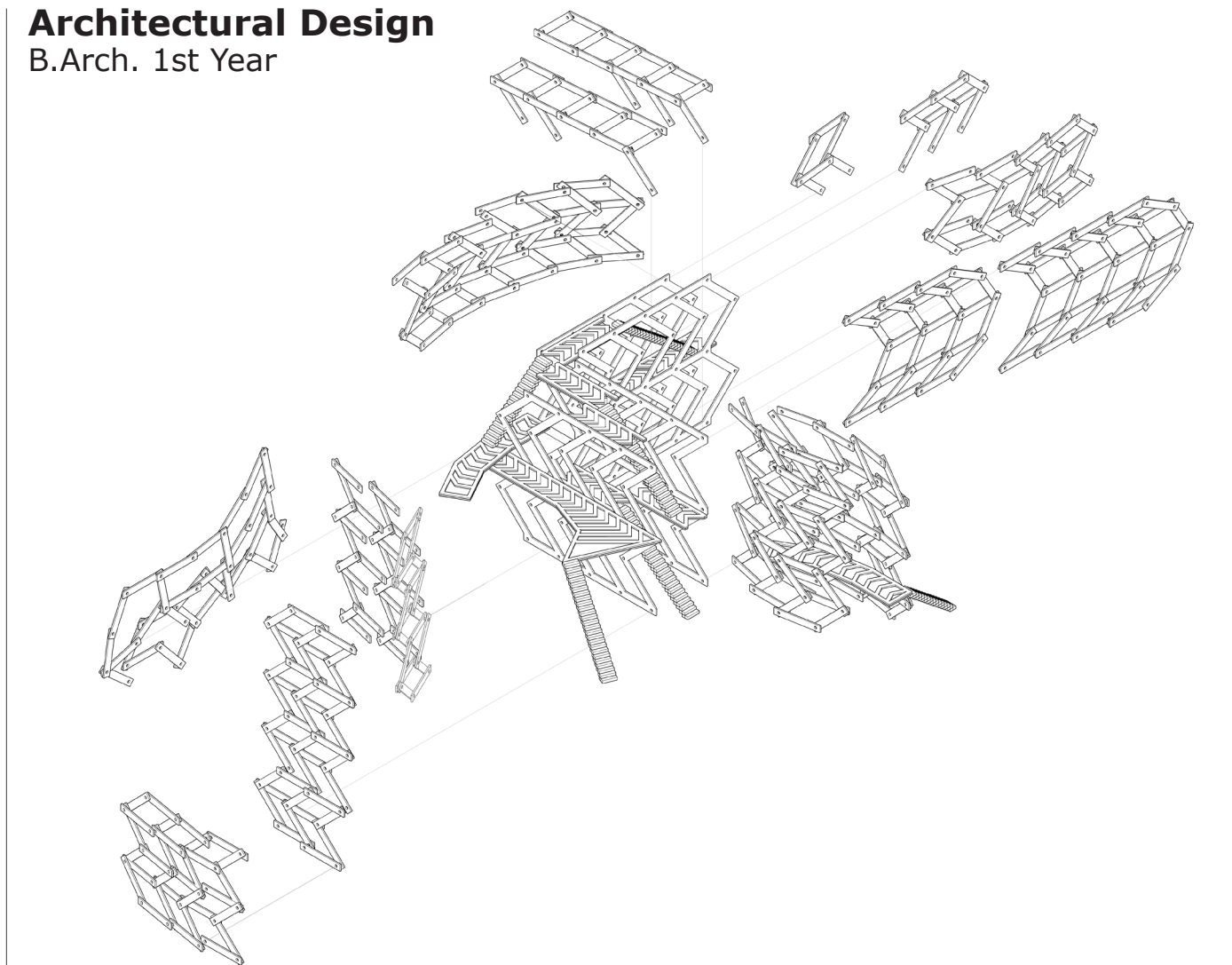
Faculty Leads; Ami Mangaldas, Arti Daga, Dhanashri Sawant, and Shriya Bhatia guided the four teams across different stages of the competition. Other faculty members like Dhruv Seth, Dhurvesh Mhatre, Ashish Tikani, Pournima Rajee, and Ajit Prabhu supported the teams with specific queries on software simulation, design, structures, services, regulations, costing, technologies, construction aspects, etc. There were expert reviews conducted by Ar.Nitin Killawala, Gunveer Singh and Pavithra Laxmi. We had a student resource group from the then 5th year; Divy Vora, Rohan Thakker, Shreya Gupta, Stavan Gang, Nidhi Sanghrajka, and Ruhi Rathod who had participated last year in the solar decathlon challenge and extended support and provided timely inputs to the current student teams across the last few months.

The Solar decathlon challenge has been extremely useful for the students to engage with real project processes including climate responsive design development, material selections, costing, climate analysis, energy simulations, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing (MEP) integration, structural analysis, disaster risk responses, regulatory requirements, business model development, client and industry engagement. This has helped them develop skills in communication, software simulations, leadership, team management, time management, report writing and technical skills. The students were ultimately able to come up with a sustainable net-zero climate resilient building solution at the end of the competition.

This year the Solar Decathlon Challenge Award Ceremony was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi. Our student Team Inferno received the People's Choice award for the best movie from Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State, Science & Technology & Earth Sciences. Dr. Srivari Chandershekhar, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology also graced the event. The students also presented their work through posters to the Minister and the Secretary, Government of India and industry experts.

Shriya Bhatia, Associate Professor

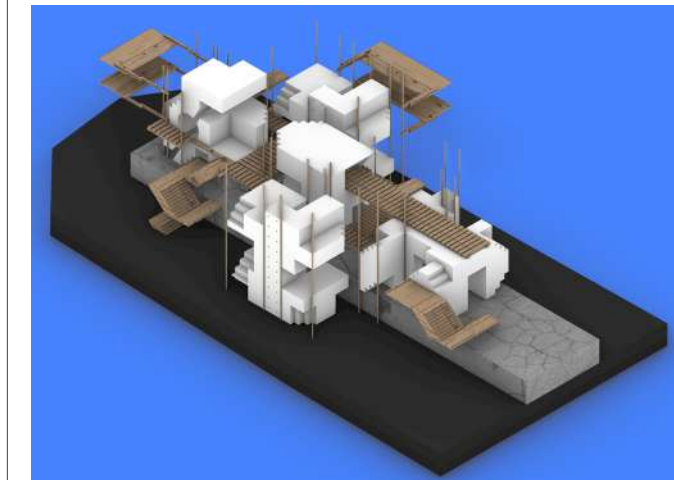
Architectural Design B.Arch. 1st Year



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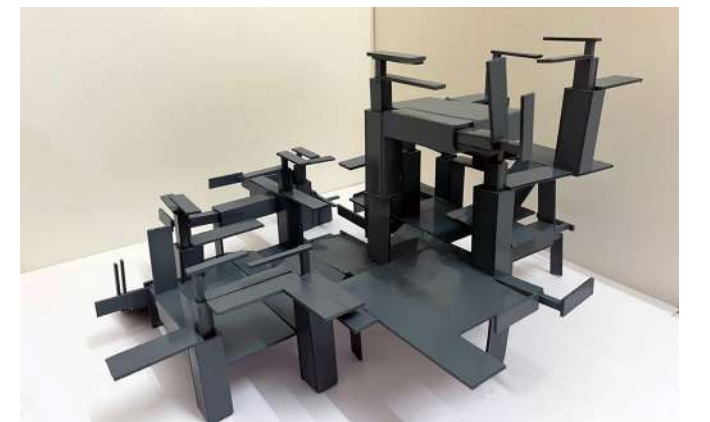
Anoushka F



Aastha S

The 1st year Architectural Design studio aims to develop individual lenses of understanding neighbourhoods, through a process that hones the observational, analytical and expressive skills of students. The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown allowed students to explore their respective neighbourhoods across different cities in India, like Indore, Ahmedabad, Bilaspur, Aurangabad, and Mumbai. The idea of the analysis was to understand ways of seeing that moved beyond the obvious first impressions. To achieve this, students were asked to understand experience over program. Furthermore, the students were expected to use means of representation that were not merely symbolic, and that moved away from recreating replicas of their observations of the site, whether markets, old cities or city edges. The resultant was a range of studies that deciphered hidden patterns across different experiential themes like expansion, contraction, changing edge conditions etc.

