

ESALA 2019

Master of Architecture

PARASITUATION

[CALCUTTA / KOLKATA]



CALCUTTA

Dorian Wiszniewski



Outside the Entrance to the Marble Palace | Jorasanko

January 2018 | Kate Le Masurier



This catalogue is part of a collection published by the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA), Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. It documents student design work produced in the Master of Architecture (MArch) programme in 2018-19. Each catalogue describes one of the following five design studios in the MArch programme. The full collection is available to view online at issuu.com/eca.march.

Catalogues 2018-19:

City Fragments: Palermo Institutions.

island territories vi: MANHATTAN *scapeland*

eSTRANGEMENT / disPLACEMENT.

Parasituation [Calcutta/Kolkata].

The Other Paris.

The Streamlines, Vortices, and Plumes of the Blue

Lagoon/Bath.

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This catalogue is a collection of architectural and urban design speculations undertaken in the Master of Architecture studio studying the city of Calcutta 2017-2019. This studio ran after a first Calcutta studio in the MSc Architectural and Urban Design Programme (2016-17) and alongside two further MSc AUD Programmes (2017-2018 and 2018-2019). The work of the MArch studio both influenced and was influenced by the outputs and processes of the associated MSc AUD Programmes. This catalogue sits alongside the first MArch Catalogue printed in 2018 and the book *Argufying Calcutta: Parasituation* [Kolkata], (Wedge Publications, 2019). All studios benefitted by the contributions of various teaching colleagues (Kevin Adams ¹, Chris French ², Maria Mitsoula ³, Neil Cunning ⁴ and Paul Pattinson ⁵), a range of guests from different disciplines, institutions and countries and all the international students across all programmes (noted at the back of each catalogue/book).

1 MSc AUD 2016-17 and 2017-18; MArch 2017-2019

2 MSc AUD 2016-17 and 2017-18; MArch 2017-2018

3 MSc AUD 2016-17 and 2017-18; MArch 2017-2018

4 MSc AUD 2017-18 and 2018-2019; MArch 2017-2018

5 MSc AUD 2018-19 and visiting critic to MSc AUD 2016-17, 2017-2018 and MArch 2017-2019.

Plan of Calcutta 1 : 75 000

May 2019 | Andrew Chavet





बसु बाज़िल

K. K. BASU.
B.E.

B. R. BASU.
J.A.B.

Figure 1 | Bowali Mandal Road | Kalighat
January 2018 | Dorian Wiszniewski

MUCH “ADDA” ABOUT EVERYTHING

DORIAN WISZNIEWSKI

There is a phenomenon in Calcutta called *adda*. It refers to informal conversations between people, “that can go on for hours at a stretch – at street corners, cafes, markets and living rooms.”¹ This extended everyday discourse is either cause or symptom of Amartya Sen’s *The Argumentative Indian*; he says, “Prolixity is not alien to us in India. We are able to talk at some length ... We do like to speak.”² Importantly, Sen sees this tendency towards loquacity as the basis of “democracy as public reasoning.”³ This is the same “heterodox” communicative principle by which we encourage the operations of and between each of our studios, staff, visitors, students and speculations. However, alongside talking and necessarily more prolifically we encourage drawing and making – this is research-by-design, an authoring amidst authoring, design as productive “argufying”⁴ – we are talking about design as much as we are drawing on Calcutta, intermingled procedures contributing to a developing thesis (argument) concerning how to be involved with Calcutta, how to speculatively envision a new possibility for Calcutta and how, then, such a speculation might become something like Calcutta and Calcutta something like the speculation.

1 Storyline text from the IMDb website for the film *Adda, Calcutta, Kolkata* (2011), directed by Surjo Deb, and written by Shayani Bhattacharya and Ranjan Palit, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2381081/?ref_=ttpL_pl_tt, Accessed 12/03/2019.

2 Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian, Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p.3.

3 Ibid. pp.12-16.

4 See Amit Chaudhuri, On Amartya Sen and the Deferral of Indian Modernity, in Dorian Wiszniewski. *Argufying Calcutta: Parasituation [Kolkata]* (Edinburgh: Wedge Publications, 2019) pp.48-58

From the outset of our studio operations we installed our own version of a *rawk* (steps on the side of buildings, frequently at the thresholds to houses, designed specifically to accommodate and promote *adda*) (see Figures 1 and 2). The 2019 book and the 2018 and 2019 catalogues record much of the *adda* about everything we could reasonably deal with in the time frame of our operations. The sub-themes are many but are guided by the two main themes, elaborated in the 2018 catalogue and 2019 book as **Inside Out** and **OCEANS OF WETNESS**.

A way we think the themes of **Inside Out** and **OCEANS OF WETNESS** is through scale. Our research methodology oscillates between body, building, series of buildings, neighbourhood, metropolitan landscape, region, nation, and global scales. These are well-recognised political scales. However, they also speak of environmental scales. Our programme is determinedly interested in the environmental to political scale relationships. Architecture, we argue, mediates these scales. We like to think of architecture as mediating between oscillating cosmological and cosmopolitical scales. Our bodies are borne of the cosmos and are compelled to navigate every cosmopolitical scale. We like to think politics by equally thinking cosmos. This is what we mean by cosmopolitical – rather than defining the cosmos only through politics (and draw absolute cartographic or architectural divisions through mountain ranges, rivers and other environmental continuities, including peoples, and subject them to discontinuous political managements), we prefer to allow for political practices to be shaped by the cosmos. Therefore, for our programme, what we call cosmopolitics is already considered cosmological. This dynamic is key to understanding the impact of **OCEANS OF WETNESS**. **OCEANS OF WETNESS**, cosmologically considered, is product of our sun acting upon our oceans. However, as a cosmological phenomenon it saturates every cosmopolitical scale: wetness is the effect of every cosmological moment in our everyday cosmopolitical existence. **Inside Out** is how we tackle each scale. **Inside Out** is how we tackle wetness. We think of each scale in turn, gradually outreaching, stepping from one scale to the other, oscillating between large and small – our bodies always in contact with the cosmos and the things we make as cosmopolitical artefacts. Every scale of our argufying, then, is immersive, literally and metaphorically, cosmic and political.

Between the three different publications, between texts and images, a reader will come to terms with something of Calcutta. Calcutta is a wetland. It sits on the eastern side of the river Hooghly, opposite the separate city of Howrah. Calcutta sits where the landscape of the Indian sub-continent and the fertile plains of Bengal meet the lush wetlands and jungle of the Sunderbans, a situation



Figure 2 | Calcutta Studio Rawk, Nov 2017, Kevin Adams

where water and land operate as precise equivalents. The Hooghly is less a river than one of many great concentrations of wetness that run through the alluvial landscape from the Himalayas to the North to the Bay of Bengal in the South. The absoluteness of political boundaries in such a fluid fertile landscape seem absurd. To have the dryness of a finite political cultural line in such a situation takes great cosmopolitical conceit never mind effort, perhaps an effort which, ultimately, we determine a cosmological impetus can and will redistribute.

The themes of **Inside Out** and **OCEANS OF WETNESS** are elaborated in the 2018 catalogue and 2019 book. As noted there, **Inside Out** pays respect to the late Diane Lewis. Her thinking and book of the same name is highly influential. It promotes architecture, drawing and building as highly skilled cultural mediation, as significant as the written word. We agree with Diane and also promote architecture as holding this communicability. Much has been written on the problems of the temperate imposition of the Global North in the Global South. Something of the cosmopolitical stress of such tendencies is well narrated, for example, in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*. The cosmological impetus of our work is greatly influenced by our friends and colleagues Dilip da Cunha and Anuradha Mathur who first proposed **OCEANS OF WETNESS** as a manifesto.⁵ In his most recent book, *The Invention of Rivers: Alexander's Eye and Ganga's Descent*, Dilip richly records the temperately focussed perspective spanning from ancient times to the zenith of modern geographers. He counterposes this with an ancient Indian perspective which Anu and Dilip have further articulated as a chapter, *A Clash of First Natures*, in our book, *Argufying Calcutta: Parasituation [Kolkata]*. We are extremely grateful to them. Our work, therefore, tries not to build from a temperate bias. Rather, it explores **OCEANS OF WETNESS Inside Out**; it explores Calcutta as birth place to cosmologies which, in turn, provide inventive language for how architecture might redistribute specific cosmopolitical situations,

“deepen[ing] a wetness that is already everywhere in some degree, a wetness that does not flow as water does but rather holds in clouds, air, earth, and living matter. It [the architecture of wetness] soaks, blows, seeps, osmotes, and transpires its way to ever-extending holdings of wetness, holdings that eventually become the ocean that reconnects with the wind.”⁶

5 <https://www.mathurdacunha.com/ocean-of-wetness>

6 Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, *A Clash of first Natures*, in Wiszniewski, *Argufying Calcutta*: p.152.

Our work is neither inside nor outside the colonial and post-colonial narratives of Calcutta. Rather than being caught in this pre-politicised bind, we take our leave from a deeply considered architectural/cultural impetus. Our research works towards what we consider to be Indian Modernity: we are looking for it and work **Inside Out** of what we find, even if it is only a seductive glimmer of an interpretive possibility. What we consider modernity must be distinguished from the merely modern and the frequently prejudiced memory of Modernism. Modernity, as the OED tells us, is “an intellectual tendency or social perspective characterized by departure from or repudiation of traditional ideas, doctrines, and cultural values in favour of contemporary or radical values and beliefs.” This is not quite right for us either. It is partly right. In fact, it may be possible that Indian Modernity gives us a different definition altogether. We are in favour of the contemporary over either glorification or repudiation of a past. We see history as a continuity, neither in progress nor decline. We pursue a critical optimism of what it is like to be in India, in Calcutta, living for the moment, looking to futurity but not ignorant of the past. Modernity, thus, is evident in many periods. We are interested in heritage in so far as we care about who inherits what from whom and that it is invested wisely – *ecosophically, cosmopolitically*. Therefore, the most important moment of modernity for us is the relevance of the futurity of a *then* as it intersects with a newly relevant *now*, and for us as architects, in a predictive adequation of futurity. Our speculations are invested in this optimism and look to build from a wisdom we find both cosmo-logically and cosmo-politically in Calcutta.

We have begun our search for Indian Modernity by drawing up “measured intensities” – intense situations intensely measured. We took our initial cues by looking at the works and some addresses important to prominent Bengali Bhadrals – for example, Ashapura Devi, Indira Devi Choudhurani, Kaliprasanna Singha (Hutum Pyencha), Jaladar Sen, Troilokyanath Mukhopadhyay, Narayan Gangopadhyay, Punyalata Chakrabarti, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Shailajaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Premendra Mitra, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, Charankavi Mukundada, Rajshekhar Basu (Parashuram), Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Sukumar Ray, Satyacharan Laha, Birmalacharan Laha, Gauharjaan, Brajendranath Sil, Hitabadi Patrika, Krishnakamal Bhattacharyya, Haraprashad Sastri, Prashanta Chandra Mahalanabish, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Satyajit Ray, Sachin Dev Burman, Pandit Gyan Prakash Ghosh and Henry Louis Vivian Derozio.⁷ We also looked to the house of Sukanya Mitra, a contemporary Bengali scholar and

⁷ This list was provided by Sanchitta Bhattacharya and Anirban Mondal (via Amit Chaudhuri), heritage researchers in Calcutta, September 2017.



Calcuttan *bhadrolok*, and the street where Amit Chaudhuri's uncle lived, the subject of his book *A Strange and Sublime Address*. We looked at some Bhadr लोक situations more intensely than others, but always mindful of each as specific exemplar of this special collective who provide the inheritance of subsequent generations of culturally driven Calcuttans.

For our “measured intensities” we took some impetus from Patrick Geddes. Knowing his exchanges with Rabindranath Tagore we see within and between them further sources of a sensibility towards Indian Modernity. Rather than looking specifically at Tagore's poetry, we are inspired more by the modernity of his humanism, perhaps most evidenced in his open educational thinking at Shantiniketan (a key subject of the Tagore/Geddes letters).⁸ We look to Geddes for his specific input into the Barra Bazaar, a most amazing dense layering of hybrid civic programmes covering about 1km by 1km square where the entire ground floor and streets are given over to market, most of the first and next two to three floors operating as residential accommodation, and with a roof-scape partially activated as extension of the common social spaces of the inner courtyards.⁹ This area is frequently considered as a bad example of urbanism. However, as Geddes, we see merits.¹⁰ Our “measured

8 See Bashabi Fraser, *A Meeting of Two Minds: Geddes Tagore Letters* (Edinburgh: Word Power Bookshop, 2005).

9 For specific measured intensities of Barra Bazaar see Wiszniewski, *Argufying Calcutta*, pp.87-202.

10 See Patrick Geddes, *Barra Bazar Improvement, A Report to The Corporation of Calcutta*, (Calcutta: The Corporation Press, 1919).

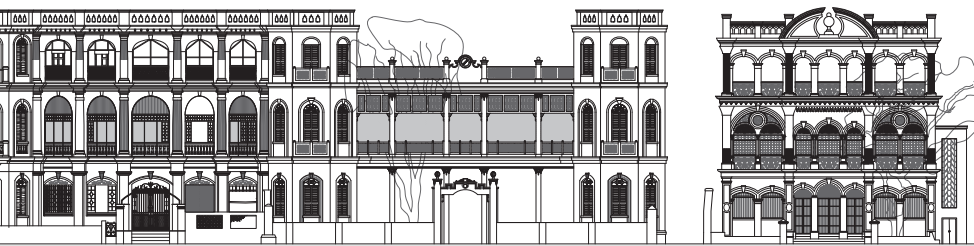


Figure 3 | Abhay Mitra Street elevation, February 2018, Kate Le Masurier and Andrew Chavet

intensities”, therefore, can be considered something of a Geddesian “diagnostic survey.” However, rather than looking for illnesses that require some “conservative surgery” to make the situation well again, we look for what we consider to be signs of urban health. We develop what we call a “Prognostic Survey.” We consider situations that seem providential and test how they might act enzymatically to propagate reciprocally propitious relationships across and between all cosmological and cosmopolitical scales. We begin **Inside Out** from a survey but by developing it alongside a cosmological projection of **OCEANS OF WETNESS** we create a speculation. Rather than acting from a curative principle we find and speculate from the basis of what we consider to be fecundating. It is the fecundating rather than curative principle that charges our “argu(fy)ing”. We present this work and the two parallel publications as records of much of the *adda* about everything we found to be cosmologically and cosmopolitically fecund in Calcutta.



House on Abhay Mitra Street | Kumartuli

January 2018 | Kate Le Masurier

CALCUTTA/KOLKATA: A SPIRITED RUPTURE

KEVIN ADAMS

“aesthetic rupture works to qualify a body whose dwelling is geared neither to its task nor its determination”¹

As a city originally moulded in the image of a British Colony by the East India Company, Kolkata is an uncanny experience. It is an architectural fool's errand, a Georgian set piece trying desperately to hold on to its decorum whilst knee deep in mud. Cities are places of continual evolution, even cities that have experienced the trauma of conflict usually regain the momentum of development with the centres often becoming commodified; grand old buildings are conserved and fetishised and the institutions are revered. The years of post-independence Marxist rule have ended in Kolkata and the relentless rituals of what constitutes street life in the Asian subcontinent determine a temporality that resides in the moment. Here many of these rituals take place within the shells of its former colonial institutions and this is what provides the uncanny, the feeling of a stage set. When you walk through the old districts of Kolkata, you experience an architecture of dilapidation not caused by economic woe or ignorance but rather, you suspect an active will of disengagement. Here you experience a rupture in the urban evolution of Kolkata, caused by a series of related acts that are still playing out on its formerly grand stage. It portrays the sense of being one thing whilst behaving like another but its reality is more complicated even than this. Cities generally have more than one character and this is an important aspect of why Calcutta (to use its historical title), as a place strongly conceived under the influence of a singular body, is ultimately revealed to be a folly.

¹ Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus On Politics and Aesthetics*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p.148.

To understand modern Kolkata better it helps to mention some of the aspects that play a role in determining its being. Its situation is indisputable and it is what provides the city's *raison d'être*. Kolkata is a place apart, a part of India, a part of West Bengal. It is an administrative capital, a metropolis, former seat of the British Raj and home to over five million people. It occupies the east bank of the Hooghly River, one of two distributaries formed when the Ganges splits 260 km further upstream. Traditionally known as Ganga, the Hooghly is considered as sacred water within the Hindu community and Kolkata sits on an alluvial clearing of the Gangetic Plain at the head of the river's tidal limit and on the northern edge of the Sundarban wetlands. The Sundarban is a vast mangrove swamp, shared with Bangladesh and forming the Ganges delta between Bengal and the Indian Ocean. It is a massive convergence of fresh Himalayan water swept downstream and salty tidal brine heading inland. The alluvial clearing was originally home to a collection of villages under the rule of the Mughal empire but the location was chosen by the East India Company, at the end of the seventeenth century, as an ideal base for its continued expansion into the hinterlands. It is a place of physical, cultural and spiritual encounter, a place of reckoning situated between the world's highest mountains and largest delta and it is one of the lowest lying and flattest places on earth. Kolkata is clay mud, it sits in it and is made of it. The once pristine white architecture is actually made of cheap local bricks, rendered firstly in lime and more lately with incompatible cement techniques. The rampant fecundity of its tropical climate is all consuming and it lays siege to any buildings left unprepared.

Kolkata serves a vast metropolitan region and it does this through a lively mix of industry and commerce. A lot of this trade takes place within the tight confines of the Barabazaar, an old and established part of central Kolkata that sits between the White and Black Town districts and flanks the Hooghly. It resides within solid and densely packed eighteenth and nineteenth century architecture that hosts an overwhelming deluge of commercial activity. The buildings appear to be poorly maintained and electrical services run between and across them like spaghetti; but they were never intended to be places of appearance - these are places of production. The architecture might be ruinous but it's also accommodating and the occupants seem constantly to adapt it to their requirements. There have been attempts in the past to make civic order from within this maelstrom of human industry; for example, Patrick Geddes wrote a report that was partly enacted by the city corporation following its production in 1919, but little impact can be observed and the actions of making and selling drive this area relentlessly. As with other areas of craft and labour in Kolkata, it's hard to ignore the very close proximity of living with working. Districts such as Kumortuli, where the world-famous clay

idols are hand made, are home to artisans, itinerant labourers and their immediate families, often all within closely confined spaces.

There is also another way of life in the city that does make space for living and working in quite a different way. In the suburbs of both the old Black Town area of north Kolkata and White Town to the south of the city there exists residential districts that were built by moderately wealthy Bengalis, generational off-spring of the Babus. The original Babus were an independent merchant class who prospered from the burgeoning trade of the developing metropolis during the colonial era and their children became richly educated in the arts and humanities; this was unwittingly facilitated by the British laws against access to the study of science and engineering for those of Indian nationality. The legacy of these subsequent generations, known as Bhadrals, meaning gentlefolk, is a unique reenactment of Bengali culture that is separate and distinct from mainstream Hindi nationalism and deliberately positioned to distance itself from its previous colonial subjugation. This is an intellectual existence, para-urban in nature, often secular, distinctly modern in its outlook, taking place within distinct neighbourhoods and streets and elegant shaded living rooms shuttered against the sharp sunlight. These are now mostly decaying properties that house generations of collected heirlooms and the personal trappings of a cultured, bourgeois life.

Modern Kolkata appears then to be in a state of active and spirited rupture. Colonialism left the physical trappings of institutions, now co-opted by the current political incumbents to endorse a representation of consensual political authority. However, this is neither the task nor determination of the city. The city's occupants are busy adapting, making and theorising their existence irrespective of appearances and within the context of a demanding climate and unrelenting alluvial conditions. Its recent post-independence history has, seemingly unwittingly, provided a platform for self-reliance and coexistence of many seemingly disparate activities, cultural and industrial, old and new. This is why we find Kolkata such a place of abundance and so rich a situation for speculations, which, in turn, determine the tasks necessary to new architectural and urban envisioning.



In Adda on *Rwaks* | Goa Bagan

January 2018 | Kate Le Masurier



01

INTIMATE WATER BONDS

REPETITIVE SCENES

ANASTASIA REPPA

The aim of this thesis is to create Vessels of Culture which encourage and promote further intimate water bonds within the *apparent everyday anarchy* of intense urbanization connecting the vibrant city with the water-bed of the Hooghly River. Centuries of human presence in the area have formed a rich cultural fundament upon which contemporary inhabitants have settled. Opening the city towards the Hooghly through a series of striped buildings with uses such as Library, Elderly Community Center, Nursery, Theatre and public walkways, will recreate the intensive bonds between the city and the river.

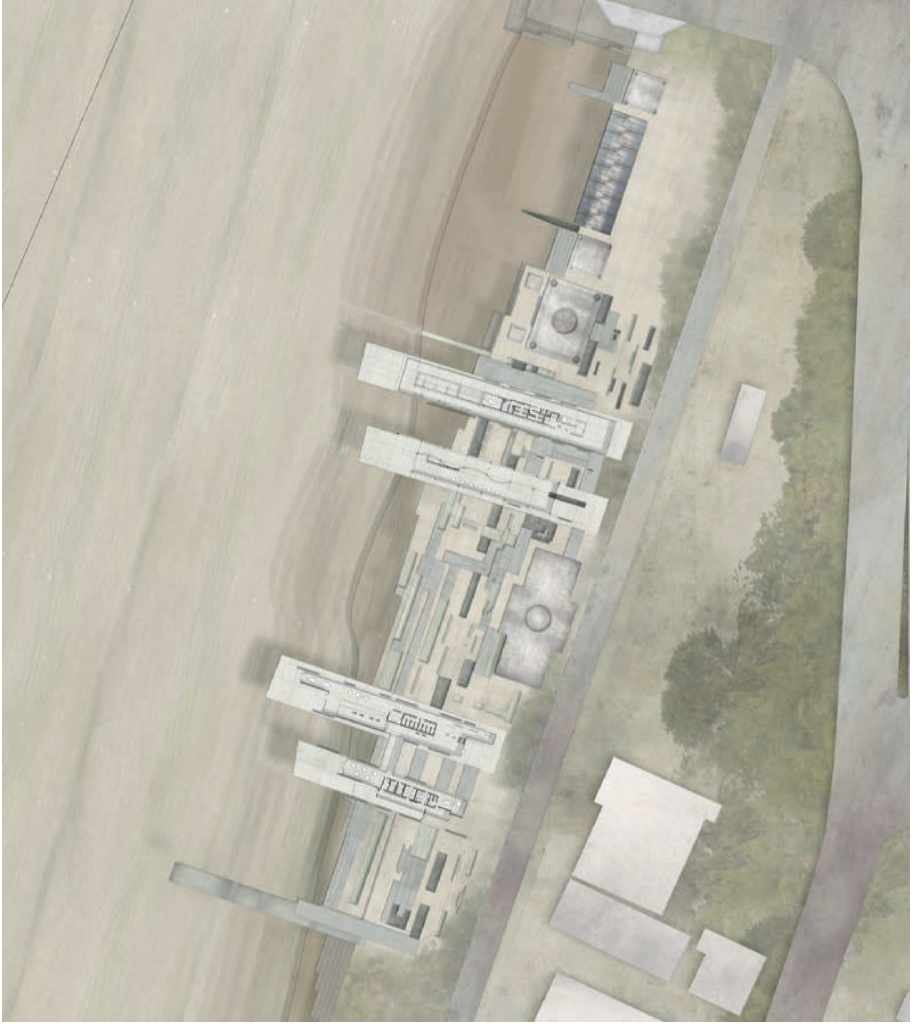
A *ghat* is the openness of a community towards a neighbouring river bed through a stepped formation. Indian culture retains deep spiritual connection with its rivers. The aggressive development of the city towards the river has isolated the city from its water source. The *ghats* of the Calcutta's Old Town nowadays form some of the most famous Markets in the city. Howrah Station feeds the markets and the city with products, people and culture from beyond. The Hooghly Bridge empowers the natural flow from the west to the east side of the city, while human intensity within and around the bazaar areas has shaped a pattern between time and space.

New striped patterns set the rhythm of a new Cultural Center as an architecture that respects the ghat. Working as complimentary figures set above and within the ghats, they enhance community amenity and access to and from the river.





