

The background of the entire page is a detailed, light-colored architectural floor plan of a building complex, overlaid on a solid dark red background. The plan shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements. The text is overlaid on this plan.

ESALA 2019-2021
Master of Architecture

**PARASITUATION [AHMEDABAD]:
“PAST, PRESENT AND POSSIBLE”**

Dorian Wiszniewski

AHMEDABAD



Near Ram Gate.

Yuchen Liu.



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 2020-21. 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 2020-21:

Animate Matter.

At Home. Where I am is Here.

Countryside [Outside] Architecture.

Island territories vii: Island Temporalities.

Catalogues 2019-21:

Parasituation [Ahmedabad].

COVID-19

During the final weeks of the 2019-20 academic year, the work of the MArch programme was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. University buildings were closed, and staff and students were required to work remotely, maintaining contact and sharing work via digital means. In the academic year 2020-21, the programme has continued to negotiate the disruption caused by Covid-19. While our normal studios and workshops have remained closed, during the first semester we managed to implement a form of hybrid teaching. Unfortunately, with a further tightening of lockdown at the start of the second semester, we were forced to return to working from home. During this period, for both students and staff alike, teaching days and their associated forms of online group tutorials, reviews and events became as important socially as they were academically. While we all miss the physicality of finely crafted models and ink drenched paper, the work presented through these volumes continues as a testament to the invention, creativity and resilience of the student body and the unfaltering commitment of the MArch programme staff.

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Parasituation [Ahmedabad]

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ESALA 2020 VOLUME 1

Master of Architecture and MSc AUD

**PARASITUATION [AHMEDABAD]:
PEOPLE AND POLS**

Dorian Wiszniewski

A H M E D A B A D

VOLUME 1

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Ram Gate.

Yuchen Liu.





Pol between Sarangpur and Panch-Kuwa Gates.

15:59, Sunday, 12 January, 2020. Dorian Wiszniewski.

A PEOPLE AND POLS STUDY: PARASITUATION LAHMEDABADI

Preface Positional Intersubjectivity

In undertaking the work of the studios that this book partially reflects, we are mindful of Amartya Sen's notion of "Positional Objectivity"¹ and his appraisal of western discourse on India. Sen, suspicious of any position that purports to be "objective," recognizes that it is very difficult to rid oneself of the prejudices of specific positions in the history of epistemology and their various national and regional trajectories. He notes that it is very difficult to have "any approach to learning innocent of power."² He suggests that the west has tended to look at India in three different ways: through exoticization; by magisterial privilege; and through a curatorial interest. Examples of the latter position include individuals and/or institutions that, for example, encourage the preservation of endangered cultural heritage, develop means for gathering and presenting knowledge presumed either to be valuable in itself or as a precondition to gaining political, economic and cultural advantage, and, in more recent times, formations of relations which are based on notions of shared cultural heritage.

We recognize particularly the difficulty of the first tendency, especially for many of the students on these programmes of study who had not yet witnessed the cultural richness of India first hand. It is so easy to romanticize and even commodify the "exotic."³ Therefore, we encourage a recognition and understanding of the "fragility" in exotic readings of India. We especially recognize the compound effect and legacies of magisterial tendencies to exoticize. We are mindful, for example, of Kipling's literary proress to tell richly embroidered and contextualized stories on one hand,

1 Amartya Sen, Positional Objectivity, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, (London: Wiley, Spring, 1993) pp. 126-145

2 Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, (London: Penguin, 2006) p.142.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 150-153.

but on the other his apparent paternalistic tendencies that at best pities the superstitious ignorance and cultural history of the Indian natives and at worst condemns them to rightful subordination. We also pay heed to Sen's own example of the Beatles' temporary fascination for Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. As Sen elaborates, eastern "insights" are fascinating until one moves on to the next most interesting thing that privilege provides. We note the satirical plays of Kaliprassana Singha, discovered through our work in Calcutta, who already recognised in the early years of the Bengal Renaissance that faux asceticism was already abound, where less than sage sadhus appealed both to the exoticization of the colonizers and to the spiritual neediness of the colonized.⁴ The fragility is also evident in all forms of Orientalism that inevitably prefigures any engagement in India. This rickety bridge between cultures seems to be what opened the first engagement by the west with Tagore. Crossed initially by W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound, their subsequent volte-face seems to have left Tagore to this day, arguably, in the pall of negativity and intellectual reduction that condemns his outputs as part of an Indian Romantic Idealism.⁵

A frequently alluded to but particularly sinister example of the magisterial category of would-be "positional objectivity" is James Mill's 1817 book, *The History of British India*.⁶ This has come to be more commonly understood as a cultural outrage, full of racist views and "ignorant smugness."⁷ Despite never having visited India this book was the official line and has seeped deeply into the cultural unconscious of many British. However, it is the same ignorant prejudicial magisterial view that pervades most kinds of racism that abounds in many countries and peoples of the world historically and to this day, where "depreciation of foreigners ... is common to all nations towards each other."⁸ Another key example given by many Indian cultural theorists is the book by the American white nationalist Katherine Mayo, *Mother India*, 1927, which due to its anti-Indian and anti-Indian Independence stance found significant support within the Imperialist British Government of the day.

4 Kaliprassana Singha, *The Observant Owl*, (India, Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2011 [first published in 1862]).

5 See Amit Chaudhuri, *On Tagore, Reading The Poet Today* (New Delhi: Viking by Penguin, 2012) and Amit Chaudhuri, 'Triumphphant Ecelecticism', *Outlook India*, e-magazine, 07.05.2006.

6 Sen, 2006, pp.146-150.

7 Sen, 2006, p.148.

8 Sen, quoting Alberuni a "most impressive" Arabic scholar of the 10th century who wrote a *History of India*, 2006, p.145.

The curatorial view, Sen argues, is the only one with any possible virtue. The virtue lies in the interest, care and dedicated scholarship by which the “curators” progress their enquiries. However, Sen is at pains to point out that these scholars always qualify their work by acknowledging their own limitations and the inevitable “slant” they place on their studies – they would not be studying it if it was not “other” to what they already know. There is an inevitable dialectical tension in all studies of strange places because what is viewed is always passed through the lens of the familiar. Because of the slant, Sen warns us against this dialectical tension sliding into “dialectical alienation.”

We acknowledge the impossibility of “positional objectivity” and the inevitable dialectical tensions between reciprocal others. Nonetheless, we are engaging with India, specific places, specific situations and specific material realities (which include the very difficult to calibrate spiritual realities). We enter the dynamic potential for exchange that exists in this dialectical tension. It is not so much that we wish then to allow the subjective prejudicial view of either side of the dialectic a free role in coming to terms with each other. It is more that we see ourselves as participants in a world where our own subjectivity is now in open and liberal partnership with the subjectivity of all others. This is a position that requires recurrent and reciprocal nurturing. It is not an easy position to hold as the slant compels us towards a view even though we might try to overcome its gravitational forces. Nonetheless, it is from this first intersubjective standpoint that we engage with India. Furthermore, it is because of the slant that we have developed a different category of how to view India. It is a view given to us from India, and by which I would argue provides benefit to how we can develop an understanding of anywhere in the world. We navigate the difficulties of the exotic by not sentimentalizing otherness, we condemn the magisterial view and we do our best to care for the richness rather than cure the illness of the complex relations that we find. We move beyond Sen’s categories to frame a further possibility: we argue for intersubjectivity through *cosmo-ecological* sensibility.⁹

⁹ This view is elaborated in more detail in a paper presented at the AHRA Conference on *Architecture and Collective Life* in Dundee, 21-23 November 2019 and will be a chapter in the forthcoming AHRA book to be published by Routledge.

Introduction

Ahmedabad, Cosmo-Ecology and Ecosophic Urbanism

This book records an aspect of the research from two post graduate architectural and urban design studios in the University of Edinburgh. The Master of Architecture (2019-2021) and Master of Science in Architectural and Urban Design (2019-2020) both operate from theories on *Ecosophic Urbanism*. Both studios benefitted by the contributions of various teaching colleagues (Kevin Adams¹⁰, Paul Pattinson, Leo Xian and Neil Cunning¹¹). I develop the cosmo-ecological view in more detail elsewhere, but it corresponds quite directly to our work on Ecosophic Urbanism,¹² a view we brought to India in the first instance and developed since 2003 under different themes whilst investigating many international cities (Budapest - Hungary, Istanbul - Turkey, Shanghai - China, Florence - Italy, Olbia - Sardinia/Italy, Wrocław - Poland), but since 2013 have been directed through studies of three particular cities in India: Bombay [Mumbai], Maharashtra; Calcutta [Kolkata], West Bengal; and now Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Ecosophic Urbanism looks for the wisdom (*sophia*) of dwelling (*oikos*). What is dwelling? How do we dwell wisely? These are key questions in initiating the research necessary for designing the ecosophic city. However, these are not such simple questions. To facilitate dwelling wisely together ought to be the goal of every city institution and every academic and professional they employ. However, this is clearly not the case. Disparity and unfairness make evident the lack of wisdom in our cities. How do we tackle questions of wisdom when we are confronted, locally and globally, by recurrent instances of unwise dwelling, instituted obscurity and seeming denial of such wisdom?

Our methods offer some views on what constitutes successful dwelling and hence also of where we may look to find wisdom. We operate from the premise that all cities work. We acknowledge that there are many horrific inequities and unwise relations on display in cities. Instances of unwise relations are perhaps particularly evident in India. We see this particularly in

¹⁰ M Arch 2019-2021 with occasional participation in the M Sc AUD 2019-2020 studio.

¹¹ Paul Pattinson, Leo Xian and Neil Cunning have all been working in the M Sc AUD 2019-2020 with occasional visits into the M Arch studio.

¹² I have been working with a range of colleagues over the years all of whom are credited in the various publications emanating from the respective studios.

how the caste system intersects with colonialism and more recently through how these legacies have been exacerbated by neo-liberalism: for example, in the many exclusive gated enclaves of “Good Life” Global Indians whilst their servants live in slums outside.¹³ These particular inequities are palpably perceived in the tropical heat, humidity and high urban densities common to Indian cities. However, India also bears testimony to how people have amazing capacity for social, economic and cultural flexibility and how architecture, landscape and urban arrangements act as holders and frames to the many different kinds of social, economic and ecological transactions that are the basis for the success of any city.

ECOSOPHIC URBANISM ECOSOPHIC PRACTICE

1. EU WORKS AS AN AGENCY OF SKILLED DESIGN PRACTICE.
2. EU PLACES DESIGN PRACTICE AT THE HEART OF URBAN PLANNING; THE LOCAL PLAN IS AS A RESULT OF LOCAL PRACTICES WITH AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK.
3. EU DEVELOPS INFRASTRUCTURES FROM WITHIN AND BETWEEN ECOLOGIES.
4. EU DOES NOT CONSIDER ECOLOGY TO BE THE DOMAIN OF A NATURE LOVING MINORITY: ECOLOGY IS AN ECOSOPHIC PRINCIPLE FOR ALL DWELLING.
5. EU DEVELOPS MULTIPLE SITES OF PRODUCTION: NEW MICROSOCIAL AND MICROPOLITICAL PRACTICES.
6. EU DEVELOPS AND ENCOURAGES NEW SOLIDARITIES.
7. EU DEVELOPS A NEW GENTLENESS.
8. EU DEVELOPS NEW AESTHETIC AND NEW ANALYTIC PRACTICES.
9. EU PROPOSES AND DEVELOPS PROCESSES OF HETEROGENESIS: RATHER THAN PROJECTS THAT CONFORM TO THE SAME FORMAL PRINCIPLES, EU CONSIDERS HETEROLOGY AS APPROPRIATE AS HOMLOGY WITH DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE HOLDING SWAY IN A STAND-OFF.
10. EU DEVELOPS WAYS, MANY WAYS (HETEROLOGIES), TO ENABLE THE SINGULAR, EXCEPTIONAL AND RARE TO CO-EXIST WITH A STATE STRUCTURE WHILST ENCOURAGING THE STATE STRUCTURE TO BE THE LEAST BURDENSOME AS POSSIBLE.

Figure 1: 10 x Tactics of Ecosophic Urbanism

Ecosophic Urbanism raises these existential questions of complex relationships between people and systems in the city. They are architectural and urban design questions. Ecosophic Urbanism pursues questions of relations between individual and collective motivations, shifting the terminology and impetus from objectivity and subjectivity to intersubjectivity. Ecosophic Urbanism looks for rapport between people and different places within, between and over generations. These are what form economic and ecological patterns. By discerning these patterns and working within their rhythms we can find and promote economic agencies based upon ecological wisdom.

13 Somina Sengupta, Inside Gate, India's Good Life; Outside, the Servants Slums, Asia Pacific (The New York Times), January 27, 2015, courtesy of Pallavi Gupta, *The Representations, Presentations, and Illusions of Life in Satellite Cities of India, A Critical Theory of Gated Enclaves in Gurgaon and Noida*, MA (Hons) Dissertation, ESALA, 2016, p.127.

The above notes offer ten “wisdoms” (Figure 1). They were formulated through readings of Felix Guattari’s *Three Ecologies: Human Subjectivity; Human Relations and the Environment*.¹⁴ However, they have also been honed as guiding principles from previous studies. They are not exhaustive, but we have found them a useful summary and as pointers into the more detailed issues of Ecosophy that have yielded fascinating speculations towards previous study cities. They are our version of Gandhi’s principles of Satyagraha (Figure 2); we find resonance between Guattari and Gandhi. Gandhi’s wheel of life has insistence upon truth at its centre, around which concentric rhythms of co-existence gather. The rhythmical basis of collective life is how we gain entry to the material reality of Ahmedabad. These rhythms also echo the notations of life diagram that Patrick Geddes gives us (Figure 3). As a botanist come urban planner, he provides yet another mantra of recurrent relationships between people and places. Working from top left, anti-clockwise we enter the uncharted path that has to be taken between the multiple relationships between people and place to move from village to city. If ever we lose our way, Geddes like Gandhi recommends that we return to the first principles and begin the journey again. We recognize these necessary simultaneous deconstructive and reconstructive principles, that come from Guattari, Gandhi and Geddes, in our cosmo-ecological and ecosophic view. Our living world is an evolving world; our cities are evolving systems; our folk and places are strands of complex biological rhythms and patterns. Cosmo-politics, bio-politics and cosmo-ecology are important critical sensibilities to develop for entering the rhythmic, oscillating and cyclical bases of ecosophic urbanism.

This book on Ahmedabad will be the first of a series of four books. This first book is ostensibly a book of portraits. However, the people we encountered had quite a bit to say and it is as much their voices we allude to as their looks – we hope their looking partially guides our looking. Five staff and forty-three students visited Ahmedabad between 6-18 January 2020. After deliberating on how best to represent the city at this intermediate point of our research, we responded to the fact that we all had a great number of portraits without ever planning such an outcome. They record our looking but also indirectly the many conversations and the places in which they spoke. The pols of Ahmedabad are amazingly intense urban conditions. The pols are a housing and neighbourhood system to be found uniquely in

14 Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, (New York: Athlone Press, 2000)

Ahmedabad. Amrita Shah has a wonderful description of what it is like to be led round a pol by a local:

“Mohan and I are walking about in a maze making me feel I am participating in an elaborate subterfuge. This is guerilla territory. Everything is and is not. One can imagine an invader, well-armed and puffed with might, disconcerted by surprise and sleight of hand. The houses, the streets here, are hard yet elastic. Unseen passageways provide a way out of cul de sacs. The rooftops packed close together are a parallel topography providing routes for transport of essentials and escape. This cunning, with which the outsider can be tricked and deceived, is also applied inwards for maintaining social norms, as I have seen, and to hide wealth from covetous eyes. The narrow frontages of many houses open out like accordions on entering, exposing unexpected spaces, courtyards splashed with sunlight, glossy floors, steep staircases and chambers as large as nineteenth-century ballrooms, and furnished with Belgian glass. It is a hamlet that can burst into life or curl into itself like a tortoise, preserving itself with this mercurial adaptability for hundreds of years.”¹⁵

As Harish Doshi and C. N. Ray note, the pols are “defence-oriented” but also act as links between individuals and the larger city.¹⁶ They may be inward looking but they are also outward projecting, setting up the bases for collective sports, literary and cultural events. A pol is not just a place to live; it is a social organisation designed to look after their residents. They are of varied religious groupings, pol by pol, for example, Jain, Yanik, Parikh, Brahmin and Muslim, tending to be formed by family and guild. We present images of only some of the people and places we encountered in Ahmedabad. All of the people included in this book were happy, many desirous, to have their photographs taken. The people of this city, particularly those we encountered within the walls of the Old City, were overwhelmingly kind, generous and welcoming. However, many of them did not hold back on their political points of view. An astonishing insight given to us by one resident is that eighty percent of the residents of the pols in the Old City have political leanings towards the Indian National Congress party (INC). In the home state of Narendra Modi, the Bharitaya Janata Party (BJP) and the policies of Hindutva, this is an astonishing statistic.

¹⁵ Amrita Shah, *Ahmedabad, A City in The World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) pp.84-85.

¹⁶ C. N. Ray, The Pols of Ahmedabad, in *SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN*, 57 (3), September - December 2008, pp. 337-352.

There will also be a book that includes a series of measured studies which approximate to the complete perimeter wall of the Old City of Ahmedabad. These first two books, then, will form part of an ongoing research archive to all our studies but also for the design work that will follow from these two studios. Neither as single books nor as a set will they comprise totalities of research. This is not our ambition. We both acknowledge and celebrate that they can only form partial and particular insights. However, between them much of the specific situations, the specific orientation of research and the specific relations between design and research might be understood. The book and catalogue outputs from all previous city studies are also important records of this kind of accretional research-by-design.¹⁷ They too form part of a progressive archive. They may also be referred to in the reading of this book. Like this book they also make virtue of the experiential and the empirical measure of both the situations they unfold and the designs which embody the interpretive appropriations of those situations.

The *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]* books, *People and Poles* and *Walls and Gates*, are representative of very significant strands of enquiry. A study of the people and the means by which they form their places is fundamental. Folk and place are Geddesian terms that we also openly acknowledge in our research. Geddes's work in Ahmedabad gives us an opening to the Walls of Ahmedabad. However, our understanding of place and people is also raised by directing our enquiry through notions of water/wetness/*Sindhu*.¹⁸ Dilip da Cunha and Anuradha Mathur have helped us come to terms with *Sindhu*. Our understanding of *Sindhu* conditions our view of environmental issues. As I have paraphrased from Da Cunha and Mathur elsewhere, "India is conceptual, emotional, ideological and political. Sindhu is everyday reality and cosmo-ecological – literally holding the rain-drop in its expression."¹⁹ We are interested in cosmo-ecological rhythms; rhythms within which the "home" and the "world" are reciprocally inscribed.²⁰ For Ahmedabad, an awareness of dust is a helpful partner to a sensibility for *Sindhu*. The dry seasons are as much part of the rhythm of *Sindhu* as the wet. The dryness-wetness rhythms have given rise to many of the historical means of water

17 See in particular: Wiszniewski, D., *Bombay City Wise, Parasituation Mumbai* (Ampersand: Edinburgh, 2016); and Wiszniewski, D., *Arguing Calcutta, Parasituation [Calcutta/Kolkata]*, (Wedge Publications: Edinburgh, 2019).