Pranali Patel, Assistant Professor
Mentors: *Dipal Chhaya, Pranali Patel, Sahil Soni, Kuwalsanam Chintala*



Divya A



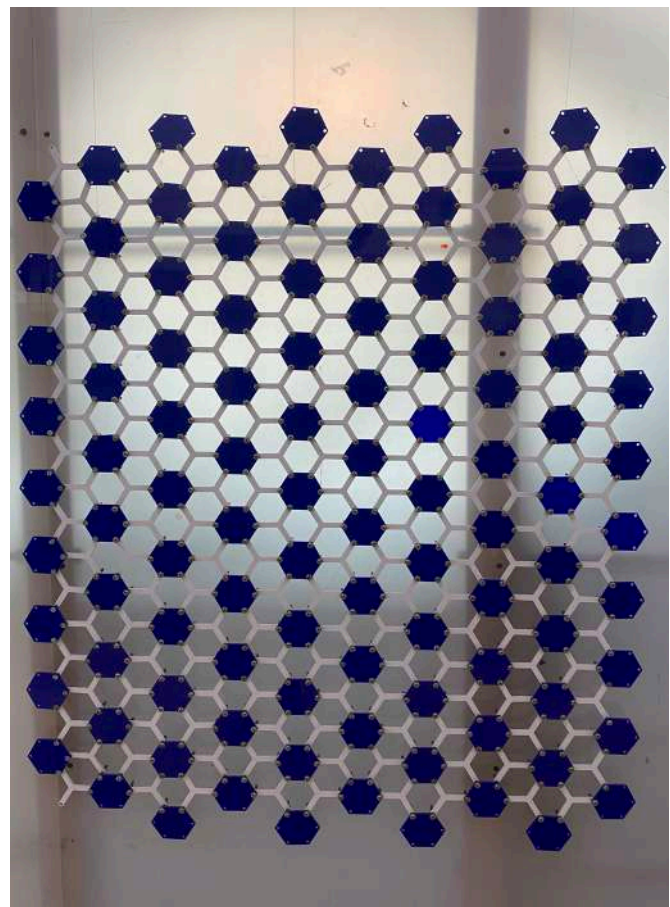
Ayushi M

Basic Design
B.Arch. 1st Year

The Basic Design studio focuses on developing and understanding the principles of visual composition through various explorations of textures, materials, light and shadows. The brief for the Basic Design studio was to analyse existing systems and complex mechanisms - a combination of 2-3 mechanisms working in conjunction with each other. These explorations were done through models by creating modules and eventually developing systems through combinations of multiple modules. The design project intended to translate the analysis developed by the students into a 3-dimensional collapsible surface - either vertical or horizontal - to control the light penetration to create varying experiences. Certain parameters were determined at the commencement of the studio. The surface was set to be 1-meter x 1 meter in size and the amount of light penetration was set to a minimum 75% in open position. Students developed 1:1 scale dynamic models of their explorations.

Prachi Donde, Assistant Professor

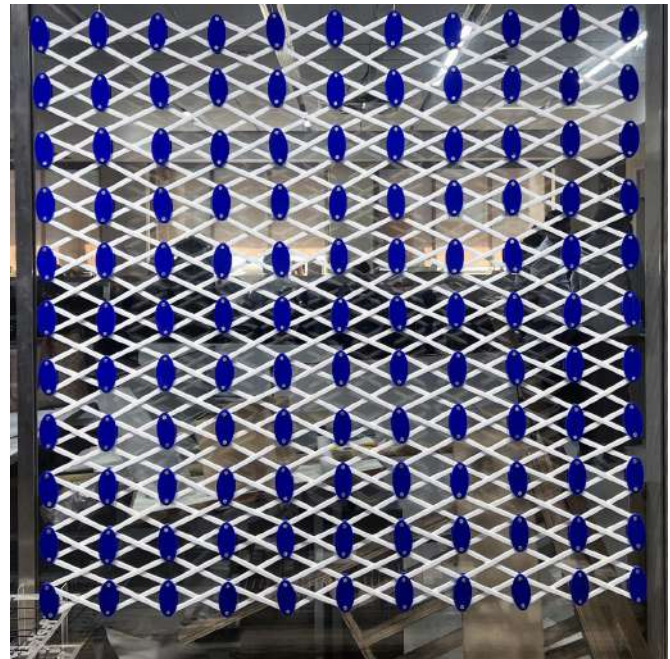
Mentors: Prachi Donde, Rohit Anchan, Janki Shah, Shachi Somani, Shweta Manikshetti, Tanima Shrivastava



Drashtant B



Khushii D



Ayushi M

Architectural Design
B.Arch. 3rd Year

Educational institutions contribute to the core of any learning process, knowledge is the bridge between what one can do and what one wants to do; and since architecture is about curating a lifestyle- these spaces for learning need to be designed with finesse in all senses. The brief was to establish relationships between how one feels in and around an educational space compared to any other. An understanding and examination of different institution buildings in Mumbai as case studies, helped in establishing this relationship.

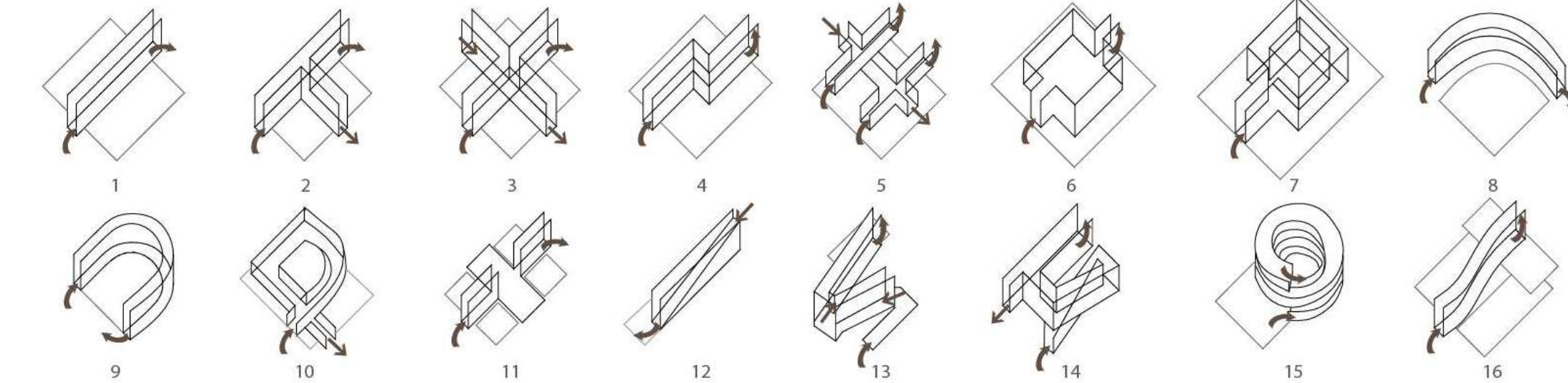
The intervention zones study included interior spaces as well as the exteriors, with an aim to understand the site holistically- in terms of relationships to everyday life and to bridge the gap between the site and the surroundings. The next step was to rebuild a different space on the existing site, which could mean morphing what already exists, creating additional spaces or even eliminating some. This trigger process was followed in order to come up with 'ideal' solutions for the notion of what a 'space for learning' meant. There can be no utopic circumstances when it comes to curating a space, but educational spaces where the core settings govern the further divisions, both psychologically and physically, have to be looked at and considered for creating events that lead to a beneficial yet intriguing experience.