2 | Cross River Section - Howrah Railway Station and Bridge
3 | City Plan - Vessels within Wetness



4 | Ground Floor Plan - Bonding the River with the City
5 | Long Elevation - Facing the Hooghly River

02

PATTERN PRINTING AND ECOLOGY

RE-TERRITORIALISATION OF THE KIDDERPORE DOCK

RUOTIAN WANG

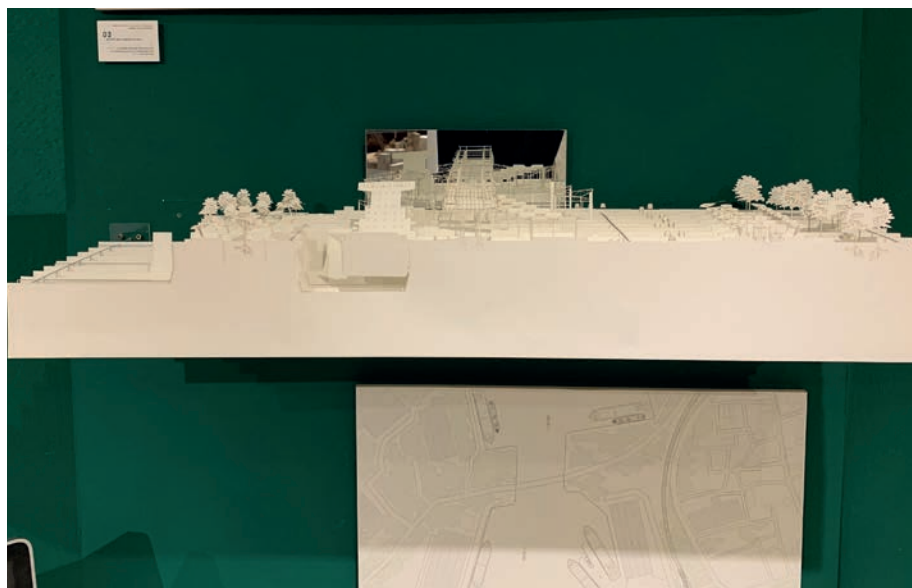
In *Towards and Ecology of Mind*,¹ Gregory Bateson defines that a healthy ecology of the city is a single, complex dynamic system of environment combined with a highly developed human civilization. The system would have fundamental and basic features which are open to slow and gradual changes reciprocally between civilization and the environment; a new kind of urban flexibility would emerge where urban patterns would match environmental patterns.

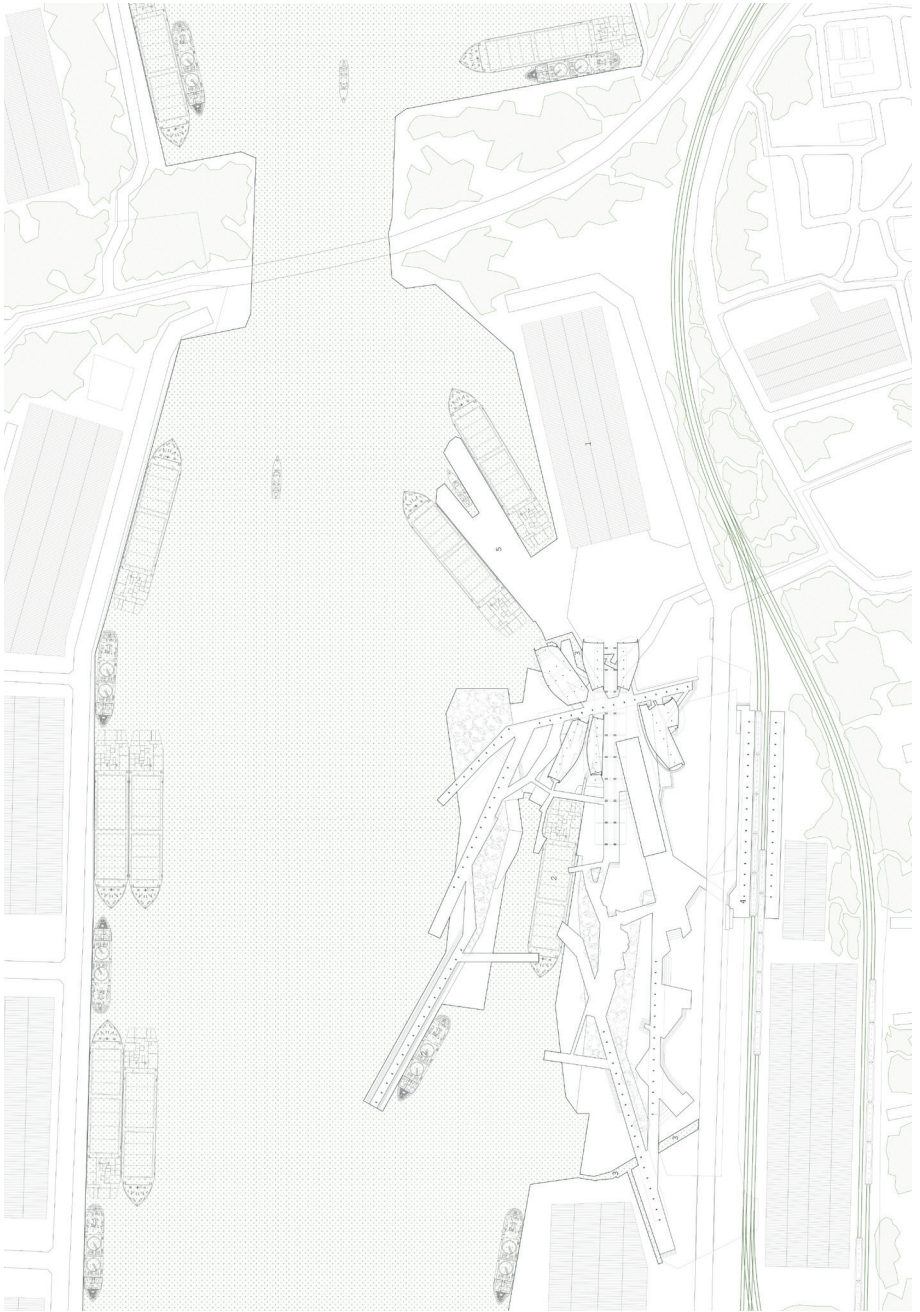
Constructed by the British East India Company, Kidderpore Dock is one of the oldest operating ports in India. Once it was the busiest trading centre in South Asia and Calcutta; now the dock is marked by largely redundant industrial cargo warehouses and dock machineries. Yet, on the dock's east side, the residential areas remains densely urbanised. The architectural and communal boundaries between the dock territory and residential territory are clearly defined by archaic industrial infrastructural patterns.

This project breaks the hard urban boundary within Calcutta. The pattern of the Calcutta wetlands is superimposed over the existing patterns of Kidderpore Dock, as if one system is imprinted into the other. This promotes a new healthy urban ecology with high degrees of programmatic, material, formal, technological and environmental flexibility. By such a re- and de-territorialisation of the Kidderpore dock, Kidderpore Dock slowly transforms into a dynamic and reciprocally flexible human-environmental civilisation.

¹ Gregory Bateson, "Ecology and Flexibility in Urban Civilization", in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).







2 | Models of Water Territory at Different Phases

3 | Photo of Paper Sections Model

4 | Territorialisation Site Plan of the Kidderpore Dock - Dry Season



Selling Marigolds at Mullick Ghat Flower Market | B.B.D. Bagh
January 2018 | Kate Le Masurier



03

AUGMENTING THE LANDSCAPE:

AN AGRICULTURAL RE-APPROPRIATION OF THE KIDDERPORE DOCKS

DAANA BOLOT

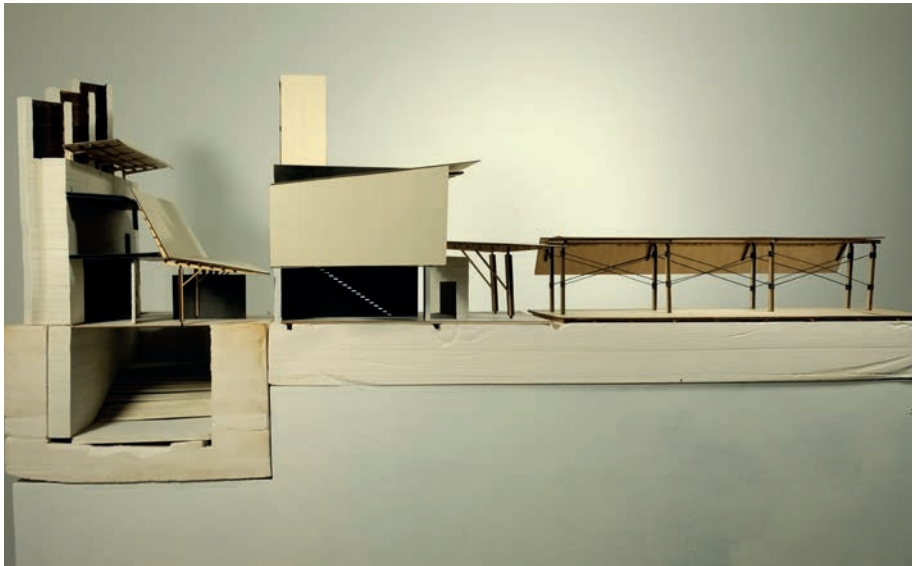
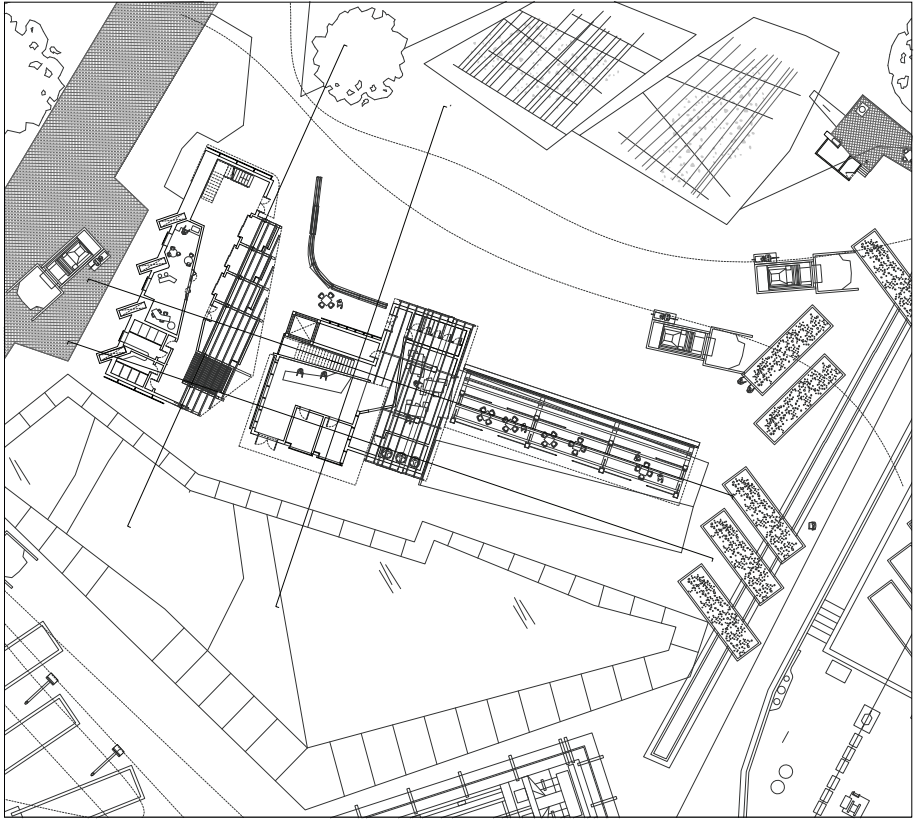
This project offers an agricultural re-appropriation and re-calibration of the landscape at the Kidderpore Docks where the architectural proposals embody the process of saturating, immersing, folding and impressing the existing and speculative new data of the Kidderpore landscape, and thus, augmenting the landscape further.

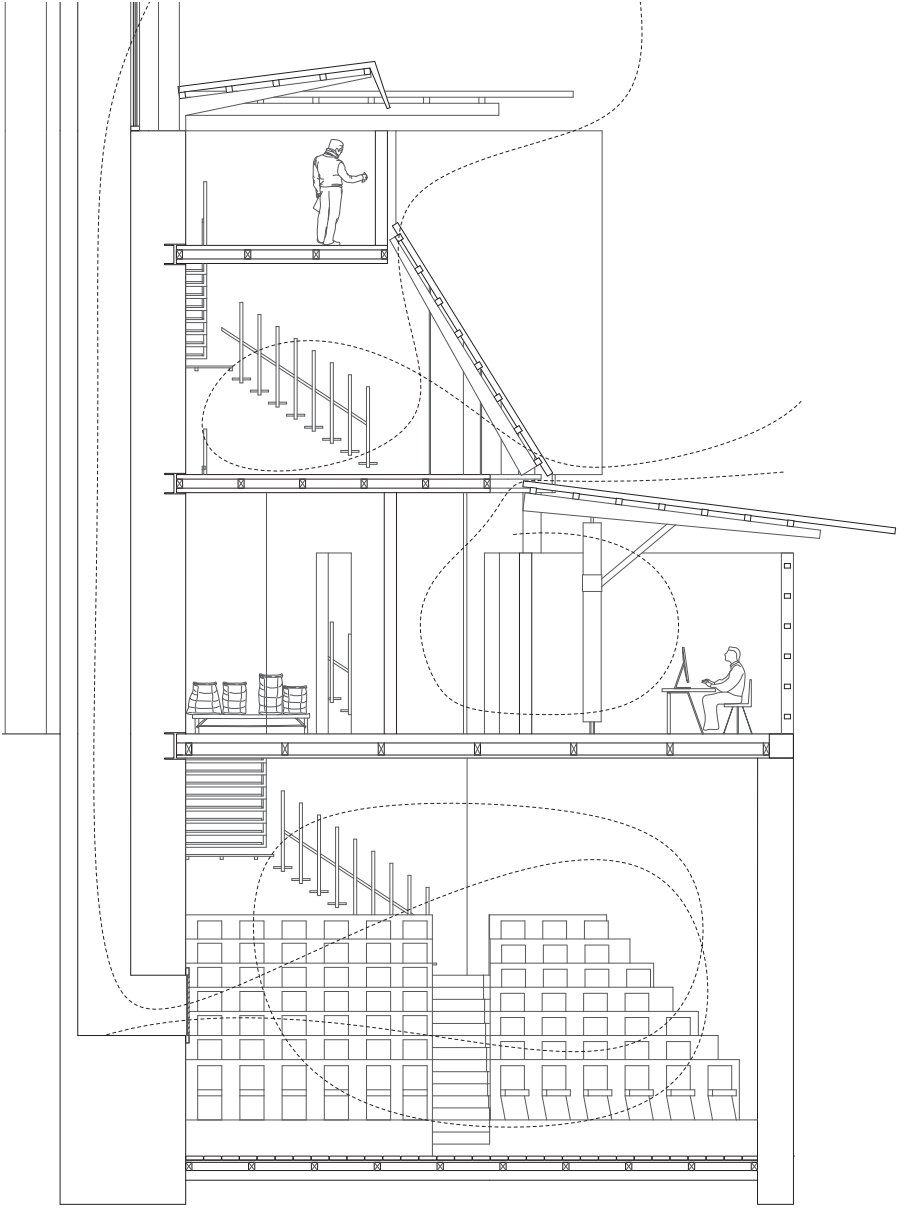
The Kidderpore Docks is a seminal territory of South Kolkata that provided the initial entry into the city, economically, politically and geographically. Situated in the Southern end of the Hooghly river the docks had been infrastructurally developed during the British Raj to become focal point of the shipping and travelling industry. Over time, the governmental authorities of the Kolkata Port had defined a boundary between the private and the public, thus highlighting a hard, impermeable border.

What the field trip and intense survey of several locations in the city had revealed was the character of residential spaces being closely knit with spaces of production and trade. The Kidderpore Docks are explored and recalibrated through the lineaments of Kidderpore market and 529 Rabindra Sarani printing house – places of particular social and urban character that immerse productivity into everyday life.

Geologically, Kolkata is situated on a rich bedrock of clay and silt, almost sinking the city into the water-rich, porous soil. Thus, the project aims to bring out the gesture of the pre-existent land and reveal that through techniques of unfolding, imprinting and saturating in drawing and modelling form, allowing the architecture to emerge from this process. The architectural programme oscillates between processes of re-using the existing silt, extracting the water for growing crops in the new landscape and harvesting and distributing the resulting production.







- 2 | Ground Floor Plan - Dredging Agency
- 3 | Structural Assembly - Dredging Factory in East Kidderpore
- 4 | Solar Chimney Effect - Natural Ventilation
- 5 | (overleaf) White on White - Re-territorialisation of Kidderpore Docks





04

ENVELOPED AEDICULE OF BLIND BLENDS

SHIDAN BELAY HAGOS

Aedicule, from the Latin Aedicula, "denoting a small shrine containing Roman household gods or, in a temple, the statue of a god; the structure covering the Holy Sepulchre. Also: a representation of a structural feature (usually in miniature) for ornamental purposes"¹

Satadru Pain, a regular of the coffee house, sits in the privacy of his table and orders coffee. Sat across from a foreigner he begins to divulge dialogue fit for politics & the arts. He finishes his drink. Iraz Malik, the owner of the book stall, sits in his usual sanctuary sipping chai. Sat across from a foreigner, he too begins to divulge dialogue fit for politics & the arts. He finishes his drink.

The *Enveloped Aedicule* is an architecture that comprises spaces to sit and have coffee and chai with the company of a book borrowed from the library in the *Aedicule* or bought from the book stalls outside.

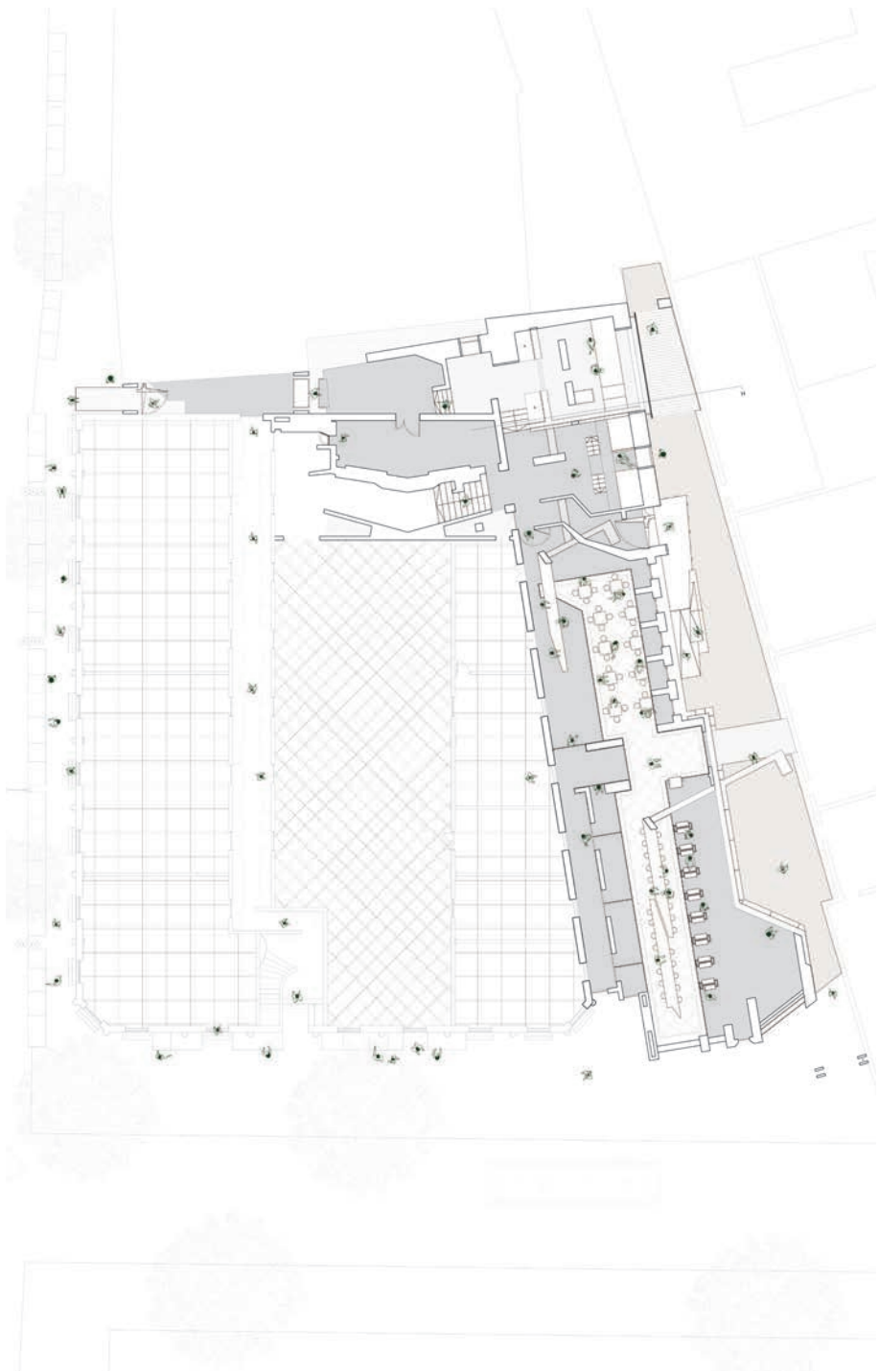
The *Enveloped Aedicule* is an architecture that reconfigures and reinterprets the confinement of coffee and the seclusion of chai and designs a tactical gap, an architecture that slips over and between the two commodities.

The gap, the Lingual Library, a blur in the relationship between the two agencies, is stirred to provide spaces that negotiate the common ground between drinkers of coffee and tea and beyond into the academic ground of College Street.

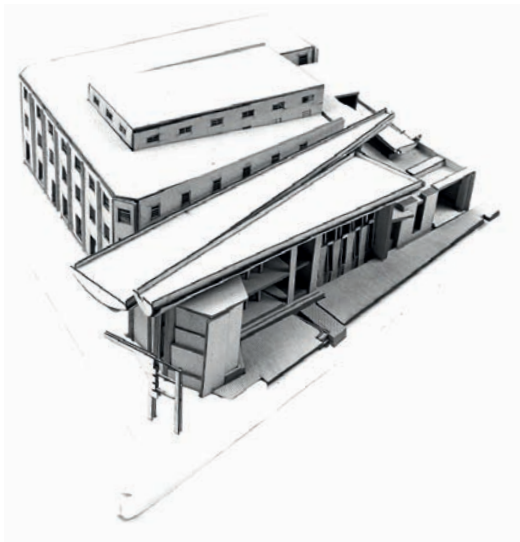
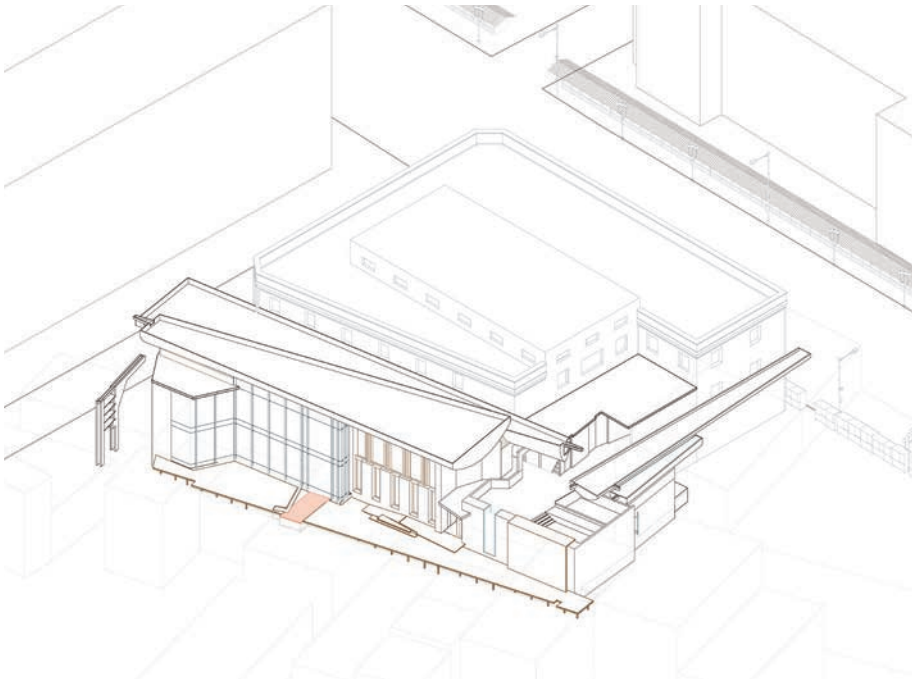
In the Enveloped Aedicule the waiter dressed in white uniform wearing flip-flops strides to the table. He places the ceramic cup for coffee and the clay cup for chai on the table, as the two continue in their Adda.² In the corner, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, the Bengali poet, the bhadrakok, sits in the privacy of the English Language room, drinking tea, smelling the coffee, writing Bengali poems about politics.

The workshop in which Michael composes accommodates and blends multiple agencies.