18 See Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, A Clash of First Natures, in Wiszniewski, D., (2019) pp. 151-158.

19 *ibid.* p. 152.

20 Note the resonance of this pairing of scales with that of Tagore's famous novel *Ghare Baire* (Home and the World – literally, something like "in the room outside of the room"): *cosmo* refers to world (*kosmos* in Greek) and *eco* refers to dwelling/home (*oikos* in Greek).

retention, for example, in ponds, cisterns and step-wells. As the work of Da Cunha and Mathur help direct, we do not impose a climatic paradigm from our temperate situation in Edinburgh. We immerse ourselves in *Sindhu*, as best we can, as means to understand the specificities that form the fuller ecological situation of our enquiry into Ahmedabad.

There is an aspect of the curatorial within the ecosophic and cosmo-ecological impulse. There is a care that is necessary to navigate the specific cultural richness of all the varied parts of India, but this project eschews any curative tendencies in such a motive. Therefore, between the cosmo-ecological developed through experience in India and the ecosophic developed principally from a European perspective, our work simply attempts to step into the rhythms of our study situations, both human and non-human, and allow the speculative voice to go with those flows. These flows and rhythms can be considered both cosmo-political and cosmo-ecological. At the confluence of these two dynamics one might begin an ecosophic engagement with India.

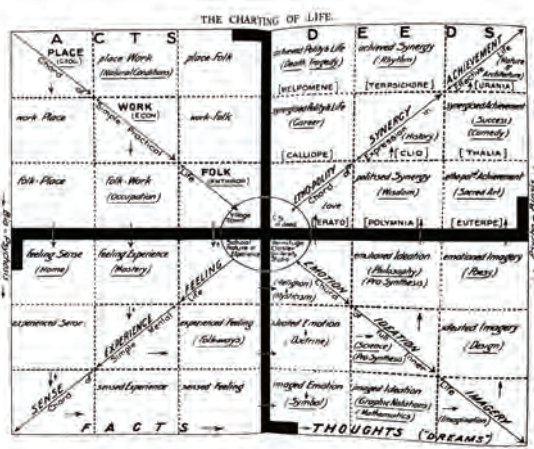


Figure 2: Poster of Gandhi's SATYAGRAHA principles on the wall of the veranda of the Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad. Photocredit: Dorian Wiszniewski, January 2020.

Figure 3: Patrick Geddes, Notations of Life, 1927.

The Sabarmati Connecting the Multiple Cities of Ahmedabad

“The Sabarmati River is 371 km long and ‘has always been the defining feature of Ahmedabad’ (Yagnik & Sheth, 2011, p. 298). The city was founded on the eastern bank of the river in the 1400s (Forrest, 1977), and until the mid-late 1800s, crossing the river was considered mostly unnecessary, until the Ellisbridge was opened in 1870. This was Ahmedabad’s first bridge (of nine, at present) to connect the city across the Sabarmati. The river was perennial and it dried up in summer months (Bhatt, 2003; Figure 1) . . . Ahmedabad is Gujarat state’s largest city and designated as one of India’s seven mega-cities by the government (Dhar, Sen, & Kumar, 2006). The urban population has increased by 34% from 3.31 million in 1991 to 4.5 million in 2001 and the average density (in 2011) is 890 persons/km² (Census of India, 2011). Ahmedabad has been described as a pre-industrial city with post-industrial segments (Nath, 2007). Dutta (2000) describes three Ahmedabads: (1) the old walled city, on the eastern bank of the river, dating back to the fifteenth century; (2) the industrial areas which emerged outside the walled city in the nineteenth century where chawls, or ‘multi-storeyed concrete slums’, prevail; and (3) the west of the city which has been developing since the 1900s as a residential area as richer residents moved out of the Old City to gain more space (Jaffrelot & Thomas, 2012).”²¹

Ahmedabad city was founded by Sultan Ahmed Shah in 1411 and served as the capital of the Sultanate of Gujarat.²² It was incorporated into the Bombay Presidency during the British rule. Under British rule a military cantonment was established and the city infrastructure was modernised and expanded. A major rail line and station linked it to Bombay, Maharashtra, to the south and northwards to Jaipur, Rajasthan, and beyond. The railway station and line are positioned on the east side of the walled city. The British Imperial governance of Ahmedabad through the public works department proposed to knock down the old walls of Ahmedabad. They were seen as belonging to the old order and defended sites of potential insurrection. Patrick Geddes had something to say about this in his report *Notes on Ahmedabad*.²³ Geddes, coming through a biological-cultural sensibility, was

21 Nicola Dempsey, Smriti Rabina Jayaraj & Emily Redmond (2017): There’s always the river: social and environmental equity in rapidly urbanising landscapes in India, *Landscape Research*, DOI: 10.1080/01426397.2017.1315389.

22 C. N. Ray, The Poles of Ahmedabad, in *SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN*, 57 (3), September - December 2008, pp. 337-352.

23 Geddes, Patrick. “Notes on Ahmedabad”, 1915. Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre, edited by Attilio Petruccioli. Rome: Libreria Herder, 1984.

scathing of the militaristic and bureaucratic tendencies of governmental urban planning: he referred to the public works department as the “public waste department.”²⁴ More of this will be said in the second book.

The old city, the industrial city and the west part of the city are conventional ways of seeing the city, but this view misses something of the complexity. We think there are more than three Ahmedabads. Prior to visiting Ahmedabad, from back-ground reading and thinking from an architectural and urban design perspective, we saw five cities, but since undertaking our field-work we have added a sixth. They absorb the conventional view but rather than working first from the notion of the Sabarmati as the defining characteristic we open up thinking on the city as sitting within a view of Sindhu. From the outset it was clear to us that Ahmedabad and the Gujarat environment have a rich history of water architecture. It seems also clear that how Ahmedabad now looks is because the metropolitan and national government are still pursuing age old questions into how to dwell in a place where the rhythms of Sindhu in otherwise fertile soil create long periods of aridity. However, there seems to be a tension between the oldest and newest versions of the city, each of them viewing the Sabarmati quite differently: the oldest recognised the temporal flux of wetness and worked with it, establishing itself on a mound to avoid flooding whilst having proximity to the seasonal flow of water; the newest also recognises the fluctuating water supply but tries to conquer it with the conceit of permanency.

The first way we think of Ahmedabad is through the **Temporal Sabarmati**. We look to the wonderful water projects of Ahmedabad and Gujarat. Between tapping into the below-ground aquifers and collecting the above ground temporal flows varied ways to hold water in the Gujarat landscape were developed, ranging from tanks as we see in early Hindu Temples like the Modhera Sun Temple (c. 11th Century), Mughal step-wells like Dada Harir in Asarwa (late 15th century) and Ahmedbad’s Mughal Lake Kankaria (mid 15th century). We think of this as the first city and its landscape. It is an urban oasis in Gujarat’s vast dry landscape of occasional inundation. It places the city in a broader metropolitan and ecological landscape, fluctuating between wetness and dryness, and reflects on the ways the city and its surroundings historically looked after one another.

24 Philip Boardmand, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town-Planner, Re-Educator, Peace Warrior* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1978), p.254.

Secondly, we think Ahmedabad through its **Pols, Gates and Walls**. This takes us from The Mughal City to the Colonial City, from the 15th Century to 1947, the Old City and the city of “public works” as framed by Patrick Geddes. Within the walls of the old city of Ahmedabad there are also many local community and individual domestic scaled step-wells and cisterns, which are served by careful imbrication of roofs, courtyards and channels.²⁵ Many of these cisterns of the old city are still functional and offer a pre-existing third supply system to supplement inconsistent state and private provision. In this view of Ahmedabad, we see the old city as under siege from a newly developing city that sees its history less as a boon and more of a hindrance to its progressivism. Ironically, the current metropolitan government seems to echo some of the thinking of its colonial past.

The third view of the city focusses on what lies outside of the Old City, what has sprung up since the late 19th century and after independence. **The Outer City** has spread into and subsumed the rural hinterland and villages of Ahmedabad. As a historical trading centre, many villages, caravanserais and stepwells were located in what became the outer city, whilst markets sprang up on the inside in proximity to the fifteen major gates in the perimeter walls. Historically, production in Ahmedabad has concentrated around “family, community and guild.”²⁶ It has always been a historic trading city, Hindu, then Mughal in the 15th century and then with Jain and Vaishnava Bania merchants taking economic control from the 18th century with the textile mills from the mid 19th century becoming the major economy. Many of the routes and markets into the old city remain but the artefacts of the first metropolitan landscape have been subsumed, many being erased on the development of the textile factories. The Sabarmati was the basis of many industries, for example, the cloth dyers, which established themselves in proximity along its length.²⁷ Their traces have also all but been erased.

The fourth view of the city was initially considered within the third as just another part of the outer city. However, since our field-work and coming to understand more about the significance and alignments between the

25 See the excellent drawings produced by Yale students of Architecture: <https://www.architecture.yale.edu/exhibitions/21-stepwells-of-ahmedabad>.

26 Howard Spodek, Traditional Culture and Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Ahmedabad, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 4, No. 8 (February 22, 1969) pp. M27-M31 (Economic and Political Weekly; Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40737346>). See also, C. N. Ray, The Pols of Ahmedabad, in *SOCIOLOGICAL BULLETIN*, 57 (3), September - December 2008, pp. 337-352.

27 For an insight into the relationship between the textile guilds and caste, see Rajiv Shah, The Dye is Caste in Gujarat, *The Times of India*, August 29, 2015.

major economies and families of Ahmedabad, this view seems worthy of framing in its own right. We think this view of Ahmedabad as **the Post-independence City of Modernity**. It is the most nuanced of the city views and, arguably, still under construction, but there are a few seminal buildings that work together to hold such a vision. The key industrial families employed the best of local and international architects, for example, Balkrishna Doshi, Louis Kahn and Le Corbusier. They marked the city with key cultural aspirational buildings, for example, the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, the Mill Owners' Association Building, the Parabhai Theatre, CEPT University's Kastarbai Labhai School of Architecture, Balkrishna Doshi's own architectural offices and residence and also the various houses of the key families, for example, Sarabhai and Shodan. The key aspect of this city is that it views Ahmedabad as one city, a progressive city. If we take the Mill Owners Association Building as one of the key focal points of this vision, we can see it sitting on the West bank deliberately overlooking the Old City, as a meeting house and palace of conversation for the key families not only to discuss the affairs of the mills but also the developing vision of the whole city.

The fifth consideration of Ahmedabad is as being within **the Sabarmati Eco Valley**. This is an extension of thinking the landscape beyond the city. It is an allusion to Bernard Kohn's project that he began in 1964 and which he continues to politicise and promote through his work today.²⁸ He is an architect and Geddesian. He considered Ahmedabad as a potential *Biopolis*. We were impressed by Kohn's initial attempt to see the Sabarmati as part of a bigger ecological valley which includes the Dharoi Reservoir in the north and continues to the gulf of Khambhat in the south. We too are interested in Ahmedabad, in fact every city, as a biopolis. However, we were fearful that Kohn still sees the Sabarmati as a river and not as *Sindhu*. In Kohn's proposals, the ecological rhythms of the coming and going of the Sabarmati still seemed to follow the western tendency to see rivers as deep lines and barriers rather than as a variant *Sindhu* spatial paradigm. *Sindhu* allows for temporally conditioned fluctuations of shallow horizontally expansive and retreating wetness with private space, the space of the home, set within a continuous open public realm.

28 See <https://www.bernardkohn.org/en/>, particularly <https://www.bernardkohn.org/en/patterns.html>, tile 2 on Ahmedabad.

The sixth view of Ahmedabad we see as a balanced consideration of the Sabarmati River Front project (beginning 2002), which at the moment provides 11.25km of as yet largely undeveloped river frontage. We think of it more as **the New Walled City**. We were initially sceptical of the sensitivities directing its programme, perhaps guided by an Amdavadi's view of it, where, paraphrasing, the Sabarmati has been turned into a western river where people look at the river rather than use it.²⁹ We, nonetheless, wanted to work with the Sabarmati River Front rather than imagine it gone. We are looking at ways the cosmo-ecological rhythms can humanise the rather blank, austere and currently rather oppressive new walls. We are looking at various ways wetness can be reconsidered and provide opportunity to new development. The Riverfront Project in its current form was designed by HCP Architects,³⁰ a local second-generation family firm of high repute with roots and connections to CEPT School of Architecture. It is clear that the Sabarmati Riverfront project can be seen alongside the new metro system as infrastructural components of Nirendra Modi's "Smart City."³¹ The Riverfront Project has evident real estate aspirations. However, it also attempts to address a very real problem: it was the case in Ahmedabad's Sabarmati as it is in many cities in India, where "unrestricted flow of industrial and domestic waste"³² pollutes rivers in ever-increasing ways, thus, depriving citizens of the very amenity that situates the city in the first place. One need only look to the Mithi River in Mumbai for how dreadful things could become if unchecked. However, questions remain on whether the riverfront project has shunned Sindhu in favour of western techno-economical India? It is clear that the river is no longer temporal, and within the city of Ahmedabad perhaps not even a river any more. It is a basin. Shored up along its edges and at either end, it has been dammed, walled and sluiced so as to provide more regular and regulated water supply. It pushes the temporal conditions beyond the new riverfront and city limits. It is evident that flooding issues still arise but they have been consigned predominantly to areas beyond the immediate gaze of the metropolitan centre.

29 Suresh Patel, Director, Alumni Office, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, October, 2015.

30 <https://www.hcp.co.in/project/sabarmati-riverfront-development>

31 See the Ministry of Urban Development Government of India Smart Cities Mission Statement and Guidelines, published June 2015, [http://smartcities.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/SmartCityGuidelines\(1\).pdf](http://smartcities.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/SmartCityGuidelines(1).pdf)

32 <https://www.hcp.co.in/project/sabarmati-riverfront-development>

Oscillating between the old walls and new walls two further key points have emerged to supplement our view of the six cities of Ahmedabad. First, we have especially developed knowledge of the extent of the Old Wall but also the sense of containment it has despite the many missing or subsumed areas of its historical brick and stone perimeter. We argue these as **Ecosophic senses of containment**, i.e. they pertain to Human Subjectivity, Human Relations and the Environment and include phenomena like the comings-and-goings of specific markets, the Pols, the 'kite festival' and the distribution and scales of water-well. They pertain to long established processes of intersubjective development. Second, we have now experienced something of the environmental conditions in which the city and river operate. This ranges between an understanding of the 'dust' of Ahmedabad, which arises from its intrinsically dry condition, and the 'wetness' of Ahmedabad which seems to be contained by four fluctuating systems: 1. Plant life and other ecologies of wetness/dryness; 2. Public water supply and drainage systems, which seem to be highly regulated but irregular in supply but reasonably well-considered as a drainage network; 3. Privately owned commercial water supply (but no drainage system), which also seems to be highly regulated but can be made regular if it is economically affordable; and 4. Individually/community gathered water, which is completely reliant on historic systems, particularly in the old city, but also as they are now compromised or supported by availability to public and private-commercial systems of supply and drainage.

The projects that may emerge from these studios in due course will take small interventionist speculative projects of making wall-wells in various sites on the old walls and new walls. They will bring wetness and dryness together in different temporal strategies, proposing new whilst accounting for old existential practices, hopefully to encourage both old and new walls to be well again. The projects will be scaled up to bigger strategic concerns by placing them in series: both as individual and collective speculations they will institute Ecosophic networks between different wall conditions, people and agencies throughout the city.

Dorian Wiszniewski

- a Vastaghejji Ni Pol
- b Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Kalupur
- c Kavi Dalpatram Chowk
- d Gangadhiya Ni Pol
- e Khetarpal Ni Pol
- f Hajiro Clothing Market / Tomb of Sultan Ahmad Shah / Jama Masjid
- g Bhadra Square / Bhadra Fort
- h Chakleshwar Mahadev Shiva Temple
- i Verai Pada Ni Pol
- j Dhal Ni Pol
- k Pir Afzalkhan Masjid
- l FD College Marg
- m Calico Mills
- n Riverfont Market
- o ManekBurj / Ravivari Bazaar
- p Ashram Rd
- q Gandhi Bridge
- r Champaner Society Rd
- s Vadaj Stepwell
- t Naroda Fruit Market
- u Dada Hari Stepwell
- v Pirana Water Pump
- w Laundry Campus
- x Sarkhej Roza
- y Adalaj Stepwell
- z Bhadar Gate Settlement
- 1 Relief Rd
- 2 Gandhi Rd
- 3 Manek Chowk Rd
- 4 Gaekwad Haveli Rd

S

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U

Shahpur Gate

Kasturba Gandhi Rd

Delhi Gate

Daryapur Gate

Khanpur Rd

Khanpur Gate

Ram Gate

Raikhad Gate

Khan Jahan's Masjid/ Gate

Jamalpur Gate

Astodia Gate

Raipur Gate

Prem Gate

Kalupur Gate

Kalupur Kohli Rang Rd

Panch-Kuwa Gate

Sarangpur Gate



Kankaria Lake

W

V



Kite festival, in Dhal Ni Pol.

17:10, Tuesday, 14 January, 2020. Yajña He.

The *People and Poles* book initially was planned to be a catalogue of a portrait exhibition. Yet, as public events were ceased, the book started to become an exhibition of its own. It does not archive, but rather presents the people and poles of Ahmedabad. The book starts from the roofs of peoples' houses, then takes the reader down through the poles and into the streets, shops, temples, mosques, markets, and walls. It moves from the special annual Kite Festival to the everyday life of Ahmedabad. The journey of the book portrays the descent from the lines of flight of the kites in a clear January sky into the throng of Ahmedabad's old and rich urban structure.

The glimpse through the book presents the ambiguity of place and its temporal and more enduring rhythms. While looking deeper into the portraits, beyond the immediate confines of what has been framed by the camera apparatus, we can see both the exact moment and something of the trajectories of what constitutes dwelling in the city. The portraits capture a phenomenology of Ahmedabad – assemblages of both dwelling of its folk and the dwelling of our studio group. Through the pages of this book, readers may enter Ahmedabad and further dwell upon and within these moments of time and draw their own lines of flight. These images were captured by us while we wandered in the city, absorbing its phenomenal agencies.

Timeline of our travel to Ahmedabad: 6 January 2020 – 18 January 2020

01

ROOFS

HOUSES, POLS, KITE FESTIVAL



Uttarayan.

Drawing by Jack Parmar.



A Father and a Son Flying Kite, Pol near Astodia Gate.

Jieyu Chen.



Umesh and Rajesh, Our First Kite Flying Lesson in Khetarpal Ni Pol.

Iona Hoggarth.



Curious Girls on Roof Top, Pols between Delhi and Shahpur Gates (above): Jiazheng Liu.

A Break from Kite Flying, Vadaj Stepwell (top): Julia Brookfield.