Aaryaa Joshi, 3rd Year

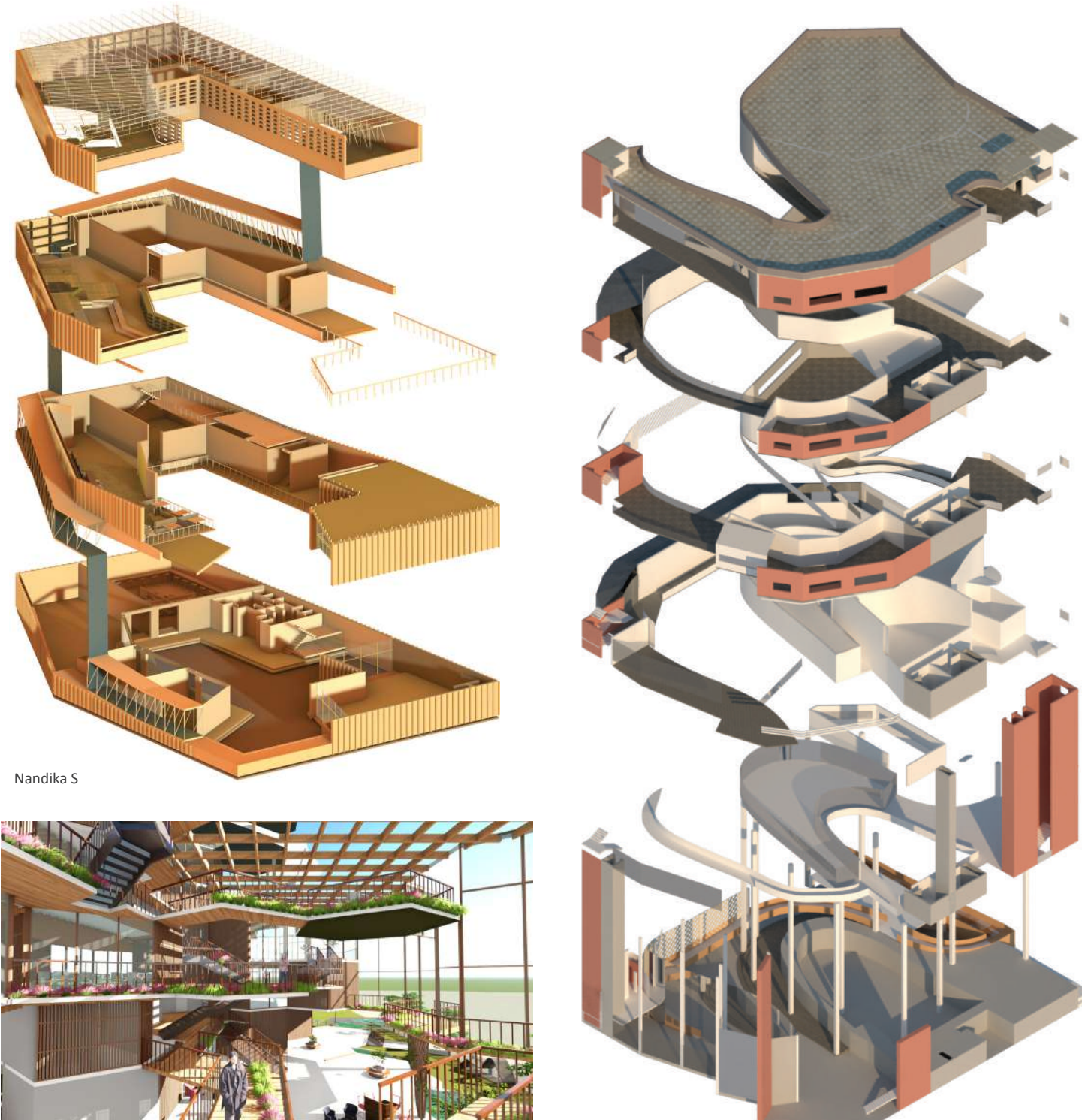
Mentors: Prashant Prabhu, Vidya Raghu, Tapan Deshpande, Suprio Bhattacharjee, Atray Chhaya