1. OED
2. Wiszniewski, "Much Adda About Everything" p.4, in this volume.







-
- 2 | Red Oxide Common Ground
 - 3 | The Aedicule in Context
 - 4 | Detailing the In-Between
 - 5 | In-Between the Gap

05

BENGAL SCENTS

MANGO RHYTHM

DESMOND CHANG

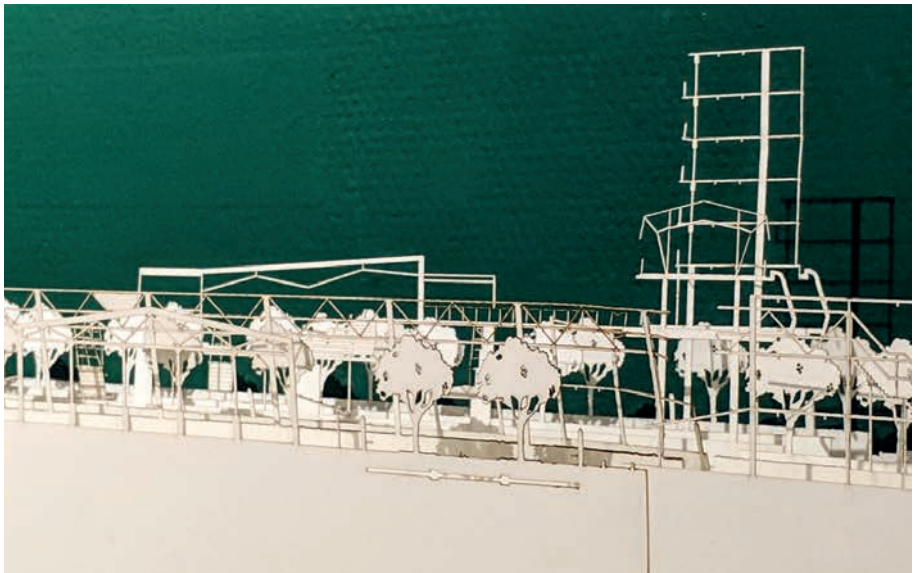
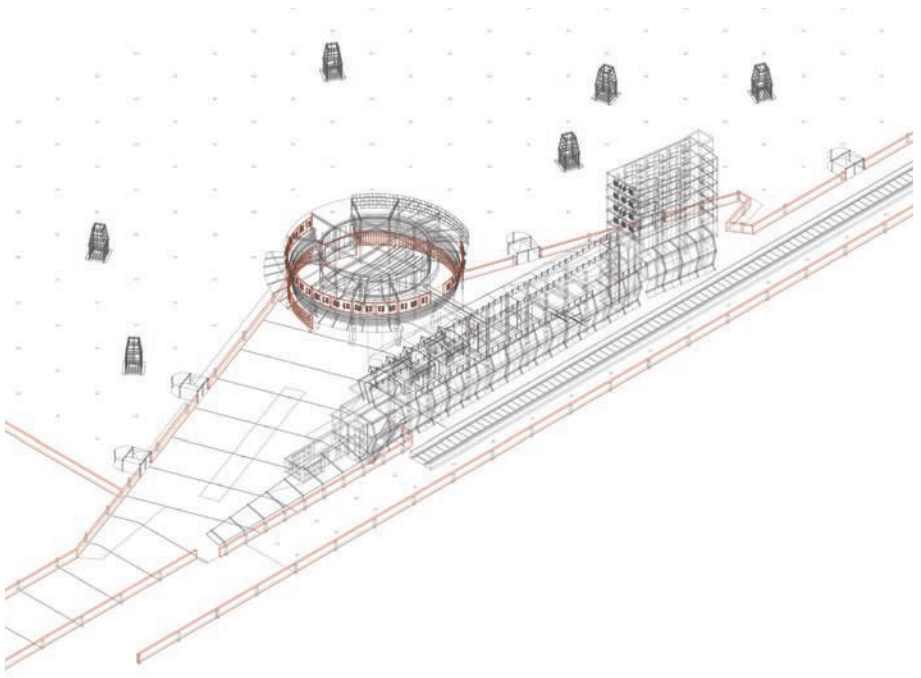
The Writers' Building and Howrah railway station are both examples of complex networks and assemblages that comprise numerous 'actants', be they human or not, that evidence the collecting, recording and distribution of many things of value and agency. Bengal Scents | Mango Rhythm investigates contingencies between different 'actants' through a specific affording agency – Indian Mangoes. The proposed West Bengal Mango Guild consists of a small-scale mango orchard, a debating chamber, various social spaces and beds.

Situating the building in between the old and new Howrah station, the West Bengal Mango Guild grafts the station together. Attaching an agricultural productive landscape to a civil engineered underground metro formulates a new equation - it speculates the propitiousness of what the East-West metro could bring to the city of Kolkata not only as a way to distribute people but also goods. The assemblage now acts as environmental remediation, creating a system of productive-landscape distribution as much as the products of landscape distribution.

The thesis blurs the boundary between inside and outside, land and water. Rather than repelling the water from the Hooghly river, it attracts and handles the water carefully to prevent the orchard from being too dry or too saturated, ensuring optimal water level for nurturing both fruit and population. Multiple positive drainage channels along the metro viaduct encourage water flow locally but also between Howrah and the East Kolkata Wetlands.







2 | Mango Ripening Chamber

3 | Mango Farmers' Guild, Debating Chamber and Walled Mango Garden

4 | Paper Section Model

06

BLOTTING ORNITHOLOGICS

FINDLAY MCFARLANE

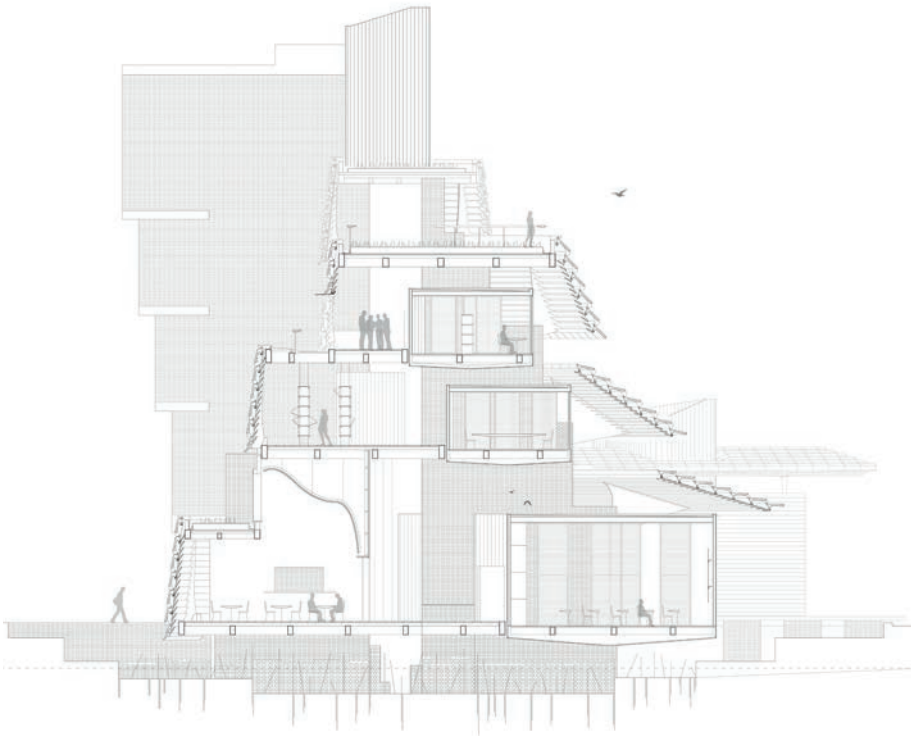
Blotting Ornithologics saturates conventional design methods to release the “white”, wet, public ground from the private, flawed dryness of figured black. The project harnesses the avicultural wisdom found in Satyacharan Laha’s *Pet Birds of Bengal*, following the logics of the bird’s eye view to challenge human lines of territory between city and jungle, and bring back the fuller ecology of the wetlands to Kolkata.

The thetic drivers of Laha’s Agrapara aviary and Sukanya Mitra’s house carry their intelligence across scales to new sites, found and “blotted” between the overlapping layers of ornithological requirements and the existing figure-ground of Calcutta to form new “blotsapes” within “birdscapes” within an “Ocean of Wetness”.

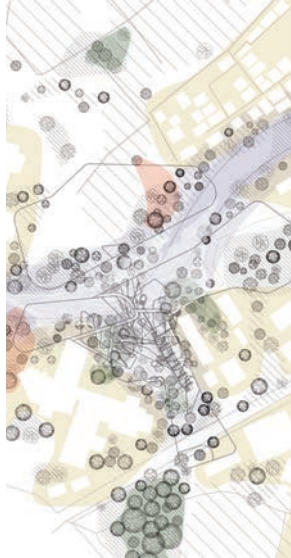
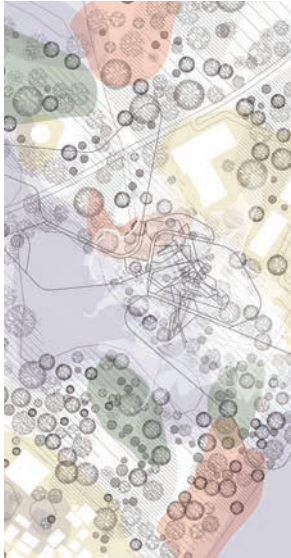
Three of these territories of “whiteness” are at once created and sustained by strategically placed, newly conceived objects of “black”. The blotting instruments of the Oriental Skylark, the Blue Whistling Thrush and the Common Iora negotiate “enzymatic territories” using senses specific to their species and draw in wetness from surrounding water systems. These “ecosopic objects” form infiltration basins which slow water down and soak it away to alleviate runoff, while creating public landscapes from which the environmental and structural cores of the architecture rise.

The three buildings form the Calcutta Institute of Aviculture; they share a tectonic language but develop species specific programmatic and architectural mutations. Their open envelopes provide shade, rain cover and air movement, creating outside buildings which hold moments of environmental control, all drawn in different ways from the wetness below and all around.





2 | Shared by Species
3 | Moments of Control

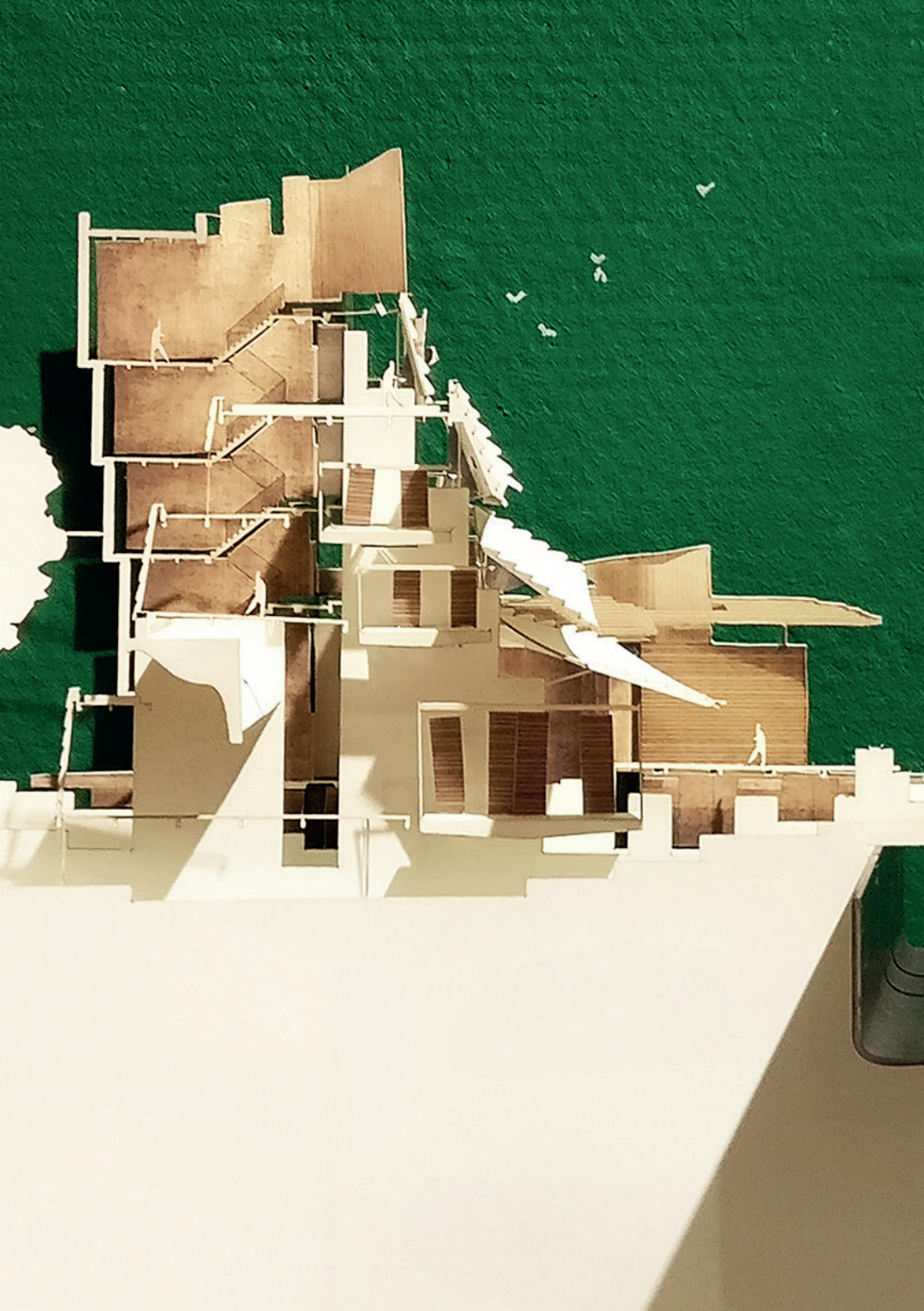


4 | Blotting Instrument Model

5 | Ornithotics: Common Iora, Blue Whistling Thrush and Oriental Skylark

6 | (overleaf) Infiltration Basin Model





07

CURATING A BLOTSCAPE

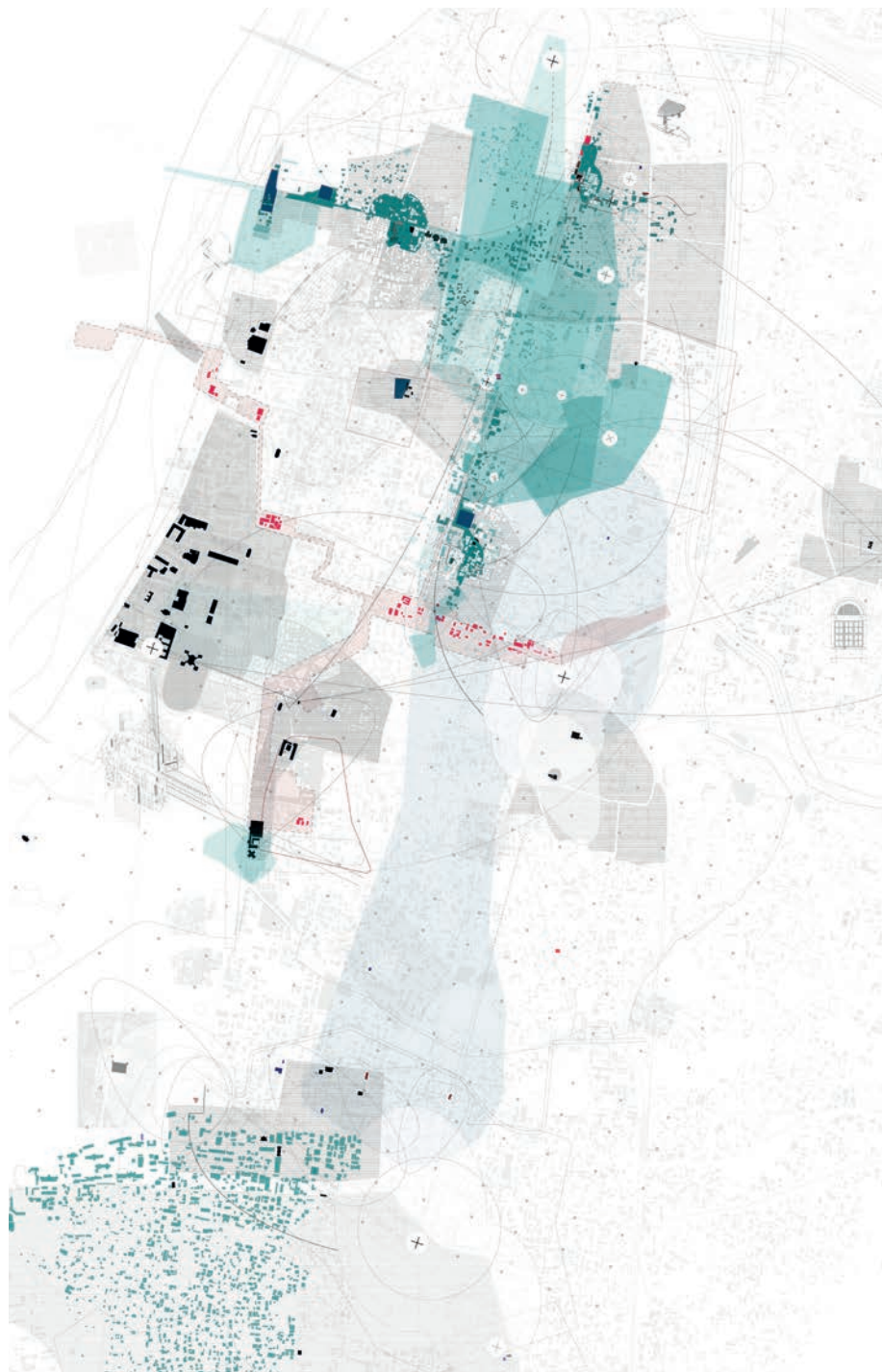
ADAM BROWN

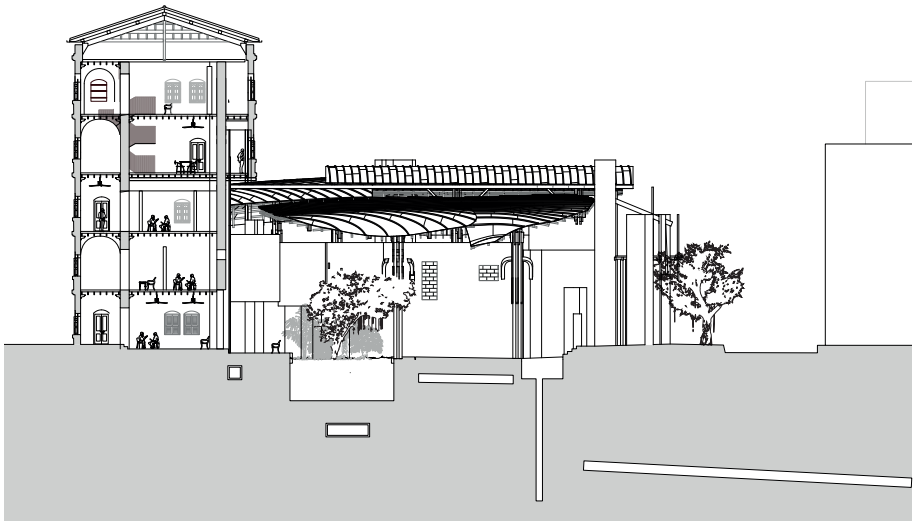
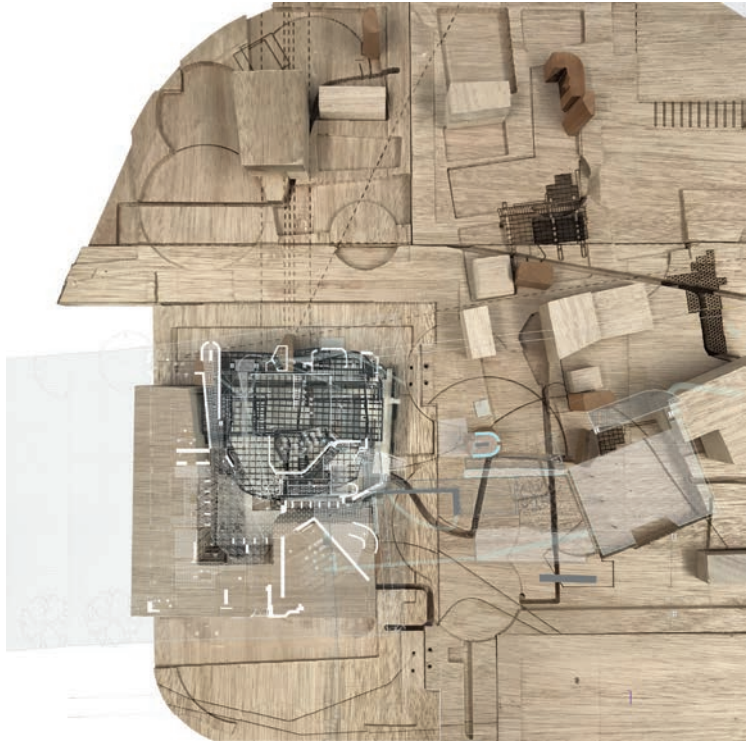
Kolkata appears to be in a state of barely stabilised wreckage. The governing powers of the city seem to act in a world of bureaucratic dryness. In an ocean of wetness, these powers seem unable to govern the contested territories between the private entities and the 'public' districts of the city.

This project identifies some of the contested territories between official power agencies and public spaces in the wards which they govern. The project plays between the literal wetness of urban fabric and the metaphorical dryness of the bureaucratic powers, tactically, literally and metaphorically, saturating local conditions of governance with performative wetness in the form of new public amenities.

Scripting these territories and their associated armatures, the new Architecture comes in the form of tectonic characters, derived from satirical sketches of Bhadrakol plays of the Bengal Renaissance, which mediate bureaucratic, cultural and water technologies together as interplaying aspects of component assemblages of the new democratic urban apparatus. These situations happen in 3 primary sites around the northern districts of the city.

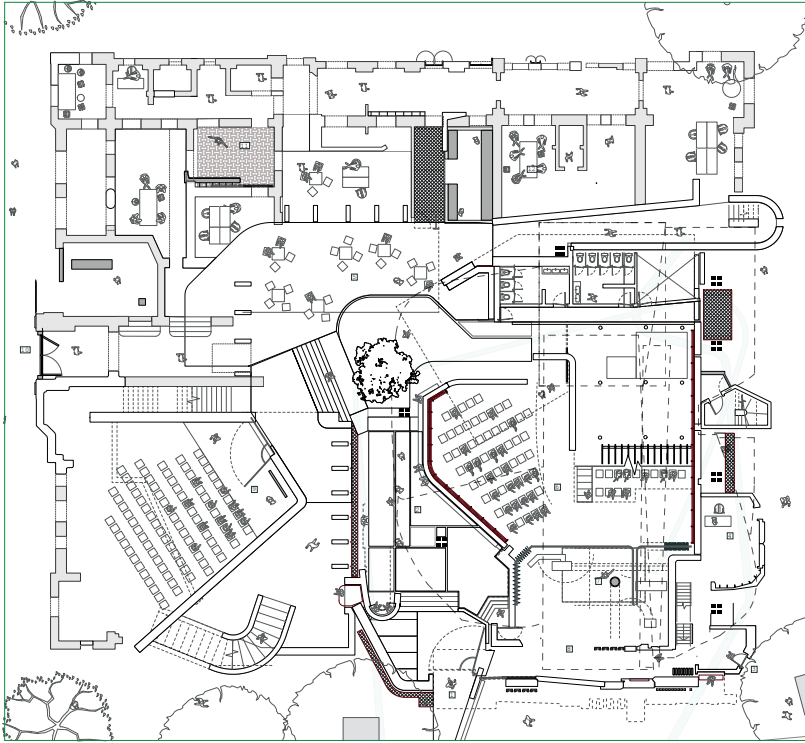
SUDS (surface water drainage systems) act as stages, at various scales, upon which the performative wetness soak into both the literal physical and the metaphorical cultural landscapes. The main figuration of the 'actors' are as clouds, vessels and satirical masking: various ways of playing out and mediating the newly negotiated territories.