Dhal Ni Pol (top): Jiazheng Liu.

Delhi Darwaja, Mirzapur Rd (above): Stephy Liu.



Dhal Ni Pol (top): Kunxi Zhuang.

People Flying Kites across the Other Rooftop, Vanmali Vanka Ni Pol (above): Jordan Mok.



Rooftop near Astodia Darwaja.

Yipeng Zhen.



02

POLS

COMMUNITIES, HOUSES, YARDS

Chabutro, Bird Feeder in the Pols.

Drawing by Qiwei Jiang, Jiajing Wu, Jie Feng.



Pol between Sarangpur and Panch-Kuwa Gates.

Dorian Wiszniewski.





Father and Daughter in the Pols: Jack Parmar.



Communal Kitchen in Pol near Raipur Gate .

Dorian Wiszniewski





Textile Worker in the Pols (top): Kevin Li.

Man with Plants in the Pols (above): Kevin Li.

Pols between Delhi and Shahpur Gates (adjacent): Dorian Wiszniewski.





Auto Driver in the Pols.

Jack Parmar.



Ironing in the Pols (top); Julia Brookfield.

Pols between Delhi and Shahpur Gates (above); Dorian Wisniewski.





Pol House near Sharpur Gate: Leo Xian.



West Pals, near Khanpur Gate.

Paul Pattinson.



03

STREETS

ROADS, SQUARES, BRIDGES, STORES



Facade Elevation near Astodia Gate.

Drawing by Yunhe Du, Wenzhe Wang, Jieyu Chen, Yipeng Zhen.



Near Kalapur Darwaja and Prem Darwaja.

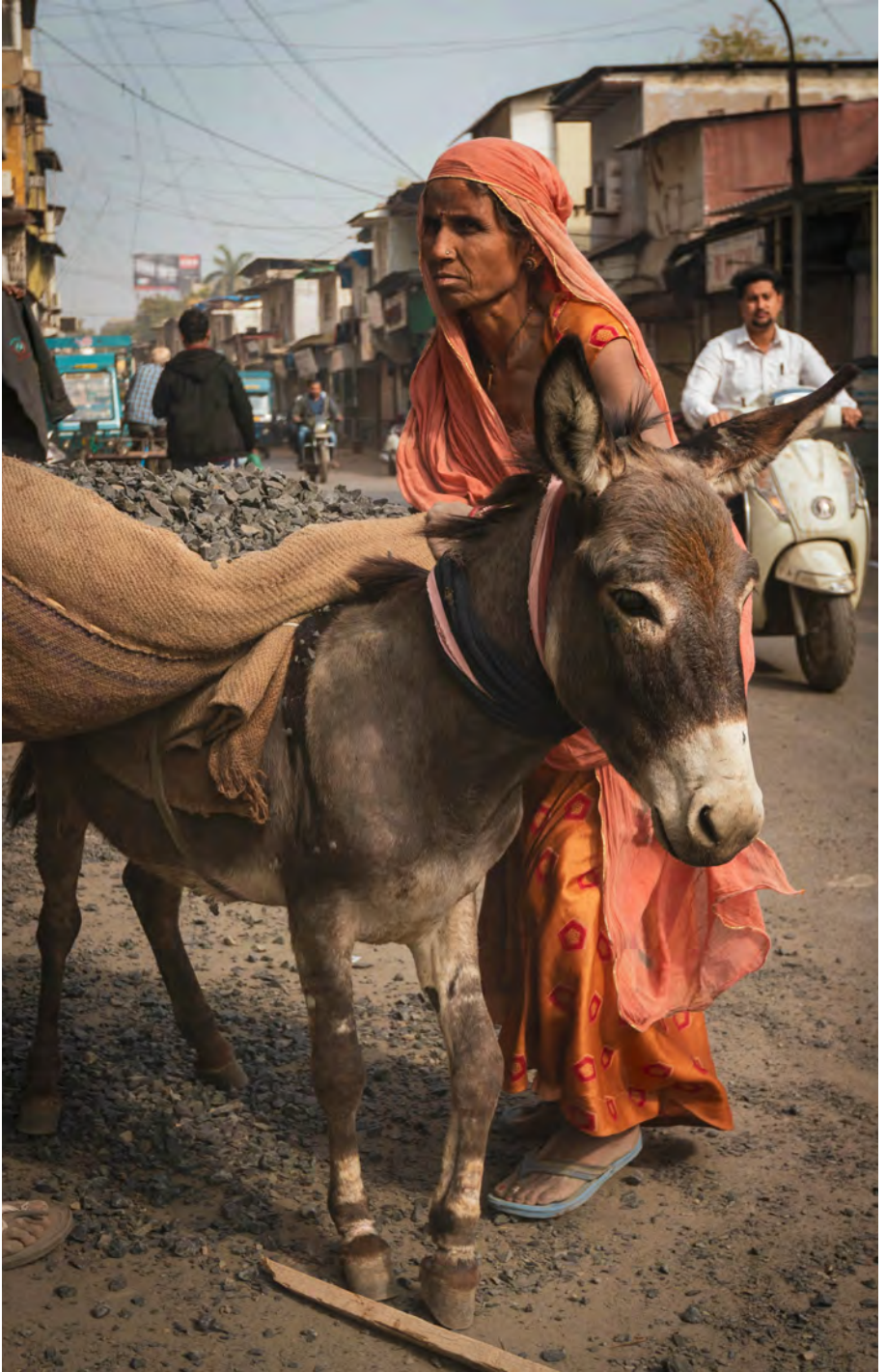
Kevin Li.



Naroda Wholesale Market (top): De Rui Lee.

Along Relief Road (above): De Rui Lee.

At Kalupur Kothi Rang Road (adjacent): De Rui Lee.





LTA
School of Beauty

Ravivari Bazaar.

Desmond Su.



Friends at Kalupur Darwaja (top): Jack Parmar.
Kalupur Darwaja (above): Jack Parmar.



Near Khanpur Gate (top): Jordan Mok.

Around Vastaghejji Ni Pol (above): Meng Sun.



A Family Picture, Village near Pir Atfzalkhan Masjid (top): Jie Wang.
Meeting, near Kavi Dalpatram Chowk (above): Jordan Mok.



Outside Dhal ni Pol, near Chakleshwar Mahadev Shiva Temple.

Jordan Mok.



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Kalapur Darwaja (top): Jack Parmar.

Around Dariyapur Gate (above): Meng Sun.

Near Kalapur Darwaja and Prem Darwaja (adjacent): Kevin Li.





Children Playing, by Manek Burj.

Rachel Dunne.



Gaekwad Haveli Road (top); Ridwan Naim.

Ram Gate (above); Ridwan Naim.



Kite String Dyer, near Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Kalupur: Iona Hoggarth.



Near Delhi Darwaja: Pamela Feng.



Manek Chowk.

Kevin Li.

हिंमत ज्वेलर्स
सोना-चाही तथा बुलियनना वडेपारी
GSTIN NO. : 24ACNPR4823P

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Sarangpur Darwaja (top): Matt Lau.

Near Khanpur Gate (above): Jordan Mok.



Lady Offering Chai, Bhadar Gate Settlement (top): Iona Hoggarth.
Prem Darwaja (above): Jack Parmar.



Near Kalupur Darwaja and Prem Darwaja.

Kevin Li.



Meeting, between Delhi and Shahpur Darwaja (top): Jamie Forde.

Between Delhi and Shahpur Darwaja (above): Jamie Forde.



Manek Chowk: Iona Hoggarth.





Gandhi Road, In the Morning.

Matt Lau.





Near Sarangpur Gate (top): Mingrui Zheng.

Near Pirana Water Pump (above): Vasiteia Sarri.



Near Shahpur Gate (top): Jordan Mok.

Near Raikhad Gate (above): Kunxi Zhuang.



Pols behind Dariyapur Gate.

Fangyu Yang.



Between Delhi and Shahpur Darwaja (top): Jamie Forde.
Prem Darwaja (above): Jack Parmar.



Fruit Seller at Gandhi Bridge (top): Pamela Feng.

Gandhi Bridge (above): Jordan Mok.



Manek Burj (top): De Rui Lee.

Vest Seller at Gandhi Bridge (above): Pamela Feng.



Seller at the Riverfront.

Jack Parmar.





Near Khanpur Rd (top): Jiazheng Liu.

Man Tending His Fire, Bhadar Gate Settlement (above): Iona Hoggarth.

Near Delhi Darwaja (adjacent): Pamela Feng.





Near Khanpur gate.

Desmond Su.





Near Delhi Darwaja (top): Pamela Feng.

Street Barbers, between Delhi and Shahpur Darwaja (above): Pamela Feng.

Man with Masala Chai, near Delhi Darwaja (adjacent): Pamela Feng.





Drawing, around Dariyapur Gate.

Meng Sun.





Around Rayakhad Gate.

Leo Xian





Son near Kalapur Gate: Rachel Dunne.



Father near Kalupur Gate: Rachel Dunne.



Between Delhi Gate and Shahpur Gate.

Desmond Su.





Father and Son, near Gandhi Bridge: Pamela Feng.



Hotel Security Guard, Ashram Road: Pamela Feng.



Pan Seller at Kalupur Darwaja.

Jack Parmer.



04

MARKETS

RIVERFRONT, NARODA, DELHI GATE



Naroda Fruit Market.

Drawing by Rachel Dunne.



Riverfront Market.

Desmond Su.



Riverfront Market.

Desmond Su.



Between Delhi and Shahpur Darwaja (top): Jamie Forde.
Riverfront Market (above): Qiwei Jiang.



Along Kalapur Kothi Rang Road (top): De Rui Lee.

At Naroda Fruit Market (above): De Rui Lee.

At Bhadra Sqaure (adjacent): Rachel Dunne.





Outside Naroda Fruit Market

De Rui Lee.





Kite Salesman, Kalupur Darwaja (top): Jack Parmar.

Kite Salesman, near Delhi Darwaja (above): Jamie Forde.

Kite Salesman, Kasturba Gandhi Road (adjaceny): Dorian Wiszniewski.





Naroda Fruit Market.

Rachel Dunne.



Riverfront Market (above): Desmond Su.





Riverfront Market (top): Yipeng Zhen.

Riverfront Market (above): Yipeng Zhen.

Merchant in Rani on Hajiro Clothing Market (adjacent): Matt Lau.



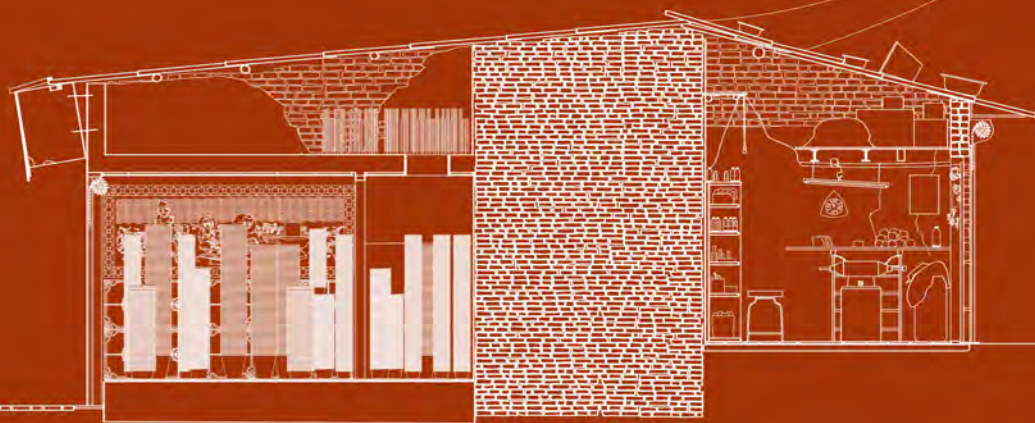
Riverfront Market.
Desmond Su.



05

SHOPS

STORES, WORKSHOPS, STALLS



Section through Shops near Delhi Gate.

Drawing by Vsevolod Yurchenko.



Woman with Clay Pot, between Delhi and Shahpur Gate.

Jamie Forde



Shop Sellers, near Delhi Darwaja (top): Pamela Feng

Tobacco Shop Seller, near Delhi Darwaja (above): Pamela Feng



Kite Seller, Kalupur Gate (top): Jack Parmar.

Laundry Campus, Riverfront (above): Meng Sun.



Recycled Electronic Seller , between Delhi and Shahpur Gate.

Jamie Forde.



Mechanics Workshop, between Delhi and Shahpur Gate (top): Jamie Forde.

Rickshaw Mechanic, between Delhi and Shahpur Gate (above): Jamie Forde.



Sugar Grinding Shop, near Delhi Darwaja (top): Pamela Feng.

Sewing, between Delhi and Shahpur Gate (above): Jamie Forde.

Binding, between Delhi and Shahpur Gate (adjacent): Jamie Forde.





Owner of Vegetable Shop, Ashram Road.

Pamela Feng.

आरोग्यमित्र
आरोग्यमित्र
आरोग्यमित्र





Shoe Shiner, Prem Darwaja: Kevin Li.





Flower Seller, near Sarangpur Gate.

Paul Patterson



Flower Merchants, near Shahpur Darwaja (top): Pamela Feng.
Metal Box Manufacture, near Prem Darwaja (above): Stephy Liu.



Rickshaw Mechanists, near Delhi Darwaja (top): Pamela Feng.

Rickshaw Mechanists, near Delhi Darwaja (above): Pamela Feng.

Barber, FD College Marg (adjacent): Paul Pattinson.







Nut Shop, near Delhi Darwaja (adjacent): Pamela Feng.

Kite Seller, around Dariyapur Gate (top): Meng Sun.

Preparation for Kite String, Relief Road (above): Stephy Liu.



Wheel repair shop.

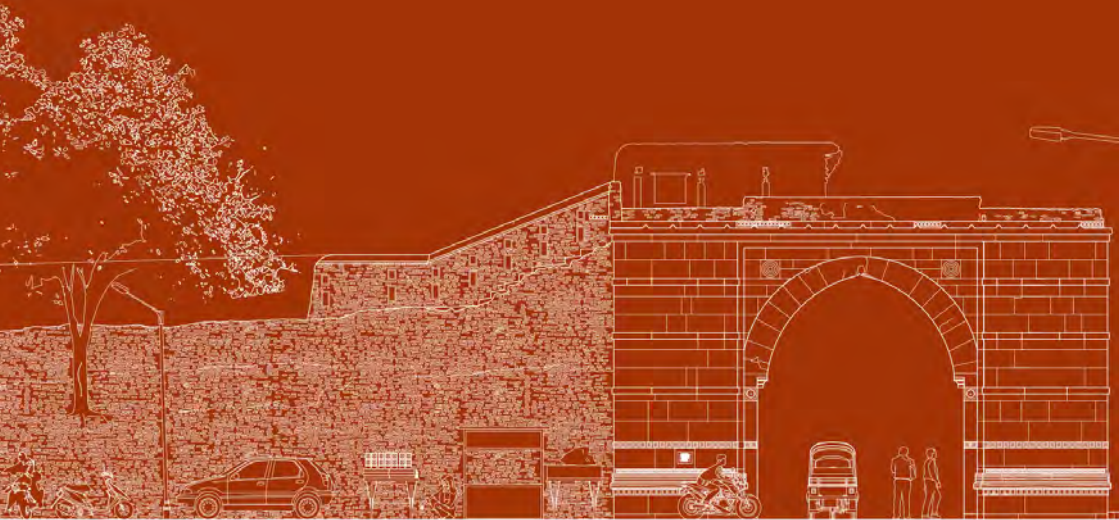
Dorjan Wiszniewski.



06

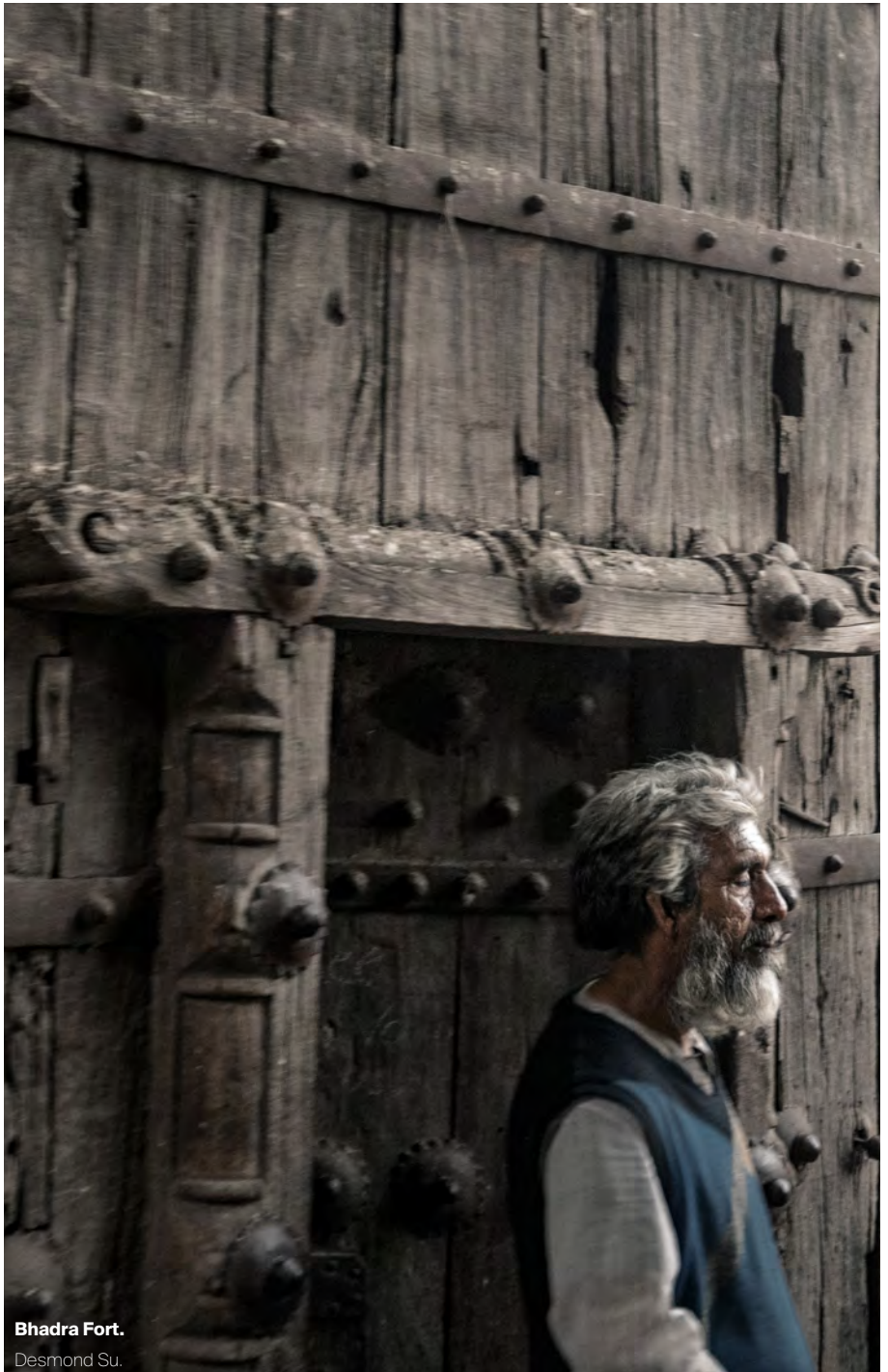
WALLS

OLD CITY GATES, NEW RIVERFRONT WALLS



Kalupur Darwaja Rear Elevation.