Shripriya A



Ayushi S



Nandika S

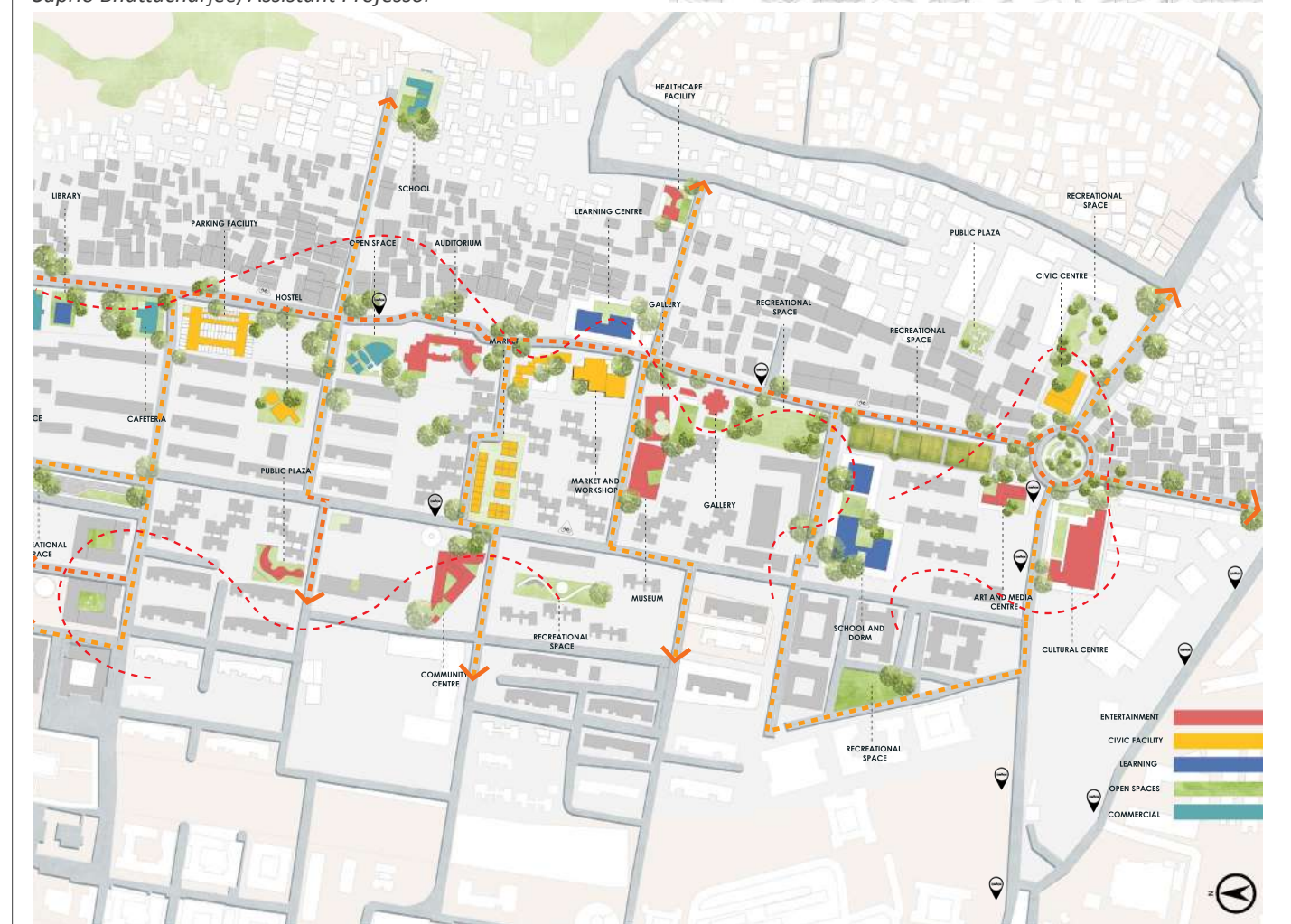
Suzanne S

Urban Design
B.Arch. 4th Year

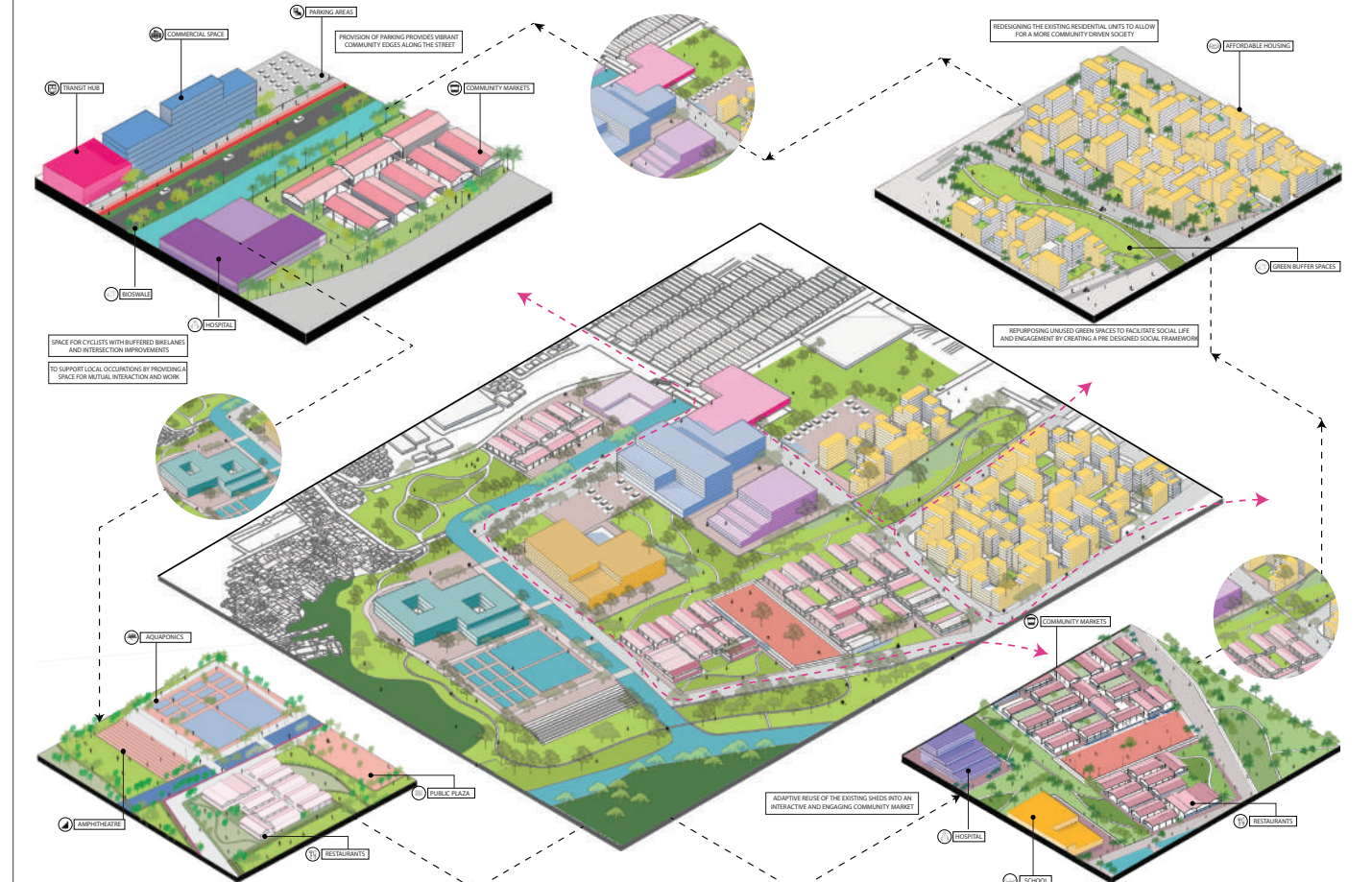
Post-Industrial cities can be burdened by ageing service & transportation infrastructure, redundant building stock, and archaic zoning regulations. In these transforming urban conditions, 'free' land is at a premium, making brownfield / grey-field sites a viable option - with the extant infrastructure offering a distinct advantage over remote greenfield sites. The benefits of densification and the rehabilitation of parts of the city considered otherwise as blighted, residual and unwelcoming are henceforth obvious. Mumbai's Wadala Truck Terminus - a significant cog in the city's former industrial machine - sits at the edge of a former wetland historically infringed upon by flawed planning strategies that systemically disregard the city's natural heritage and ecological processes. A proposal by the city administration to relocate the Truck Terminus only to replace it with a 'CBD' or Central Business District - replete with visions of glitzy skyscrapers - continues the governing bodies' tradition of employing exploitative commercial strategies - omitting the city's industrial past, side-lining the need of public spaces and facilities within neglected urban communities, whilst failing to structurally and experientially integrate natural resources and features. These concerns drove a studio investigation into appropriate visions for a future urbanity, now tempered by the pandemic, shifting demographics, unstable economic realities, and the impending environmental crisis.

Suprio Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor

Mentors: Nishant Modi, Pankti Sangane, Suprio Bhattacharjee, Prakriti Mehta, Shweta Manikshetti, Ritu Mohanty Padora



Yukti J, Sharanya K, Nandini M, Muskaan S, Arsh Q, Ronak S



Tirth D, Jeffin J, Kareena P, Vama S, Saie W, Sonya G

Design Dissertation

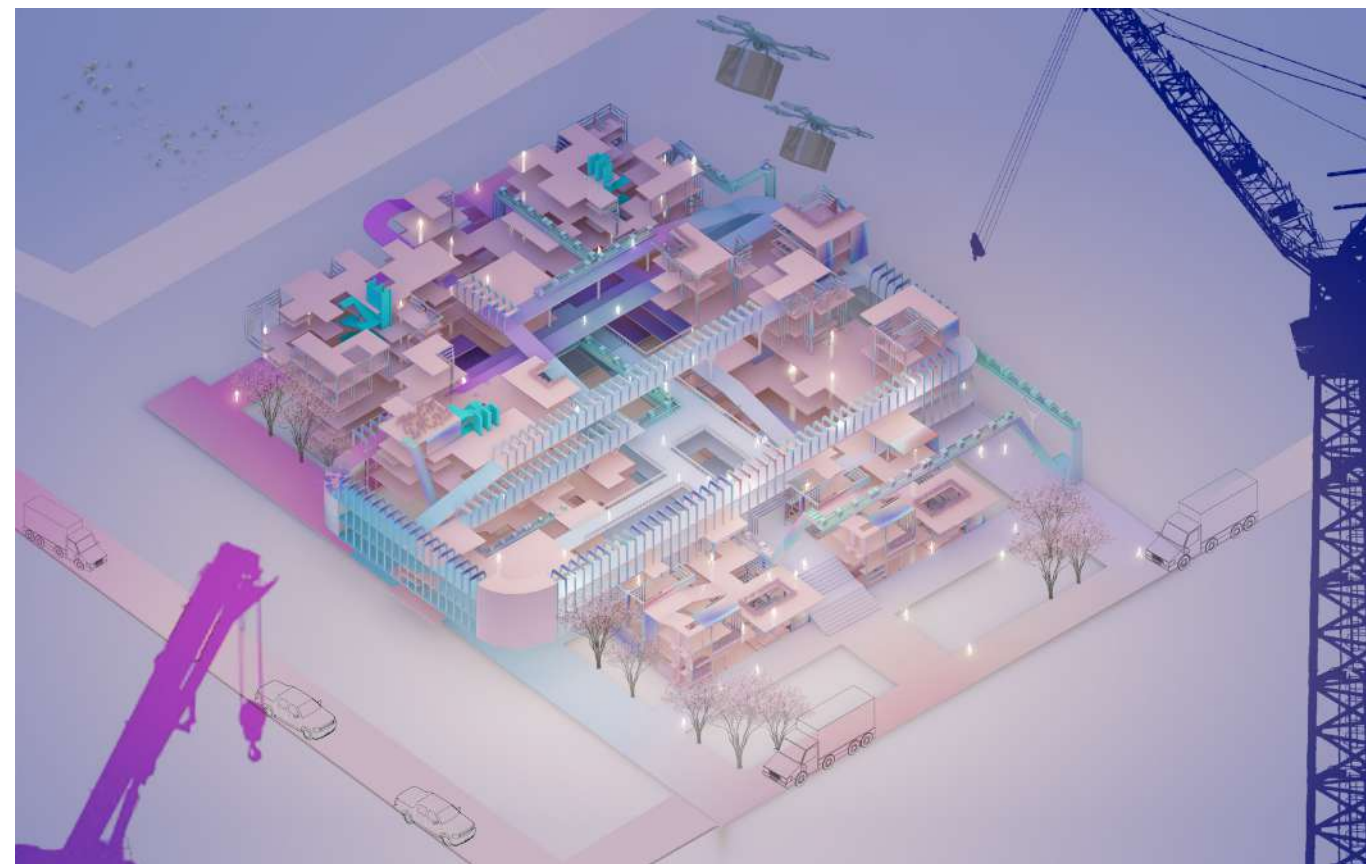
B.Arch. 5th Year

“A Gap in the Fence” Re-imagining the potential of the ‘social’

The effects of border disputes are not contained only at the borders: they multiply through various scales of influence and find their way into the workings of everyday life, acting as psychological symbols dividing people and their sense of belonging between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Media bias has resulted in perception gaps which are not determined through personal experience, but through filtered information fed to us. The thesis is centred around questions of how the design process can be re-imagined with respect to various types of borders at multiple scales, to form an opportunity for interaction, while maintaining identity, diversity, security, and sense of place. It also inquires whether design can aid in the integration of various cultures into a common, shared space of an urban setting. If we gave citizens from conflicting backgrounds a chance to see and engage with one another, could that be a catalyst to the breakdown of the biases in our heads? My intervention aims to take a ground-up approach to understand ideas of the ‘social’, methods of interaction and expression, with an aim to trigger a dialogue between people across their respective physical and mental borders, and provide them with a chance to see, understand, interact and create perceptions of their own.