2 | Territory Model

3 | Section though Courtyard



4 | Ground Floor Plan

5 | Aluminum Cast Ground Condition

6 | Plaster Cast Saturated Landscape

08

JUNGLE WRITING

NOOKS, MOATS AND THE RED OXIDE LINE

SABRINA SYED

"The context was a city in which things were being disinterred and dislodged from their moorings, and being washed ashore by an imaginary tide."¹

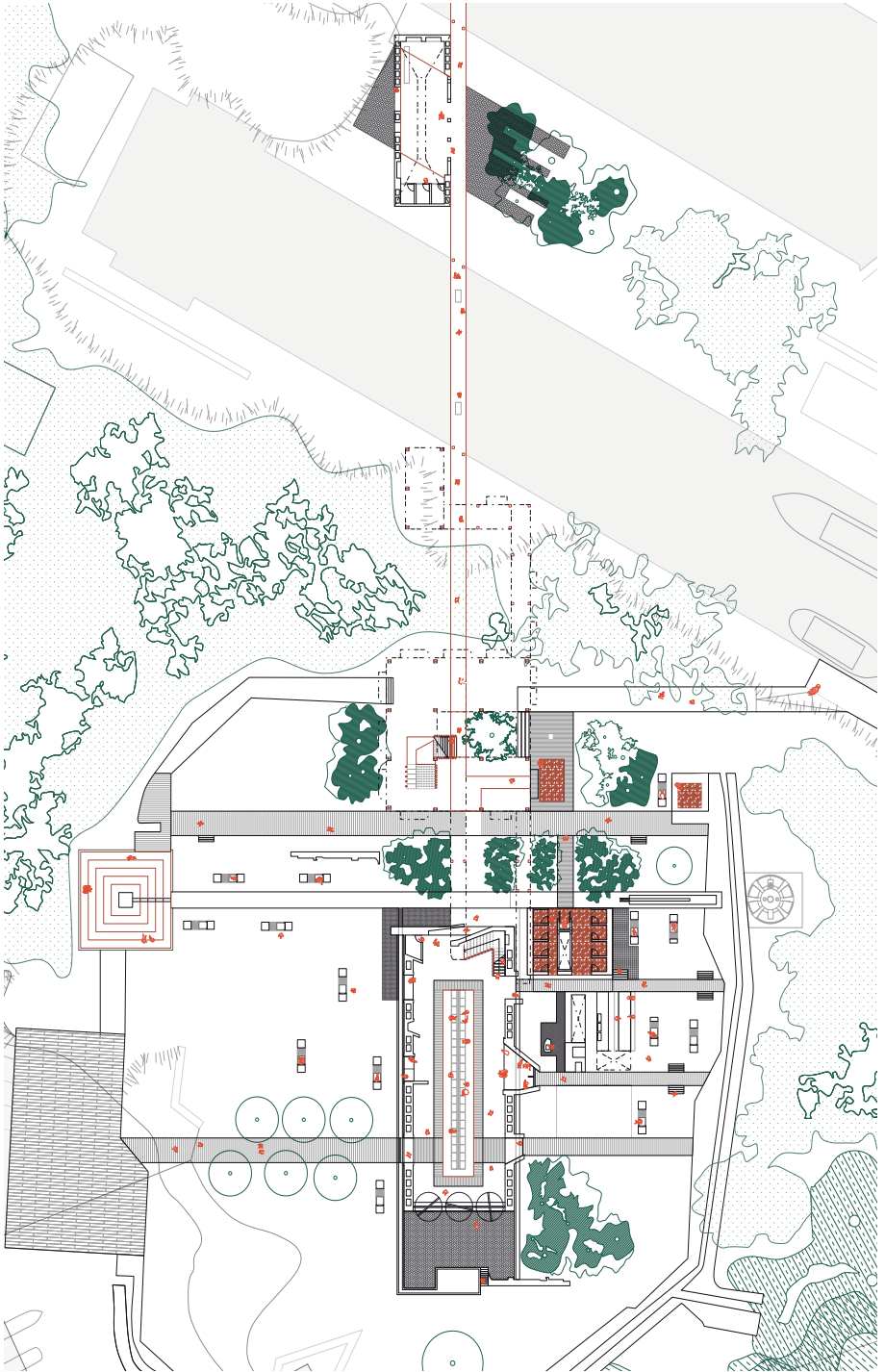
Amit Chaudhuri describes Calcutta, submerged and shifting in what we call an "Ocean of Wetness". The architecture he describes takes shape through the houses of the Bengali Bhadrolok – whose writings shaped the city. However, these dwellings and their architectures are disappearing, erased through combined forces of avarice and neglect. Kolkata's authorities have allowed these textured sites to be flattened. The languages of the "nook", the lush, polished red oxide "walkways" and the circumsepting "moats" are being replaced with yet more buildings of non-place. With them goes the intelligence they fostered, surrendering to erasure. Real-estate driven projects ignore the possibilities of working alongside Wetness, yet are inhabited by populations whose experiences are steeped in it.

The thesis seeks to reclaim Calcutta's narratives through architecture that works alongside both literal and "literary" Wetness. Using a vocabulary of architectural elements from the original "parent" dwelling, the proposals seek to develop them through a network of writing institutes that strengthen and develop buildings as "Ecosophic Objects". The Writer's Institute in Kidderpore, and the New Alipore Press each "hijack" a site of contested nature within the city and insert a new writing agency within it.

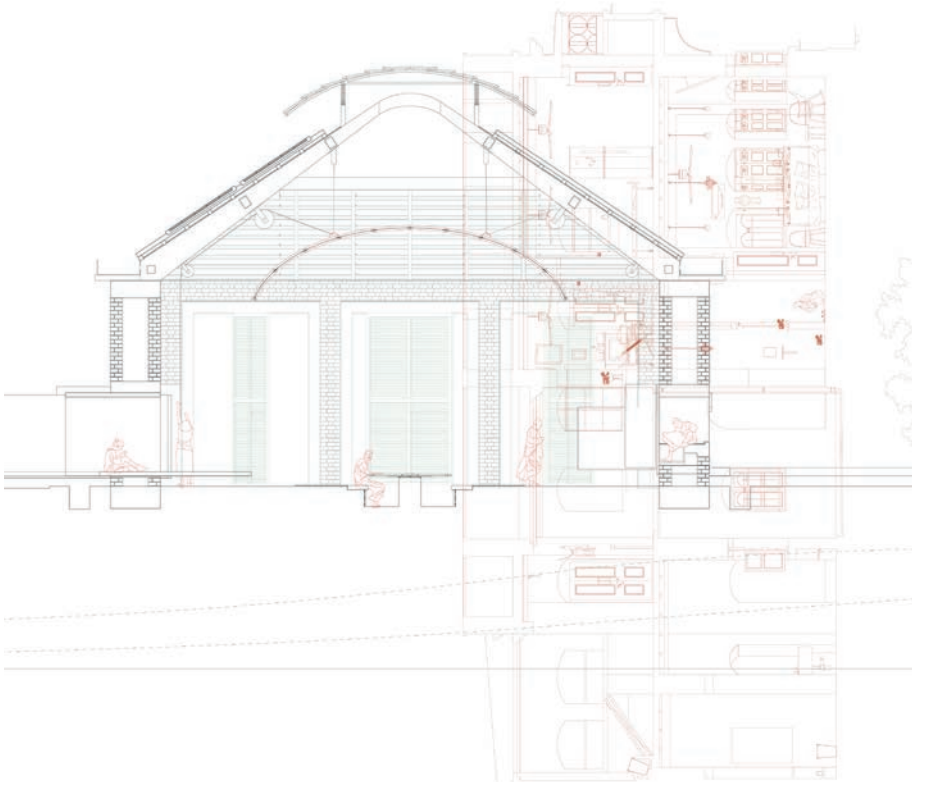
The sites also operate from a new "second nature", guided by the thoughts of Dilip da Cunha and Anuradha Mathur in 'The Jungle's Call': in order to create "wetness architecture"² and reject the land-water binary, the role of the jungle as an existing condition of Calcutta is revealed again, both literally and metaphorically. Therefore, in each agency, there is a careful consideration of when the jungle is architecture and the architecture is jungle. Each institute is a clearing in its own jungle. These "jungle" territories act as new public programs which literally and metaphorically re-write themselves into the city's urban consciousness.

1 | Amit Chaudhuri, "Calcutta: Two Years In The City" (London: Union Books, 2013).

2 | Dilip da Cunha, The Jungle's Call, *Harvard Design Magazine*, No.45, 2018.







2 | Endangered Red Oxide in the Ocean of Wetness , TLML

3 | Mapping Languages of Nookishness are Languages of Bengalingness

4 | Mahogany Model

09

CRAFTING THE LIMINAL

A CLAY SCAFFOLD FOR CALCUTTA'S PAVEMENTS

ANDREW CHAVET | KATE LE MASURIER

An irony exists between the two thresholds of Calcutta's chaotic pavements.

On the kerb side the 'Inside-Out' inexhaustible activity of streetside commerce spills out onto the road: textiles, woodcraft, pottery and metalwork, a hive of sustainable handmade production gives hint to the wider intricate economic wonder of Bengal.

On the building side - behind the saris and sandals in *adda on rawks*¹ - a backdrop of peeling plaster, exposed brick and engulfing plantlife has left the once 'City of Palaces' as an architecture in decay. At the mercy of the 'Oceans of Wetness,' humidity and moisture are returning the city's soft clay structures to the bed of the Hooghly.

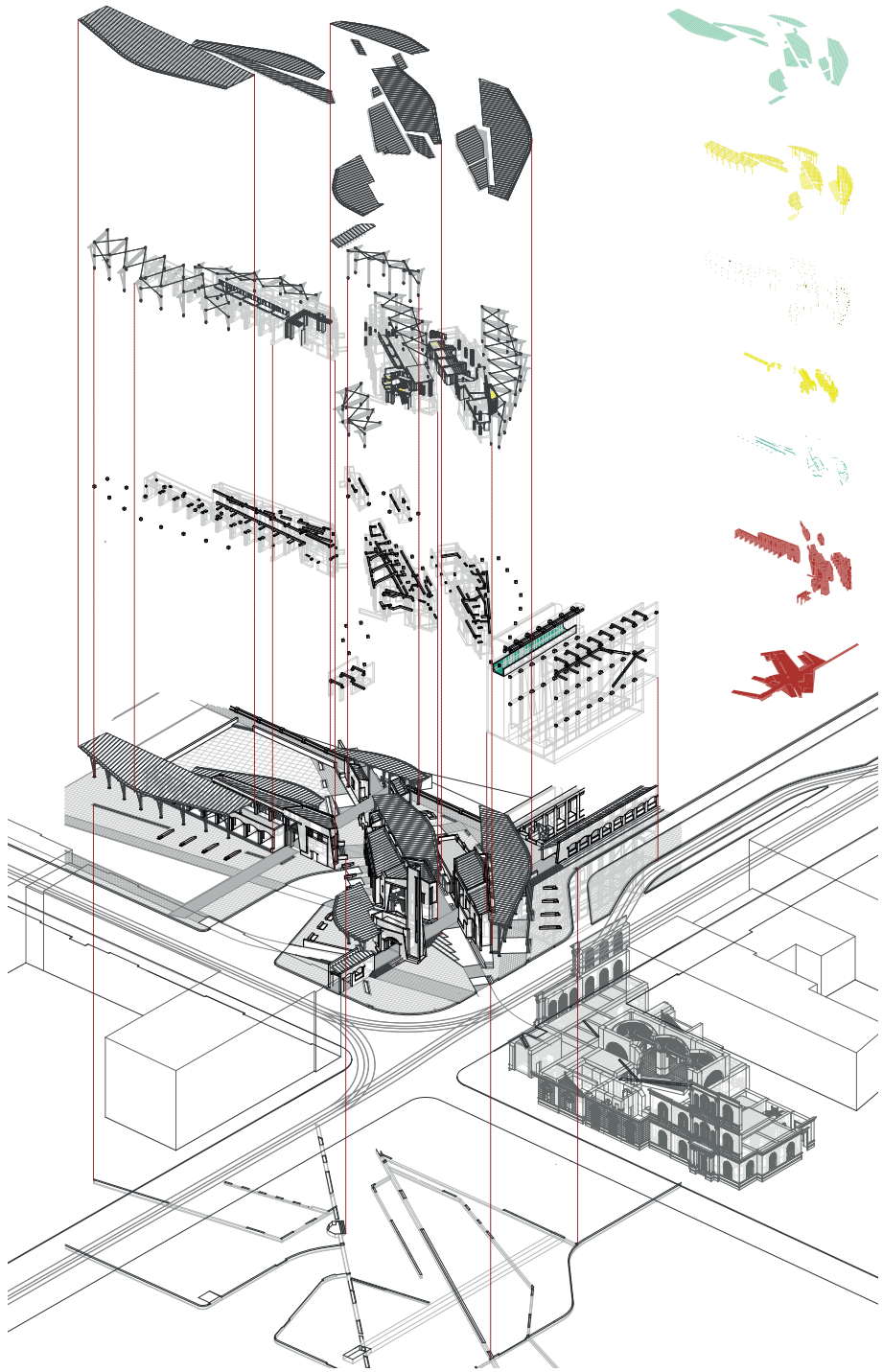
This juxtaposition of handcraft potential and urban neglect, however, offers a perfect opportunity for speculative architectural policy. Having lagged India's epicentres of economic growth, Calcutta - the sub-continent's cultural-intellectual capital - can avoid the acontextual construction practices that have revolutionised swathes of the country's re-urbanising cities. Instead, like a contemporary 'City in Evolution',

Calcutta's existing architecture can be understood as the scaffold for the next:

a scaffold that encourages site by site specificity, where *bhavan* are part retained, part renovated, part replaced, crafting a city in flux; a scaffold that advocates a climatic sensibility, reliant on tanks, butts and channels as the *parti-pris* of wetness design; a scaffold where no drawn masterplan takes command but rather supports an economy of interdependent small-scale suppliers and craftspeople; a scaffold whose unique locality preserves Calcutta's urban identity and celebrates the zest of the city's pavement culture.

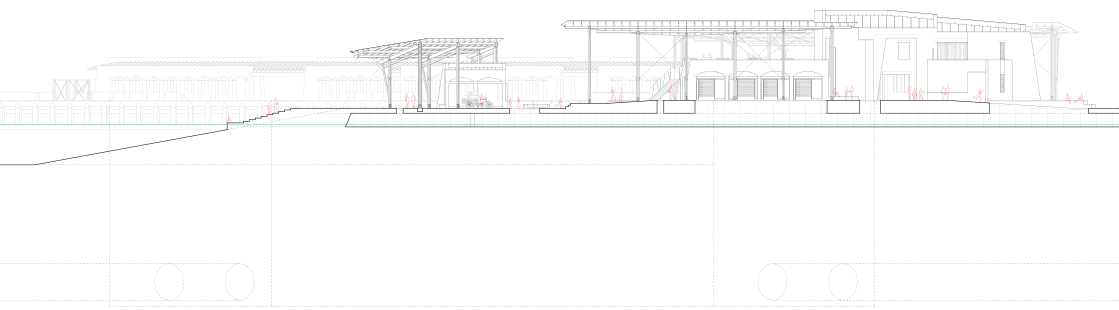
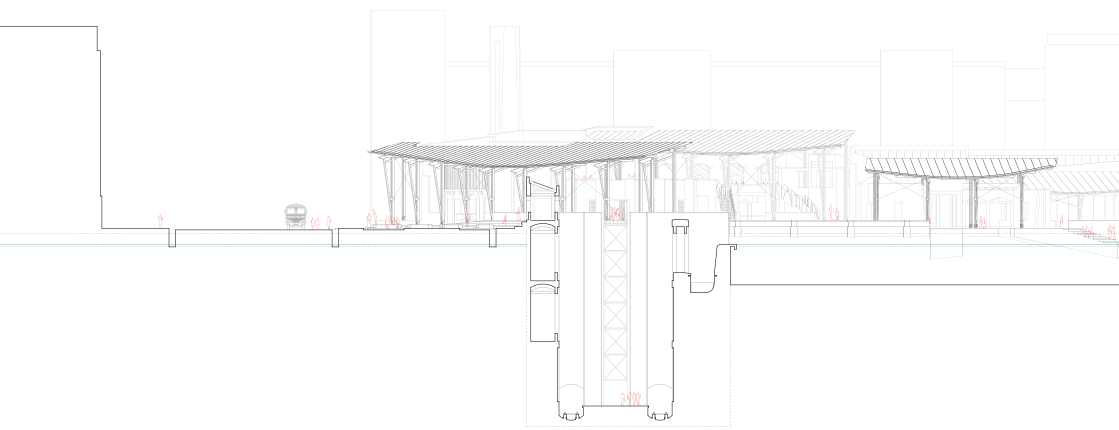
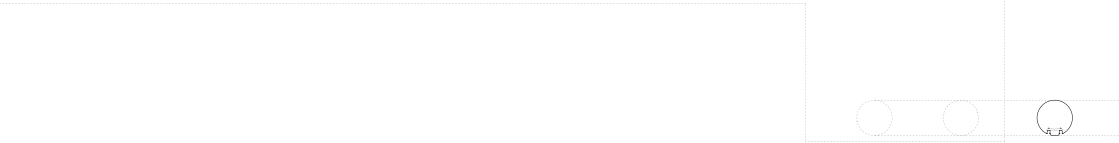
1 Wiszniewski, "Much Adda About Everything" p.4, in this volume.

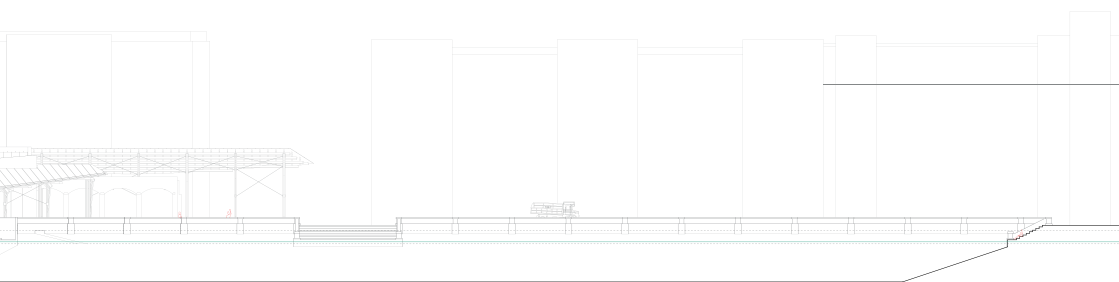
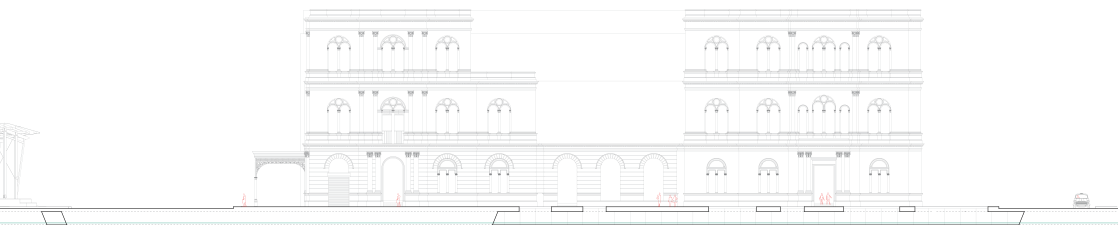






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- 2 | Kit of Parts for a Building Site
 - 3 | Short Section through the Micro Clay Scaffold
 - 4 | Craft Hub Pavement-Scape