Drawing by Kevin Li and Jack Parmar.



Bhadra Fort.
Desmond Su.





Kalapur Gate (adjacent): Kevin Li.

Kalapur Gate (top): Jack Parmar.

Kahnpur Community, Kahnpur Gate (above): Julia Brookfield.



Brothers, Khanpur Gate (top): Julia Brookfield.

Elder Sister, Khanpur Gate (above): Julia Brookfield.

Near the Gate, Khanpur Gate (adjacent): Desmond Su.





Traffic Policeman, Jamalpur Gate.

Pamela Feng.



Near Delhi Gate (top): Jamie Forde.

Mr. Mohan Prajapati, Engineer of Technical Supervisor, Khanpur Gate (above): Jordan Mok.



Children with Kites, around Raikhad Gate.

Kunxi Zhuang.





Kalapur Gate: Kevin Li.





Riverfront West Bank.

Leo Xian.



A Man with Lari Cart, Raipur Gate (top): Mingrui Zheng.
Kulupur Gate (above): Jack Parmar.



With Masala Chai Tea at Kalupur Darwaja: Kevin Li.





Living inside the Wall, Khan Jahan Wall, around Jamalpur Gate.

Ridwan Naim.



07

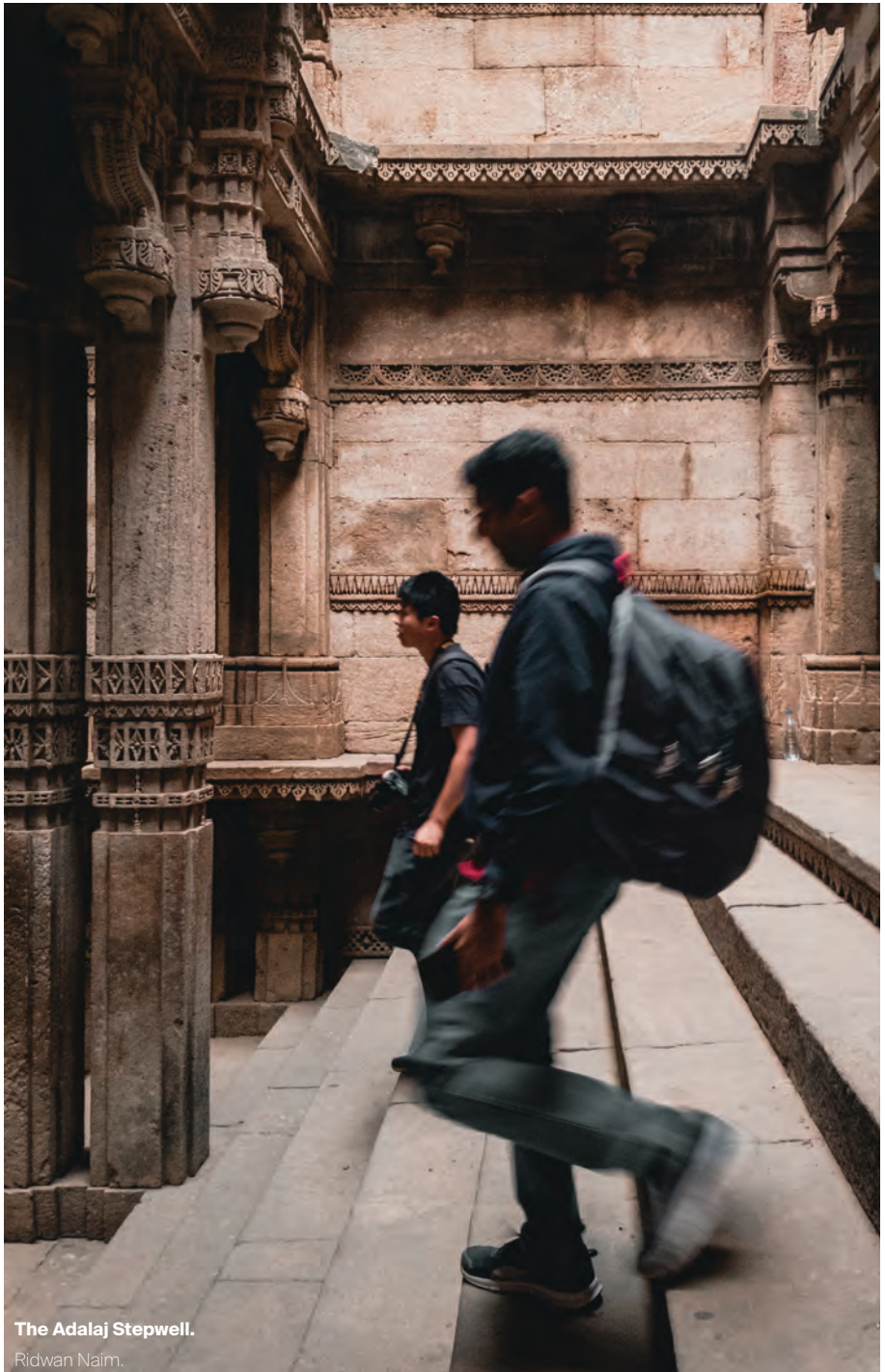
WELLS

STEP WELLS, WATER SIGHTS.



Vadaj Stepwell Section.

Drawing by Julia Brookfield and Desmond Su.



The Adalaj Stepwell.

Ridwan Naim.





At Vadaj Stepwell (adjacent): Desmond Su.
The Vadaj Stepwell Community (top): Julia Brookfield.
The Adalaj Stepwell (above): Iona Hoggarth.



Dada Hari Stepwell.

Jie Feng.





Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Kalupur.

Kevin Li.

BETWEEN AN EMPATHETIC EYE AND ENIGMATIC WALLS

A century after Patrick Geddes visited Ahmedabad, his empathetic eye returns from his city of Edinburgh seeking an answer to a question asked of him that still remains at large: what to do about the city's historic walls. Geddes' answer sought to avoid the obvious choice of his time between romantics who preserved such things and utilitarians who tore them down in the name of progress. Both he believed isolated the walls and made them a problem to solve. His approach was to contextualize the walls in a City Survey and bring it to the people in a Civic Exhibition. The walls, he believed, were not his problem to solve; they were for the people of Ahmedabad to resolve in an ongoing city-in-evolution. Of course, there was neither the time nor the will for such a generous people's approach in those impatient colonial times. But after a century of romantics and utilitarians on either side of India's independence that has left Ahmedabad and other cities across India gasping for air, water, and justice, there is an opportunity to 'begin again'—with the walls and an empathetic eye that has learnt to navigate with intersubjectivity.

Ecosophic Urbanism is not Geddes' Civic Survey, but it carries the same promise of contextualizing the city anew, this time in a field of intersubjective moments, in infrastructures of wetness, and by stepping into history, *pols*, books, Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, and "the rhythms of our study situations, both human and non-human." It is a contextualizing that speaks through images that forefront people with expressions, drawings of the wall that are lived, grafted onto, and supplemented, and text that is engaging, searching and open-ended. Such study and documentation can only promise what Geddes sought, namely, design proposals that do not solve problems but resolves a city-in-evolution.

Dilip da Cunha and Anuradha Mathur



Dance Floors Across a Dry City.

Julia Brookfield, Iona Hoggarth, Desmond Su.

The background of the cover is a detailed architectural site plan of Ahmedabad, India. It features a complex network of roads, streets, and building footprints. A prominent feature is a large, rectangular area with a grid pattern, likely representing a planned urban zone. The map is rendered in a light, muted color palette, with some areas highlighted in a slightly darker shade of brown or tan. The overall aesthetic is technical and urban.

ESALA 2021 VOLUME 4
Master of Architecture

**PARASITUATION [AHMEDABAD]:
“PAST, PRESENT AND POSSIBLE”**

AHMEDABAD

VOLUME 4

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Measuring of the Old City.

Rachel Dunne, Lily Gonlag, De Rui Lee.

PARASITUATION [AHMEDABAD]: “PAST, PRESENT AND POSSIBLE.”

In this volume, a reworking of Ahmedabad’s old and new walls through the reciprocal themes of ecosophy, wetness and dust takes a Geddesian prompt to produce architectural and urban scale speculations as part of a civic survey of “past, present and possible.” Some of the principles for our research and design speculation have been outlined already in Volume 1, *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]: People and Poles*. On page 14 of volume 1, I set out our intention to publish four volumes. In fact, we have only managed two: volumes 1 and 4 come together in this book; volume 2 is a stand-alone volume, successfully published, independently of ESALA, by Wedge Publications, Edinburgh, 2020; and Volume 3, regrettably, remains unpublished. Volume 2, *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]: Walls and Gates*, is a measured survey of the complete perimeter walls of Ahmedabad old city, undertaken by both students of the Master of Architecture Programme, 2019-2021, and the M Sc Architectural and Urban Design Programme, 2019-2020. As Robert Stephens notes in his commentary to Volume 2, we are not the first multi-cultural research team to undertake such a survey, but we are the first to make this readily accessible and “through the penetrating gaze of a mathematical survey.”

It has always been the intention, then, that all volumes be read together as part of the same civic survey of Ahmedabad. It is a pity that Volume 3 remains unpublished. However, in the ramifications of two global scale events – the murder of George Floyd (May 25 2020) and the rightful emergence of the various strands of the Black Lives Matter campaigns, and the horrors of COVID-19 – for various reasons, it became impossible to sustain the four-volume output. All the speculations and theses prepared in this volume 4 by the M Arch students should have been read along with those in Volume 3 by the M Sc Architectural and Urban Design students, 2019-2020: Ziyang Chen’s, Jie Fang’s, Jiahui Tong’s and Yajia He’s *Chabutro Ecologies*; Qiwei Jiang’s, Mingrui Zhang’s, Meng Sun’s and Fangyu Yang’s *Riverfront Jharohka Flowerings*; Jiazheng Liu’s

Collage Temporality; Stephy Liu's *Slicing an Egalitarian Sponge*; Chen Lyu's, Jie Wang's and Chuhuang Jiang's *Labyrinthine Cake Walks*; Vasileia Sarri's *Celebrating The Transverse (Through Fissures and Fragments)*; Yuanli Sha's *Pensile Fabricity*; Yanjie Song's, Jiajing Wu's and Lantao Wei's *Eco-Fabricity*; Tianyu Su's *Kite-Climate Calibrations*; and Wenzhe Wang's, Jieyu Chen's, Yunhe Du's and Yipeng Zheng's *Butterfly Communities*. Especially during the fieldwork phase, thankfully undertaken pre-COVID, the students of both programmes worked together. It is safe to say that they will have influenced each other. This intersubjectivity, communitarianism and encouragement to read beyond the limits of conventional knowledge systems go some way not only in decolonising the confines of curricula but also the way we approach the contexts into and from which we take our research and design practice.

We completely agree with Amit Chaudhuri's view on how to deal with decolonisation. It is important to see the issues it entails from the privilege of a "western perspective." As I have said previously, our work is in India and we listen to Indian voices:

*"The need for the kind of rethinking suggested by the word 'decolonisation' is urgent because of the opportunistic, constricted versions of history, culture, and science that have been passed on to us as our only available inheritance among possible modes of self-understanding. Yet we must locate this sense of increased constriction, and the moment leading up to the call to decolonize, not only in the continuing relevance of colonial histories, but in the three-decades-old bubble of globalization with its new enclaves of privilege: enclaves that not only include rich neighbourhoods but also academia. Decolonization can't, then, be just a corrective, or, for that matter, policy; it has to involve an embrace of the kind of seriousness that the bubble (which is by no means synonymous with the West) abhors. I'm interested in decolonization as an opportunity to enquire into the formation of cultural histories and modernity, to put to one side fundamentally unworkable categories (like 'East' and 'West'), and to learn to work outside the parameters that not only colonization but the European Enlightenment has given us. Decolonisation may need to express itself as policy; but it must also work imaginatively and, in a crucial way, challenge policy."*¹

We too are interested in decolonisation as an opportunity to work imaginatively through complex contexts.

¹ Amit Chaudhuri, Mission statement for the 6th Symposium in the 'Literary Activism' series: 'Decolonisation', 20th and 21st March 2021.

In preparing the book *Argufying Calcutta, Parasituation [Kolkata]* (Edinburgh: Wedge Publications, 2019), we were delighted to include Amit's Chaudhuri's essay, *Argufying: On Amarta Sen and the Deferral of Indian Modernity*. In Volumes 1 and 4 of *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]*, we are again delighted to have the contributions of important colleagues and scholars working between academic and cultural institutions in India, UK and the USA. Dilip da Cunha, Anuradha Mathur and Bashabi Fraser helped us move with our "empathetic eye" from Edinburgh's "Outlook Tower" into the rhythms of past, present and possible Ahmedabad. Therefore, we have chosen to end volume 1 with the words of Dilip da Cunha and Anuradha Mathur and begin Volume 4 with those of Bashabi Fraser.

Dorian Wiszniewski



Dying Strings in the Old City.

Kevin Li.

REFRAMING GEDDES

Dorian Wiszniewski's *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]: People and Poles (Volume 1)* is the first of a series of four books which is based on an intensive and meticulous study of 'cities' within the city of Ahmedabad, the capital city of Gujarat. The study was conducted by 5 staff members and 43 students from the Architecture Urban Design Studios at the University of Edinburgh, doing intensive field work in Ahmedabad. The book acknowledges the layers of history, the story of development and expansion through time and the rich legacies which continue to evoke the past and influence the present, making Ahmedabad a vibrant urban conglomerate, suggestive of a living unity of people(s) who dwell within the cityscape. The book includes an imagistic record of people and their neighbourhoods, documenting their passions, culture, professions and diverse ways of life, presented under indicative headings: 'Roofs,' 'Poles,' 'Markets,' 'Shops' and 'Walls' in 157 vivid photographs which build an empathetic and compelling narrative.

This review concentrates on the written section entitled 'People and Poles' (pp. 1-15), followed by what may be considered an afterword (p. 19) and finally, what reads as an epilogue, 'Between an Empathetic Eye and Enigmatic Walls'. The last section looks forward to the accompanying publication on *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]: Walls and Gates (Volume 2)* (referred to on p. 155) that is forthcoming.

Parasituation [Ahmedabad] acknowledges the validity of Amartya Sen's

warning of the danger of relying on the Western gaze with its 'Positional Objectivity' which stems from (i) exoticisation, (ii) magisterial privilege or (iii) curatorial interest in the Western scholar's perspective on and representation of India. However, it moves beyond Sen's three-pronged positionality to a consideration of intersubjectivity viewed through the lens of a cosmo-ecological sensibility that sees the connection between people, their livelihood and their neighbourhood.

The three key thinkers it interweaves in this urban narrative are Felix Guattari, Mahatma Gandhi and Patrick Geddes. It shows how Guattari's interlinking of human ecologies, relations and the environment echoes the Gandhian Satyagraha philosophy of the concentric rhythms of urban coexistence, which, in turn, finds a parallel in Geddes' life diagram in which he affirms the interdependence of people/folk, work and place which accounts for the connection between people and places through the generations.

This is where *pols*, the housing system - the neighbourhood where people live and interact become crucial to an understanding of the people who live in Ecosophic Urban spaces, helping us to identify the wisdom (*sophia*) of dwellings (*oikos*) as the benefits of the collective is recognised. While this study accepts the three cities which are identified as comprising Ahmedabad: the Old City, the industrial city and the newer western development across the Sabarmati river, it adds three further dimensions to the existing narrative. The first perspective includes the tanks, e.g., in Hindu temples (11th century) and the step wells and lakes in Mughal times (15th century), which exemplify how the people have been protected with water supplies so crucial to lives and livelihoods. The second extends to the *pols*, the 14 gates to the city and its surrounding wall, while the third moves outwards to the rural surroundings whose ecology is intimately linked to the urban centre. The fourth perspective is that of the affluent postcolonial reality which is linked to the western part.

The Geddesian approach is reinforced in the fifth view through the adoption of Bernard Kohn's theory of the city as a biopolis, informed and influenced by its ecological positioning and consequent response to its environment. This view is inseparable from the final and fresh perspective of viewing the significance of the Sabarmati river. Ahmedabad's para-

situation can be fully understood by not seeing the Sabaramati as just a river, but as *Sindhu*, a whole basin that fluctuates between wetness and dryness, between flowing water and predominant dust. This book makes a crucial proposition in which the temporality of the *Sindhu* is recognised, its rhythms anticipated and accepted without recourse to trying to build a permanent water supply, which could prove devastating for this city with its rich history and jeopardise an assured future.