Raeka Tambawala

Mentor: Dr. Kaiwan Mehta

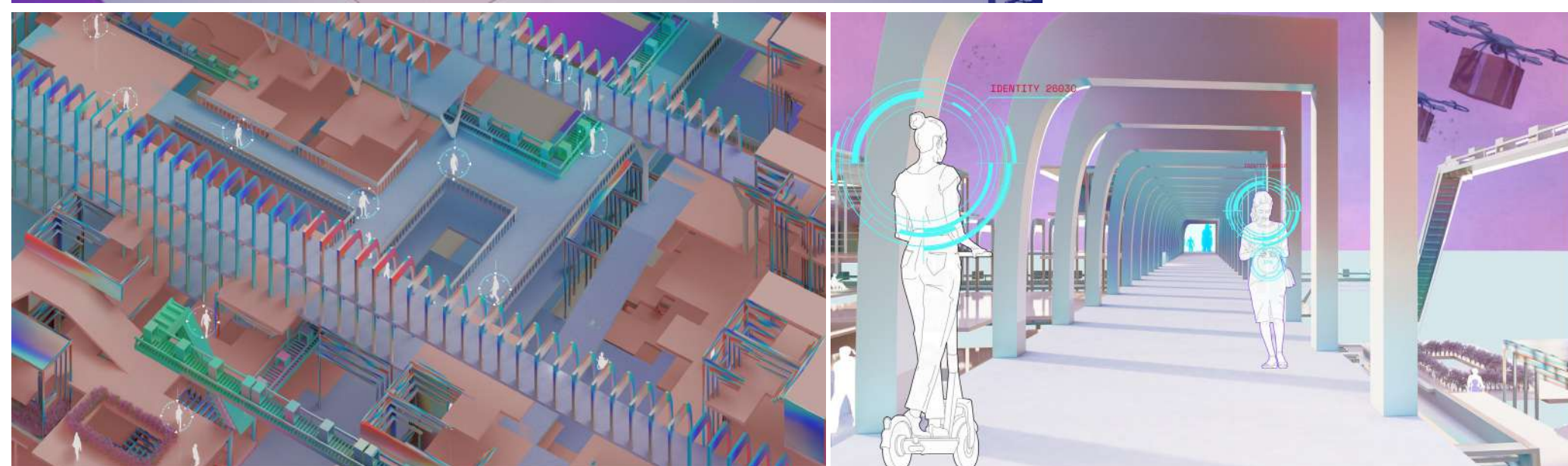


Nexus Between Reality and Fiction

This project investigates how the work and domestic realm will be affected by the evolution of 2D computer interfaces into 3D inhabitable digital environments. In light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the project explores the role of architecture in learning, working, meeting up and living communally online, eliminating spatial distance through technology. Many speculations are made in terms of design and orientation of modules on site, the project is a blend of makers, museum and market. (Museum where work in terms of art gets appreciated and market where work is sold for money). The project is set in the year 2035 and explores the realm of Science-fiction and digitalisation.

Aayushi D'costa

Mentor: Hemant Purohit



Design Dissertation

B.Arch. 5th Year

Locked Up then Locked Out

The focus of this dissertation is on the relationship of ex-convicts and crime affected individuals with society, specifically looking at the ‘reformation’ and ‘re-integration’ aspects. The major contributing factor to the soaring rates of crime and recidivism is the inability of former convicted offenders to get their lives restarted upon release. Through multiple interviews it was established that 75% of former-criminals have an average primary level education; nearly a third are illiterate. 75% persons who return home from prison face personal, social and structural challenges that they neither have the ability nor the resources to overcome entirely on their own. Post-release success depends on the nature and quality of services and support provided by the community and here is where the least amount of societal attention and resources are typically directed. There is a need for us to take an active role in de-stigmatising, rehabilitation and re-integration of an ex-convict into society. Complete resolution of this problem requires a multidisciplinary approach, but architecture can provide a platform to reshape the social construct of a criminal, curb criminal tendency and help dissolve the stigma attached to an ex-convict through spatial aspects. The proposal is designed to develop a type of transition- through spatial aspects of integrative and disintegrative spaces and through a programmatic approach- to increase a sense of community. The re-integration centre acts as a platform for crime affected individuals to regain their position in society as the space becomes a sensitizing physical environment to aid the process of reintegration.

Nazm Furniturewala

Mentor: Priyank Mehta



Application of Digital Fabrication and Computational Logic in User-experience Based Design

In this information age the idea of one size fits all is no longer relevant. The democratization of technology has brought multiple voices to the public domain. Easy access to information and advanced digital tools has ensured user involvement in the design process of their own homes. This has changed the design landscape profoundly. Smart designers have worked this out and now function as partners rather than suppliers, often working alongside experts in other fields. My design approach therefore proposes a system or method where the users and the design community have equal participation in the process of designing homes.

As the construction industry contributes to 30% of environmental pollution, designers must find a way to make designs more adaptable, flexible, and sustainable by exploring and experimenting with newer methods, materials and technology. Another major issue that I have looked at is the legal aspect of home ownership. There are multiple reasons like financial security, emotional attachment, rental income, familiar Neighbours etc. why people in India prefer to own their houses rather than rent. A new system of ownership of space and not place- attempts to solve the problems associated with ownership. The approach to the proposal is wholistic- keeping in mind various factors like context, lifestyle, climate, demand, land value, sustainability, home ownership, adaptability, flexibility, community, affordability, user experience and comfort, and feasibility to create a self-sufficient system that could be used at multiple locations. This system might be an efficient solution to solve the housing crisis and the ever-changing demand for affordable housing in India.

Rohan Thakker

Mentor: Atrey Chhaya



History, Theory & Criticism

M.Arch. 1st Year

Anti-Object - Kengo Kuma

Kengo Kuma calls the architecture that is built deliberately distinct to the environment as "Objects". This concern arose from the lack of relationship between the building and its environment. This leads to the practice of "self-centredness" where pre-modern and modern architecture strove to build buildings that were isolated from the environment and context. There is a general notion with regards to the definition of a beautiful work of architecture, often perceived as an object. Kuma proposes the removal of the "Object" from architecture- a material form that is distinct from the surroundings. His proposal includes an approach, "The architecture of disappearance", where the focus is on the aesthetics of the disappearance instead of the creation or presence of the image or form. The answer to his criticism, as he puts it, lies in an alternative form of presence which he calls "The Anti-Object". This alternative to the insensitivity to the environment of the building could be achieved through several ways as seen through his explanation of the examples of his works. It should be noted that the goal of the author is to make people question the commonly existing style of architecture- one that is focused on buildings being made distinct to the environment they are built in. He admits that his works could be criticized as being objects themselves. He is not against the use of style, instead he proposes the use of style, material and form-making in a way that makes the building blend with the environment.

Kuma substantiates this idea against distinct, isolated and self-centred architecture through work of Bruno Taut. When he comes across the Hyuga Residence, he does not see it as a special piece of work by a renowned architect, it seems ordinary, blending in with the environment and context it was built in. He concludes that architecture practise should focus on the relationship of the designed structure with the environment rather than making it distinct and stand out as a separate object- such that it is perceived as beautiful.

Syed Mohammad Asim, 1st Year

Mentors: Dr. Kaiwan Mehta, Ela Singhal

Critical Writing

M.Arch. 2nd Year

Excerpt from "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance"

Physical space - the public space, universities, and cultural institutions in India have played a major role in shaping the public sphere, be it in revolutionizing the Indian independence, protests by educational institutions against the recent Citizenship Amendment Act, or the protests at Shaheen Bagh; media becomes an important part in the later events. The fact that these institutions or agencies are targeted for being seen as voices of dissent, defines the democratic state's transgression towards that of an authoritarian one. Thus, the argument presented by the author about the public sphere and its operation defining the dynamics of any given polity, stands true in the contemporary Indian context.