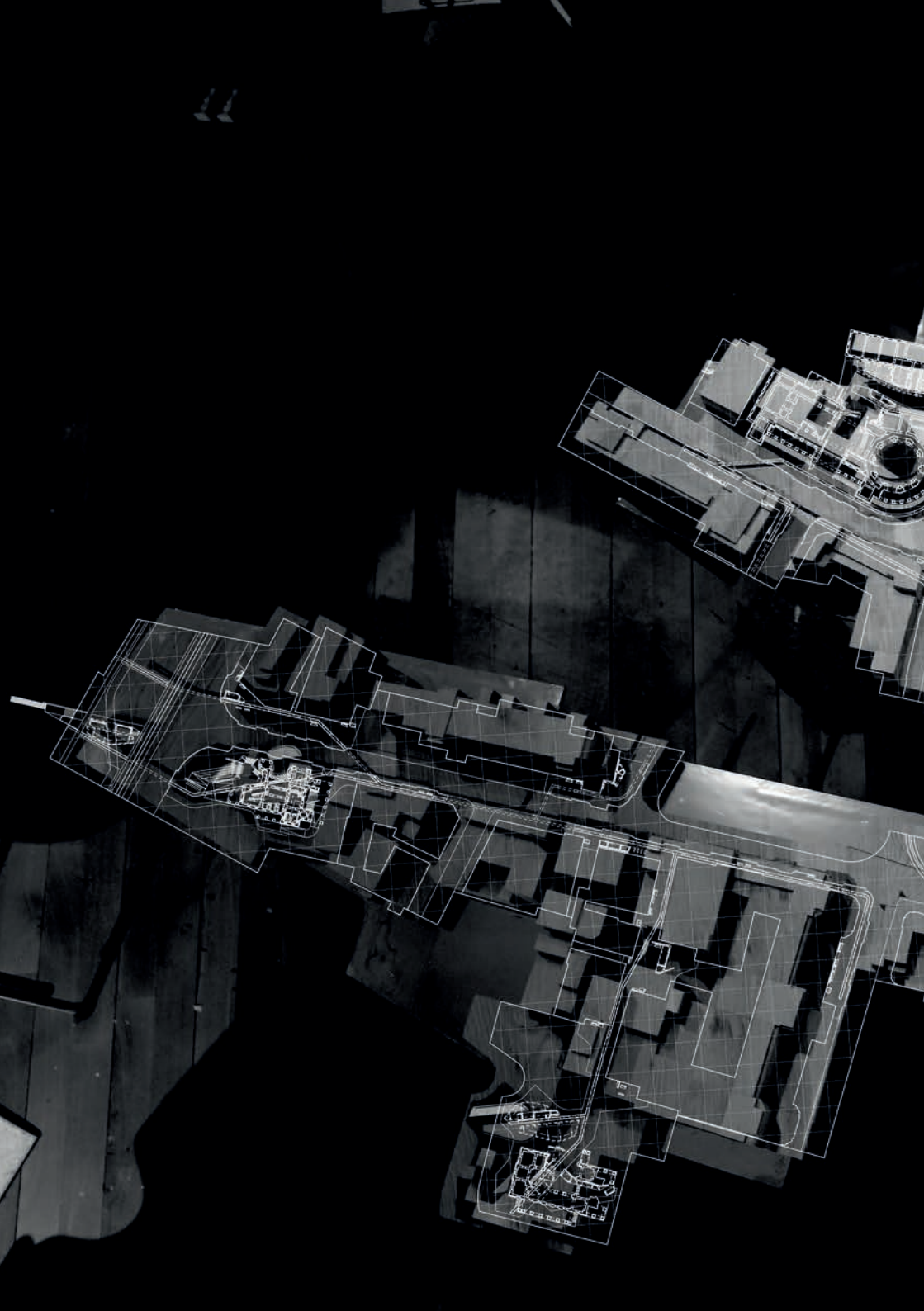




8 | Within a City Scaffold

9-11 | Where Calcutta's Craft Culture Thrives

12 | (overleaf) Fragments and Fissures Channel the Wetness





10

PROJECT MAYHEM

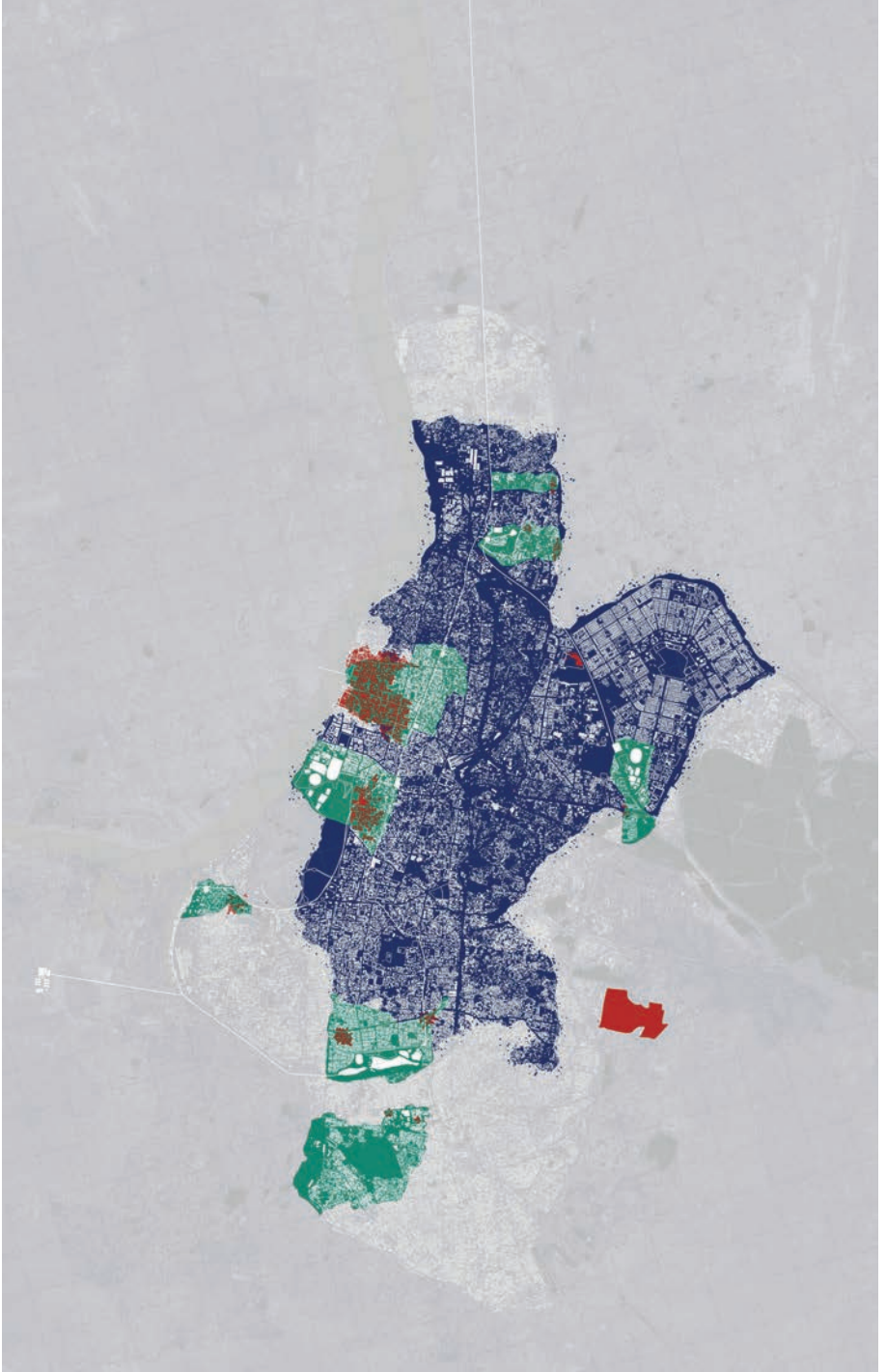
ON THE CUSP OF TALLAH

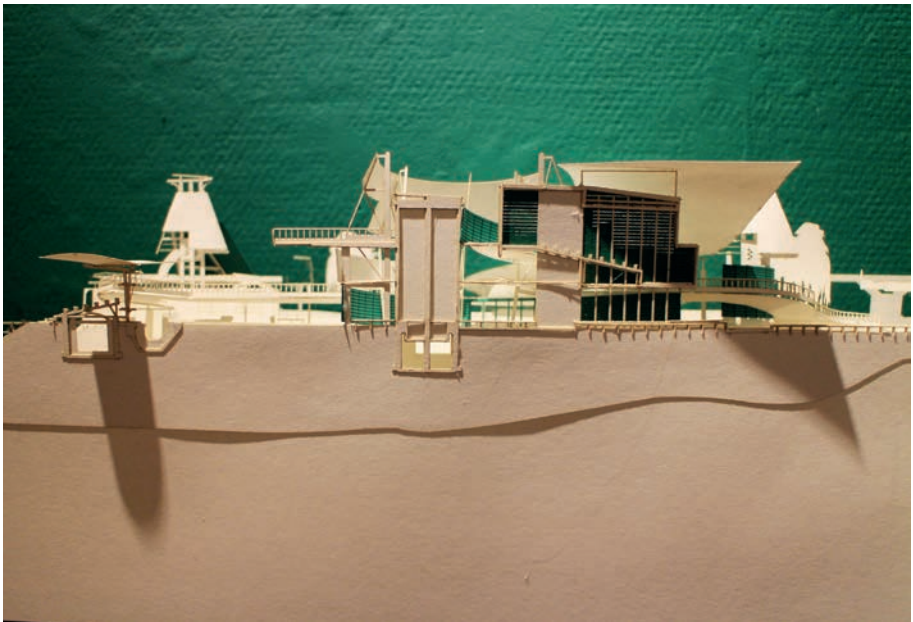
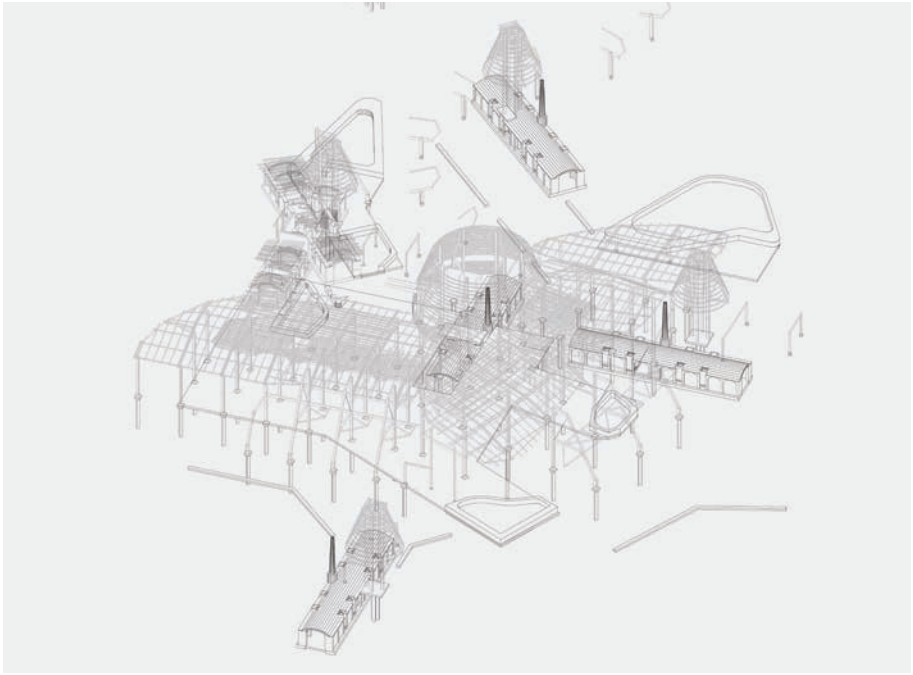
CORRIE GRAHAM | MICHAEL POSSO

Boat Clubs tend to convey elitist views, sub-urban mentality, notions of wealth and exclusivity. Kolkata seems to encourage urban infrastructure built upon bourgeois amenities: social clubs and other privileged spaces are linked together as series of buoys floating on a surface of now fragmented colonial class-formed territoriality. In the South of Kolkata, *The Lake Mall* creates a distinction between the “up”-market measure of privilege in the upstairs shopping mall and the “down”-market Ganga measures present among the fishmonger folk at street level. In the North of Kolkata, the *Tallah Tank* echoes and represents parallel water distribution inequalities of Kolkata more directly through its re-appropriation, dominance and measure of nature.

Project Mayhem is an urban garden project that seeks to disturb current water and Ganga relations. The Rabindra Sarobar Lake presents a fecund ground for tactical rupture. A rowing track is proposed for the artificial lake. It seeks to look beyond the handicap of water through aquatectural thresholds (*Ganga’s Cast of Gags*), using various social measures to rupture and redistribute privileged measure.

A series of kilns will re-appropriate the man-made garden ground (that was once swamp) to *Democratic Huts*, abiding by the precision of a rowing track. Urban Shuttering will provide a transition between Ganga measure and the conditions demanded by social measures. *Ganga’s Cast of Gags* will reveal a new garden biopolis to initiate a different *Boat Club* mentality for the benefit of all folk.



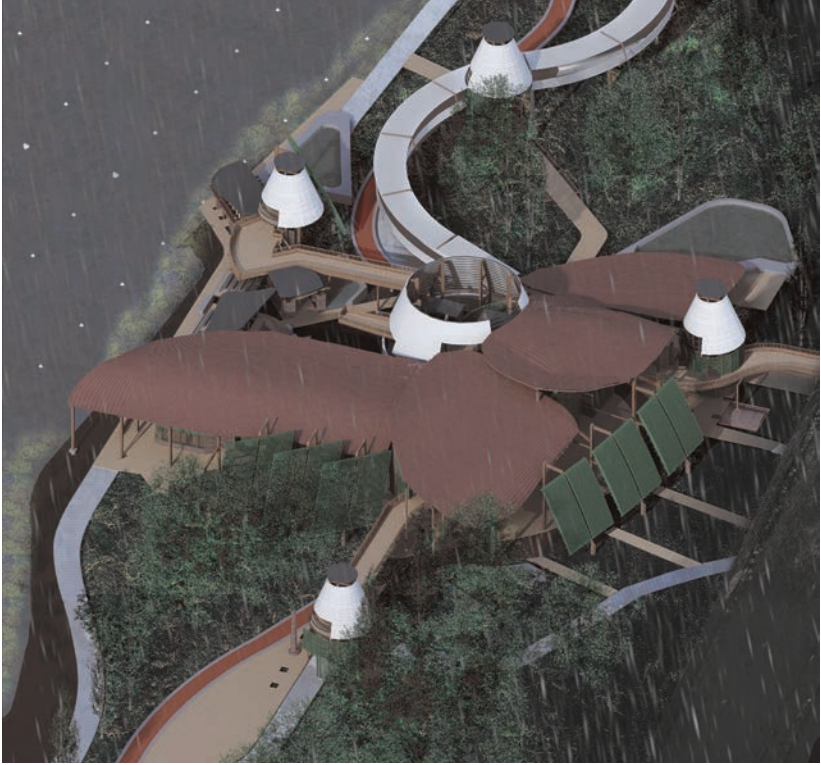


2 | Auction House Ground Re-appropriation Tactics isometric

3 | Auction House Sectional Paper Model



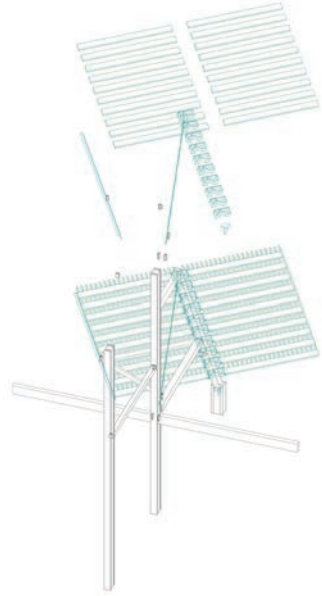
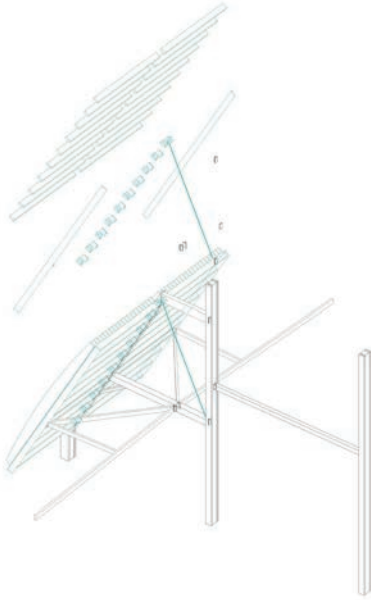
4 | Series of Enzymatic Territories, Rabindra Sarobar Lake
5 | Crafting a Liminal Edge



6 | Auction House Rendered Isometric

7 | Auction House Water Table Model

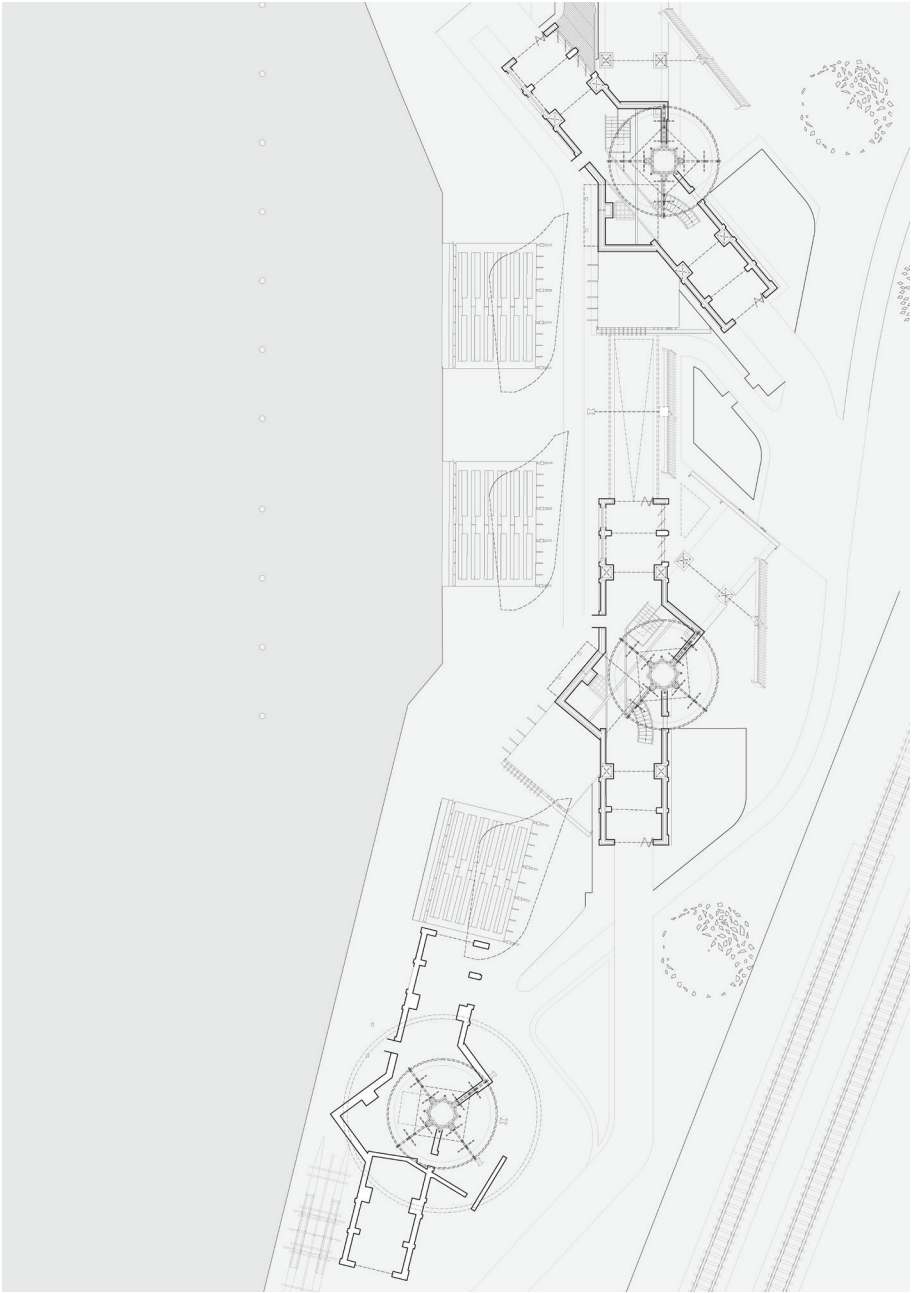






11 | Exhibition Water Table
12 | Auction House Fish Market







Idols on Kashi Mitra Gash Street | Kumartuli

January 2018 | Daana Bolot



11

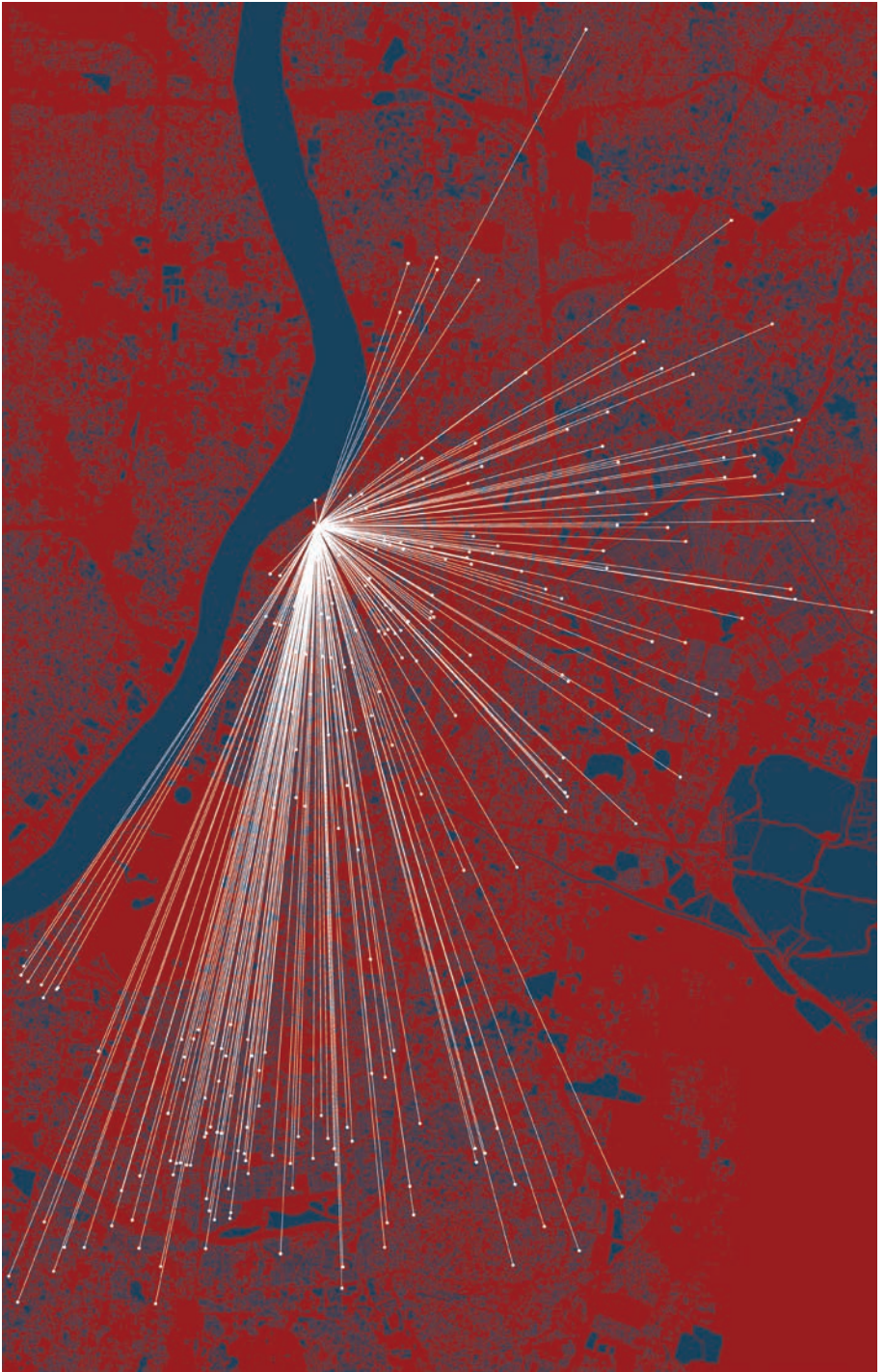
MMASS-ING THE SUPER-NATURAL

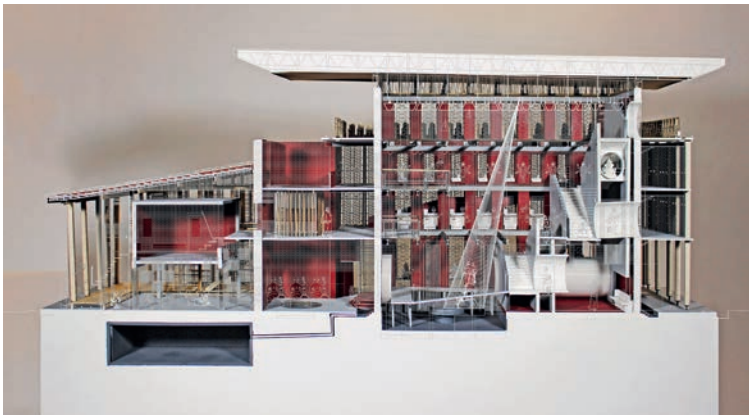
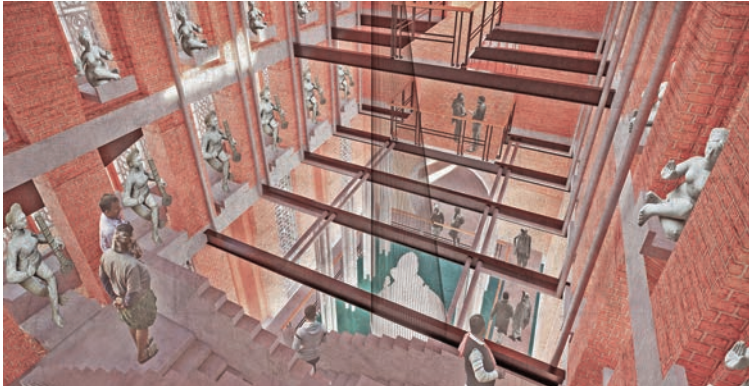
MODELING, MOULDING, ASSEMBLING, SHADOWING, SECTIONING

LIU WEI

Kumartuli is the cradle of the Gods in North Calcutta. The clay made idols in Kumartuli are one of the oldest surviving handicrafts of India. The artists here are the people who bring the supernatural power of the gods down to the earth. However, contrary to its important position, Kumartuli is facing environmental, economic and social problems. In order to alleviate these problems, this project proposes to elevate the place in two ways: first, by enhancing the recognition of Kumartuli as a specific civic amenity of gallery and workshops for both residents and visitors; and second, by extending other social amenities across Kumartuli.

Always borne in mind is the importance of the legacy and ambience of Kumartuli. Based on the intense measurement of its special character, architectural recalibration brings new means to rethink architecture. The gallery and workshop is based upon existing “supernatural” processes found in the everyday workshops of Kumartuli. The new architecture accommodates the flux of Monsoon, it mediates the wet and dry processes, it *Models* space as the idol makers model flesh, it *Moulds* clay and other materials of the idol makers into architecture, it *Assembles* parts and programme as clay body, each part *Shadows* others and respects a *Sectional* disposition locally and across Calcutta clay body-scape. It is both Epic and Filmic: experience is serial and episodic. Other amenities, like bus stop, port, Kurmartuli playground and the potter’s home further echo these super-natural relationships.

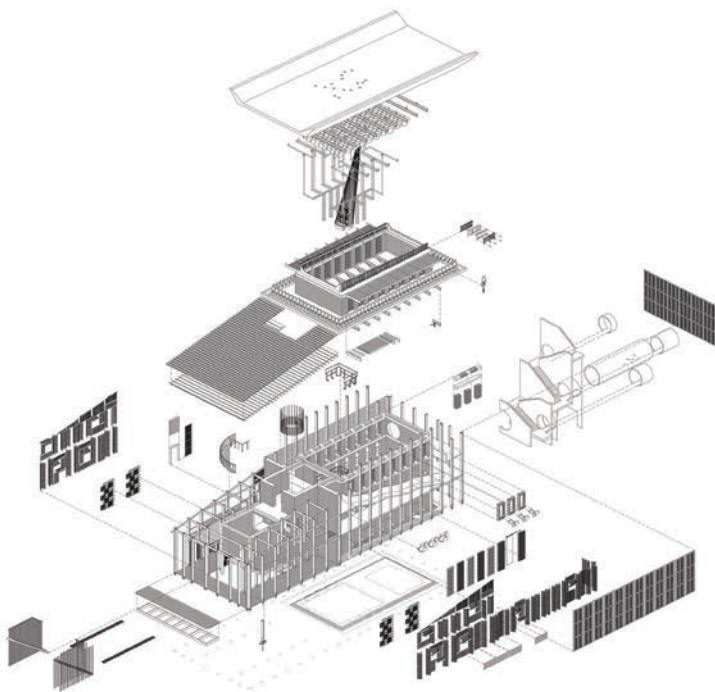
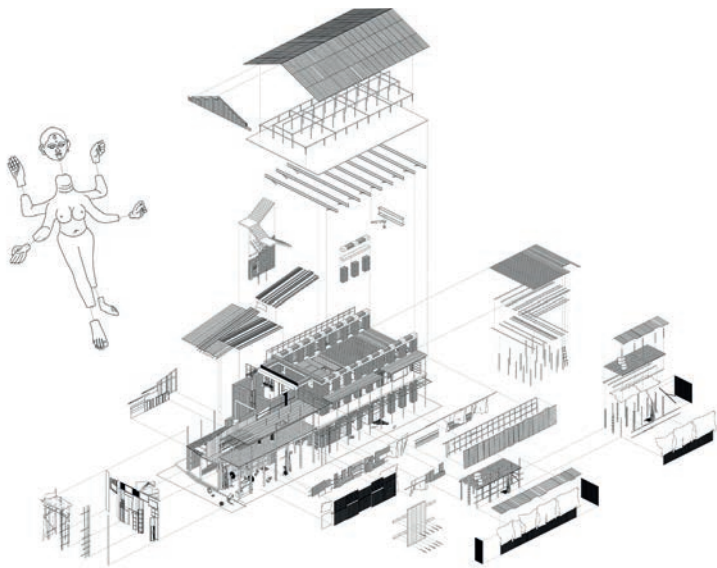




2 | Kumartuli Gallery Exterior

3 | Kumartuli Gallery Interior

4 | Section through Kumartuli Gallery



5 | Exploded Axonometric of Original Workshop

6 | Exploded Axonometric of Kumartuli Gallery

12

THE EDGE OF THE VESSEL

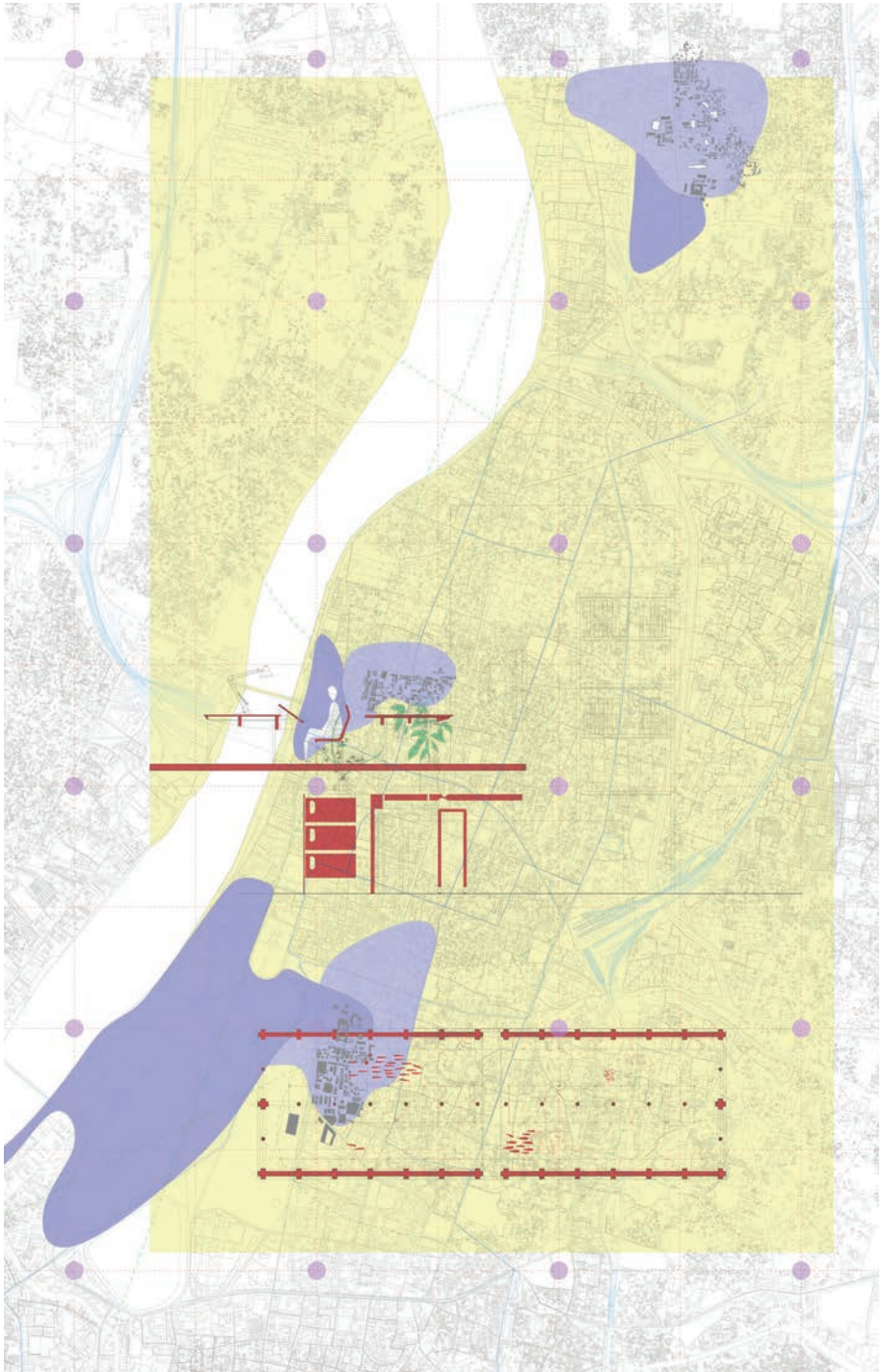
GBEKE AKINKUGBE

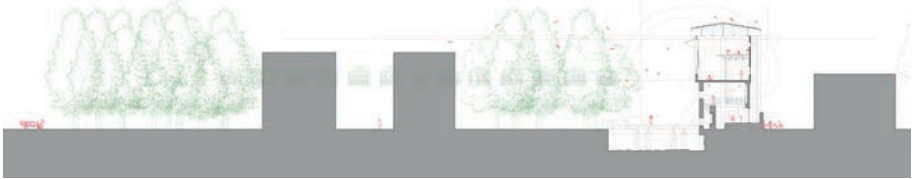
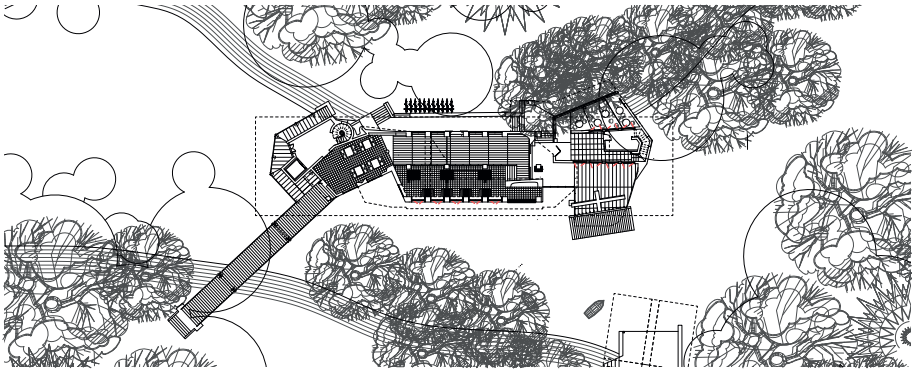
In reading a city like Calcutta, one can get lost in the multi-layered frenzy of its ecology. It is key to note that the way the city operates can be read through the study of concentrated clusters.