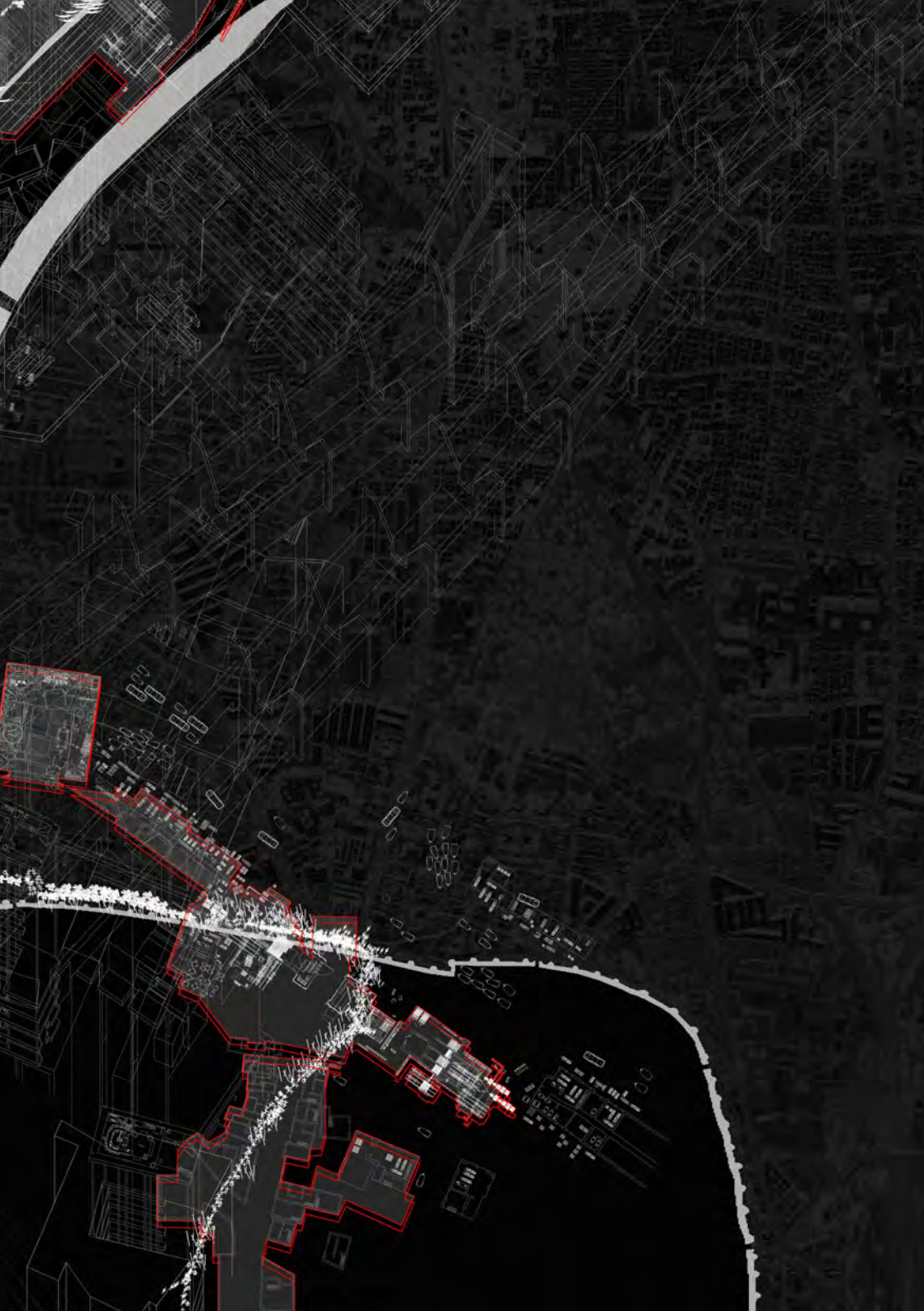
What this book exemplifies is a reframing of Patrick Geddes's philosophy of the *Outlook Tower* in Edinburgh, where Geddes had an exhibition which showed a paradigmatic view that started at the top from Edinburgh and widened its perspective to Scotland and then to the reality of multiple languages of expression. It then reached out to Europe and ultimately embraced the world, affirming the interrelatedness of the near and the far, the local and the global, the reliance of one on the other as people and place are intimately related, dependent on and influenced by the cosmo-ecological reality, which is also reflected in the city of Ahmedabad. Wiszniewski and his team have adopted the Geddesian principle of the *Outlook Tower*. They start with the rooftop gatherings as neighbours share the skies, flying kites which embody their aspirations. Then we descend to the families below in their homes, before we venture out with them onto the streets to note the intimacy of the neighbourhood. We then accompany them to the market and shops, the spaces for interaction, for trade and commerce, before we encounter the walls that hold the city within the city with its historically protective reality that signifies the continuity of the people and *pols*, connected to the widening urban sprawl and rural hinterland through its 14 gates. The reader can now look forward to the companion book, *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]: Walls and Gates (Volume 2)*, which will follow this thoughtful study on *Parasituation [Ahmedabad]: People and Pols (Volume 1)*.

Dr Bashabi Fraser, CBE
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 Director, Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies (ScoTs)
 Edinburgh Napier University;
 Honorary Fellow, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Edinburgh.



Territories Transmission Drawing.

Pamela Feng, Jamie Forde, Seva Yurchenko.



Site: West Sabarmati Riverfront Adjacent to Ashram Road, East Sabarmati Riverfront Adjacent to Rishi Dadishi Bridge, East Sabarmati Riverfront Adjacent to Sunday Market, Ahmedabad.

Programme: Crematorium and Wood Storage; Pol Housing and E-Rickshaw Workshop; Water Department Building and Market.

01



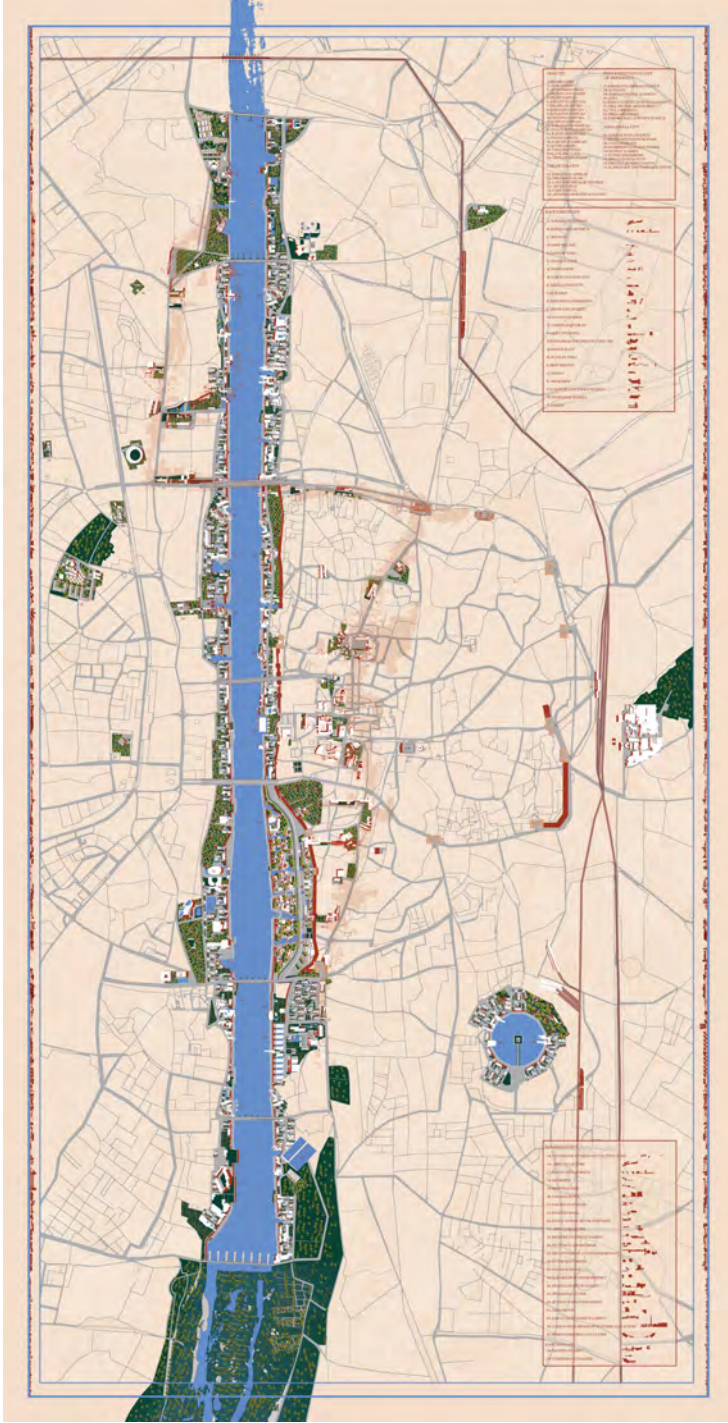
NARRATOLOGIES OF AHMEDABAD

THE SABARMATI CITY

PAMELA FENG | JAMIE FORDE | SEVA YURCHENKO

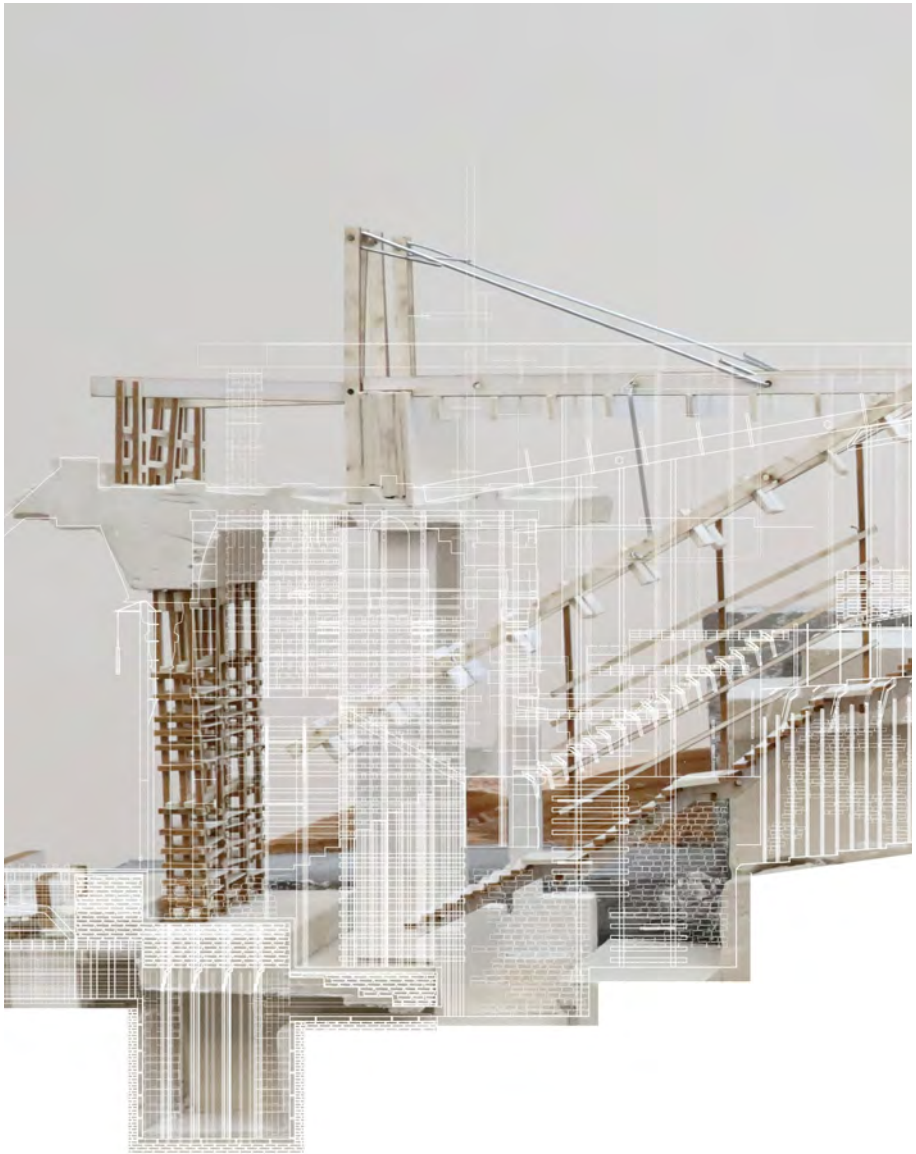
Narratologies of Ahmedabad is an architectural proposal based on the inquiry into stories that haunt the city. Traced through narrative figures, structures and places, as well as our own narratives, our proposals draw out a possibility for the future while remaining grounded in the enquired narratologies of past and present. As outsiders, we uncovered Ahmedabad through the event of The Salt March, an act of non-violent resistance led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930. Through the study of body and building posture the relationship between the perception of narrative event and architecture was discovered. The anatomy of narratological absence and presence resulted in a series of tectonic speculations in hauntology. Through exploration and measuring, the unique constitution of the present Ahmedabad was revealed. On a city scale, when put in series, the analyses of the various city territories display narratives of past visions for Ahmedabad, which today are sensed like disparate fragments strewn across the carpet of the city. The proposed Sabarmati Riverfront City affords the space to bring the fragments together constituting a new possibility for Ahmedabad.

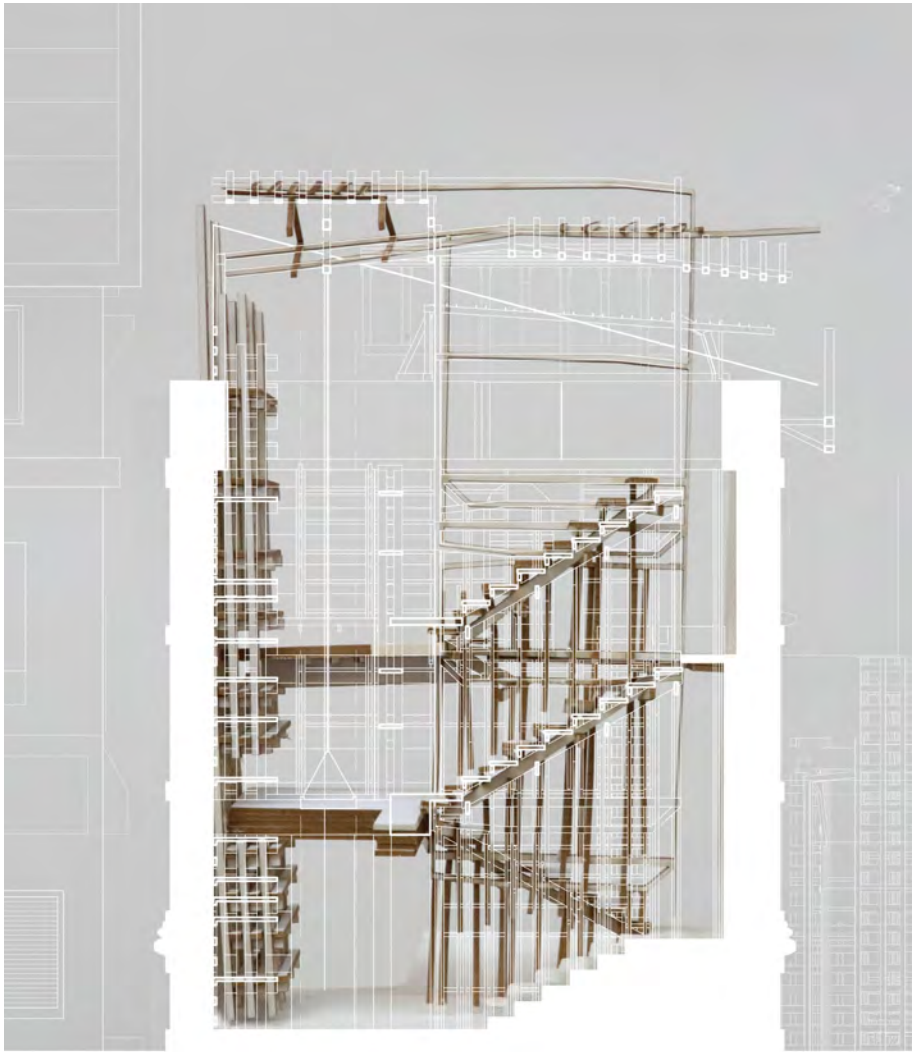
The new assemblage for the Sabarmati Riverfront City hauntology is tested technologically and ecologically through three projects: Dandi Crematorium, Sabarmati Pol and Sabarmati Business District offer programmes of life and death, dwelling and community, and economy and environment. The new series of enzymatic territories parasite as an architecture of non-violent resistance to neo-liberal compulsions along the riverfront wall to re-engage with wetness to reintroduce the liminality between city and Ganga.



Past, Present and Possible: Ahmedabad City Carpet.

Physical Carpet, 1607 x 825 (mm), printed on Chenille fabric (330gsm).



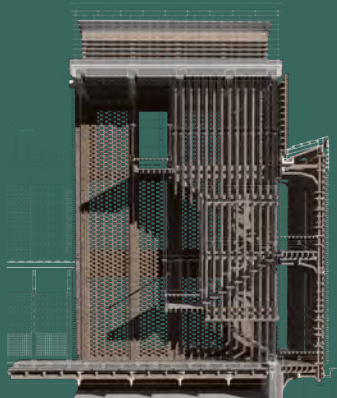
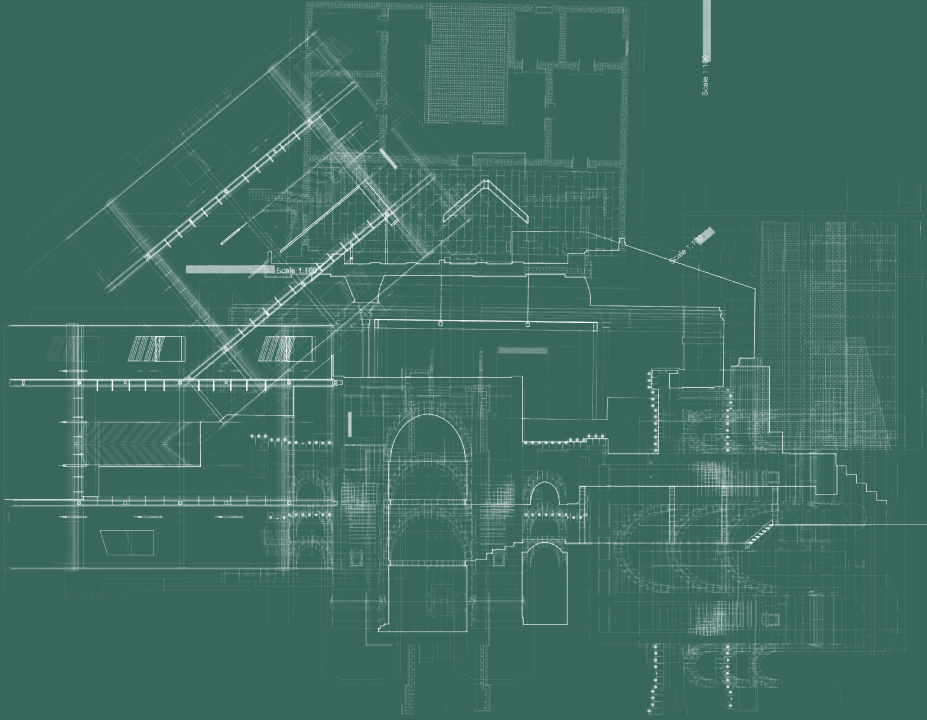


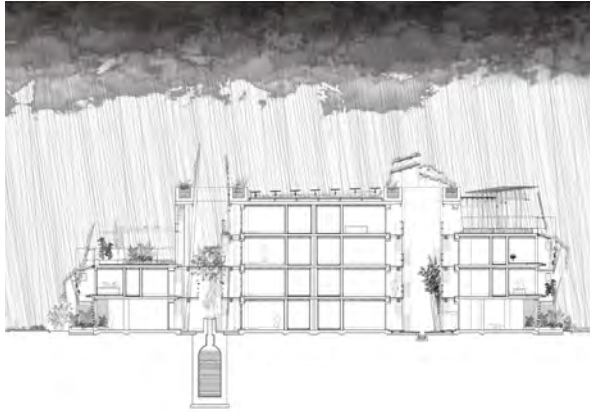
Sabarmati Ashram Laundry Model Collage. (adjacent)

Sabarmati Ashram Laundry Section (adjacent left)

Delhi Gate Market Section (adjacent right)

Delhi Gate Market Model Collage (above)





Three Agencies Plinth Models: Dandi Crematorium, Sabarmati Pol, Sabarmati Business District (adjacent)
Dandi Crematorium Monsoon Drawing (top)
Sabarmati Pol Monsoon Drawing (above middle)
Sabarmati Business District (above)