Manuel Castells also mentions a global public sphere in the essay. This international arena he mentions could be seen to have intersections with territories beyond the chosen context of India. This global sphere is not only formed by people who constitute to form the digital public domain, where people are able to express and convey their feelings beyond geographies (Indian students worldwide protesting the announcement of a nationwide CAA across social media and streaming websites); but also of international organizations contributing to the governance (eg. the presence of UN, WHO, IMF, UNICEF, FAO, etc in India). These organizations in a way have also affected in altering the decisions which form the global image of India, thus constantly challenging the decisions of the state to cling to political order becomes defined by the realpolitik of nation-states that cling to the "illusion of sovereignty despite the realities wrought by globalization (Castells 82)"

Athira Pillai

Mentor: Dhvani Shanghvi

Design Dissertation

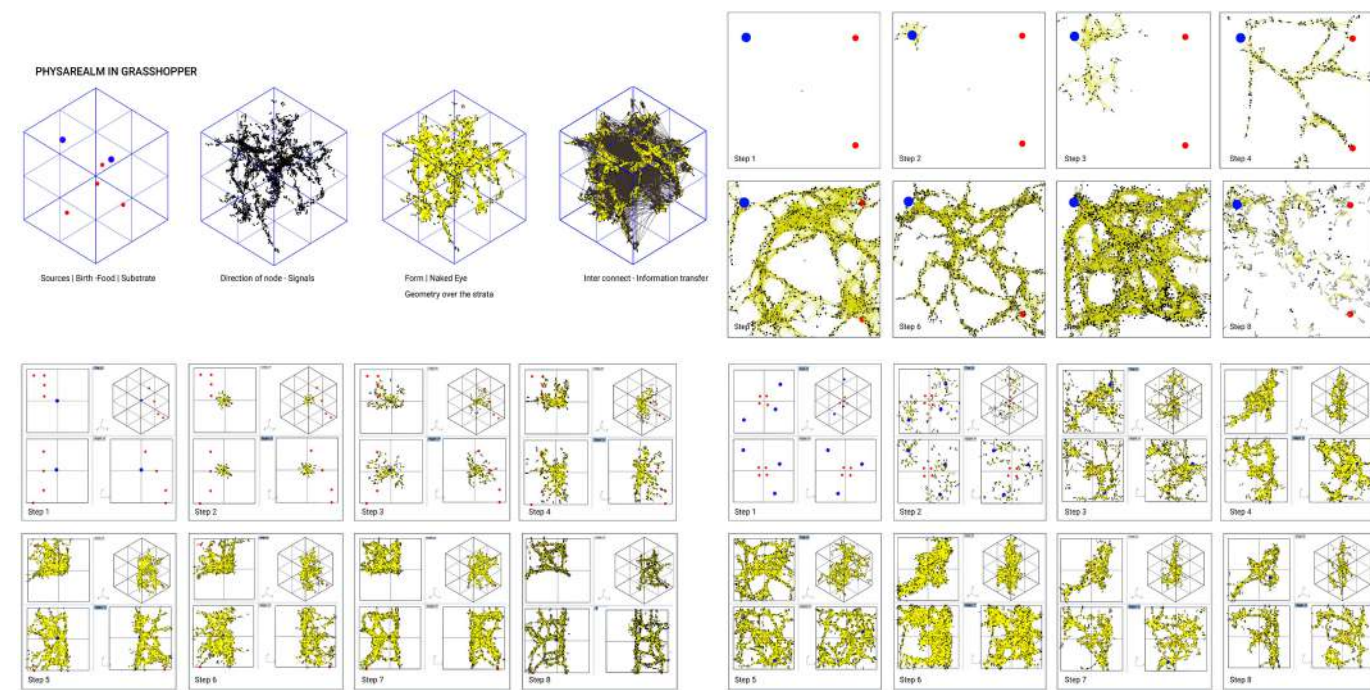
M.Arch. 2nd Year

Adding Life

The dissertation examines the broader history of deindustrialization, gentrification, and changing land use patterns in Girgaon, Mumbai. An attempt is made to explain the deterioration of a community as a cognitive response to gentrification in the suburbs and satellite cities of greater Mumbai.

The process of gentrification can have a detrimental physical, social, economic, and cultural impact whereby urban neighbourhoods in a short period of time are converted into more affluent communities, resulting in heightened property values and the discharge of low-income families, raising complex social issues amongst others.

The basic epistemic concept of the project is "something becomes something else". The laws of physics suggest- indeed require - that everything in the universe, 'dead' or



Building Intimacy Through Grafting

Taking the idea ahead that the nature of reality was based not upon the atomistic perspective that had promoted the Newtonian worldview, but instead upon a process-driven ontology where the fundamental building blocks of the reality of events - and of life - are defined by interactions, the thesis tries to explore the idea of 'intimacy' in an urban realm. Large human settlements have existed over time and have grown in their form, complexities, and intelligence. The study tries to look at scales of spaces in a city through this lens to understand interactions and their facilitators.

Steven Johnson's book, 'Emergence' observes how streets in medieval cities were specialized to deliver particular products, like gold, fabrics, hats or shoes. He argues that this clustering of similar products emerges as a result of complex interactions on the ground. Over time, these interactions sediment, such that a particular street, block, or district focuses upon a specific kind of urban offering, product, or event. Johnson points to how this kind of emergence occurs in many circumstances, from ant colonies to cities. In its typical assembly, formal assemblage collapses all critical distance between the observer and observed, becoming representations that absorb themselves into a system of signification. The anatomy of intimacy is dissected to understand how it plays out in different scales and domains.

While considering the complex network of mutations and permutations, the system of a 'grafted tree' is studied to understand its performative traits and pattern of growth, chosen particularly for its ability to form a networked assembly of hybrids in a unified system. Taking cues from precedents of object assemblies, contextual elements are distilled and treated and subsequently put together into assemblages that begin to destabilize the static images and have an enhanced pattern of branching, growth, and environmental responses that remotely mimic the analyzed system. Fibrous assemblies are explored to create hybrids, visualizing a grafted system in the built environment.