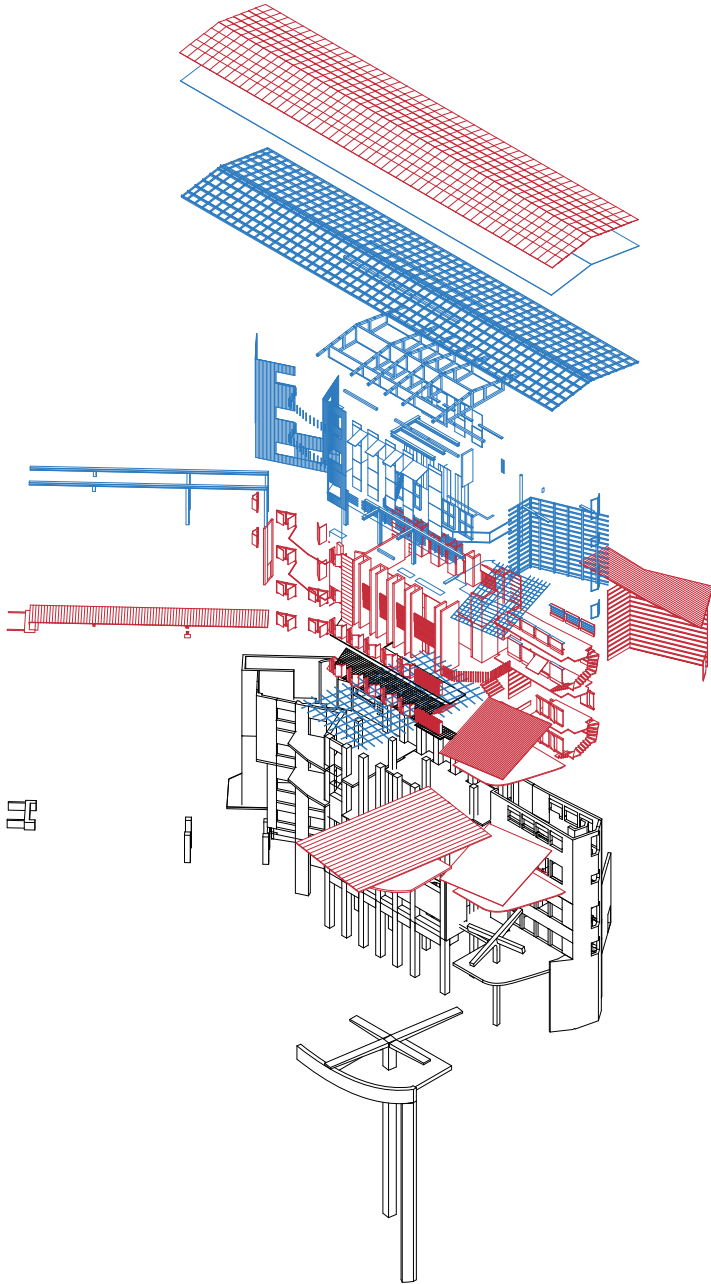
Such an example can be found in the meatpacking hall of the S.S. Hogg New Market: where animals, children, butchers, motorcycles and other amenities co-exist within close proximity to each other. The hall is an “ark”, sitting within a landscape of the market, where various vessels interact with it on a daily basis. The ark in this project is paramount in reading the architecture of the city, where each building/individual is a vessel, sifting through the landscape of Calcutta.

Judging the effectiveness of each vessel is hinged on its hybridism and its accommodation of the elements within its ecology. In trying to create a new architecture (ark), it is important to consider Calcutta as not the dehydrated flat table that it is, but as a layered ocean which must be assailed through programmatic and tectonic considerations. The building/Ark created in this project serves as a point of analysis in which to investigate tectonic, political and ecological relationships.

The methodology of this research started with an investigation into the relationship between Rabindranath Tagore and his correspondence with Patrick Geddes. This close, interpersonal examination allowed for research not only into Calcutta as a physical space but a mental one, grappling with its colonial past and bureaucratic present, in the hopes for a more democratic future within those cracks.





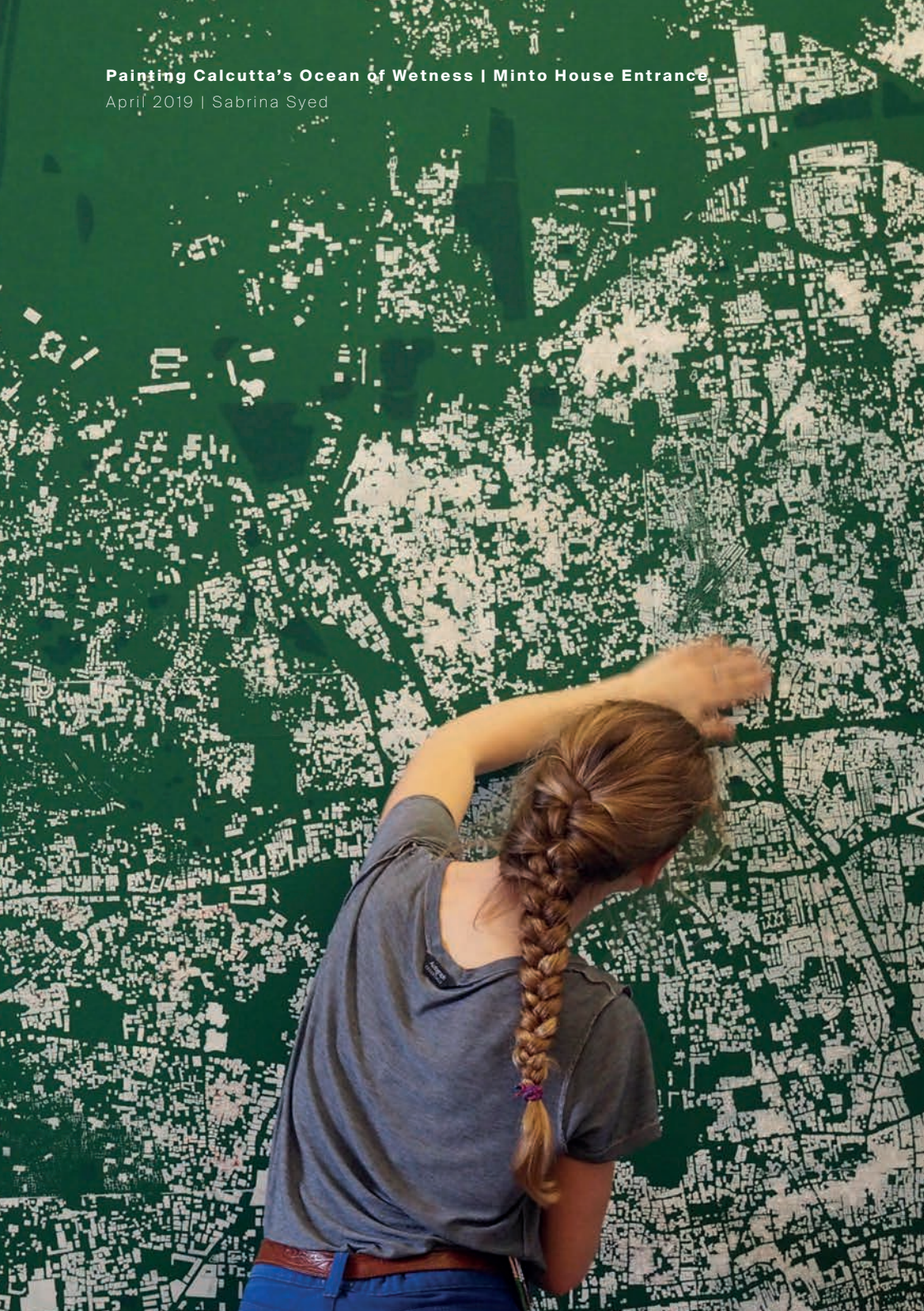


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- 2 | The Ark in Action
 - 3 | Ground Floor Plan
 - 4 | Short Section
 - 5 | Kit of Parts



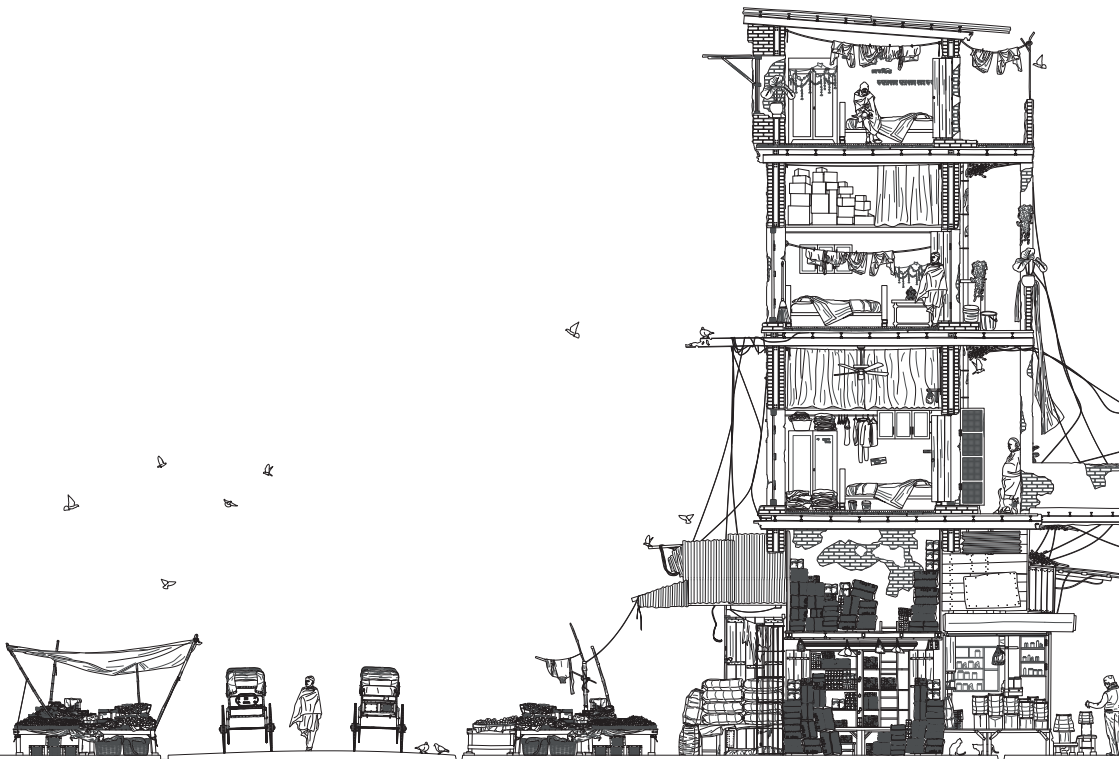
Painting Calcutta's Ocean of Wetness | Minto House Entrance

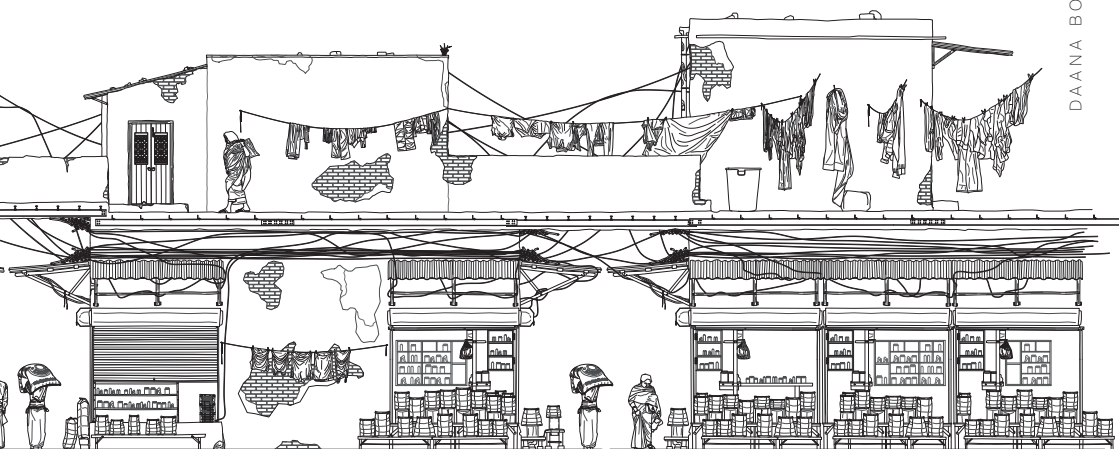
April 2019 | Sabrina Syed



MEASURED INTENSITIES

SITE SURVEYS AROUND CALCUTTA





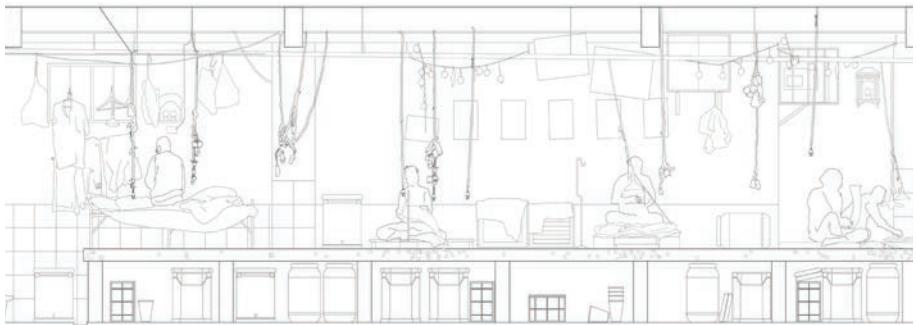
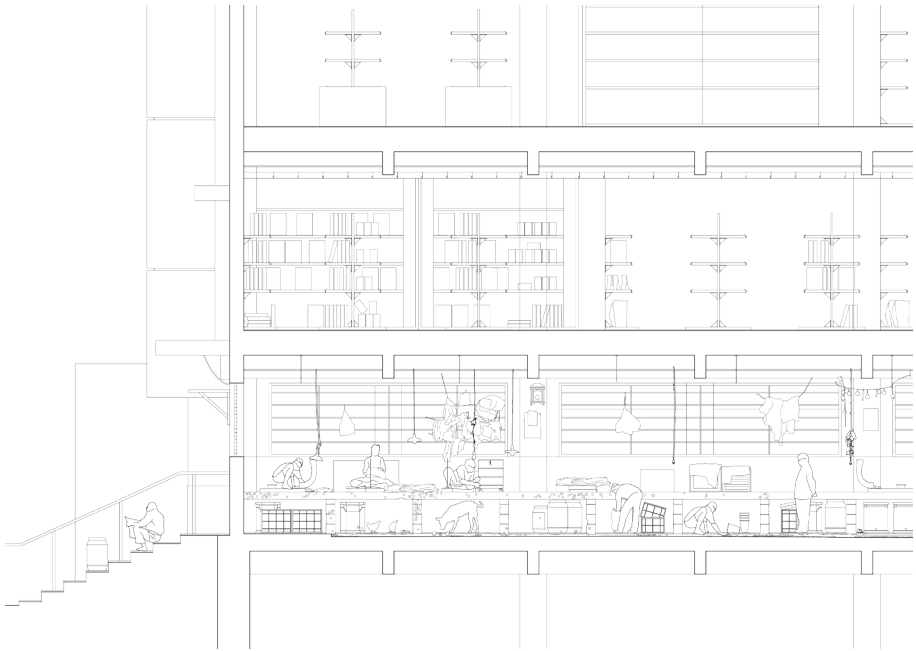
Section through Kidderpore Market

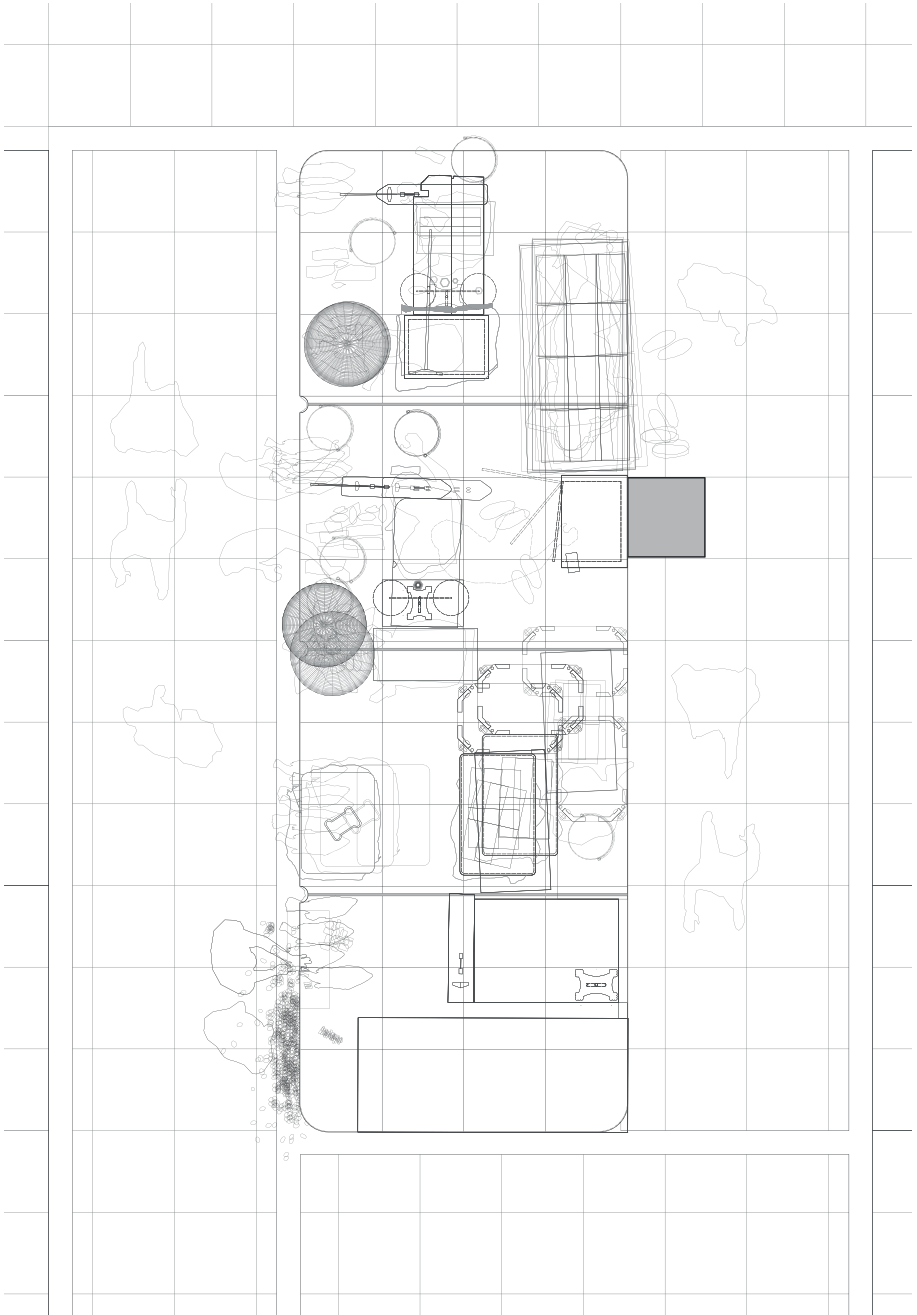
10

LAKE MALL FISH MARKET

LAKE MALL

CORRIE GRAHAM | MICHAEL POSSO





- 1 | Section through part of the Lake Mall
- 2 | Detail Section through part of the Fish Market
- 3 | Fish Market through the Day