01a

NARRATOLOGY OF RITUALS

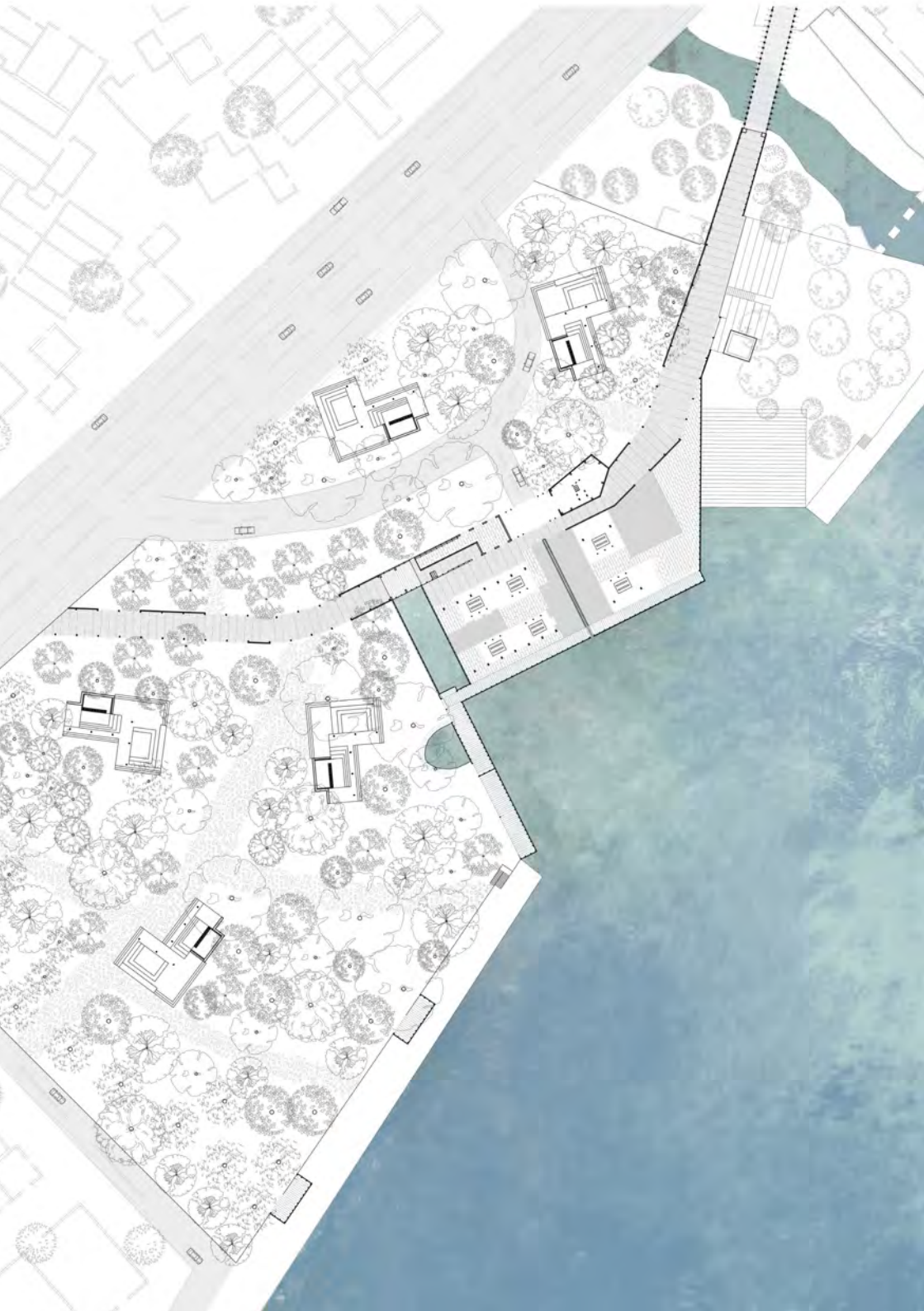
DANDI CREMATORIUM

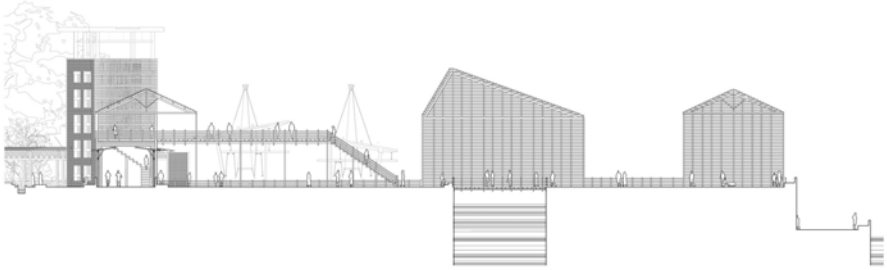
PAMELA FENG

Gandhi and his followers marched from the Ashram through Dandi Bridge and the crematorium site before entering the old city. Similar to how the Ashram Laundry parasites the riverfront and the Sabarmati River, Dandi Crematorium acts as a part of the Sabarmati Riverfront City proposal to re-engage the Sabarmati River with narratology of rituals and narratives of the in-between spaces.

Indian rituals are always respected, and they never completely disappear. In Hinduism, the belief is that life is based on illusion of being in *samsara*, which is conditioned by *karma*. Yet souls are able to liberate from *samsara* by cremation. Cremation is a part of the rituals that reincarnate souls to the next level, to give the souls freedom from their past lives' sins. In this rite of passage, it requires the combination of fire and water – fire for escape, and water to rebirth. Therefore, dying in Hinduism is not the end of life, it is the beginning.

Carrying this main narrative, this project aims to initiate a rebirth city by re-establishing the relation between the city of living and the city of death through re-engagement with water, boundaries and ecology. The in-between condition of the living and the dead makes up a series of soft boundaries that rely on each other. The new range of liminal transpositions across the territory include the proposal to plant large areas of local trees. Some are coppiced as demand to provide the firewood, and yet, they provide the space for the living, shaping a park with chai stalls and places of rest and repose.







Pavilion Section (adjacent top)

Wood Tower and Office Elevation (adjacent middle)

Dandi Crematorium Riverfront View (adjacent)

Crematorium In-Between Render and Cremation Render (above)

01b

SATYAGRAHA AND THE SABARMATI

SABARMATI POL

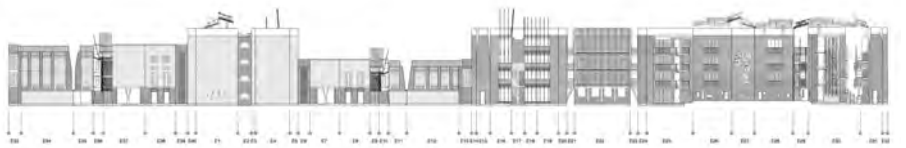
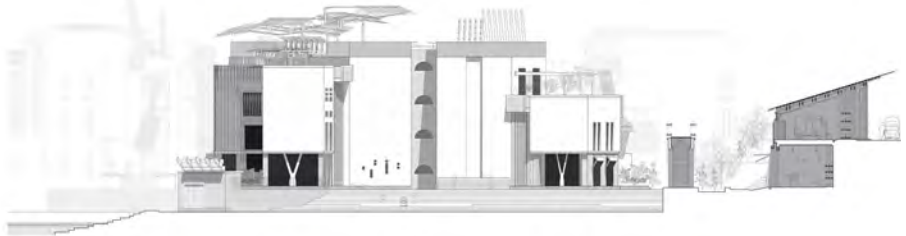
JAMIE FORDE

Having crossed the open banks of the Sabarmati The Salt March entered the brimming old city. The urban thickness that Gandhi and his followers met were the *pol*s, the housing typical to the walled city of Ahmedabad. Derived from the Sanskrit word *pratoli* meaning to enter an enclosed area or the Greek word *polis* connoting a city of common good, the characteristics of the vernacular housing align with both these conceptions. The communities within each *pol* are tied together through a commonality, usually a religion, a profession or caste; perhaps this shared relationship could be of something equally connective?

Narratologies of Ahmedabad provides a series of strategic connective social and architectural tissues for *Sabarmati Pol* using a devised hauntology of The Salt March as the basis for developing a transpositional tectonic language. While this programme could not previously exist on the temporal Sabarmati, the riverfront wall provides a new space for parasitic intervention of liminality. This proposed architecture is of thickness, thresholds, texture and lushness, antithetical to the current condition. The territory mediates the two adverse infrastructures of the stagnant Sabarmati and polluted road through the programme as a FABB Agency. *Sabarmati Pol* is a community with an e-rickshaw conversion workshops [FACTORY], market and community space [AMENITY], contemporary *pol* dwellings [BED] and systems of wetness [BUTT].







Rickshaw Workshop Render (adjacent top)
 Sabarmati Poi Riverfront Collage (adjacent)
 Poi Courtyard Render (top)
 Sabarmati Poi Elevation (middle)
 Building Elevation Study (above)

01c

HAUNTOLOGY OF IN-BETWEEN

SABARMATI BUSINESS DISTRICT

SEVA YURCHENKO

This project is one of many transpositions of the Delhi Gate posture-studies, made to commemorate the day of The Salt March, onto the riverfront. The area of the riverfront site chosen for speculation is a raised landfill positioned between two riverfront development areas – the riverfront promenade and the Sunday Market. The design cuts through the territories to establish a set of liminal agencies of mutual parasitism: of neo-liberal global economic expansion curtailed and redefined by the Satyagraha of community economies.

Vertically, the creeks create a series of boundaries between business gardens and Sabarmati promenades, where the office buildings of different scales reach to the Sabarmati to gather the wetness of the pools. The vertical layering culminates with the crowns of the trees and Photo Voltaic panel roofs that reach out for the sun to gather the solar energy necessary for the transmission of wetness and cooling of the architecture.

Satyagraha marches through the territories creating a series of tectonics of breathing surfaces, that separate spaces, form enclosures and yards and create liminal conditions between secluded corporate offices, public amenities and folk and entrepreneur interaction places. As the architecture of the Business Gardens reaches to the Sabarmati, the liminal programmes of Markets, event spaces, auditoriums and flood-planes merge, bridging the effusive layering of Ahmedabad Narratologies and transposing the boundaries of territories as extended thresholds of reciprocal transmission rather than absolute limits and stand-offs between different cultural forces.





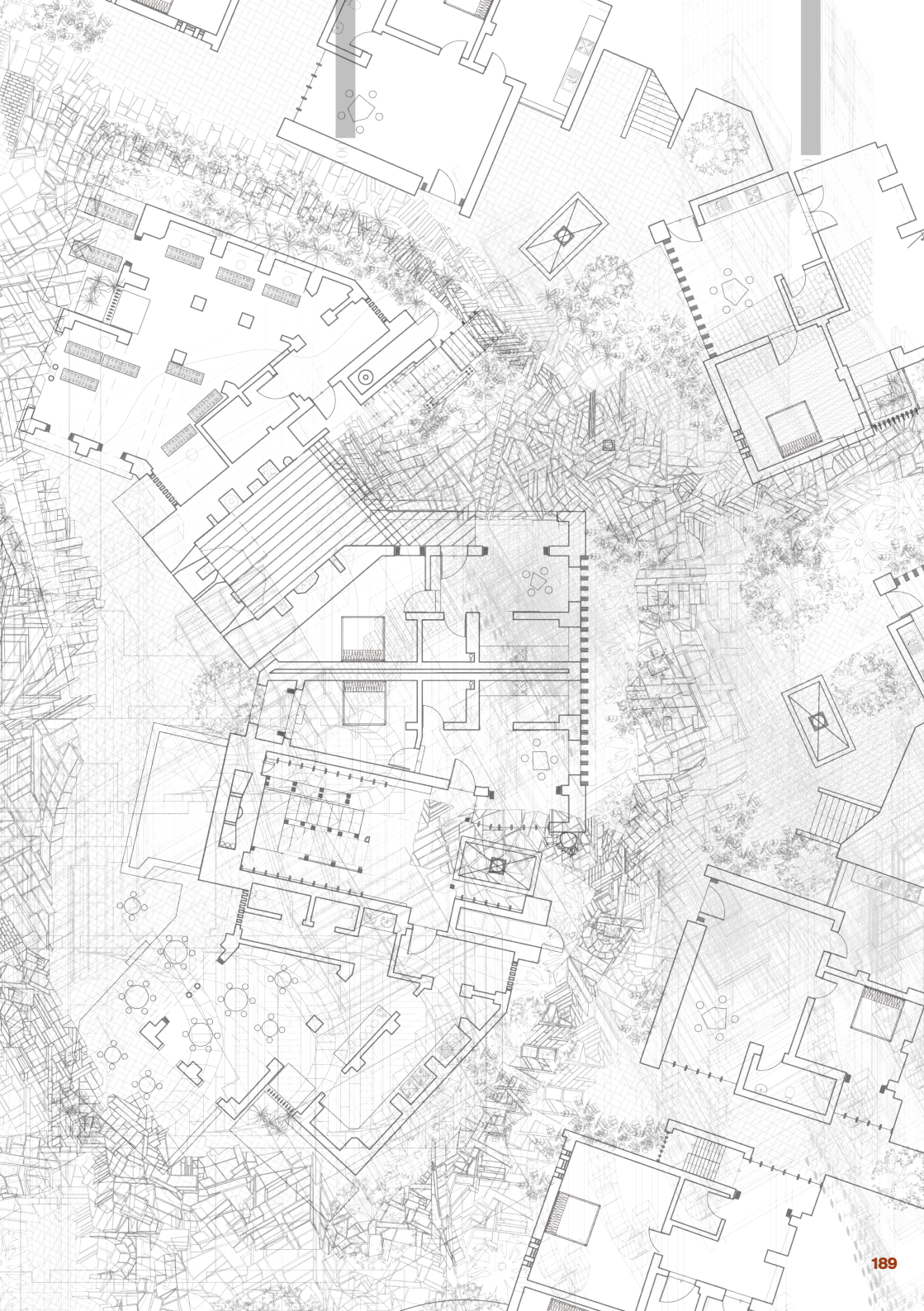


Business Garden and Water Department Section Series (adjacent top)
Sabarmati POI Riverfront Collage (adjacent)
Water Department Building Render and Business Garden Render (above right)



Sabarmati Pol: Hauntological Plan.

Jamie Forde.



Site: East Sabarmati Riverfront adjacent to Sunday Market, Ahmedabad.
Programme: College.

02

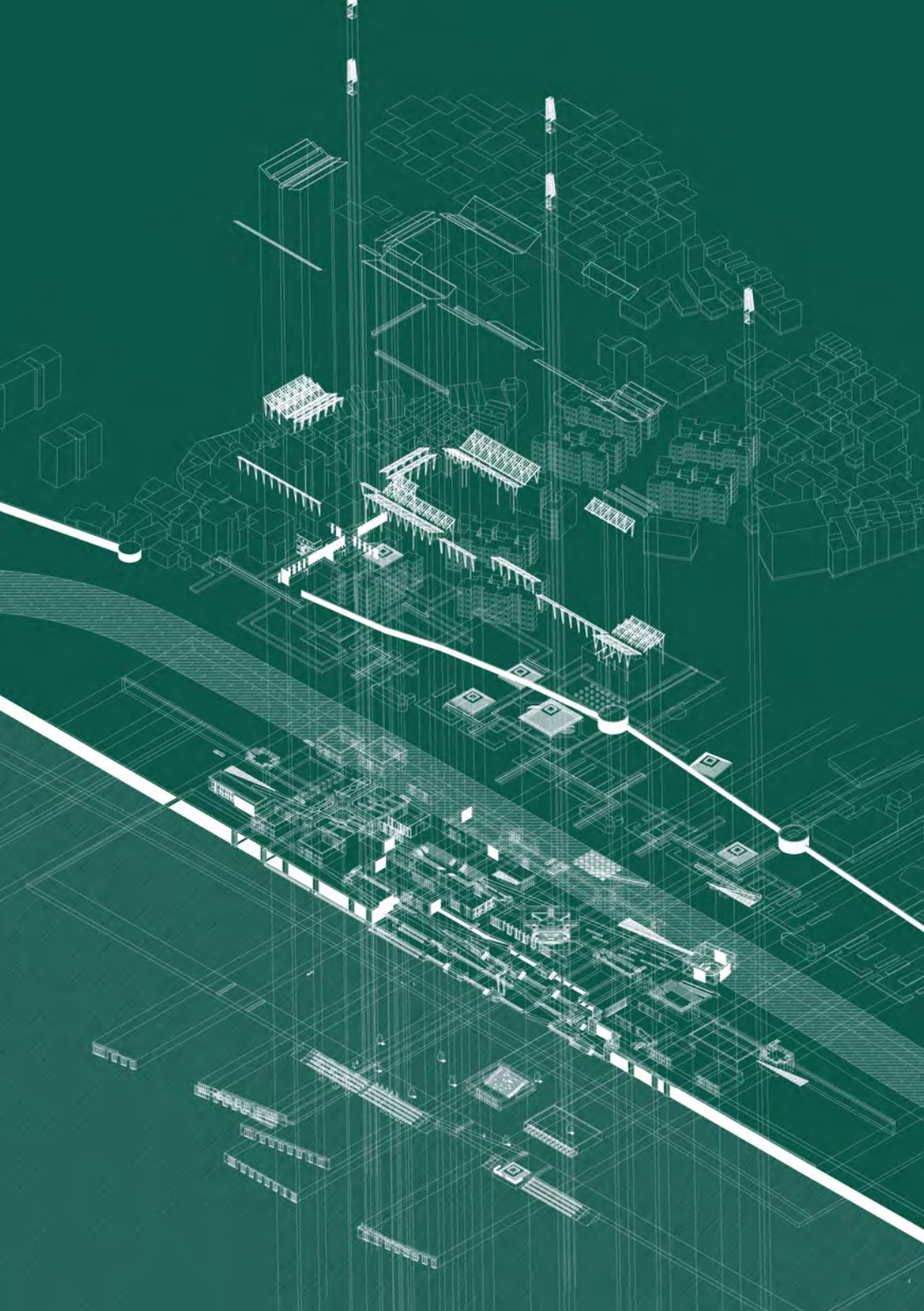


PERMEABILITY & PERFORATION

MAT-CAMPUS S

YUCHEN LIU

There is an urgent need for Ahmedabad to provide public spaces for community building and public events. In this project, the intensity of the liminal conditions of the pols found in the Old City is transported to the Sabarmati Riverfront Project, where the vast openness of its currently empty banks might be seen to offer sites for the future higher education of its residents. By proposing a college aimed at locals, the project elaborates the idea of learning, landscape and materiality. The city of Ahmedabad has dense buildings, many stepwells and a range of richer and poorer areas. The objective of this design is to investigate ways to bridge the relationship between different citizens, to the effect of greater shared intellectual and civic prosperity. The project will prepare a blueprint for Indian students which focuses on education equity and cultural renaissance. As such it will connect the range of economic and cultural situations; poor and rich, old walls and new walls will now co-operate in the same civic spaces. The project is distributed over a large area of the riverfront as a Mat-building. It was conceived as a national institution that would offer progressive education to students from all communities in India. My objective is to reconnect with the Ocean of Wetness – a way of thinking environment that employs the dynamic conditions of all seasons and all parts of the hydrological cycle rather than by either privileging or condemning one. Following traditions of Ganga, water plays an important role as a material that defines thresholds, creates atmosphere and responds to the rainy context. Inspired also by the Mughal manuscript illustration and its relationship to water, the building connects to the river step typology, creating different ways to access water. The design proposes the vertical positioning of different layers of water for the interior environment, using the stepwells' functions of human congregation and water source management.