Athira Pillai

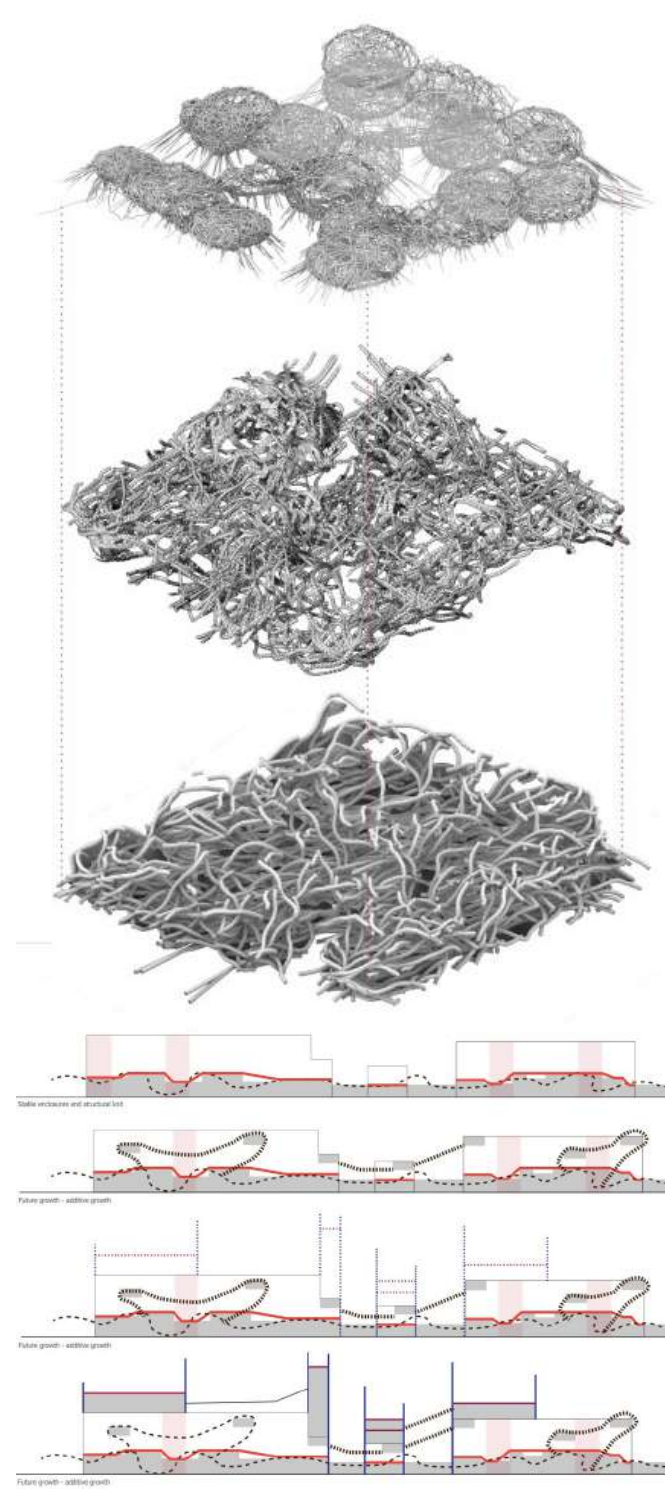
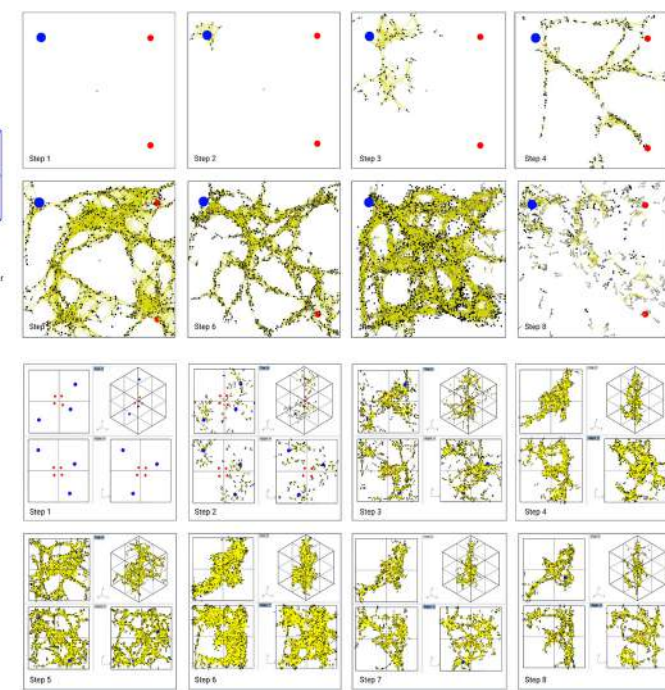
Mentor: Atrey Chhaya

'alive' is made of the same subatomic particles and forces and is subject to all the same laws, without exception. Life on earth is no doubt a very special event; even so, it is part of the infinite diversity of particular re-configuration—"something becomes something else again", that is fundamental to the processes of the universe. An adaptable system to which elements can be taken or added. Functionality can shift and adapt to meet changing demands.

Basing the study on the 'slime,' experiments were carried out to deduce the 'act of decay,' leading to a city rejuvenation module, where a new community/space intends to thrive on a dying substrate.'

Vedantee Chaudhari

Mentor: Atrey Chhaya



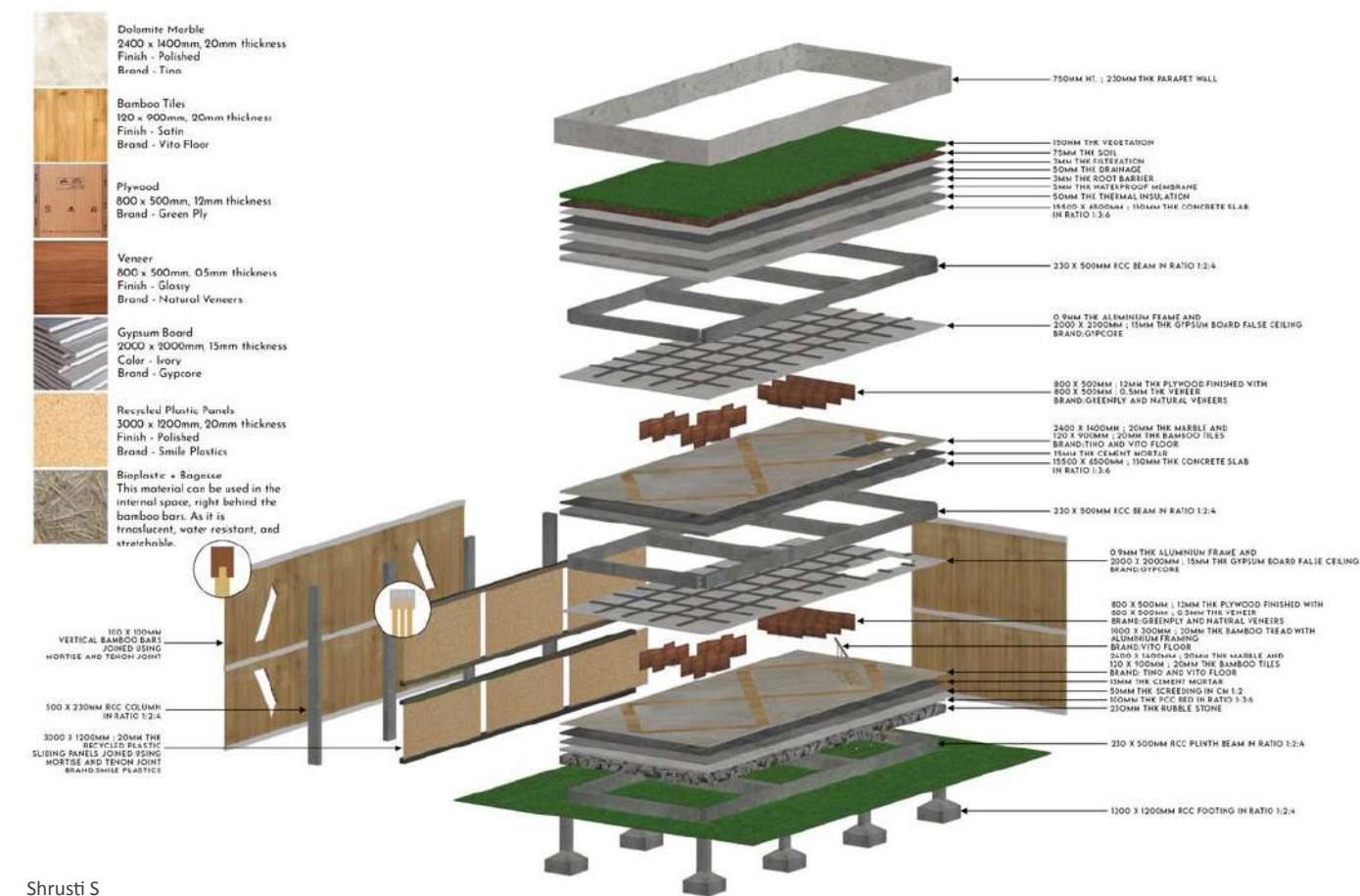
Materials

CIED 2nd Year

The studio aimed at evaluating current building materials, and discovering new materials from objects found in their immediate surroundings. The new material could be an alternate, which could be further be developed into complex material systems. A parallel study of existing versus found material sensitized the students to building materials that can be used from everyday life. The base materials students experimented with were household waste such as mango seed fiber, groundnut shells, bagasse, kombucha, egg shells, and waste newspaper. Each student determined the properties of these materials to develop new material systems with respect to adhesion, flexibility and mechanical strength. Simultaneously, students were asked to incorporate the existing building materials into their designs.