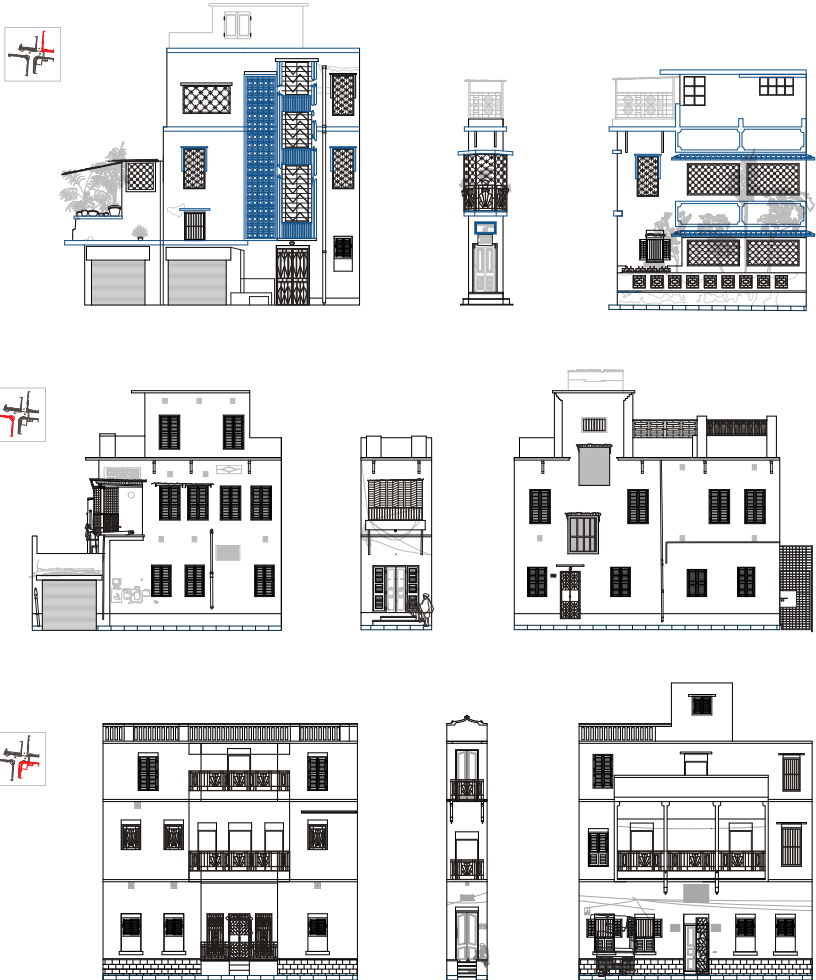


06 | 07 | 08

200Q, SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJEE RD

KALIGHAT

FINDLAY MC FARLANE | ADAM BROWN | SABRINA SYED



1 | Street Corner Plan
2 -4 | Street elevations



On the Doorstep on Circular Canal | Seth Bagan

January 2018 | Daana Bolot

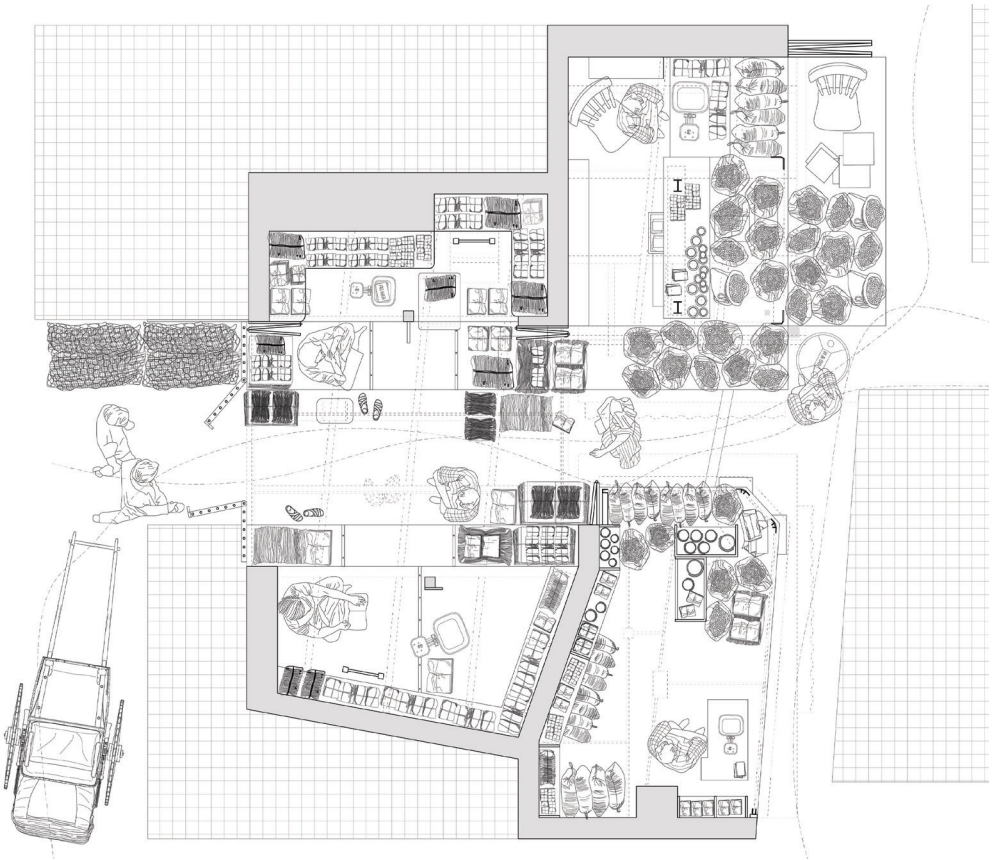
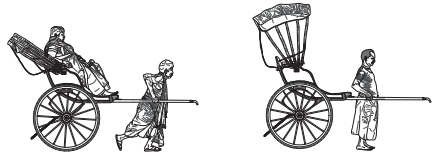


02 | 03

KIDDERPORE MARKET

KHIDIRPUR

RUOTIAN WANG | DAANA BOLOT



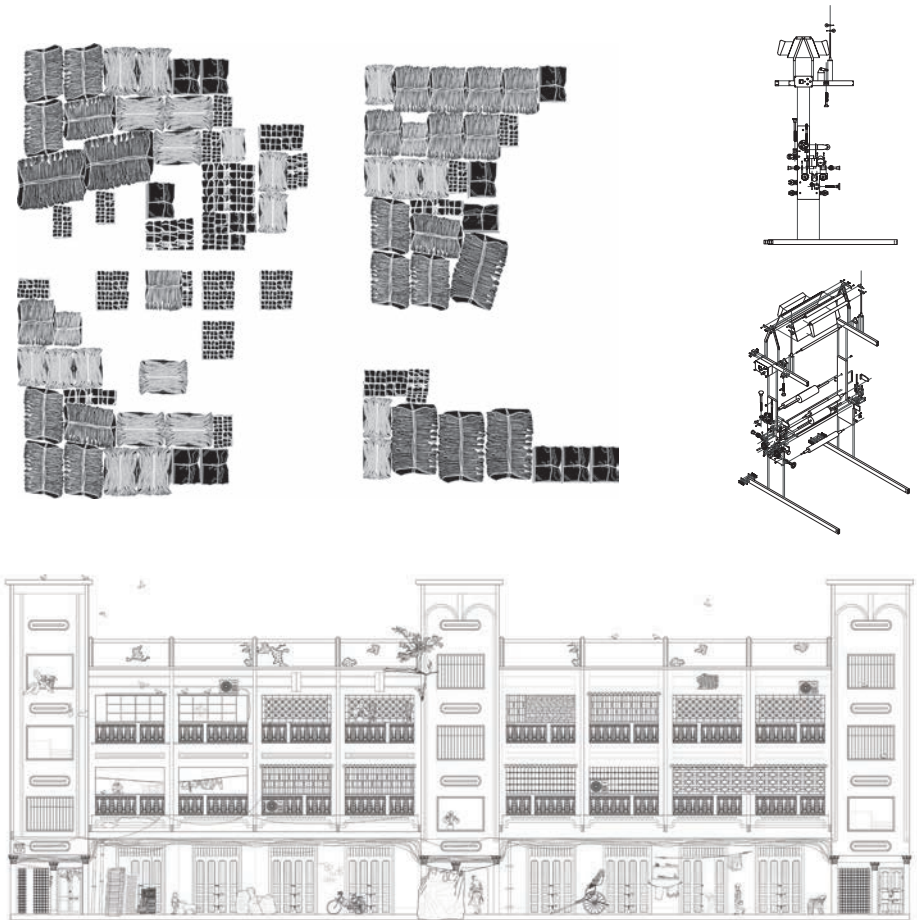
1 | Side Elevation of a Man Pulling a Rickshaw

2 | Kidderpore Market Entrance

539 RABINDRA SARANI

SOVABAZAR

RUOTIAN WANG | DAANA BOLOT



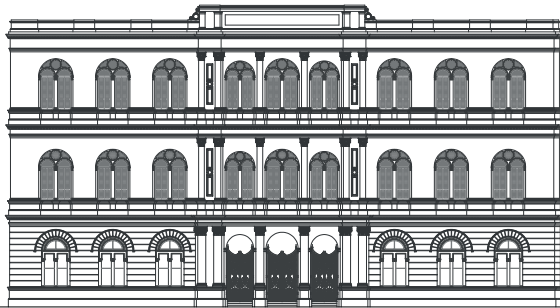
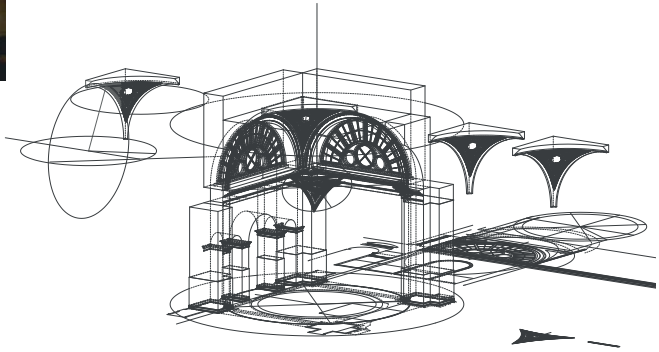
- 1 | Taxonomy of Wetness
- 2 | Exploded Axonometric of a Printing Press
- 3 | 539 Rabindra Sarani Street Elevation

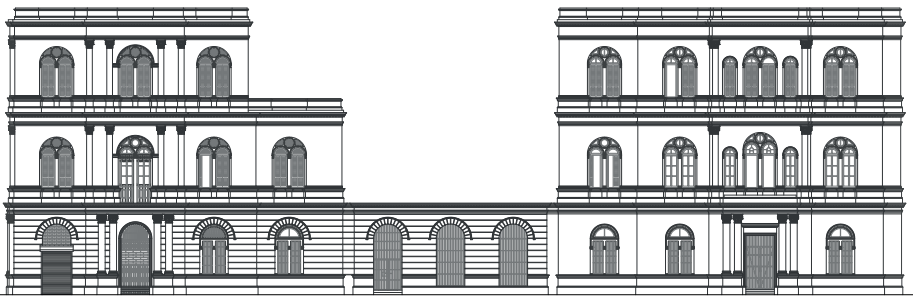
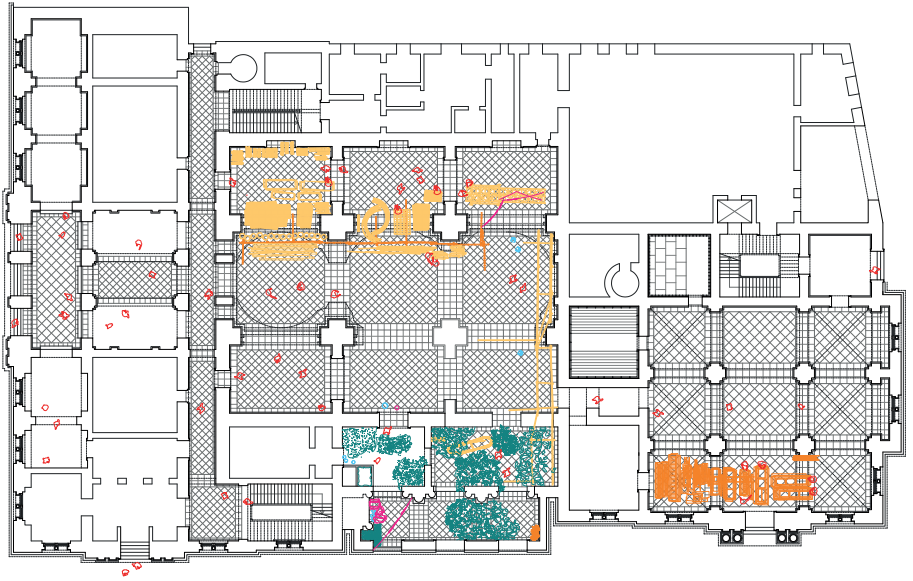
09

CURRENCY BUILDING, MANGOE LANE

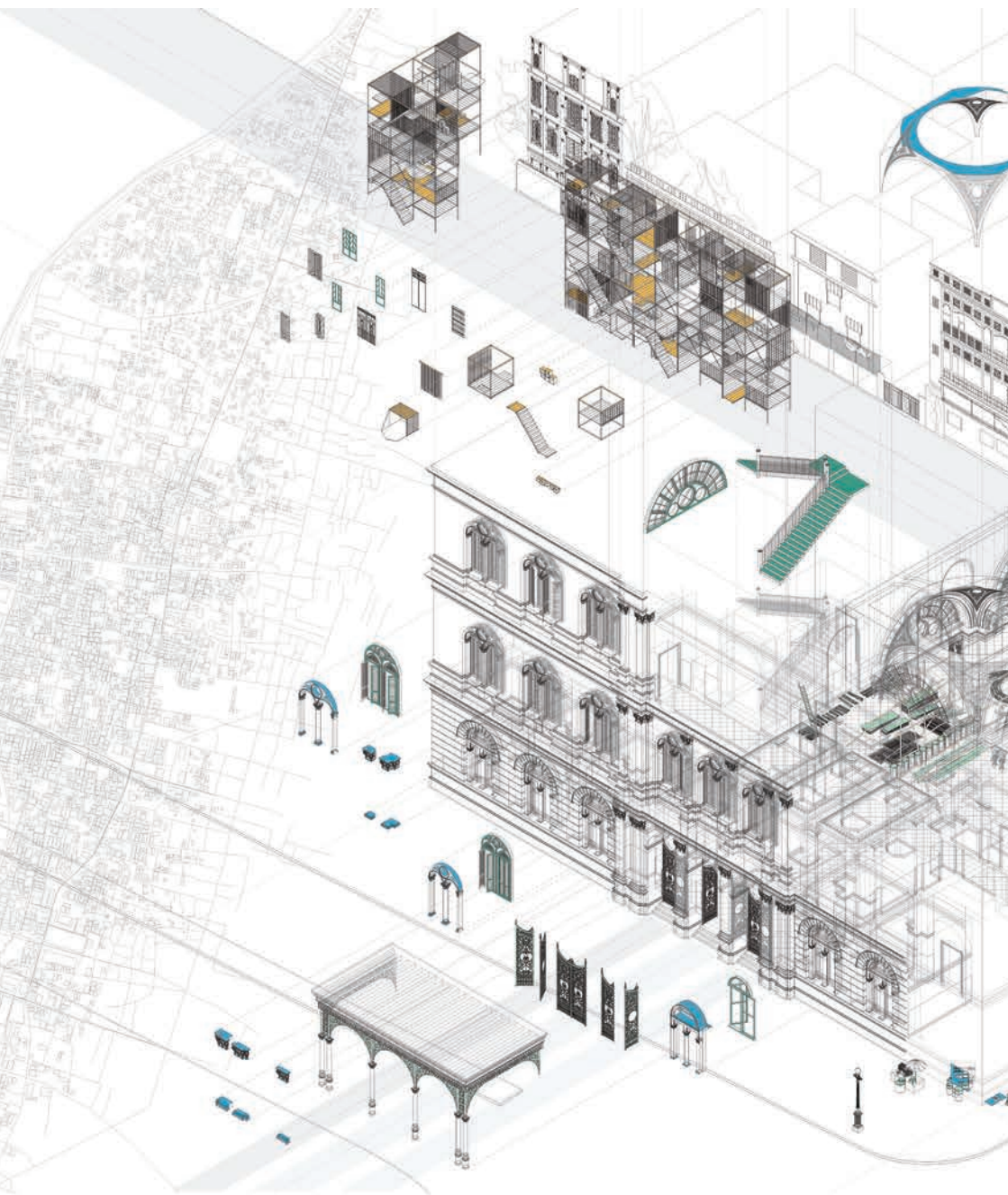
B.B.D. BAGH

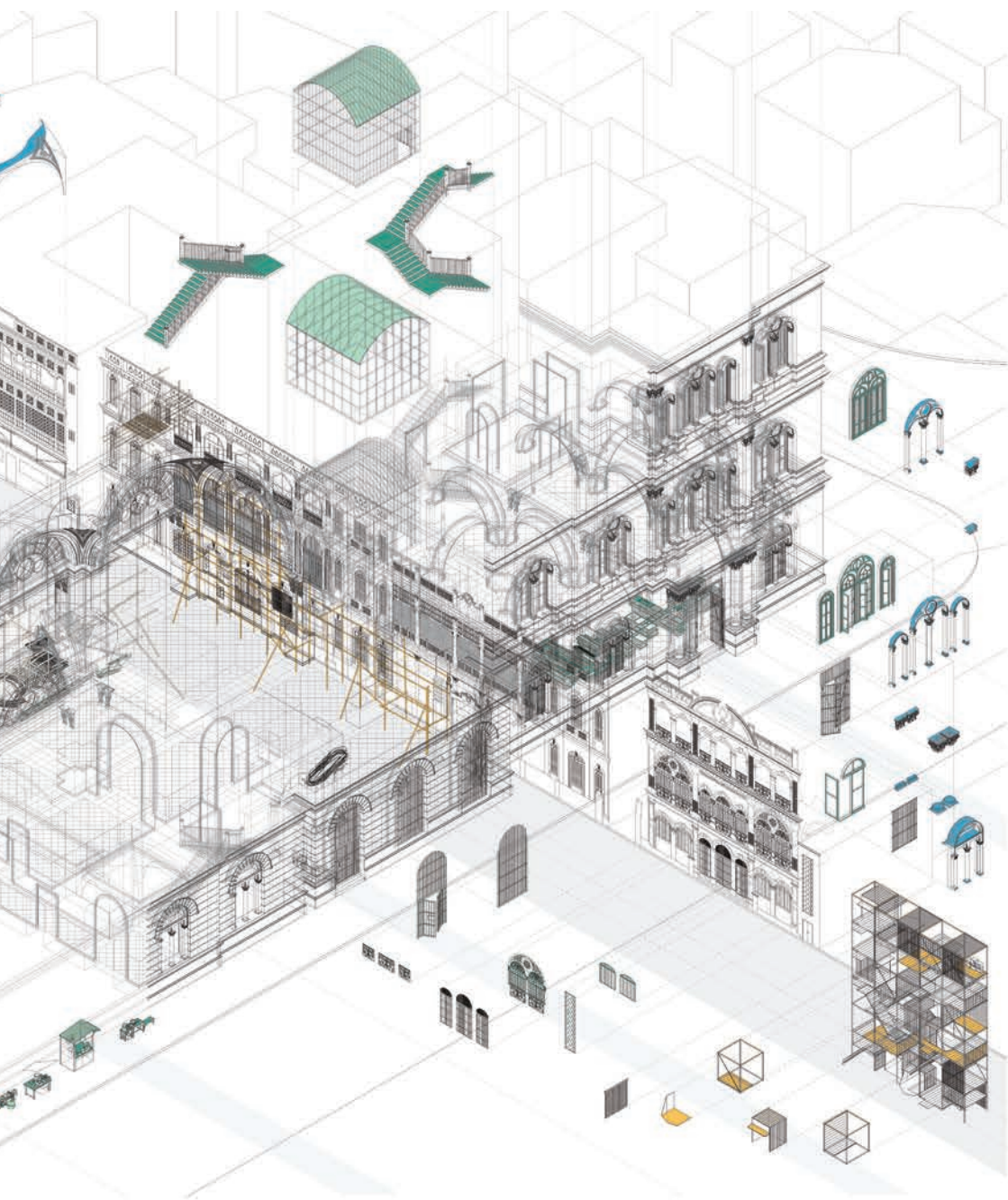
ANDREW CHAVET | KATE LE MASURIER





- 1 | Axonometric Study of a Pendentive
- 2, 4 | Front and Side Elevations of the Currency Building
- 3 | Ground Floor Plan of the Currency Building, with *Kutchi* Elements in Colour
- 5 | (Overleaf) Exploded Axonometric of the Currency Building and Abhay Mitra Street







New Market | Sen Gupta Sarani

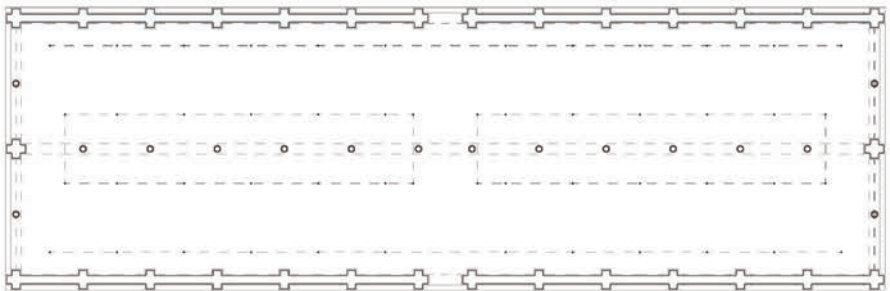
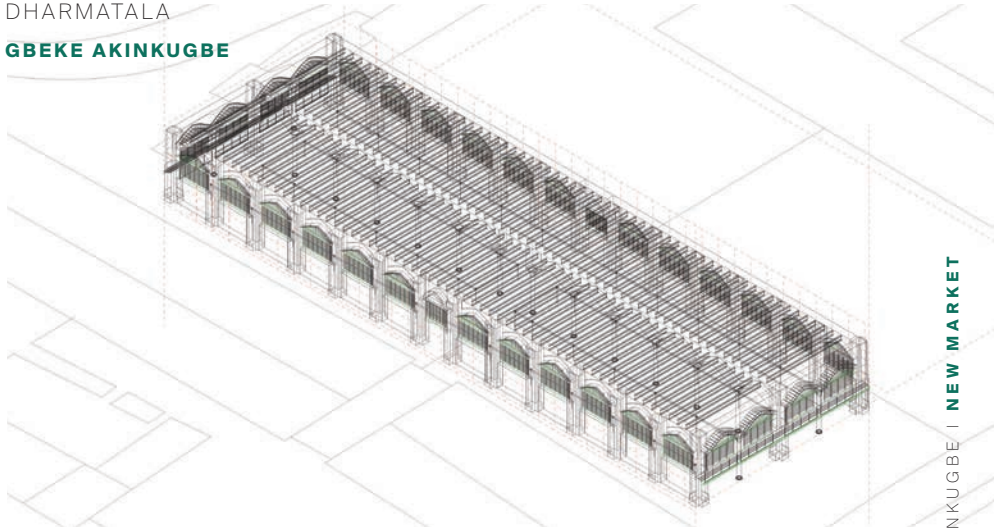
January 2018 | Gbeke Akinkugbe

12

NEW MARKET

DHARMATALA

GBEKE AKINKUGBE



GBEKE AKINKUGBE | NEW MARKET

1 | Axonometric of New Market

2 | Long Section through New Market

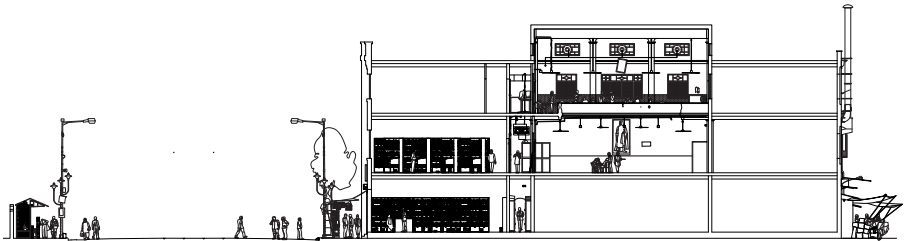
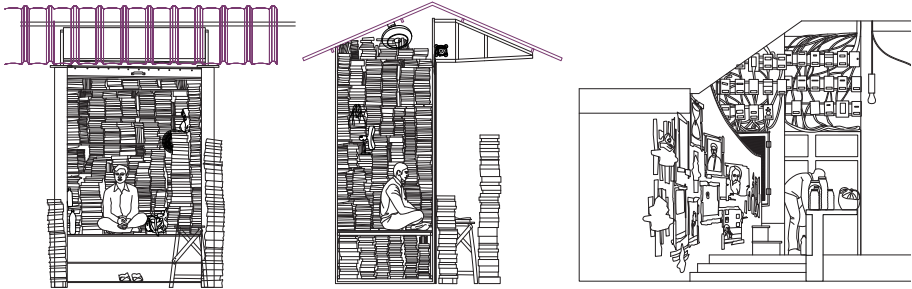
3 | Ground Floor Plan of New Market

04

INDIAN COFFEE HOUSE, COLLEGE STREET

COLLEGE SQUARE

SHIDAN BELAY HAGOS



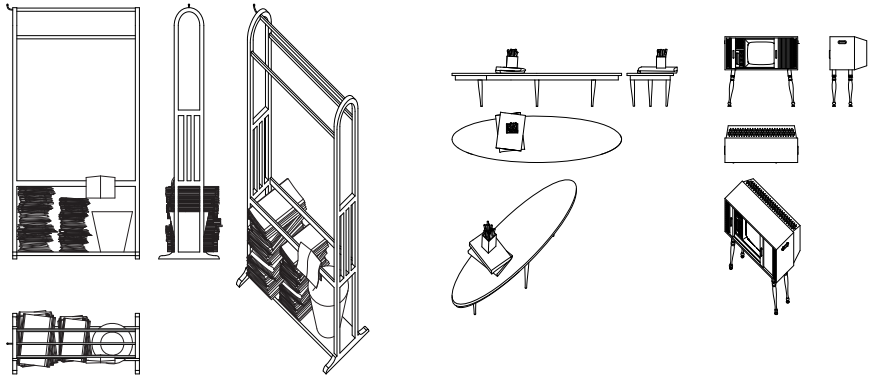
1 | Elevations of a Book Stall

2 | Section through the Indian Coffee House

04 | 05

SEN'S HOUSE, 79B RASHBEHARI AVENUE, KALIGHAT

SHIDAN BELAY HAGOS | DESMOND CHANG



- 1 | Isometrics of Furniture in Sen's House
- 2 | Section through Sen's House and Garden