Design Plan. (adjacent)

Monsoon Season Renders (above top)

Riverbank Monsoon (above)

Site: East Sabarmati Riverfront, near Raikhad Gate, Ahmedabad.
Programme: College.

03



PLACING A MAT BETWEEN CITY WALLS

MAT-CAMPUS N

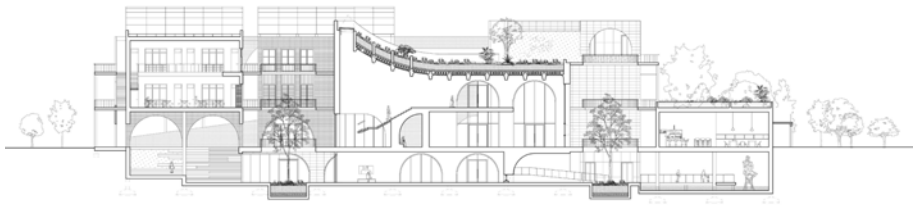
KUNXI ZHUANG

Stretching across the old and new walls, the mat breaks the barrier between inside and outside, the old city and new city, connecting all through the landscape of the park along the river.

The project reproduces principles of mat-building, which has its own logic of growing—the module. The flexible exchange of internal and external environment, continuous flow line, high density of horizontal courtyard and close relationship between the city are four features of the mat-building. The introduction of mat-building will enhance the communication between the old city and the new city, and increase greening opportunities for the whole city. The plants in the high-density courtyards bring moist ecological climate and the biological filtration technology for water reuse. Thus the ‘wetness’ of Ahmedabad is realized as an environmental cooling and ecological and biodiversity gain. In addition, inspired by the old walls, thick walls are set as perimeter structures to the new mat-buildings. The thick wall is regarded as an architectural space, which includes the ground, traffic, seats, doors and windows as environmental mediators between inside and outside. This in-between space not only enriches the functions, but also brings coolness to the interior.

It is a campus designed for both city and college residents. Most of the building units are classrooms, while the building that straddles the old and the new walls offer public facilities. The walls blend: not only do the mat-building walls break the relentlessness of the riverfront walls, the new rhythmic structures also carry forward the charm of the old city walls.







Design Section Series. (adjacent top)

Classroom Axonometric (adjacent)

Perspective Renders (above)

Site: East Sabarmati Riverfront adjacent to Sunday Market, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Dyeing Factory, Printing Workshop, Lab, Dwelling and Markets.

04



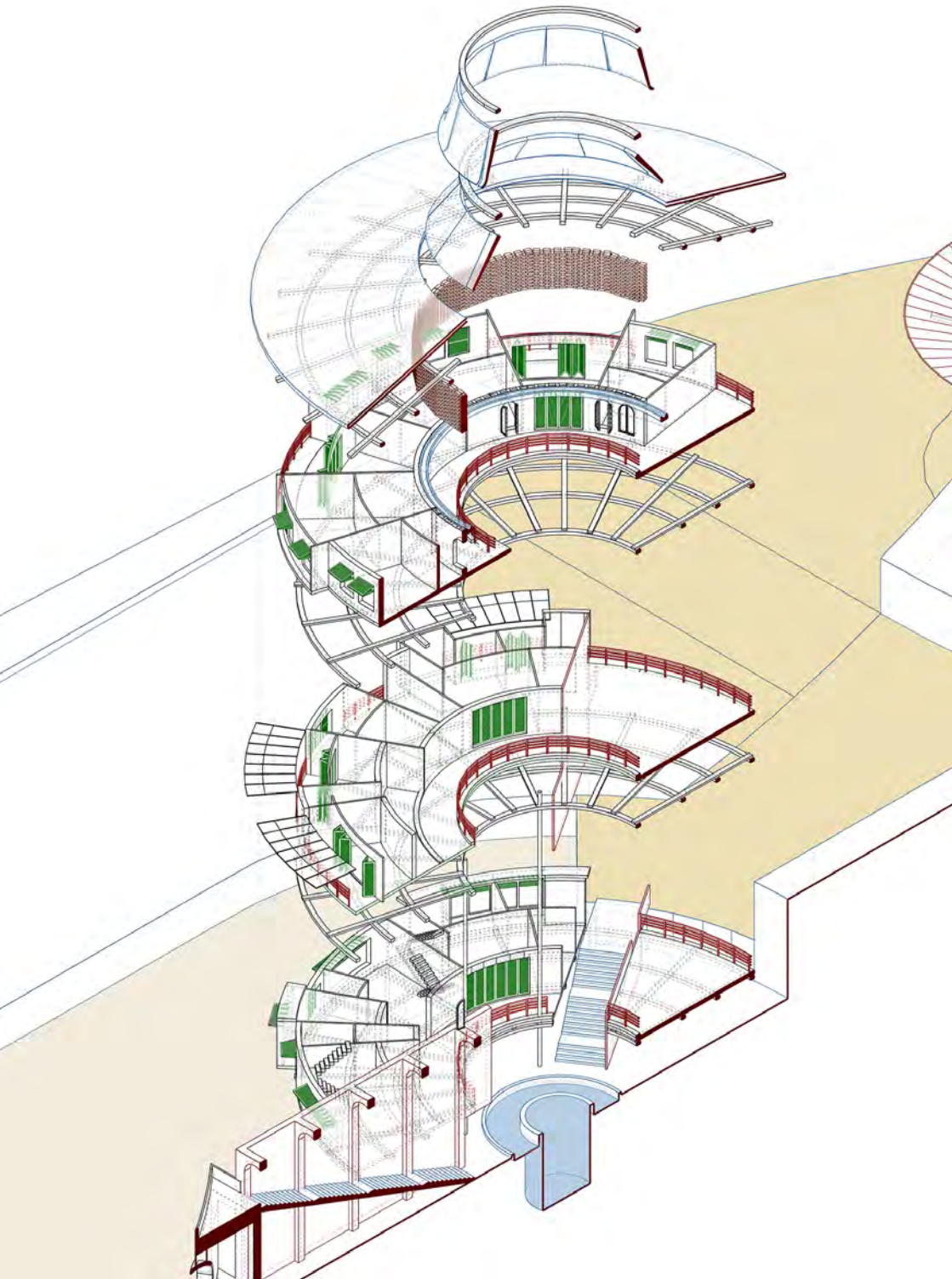
RETURNING TEMPORALITY TO AHMEDABAD'S FABRIC

YABING LIU

Ahmedabad is a refuge from the surrounding hot and arid landscape. The Old City Walls have been gradually eroded, with only fragments left in some places. The Sabarmati Riverfront Project (2005) is a concrete enclosure, which, although protecting the city from flood, cuts off the interconnection of the river and city. The patterns of culture and fabric-making in Ahmedabad emerge from the rhythms, flows and flux of weather and water. This rhythmic extension has been interrupted by the New Riverfront Walls.

Unlike the centralized modern textile factories in the surrounding areas, much of the fabric-making, printing and embroidering in the old city are still working in a family-based hand-craft fashion. with efficiencies compromised by limited water, drainage and transportation access. Each of these factors points to an opportunity to re-integrate the three ecologies: the environment, social relations and human subjectivity.

The New Riverfront Walls in this project now embody agencies like the existing Fabric Market between Panch-Kuwa and Sarangpur Gate on the Old City Wall. This dialogue between the old and new world opens a working relationship between the Old City and the Sabarmati River. Factories, Workshops, Dwellings and Stepwells are closely combined to form a complete water circulation system of river filtration, rainwater collection and sewage filtration. Surrounding areas benefit. The enzymatic growth of agency territories combined with the ecologically arranged water system gradually permeates into the old city and, simultaneously, activates the life of the city and the vitality of fabric craftwork.







YABING LIU | RETURNING TEMPORALITY TO AHMEDABAD'S FABRIC

Sabarmati Riverfront S.E.T. [FABB] Agencies. (adjacent)
The New Visualisations of Sabarmati Riverfront (top)
Elevation From The Sabarmati River (above)



Urban Fragments: Bharatanatyam Institutions along Sabarmati West Bank.

Julia Brookfield.



Site: West Sabarmati Riverfront adjacent to the Darpana Academy of Performing Art, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Theatres and civic institutions for Bharatanatyam Dance.

05



DANCE FLOORS AND AQUA FISSURES

THE SABARMATI THEATRE FOR BHARATANATYAM DANCE

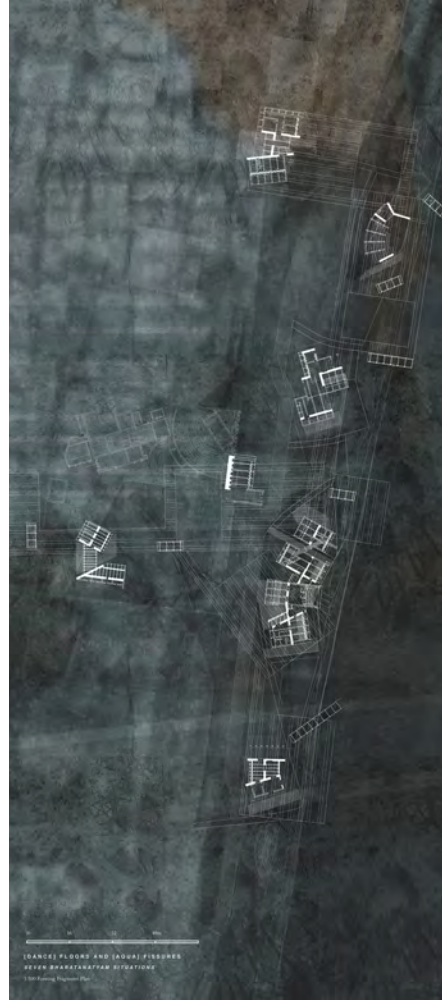
JULIA BROOKFIELD

Dance Floors and Aqua Fissures proposes an architecture for the performance of the Indian classical dance, Bharatanatyam, by taking a mantle from the narrative gestures of *Hand* and *Heel* which are used to communicate a Bharatanatyam performance.¹ As part of the translation of gesture, architectural interventions become a repository for the passing of knowledge of the Bharatanatyam language.

The 2016 Sabarmati Riverfront project laid 11.25 km of concrete bulwark and converted Ahmedabad's once meandering river edge into automotive infrastructure.² As part of the imprint of the project, the stage of The Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, a national sanctuary for the practice of Bharatanatyam, was severed from the river. In response, this thetic enquiry roots from the green marble dance floor of Darpana, fissuring and hanging architecture which reconnect to the Sabarmati.

The gestures of *Heel* and *Hand* become a framework for invention. The *Heel*, as that of the ground, and the *Hand*, as that of the sky, operate across scales and inform the proportionality of both spaces and systems. Hence, the wondrous narrative of Bharatanatyam brings together a range of forces to the Sabarmati riverfront in gestural blurring of wetness.

¹ Mrinalini Sarabhai, *Understanding Bharatanatyam* (Ahmedabad: A Darpana Publication, 2018), 1-8.
² Amrita Shah, *Ahmedabad, A City in The World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 51.





The Green Marble Dance Floor. (above)
Gesture of Hand and Heel (adjacent top)
A Stage over the Sabarmati (adjacent)



Hand: That of the Sky

Heel: That of the Ground



Site: Vadaj Stepwell, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Dancing Academy and Community Centre.

06



DANCING IN THE NEW “OASIS”

DESMOND SU

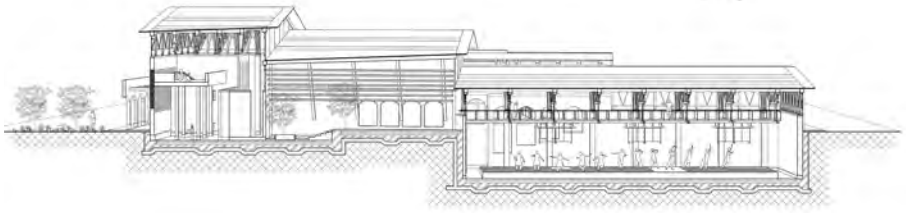
Between the rhythms of the regional Bharatanatyam dance and the flux of the Sabarmati river we can sense how Ahmedabad’s specific geographical location has characterised cultural life in the city. However, with the new urban revolution, the city is now enclosed by the concrete infrastructures of river, roads and metro; this is a modernisation that has distorted the long-nurtured way of Indian living, particularly affecting Ahmedabad’s presentation and engagement with water.

In response, this project embodies the India classical dance, Bharatanatyam, as the agency for promoting discussion on the three ecologies: the environment, social relations and human subjectivity. As the gestural language of Bharatanatyam dance already embeds the cosmological and everyday living practices of India people through its performance, so this project opens itself to the possibility of a hand gesture translated into architecture harnessing a new relationship to water. The tectonic translation of hand gestures becomes the blueprint for integrating new and existing situations of Ahmedabad.

The thesis enquiry sees a relationship between the green marble dance floor of Darpana Dancing academy and the Vadaj Stepwell: dance springs water and the well springs dance. The enquiry re-introduces the regional heritage of dancing and a rescued language of water into a situation of dryness to form a culturally enriched association of dance, water and domestic living. With a simple (narrative) hand gesture, the stepwell water source fecundates vegetation, domestic living, school, theatre and workshops to form a different ecological urban arrangement.







The Site of Vadaj Community. (adjacent)
Dancing School of Vadaj Sections (top)
Dancing Floor Render (above)

Site: Ravivari Bazaar, Sabarmati East Bank, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Kalakruti ni Pol: Women's Refuge and Textile Guild.

07



[DANCE] FLOORS AND [AQUA] FISSURES

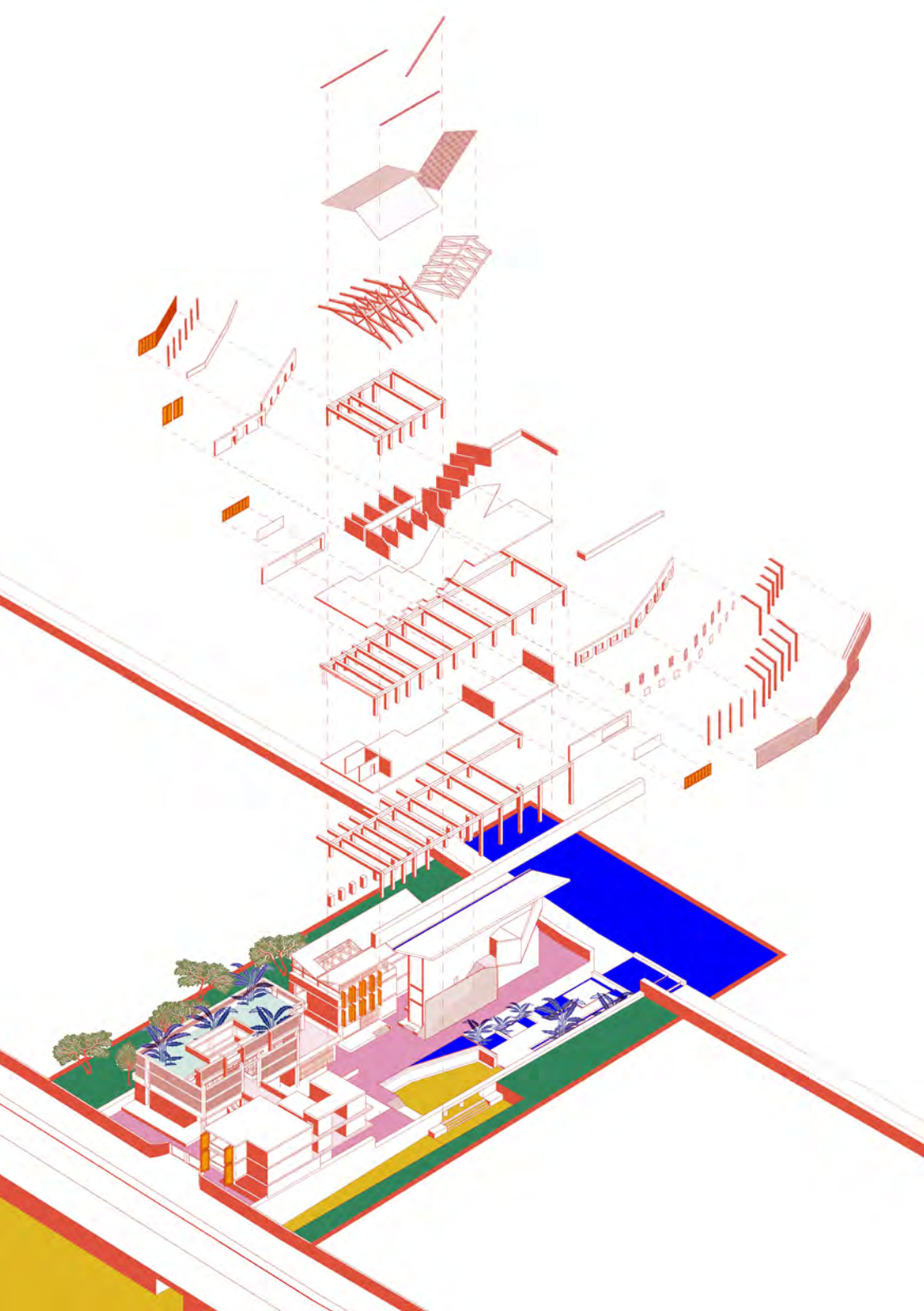
THE REFUGE & RE-SATURATION OF THE RAVIVARI RIVER BANK