Ipsita Datta, Assistant Professor

Mentors : Sohil Soni, Ipsita Datta



Shruti S



Shagun P

Design Dissertation

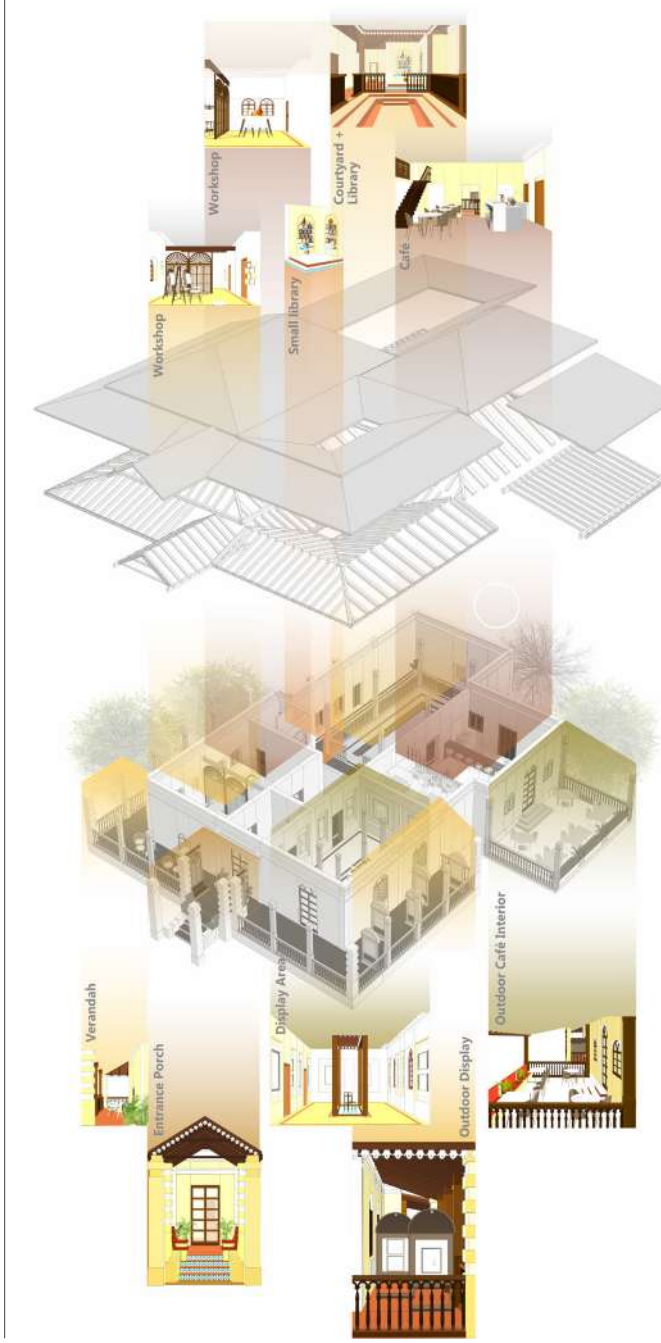
CIED 3rd Year

Lien - Connectivity With All

The concept is to create a skin which helps make the structure and not constrict to a small space to increase art appreciation. Taking inspiration from nature, the pangolin has overlapping scales forming its skin. Through Simple geometry the interlocking system has been derived and structure possibilities are shown. The following sites aimed in the project are public spaces and a variety of crowd visiting. The two sites Juhu Beach and Marine Drive are one of the most popular public spaces in Mumbai with a regular flow of people and throughout the day making the sites optimal for the project. The space is designed flexible according to its surroundings and creates a new experience for the people visiting. Fulfilling its purpose of making people more aware of art in one of the simplest ways, it highlights the idea of open spaces and environments being a part of the existing context.

Bhairavi Ruparel

Mentor: Kavan Shah



Study of the Houses of Goa

The aim of the thesis is to create a model for conserving the built heritage in Goa while ensuring that it remains public in character. Through an understanding of Goa's peculiar heritage, the thesis deciphers how culture impacts our sense of belonging. The structures are a reflection of diverse historical periods and architectural styles, culture and aesthetics. The utilisation of indigenous materials, crafts, and skills distinguishes Goan dwellings and structures as a distinct architectural expression. The study included documentation of a few houses in Goa - draughting the basic layouts/plans and evaluating the architectural components and materials, as well as collecting information about the time period it was built in. Elevations and details also became an important aspect of the documentation- with a focus on elements such as roofs, arches and their typologies, balustrades, stucco pediments, pilasters, porches, screens etc. Building conservations with the house owners, and analysing the process of restoration in structures that have been restored across the world took the study forward.

Sara Mayekar

Mentor: Atrey Chhaya

After-Thought Or Not

Rambblings at the end of a rumbling post-lockdown post-virtual semester

A long time ago – probably in the early noughts – I came across a remarkably amusing ad for – imagine this – an American manufacturer of sanitary ware. It went something like this, “they say everything in the future will be done by the computer” at the top of the magazine page – with a side photo of one of their popular WCs in the middle of the spread, followed by a resounding “Oh?” at the bottom. It still is one of the funniest and on-point ads I have seen – especially within the building industry.

I am reminded of this as we pick up the pieces from a devastating global Pandemic (that still rages on as I write and even as and when you would be reading this) compounded by adverse weather events during one of the hottest years in recorded human history with climate apocalypse ravaging some of the poorest countries on this planet whilst not sparing the wealthier ones either – and marked by increasing socio-political polarization and a surge in armed conflicts. This is a wild time (and not in a good way). The Pandemic has managed to reinforce and widen the gaps and schisms that our post-global world had only just started to address or encounter. Our planet’s homeostasis has been upset by humanity’s short presence making it more and more unlivable as days pass, and all the warnings and remedial measures are secondary to short term gains of a small group that in any case, will be insulated from any world crises by their wealth and influence.

So yeah. Post-Anthropocene is upon us already in many ways. But you may ask, what is in it for me as an Architect? Well, for one, our role as architects and the tools we use and strategies we devise for envisaging a future building culture can help in addressing or at least confronting some of the challenges. A 2021 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report outlined how buildings are responsible for 40% of global energy consumption, and a third of greenhouse gas emissions. In our country alone, the use of centralized air-conditioning and insulated glass facades is on the rise, encouraged by the illusion of energy efficiency that contentious industry-driven ‘green’ ratings promote. Elsewhere, societal challenges are reduced to design tropes and design ‘opportunities’ driven by the illusion that the ‘digital’ is egalitarian. Thus I recently came across an ‘anti-patriarchy’ mask devised by students and faculty at one of the leading institutions of ‘digital design’ in the UK. It continues to pander to the now-dismissed idea that a ‘new formalism’ will allow for a ‘new future’ – something that we have repeatedly witnessed as empty – multiple times so – in the 20th century. Design ‘solutions’ such as these neither are able to address the root concerns of the ‘problem’ (that they so claim to do) and nor are they able to really make ‘design’ be seen as a credible space or discipline for thinking effectively about persistent social conditions. Thus the mockery of our discipline, unwittingly engineered by its practitioners, continues.

If the Digital is really meant to be a ‘savior’, then perhaps reducing its application to surface desires and reductive formalism is perhaps the most limiting and dumbed-down application of a medium and tool-set that has fundamentally transformed human existence. What role does the digital need to play in the domain of spatial cultures – such as our chosen disciplines of Architecture, Urban Design, Interior Design et al – is thus still an open question – more so for a country and society like ours still trying to find its grounding. *Suprio Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor*

Disclaimer

Student work featured in this newsletter is meant to be indicative of broader studio directions and the diversity of resolution, and hence not intended to validate or emphasize the work of one student (or faculty/mentor) over another. projects were selected from a pool of works shortlisted by the editorial team in consultation with respective studio and subject faculties and the availability of print-quality material while being cognizant of the format and length of the newsletter. as such, by the nature of the previously stated process, this newsletter and the works & subjects thus represented will not intend to provide a comprehensive account of all the semesters or subjects in the school.

Library Holdings



During the academic year 2021-2022, the BSSA Library purchased 312 books and subscribed to 32 journals and magazines spanning a range of subjects such as *Designers and their Works, Design Typologies, Typological Studies, Theory, Methods & Processes, History & Humanities, Regional Studies, Urban Design, Theory & Planning, Housing & Dwelling, Landscape & Ecology, Materials, Technology and Construction, Drawing & Visualisation, Statutory norms/codes & guidelines, Professional Practice, Arts, Crafts and Allied Design Disciplines, Literature and Writings.*

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Anoushka Fonseca, 2nd Year

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Awards and Recognition

Certificate of Merit for Exemplary Performance Bachelor of Architecture / 2017 – 2022

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Aditya Shroff

Nazm Furniturewala

Certificate of Merit for Exemplary Performance Master of Architecture / 2020 – 2022

Vedantee Chaudhari

Athira Pillai

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