Waiting in Howrah Railway Station | Howrah-1
January 2018, Desmond Chang



Ja Simran Ja



Platform bhi saaf rakhte hue ja

HOWRAH DIVISION

थूकना मना है

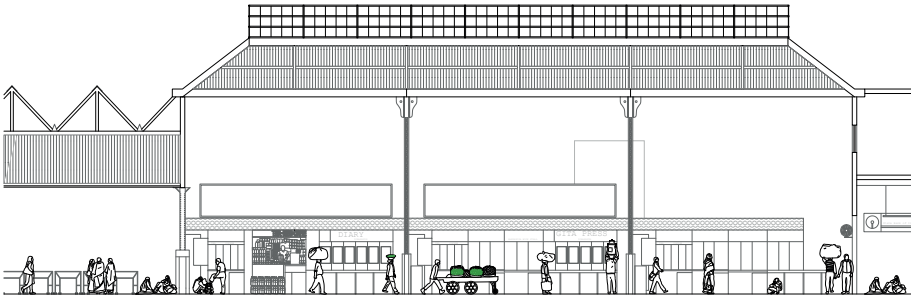
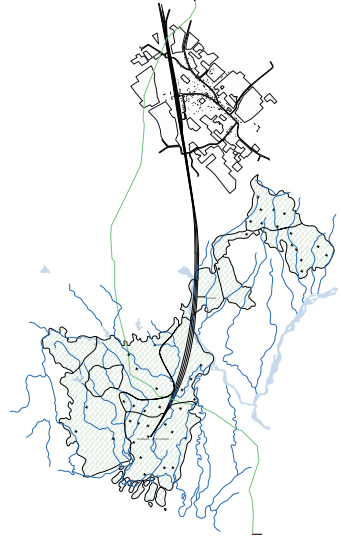
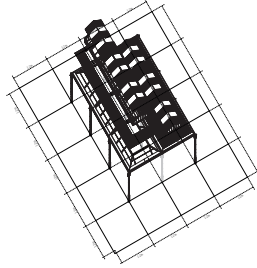


05

HOWRAH STATION AND MALDO MANGO FARM

HOWRAH

DESOMOND CHANG



1 | Isometric of part of Howrah Station

2 | Mapping Maldo Farm

3 | Section through part of Howrah Station

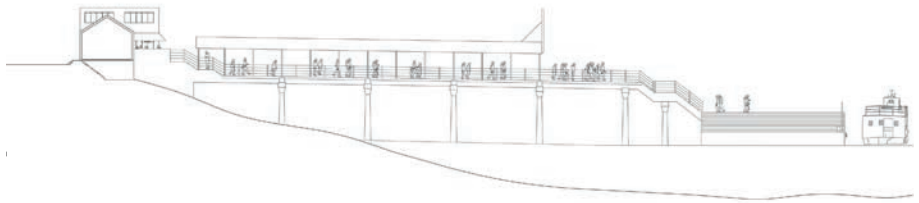
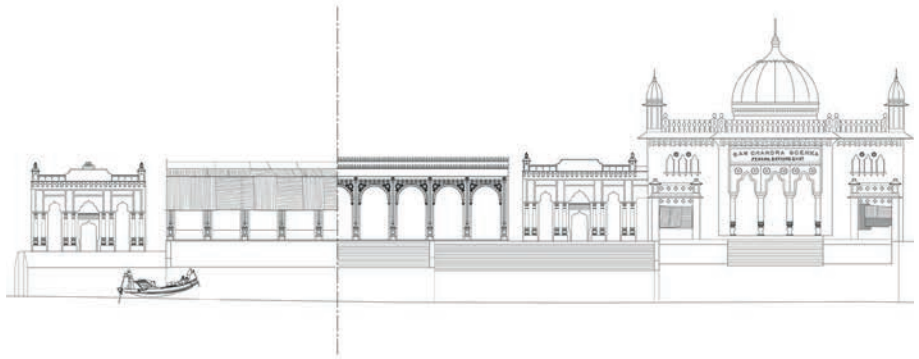
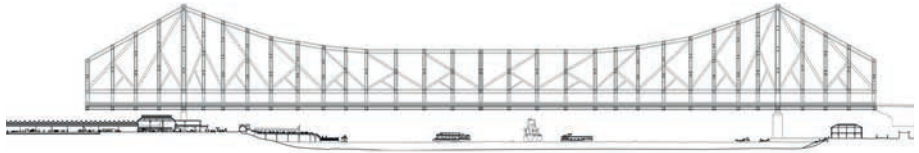
4 | Section through Maldo Farm and Distribution Building

01

HOWRAH BRIDGE AND ARMENIAN GHAT

HOWRAH AND B.B.D. BAGH

ANASTASIA REPPA



1 | Section through the Hooghly River, Howrah Bridge Elevation

2 | Armenia Ghat and Zenana Ghat Complex Elevation

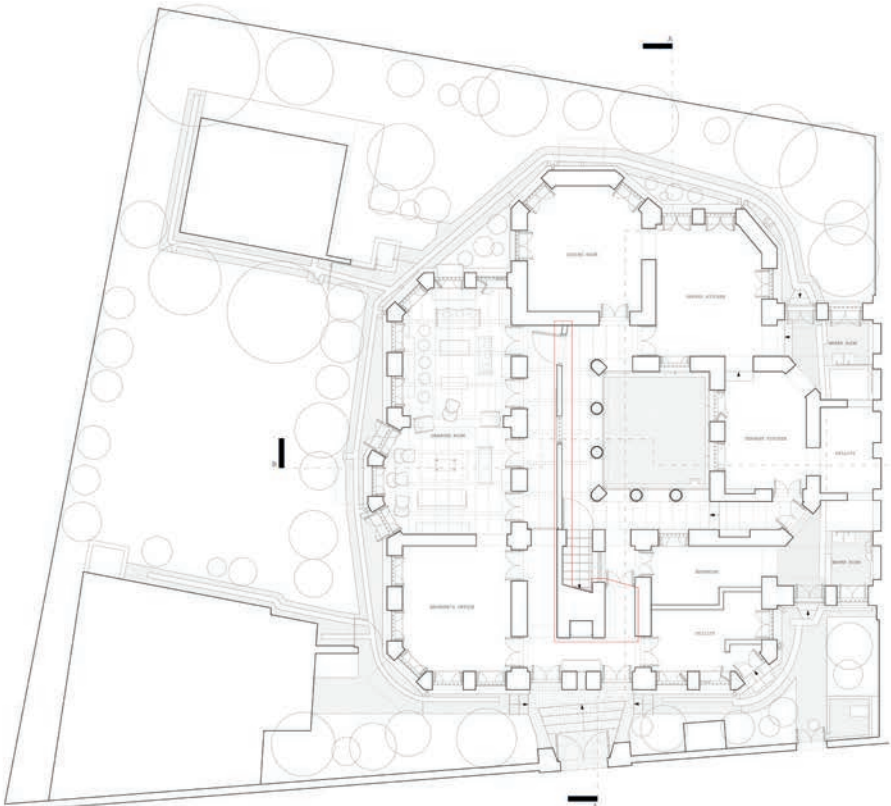
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06 | 07 | 08

SUKANYA'S HOUSE, 3 PEARY ROW

GOA BAGAN

ADAM BROWN | FINDLAY MCFARLANE | SABRINA SYED





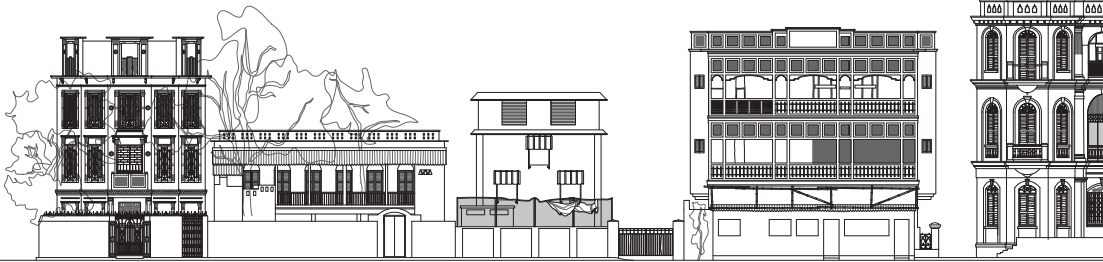
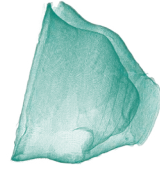
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 2 | Front Elevation of Sukanya's House
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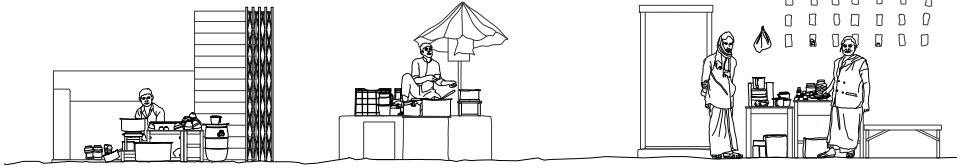
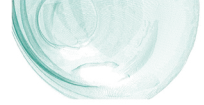
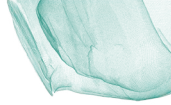
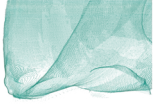
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ABHAY MITRA STREET

KUMARTULI

ANDREW CHAVET | KATE LE MASURIER





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- 2 | Elevations of Calcutta's *Chai Wallah* Stalls
- 3 | Street Elevation of Abhay Mitra Street
- 5 | Photographic Elevation of Abhay Mitra Street



Bethune Row, Azad Hind Bag

January 2018, Daana Bolot

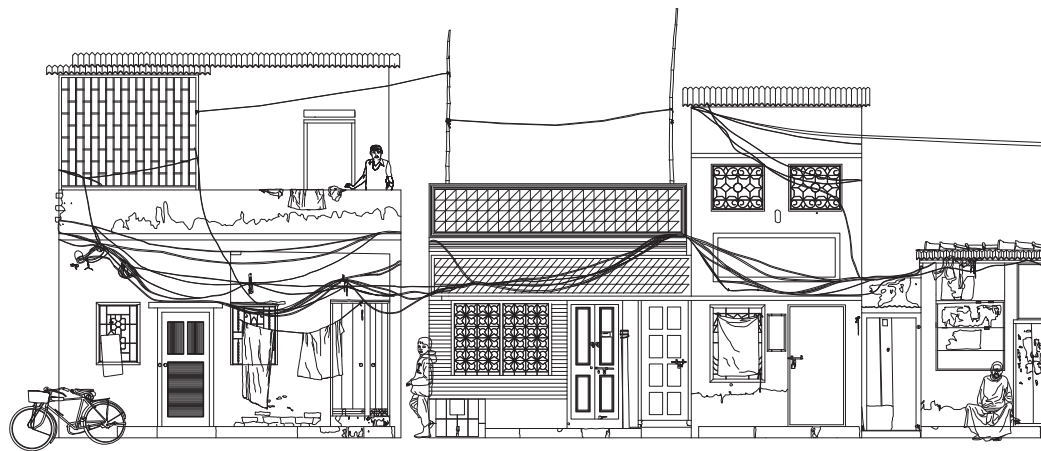
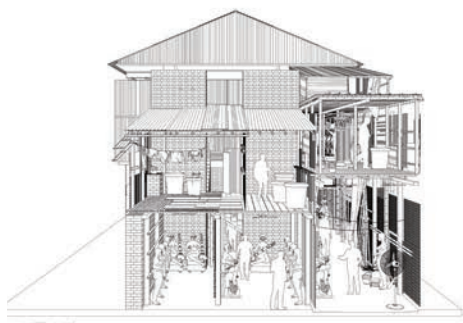
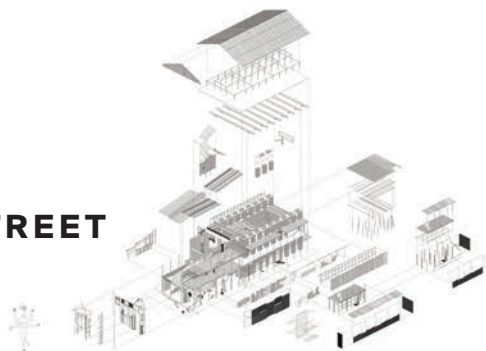


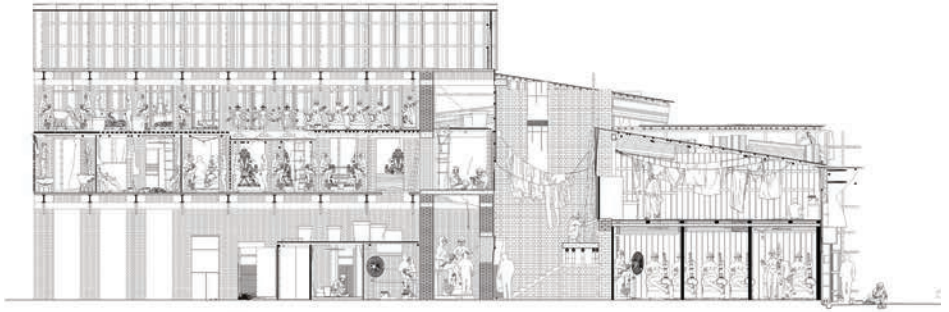
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BONOMALI SARKAR STREET

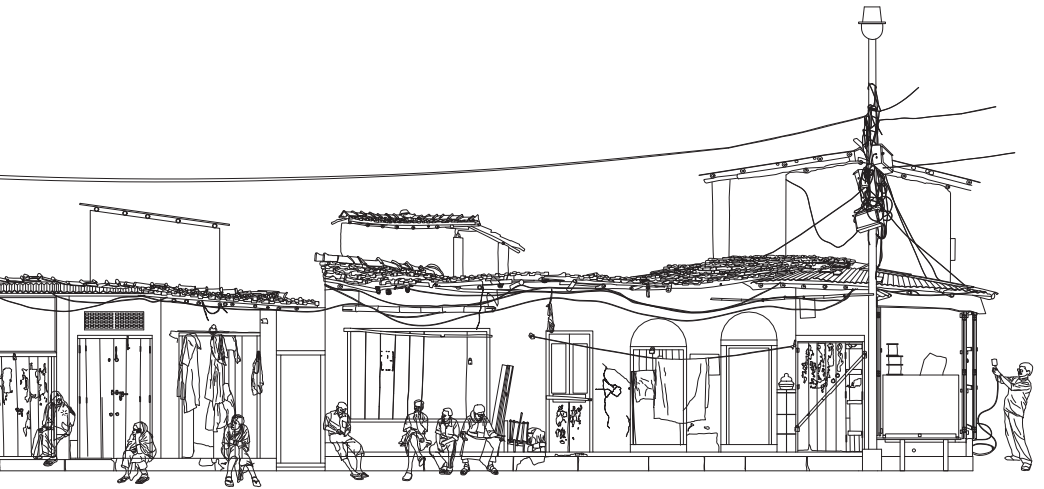
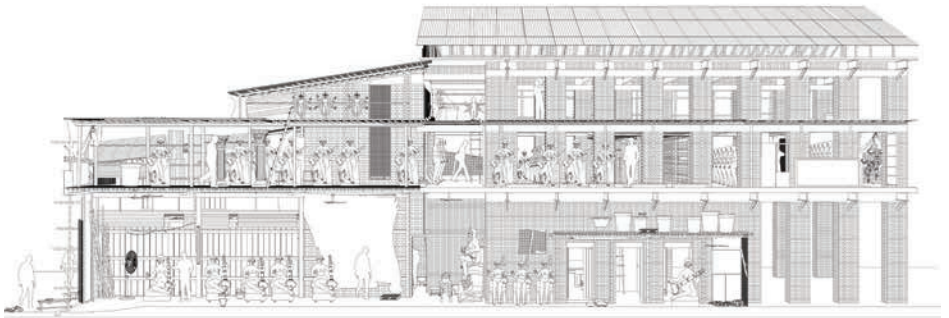
KUMARTULI

LIU WEI





1 2 5m



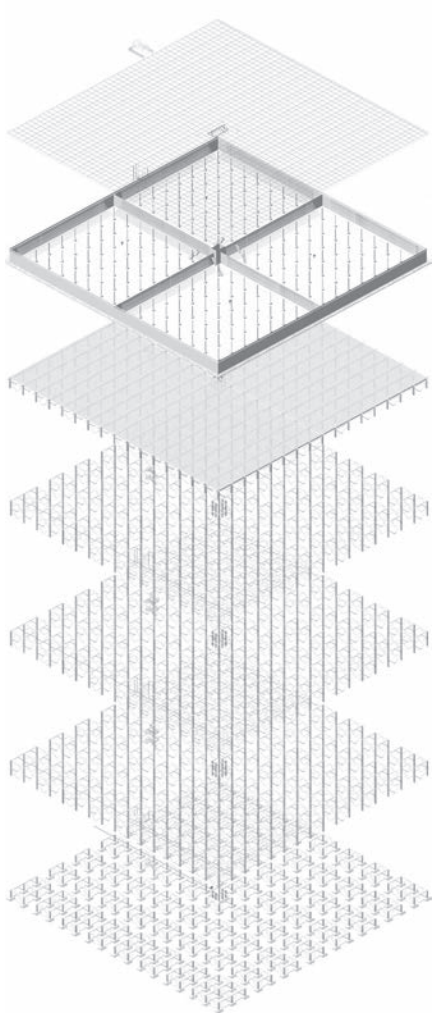
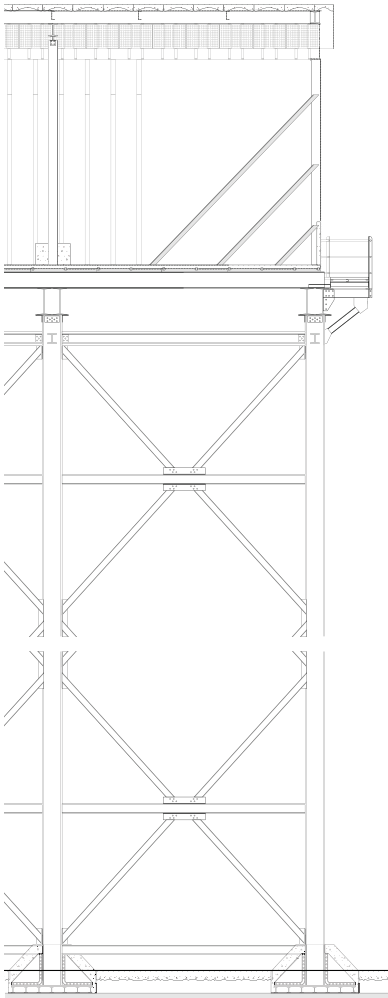
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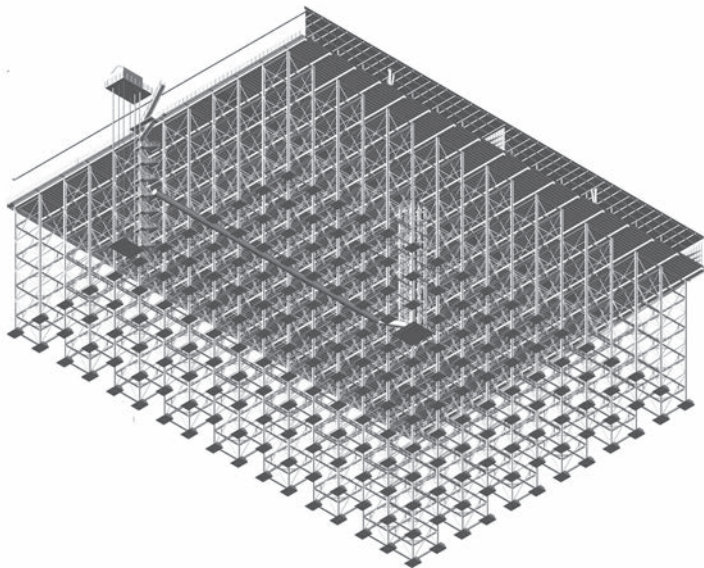
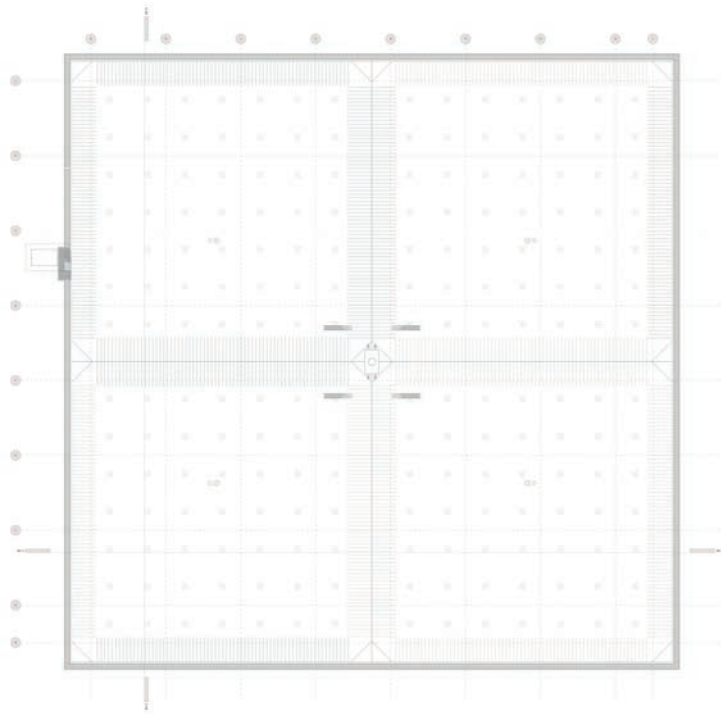
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TALLAH TANK

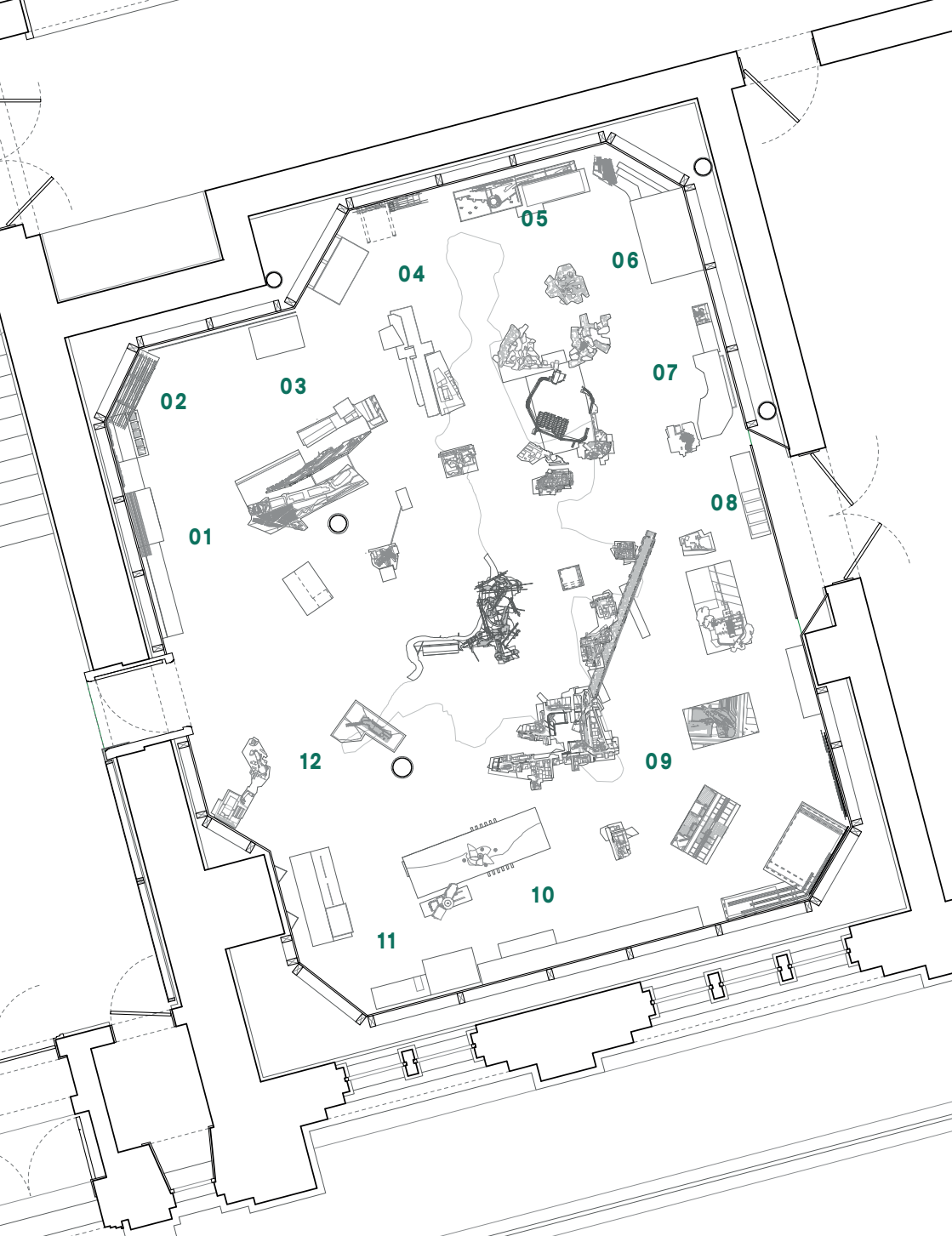
TALA

CORRIE GRAHAM | MICHAEL POSSO





-
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 - 2 | Exploded Isometric of the Tallah Tank
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 - 4 | Cutaway Worms-eye Isometric of the Tallah Tank



Calcutta MArch Exhibition 2019, Matthew Gallery Floor Plan 1:100, Minto House

May 2019, Andrew Chavet

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House on Sardar Shankar Road, Kalighat

January 2018, Kate Le Masurier



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