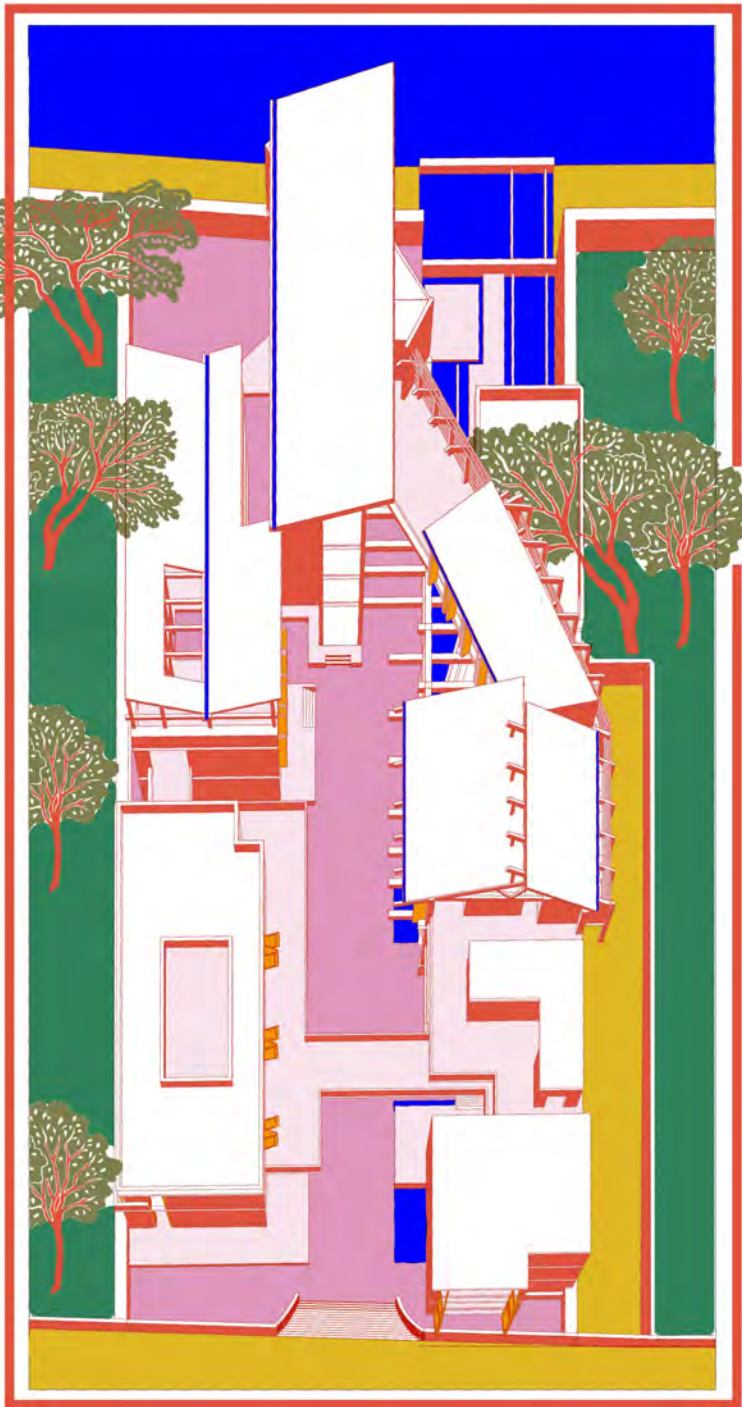
IONA HOGGARTH

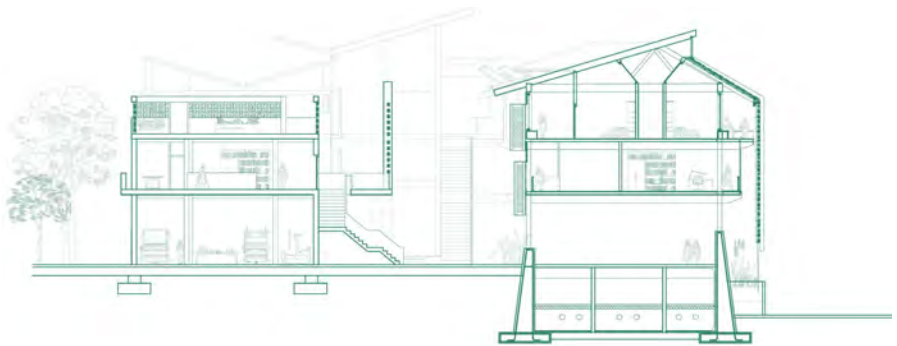
The *Kalakruti ni Pol* contains an agency rooted in the social sustainability and ecosophic spatial quality instilled within Ahmedabad's Old City architectural vernacular. The *pol* is an architecture of containment, of defence but also community, interdependence, culture and sanctuary. The *Kalakruti ni Pol* is a women's refuge for those suffering domestic abuse. It is a hub for producing and trading traditional fabric crafts; it is a place that promotes the education of critical skills that will empower economic independence while keeping alive textile traditions under threat by the rising Gujarat fast-economy practices.

Architectural stitching now closes the desiccated seam between Ahmedabad's new and old city-walls, Ambdavadis, and the watery artery of their city. The project sits between the Sabarmati and the centuries long-established Ravivari Bazaar. With its prominent purchase on the Eastern bank, this urban speculation represents a new phase of the textile legacy and counterbalancing landmark to the associations of cotton mill owners and the metropolitan city they represent on the Western Bank.

The project tests an ecosophic approach to urbanism and placemaking: an ode to thresholds, and a reimagining of ground, it explores the balance of passage versus enclosure to elevate the harmony of many independently moving parts to function as a collective agency; and it is safe and fortified rather than imprisoned. The design aims to enable Ahmedabad's people to reclaim and re-saturate the riverbank as a vital part of their cultural and commercial landscape.







Kalakruti: The Block Print. (adjacent)

Guided Edges of the Ravivari Riverbank; Integrating Agencies of Craft and Public Amenity (top)

Meticulous Chaos; Concept Drawing (middle)

1:50 Section through Refuge Courtyard (above)

Site: West Sabarmati Riverfront in between Nehru Bridge and Swami Vivekanand Bridge, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Textile Museum, Library, Youth Centre and Gallery.

08



FOREGROUNDING AHMEDABAD

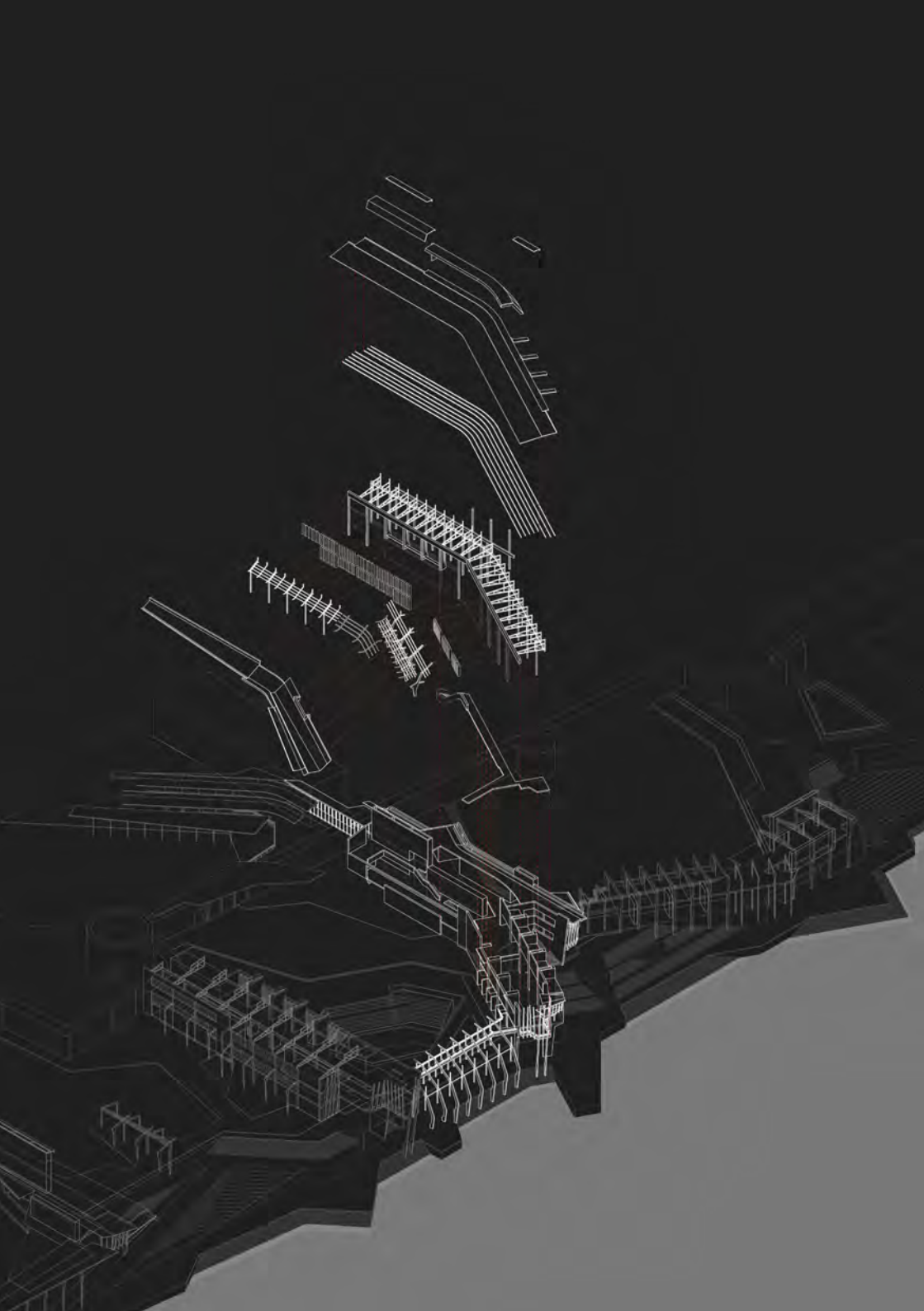
DISASSEMBLY AND REASSEMBLY OF THE OLD AND NEW WALLS

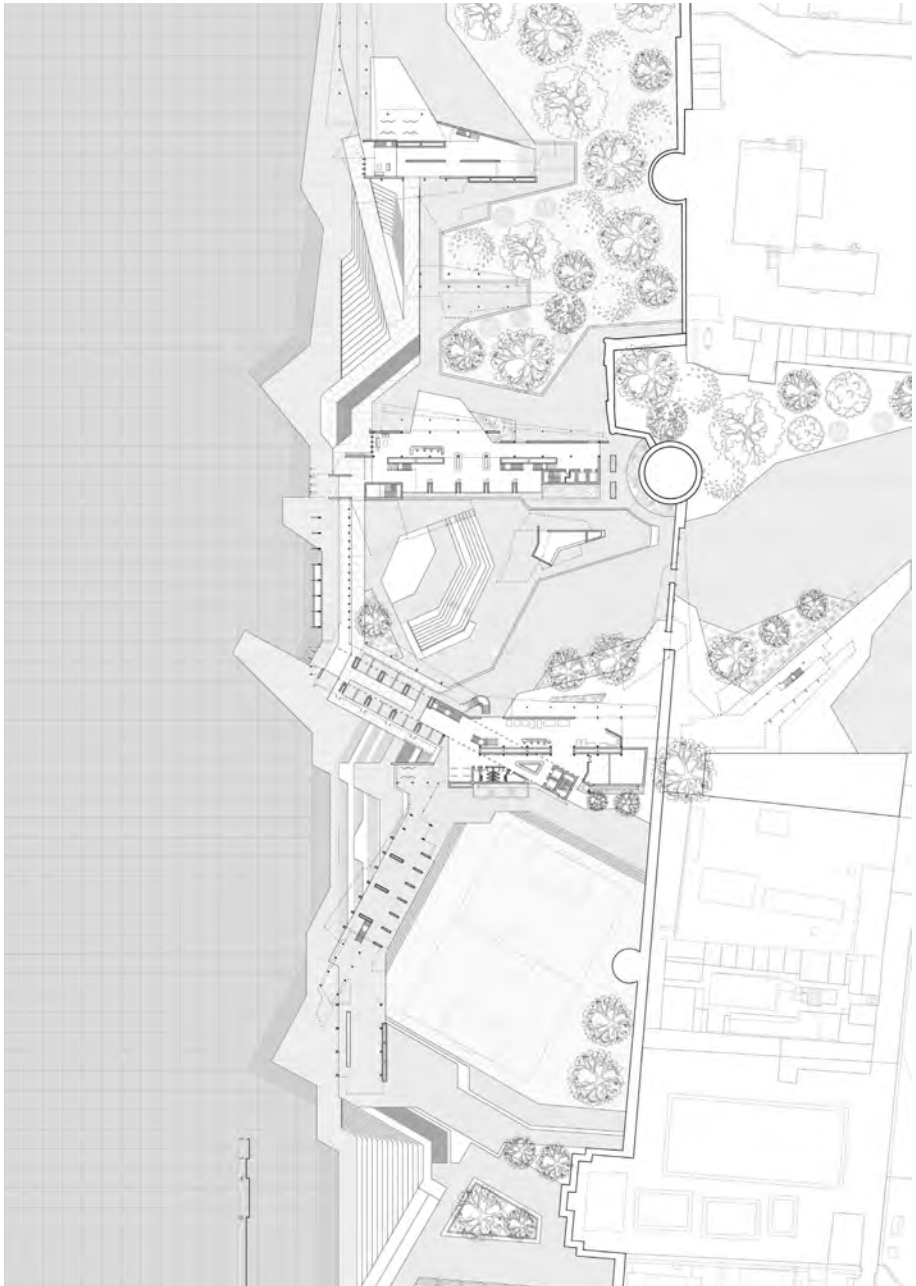
MATT LAU

Foregrounding Ahmedabad is a project of reuniting the Sabarmati River and the Ahmedabad old town through water and architecture. A Hindu mythological notion suggests the goddess Ganga fell on the Himalaya Mountains; she became rivers and other forms of water body to bring fertility to the land. The existing Sabarmati Riverfront has been segregated from the city by a sharp-edged concrete retaining wall, isolating folk from the *Descent of Ganga*.

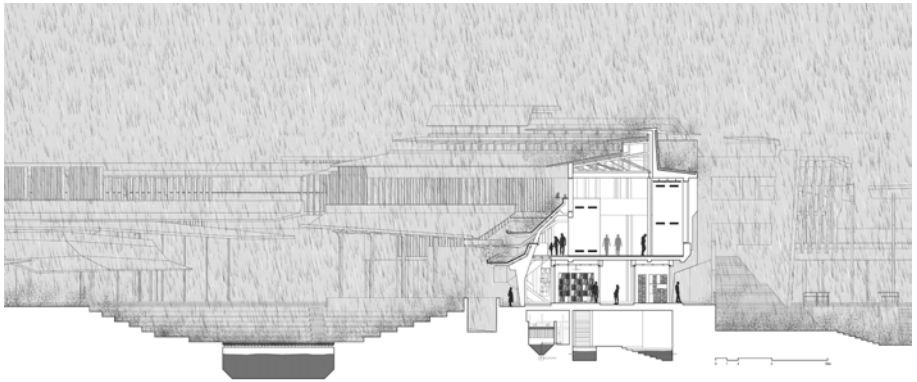
The project proposes a series of civic architectures along the Sabarmati Riverfront on the old city bank, creating a range of open spaces and public facilities which the old city is currently lacking. Inspired by the fabric markets in the old town, the lushness and moments within these fabric markets are extracted as gestures and further developed into a new architectural language. The proposed architecture will be erected on the existing concrete retaining wall and recrafted as the *Otla*¹ of the new civic institutions. The architecture of *Foregrounding Ahmedabad* is also the *Otla* of the city and the *Otla* of Ganga. Each building along the New Wall contains a mini water factory, which leads the river into the building as a part of the natural ventilation system, it also supplies the filtered river water into the old city to establish a city-scaled irrigation system. Each architecture on this water network serves as the “foreground” of accessing river water and the “foreground” of collecting rainwater, conveying the journey of Ganga meeting Ganga.

¹ *Otla* is the name given to the slightly raised loggias of the Pol houses.





Ground Floor Plan of the Foreground. (above)
Exhibition Hall in Textile Museum (adjacent top)
Section of the Textile Museum (adjacent middle)
The Youth Centre (adjacent)



Site: South-East Sabarmati Riverfront adjacent to Khan Jahan's Gate, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Riverfront Community Complex.

09



THE COSMOLOGY OF A PALIMPSEST

MEMORIES OF AHMEDABAD

GIOIA PUDDU

This thesis evokes the Palimpsest that constitutes Ahmedabad as a multi-stratification of times and cultures, that are expressed both in presence of absences and in absence of presences.

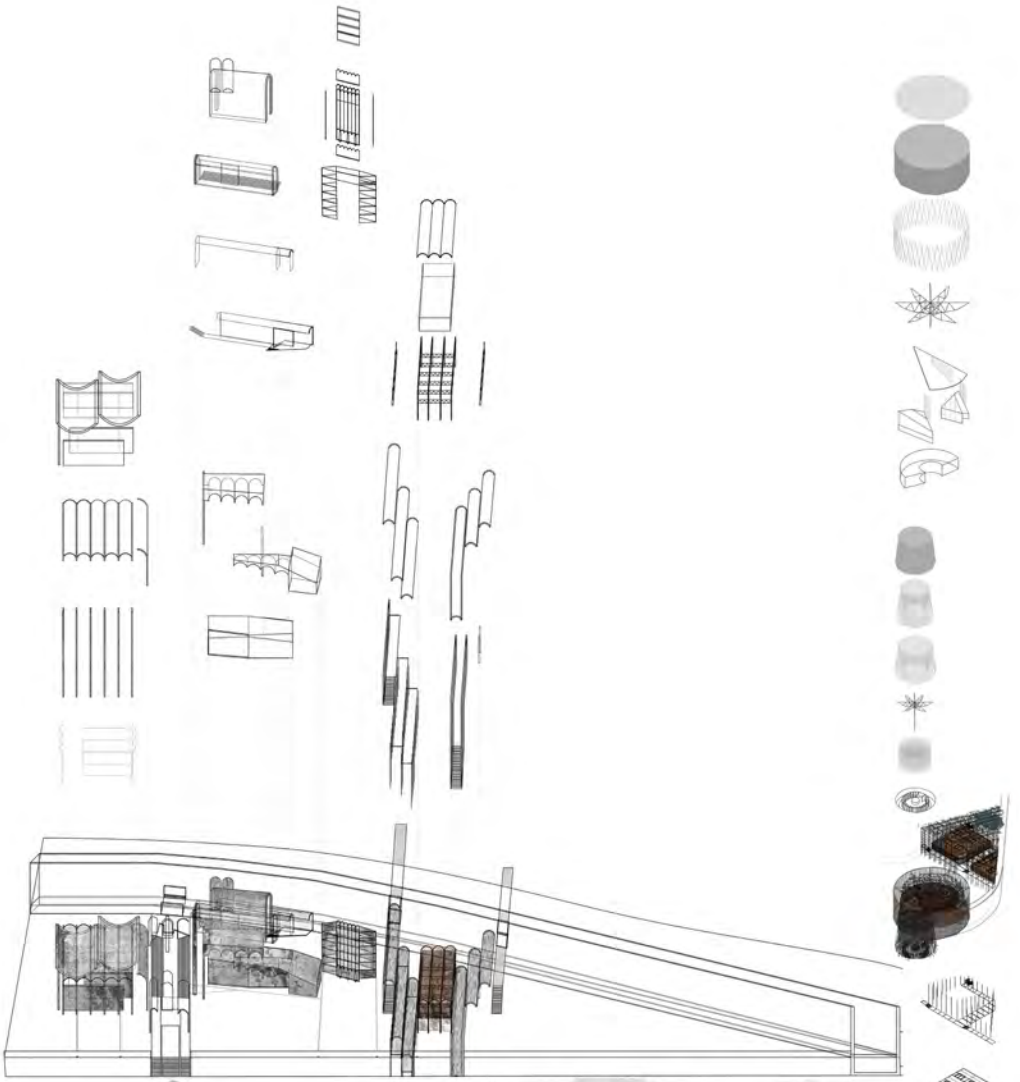
The focus of the thesis, like a primary cell of the complex cosmology of the city itself, is an area in the south east riverbank of Ahmedabad, at a critical point that marks the end of the historic city.

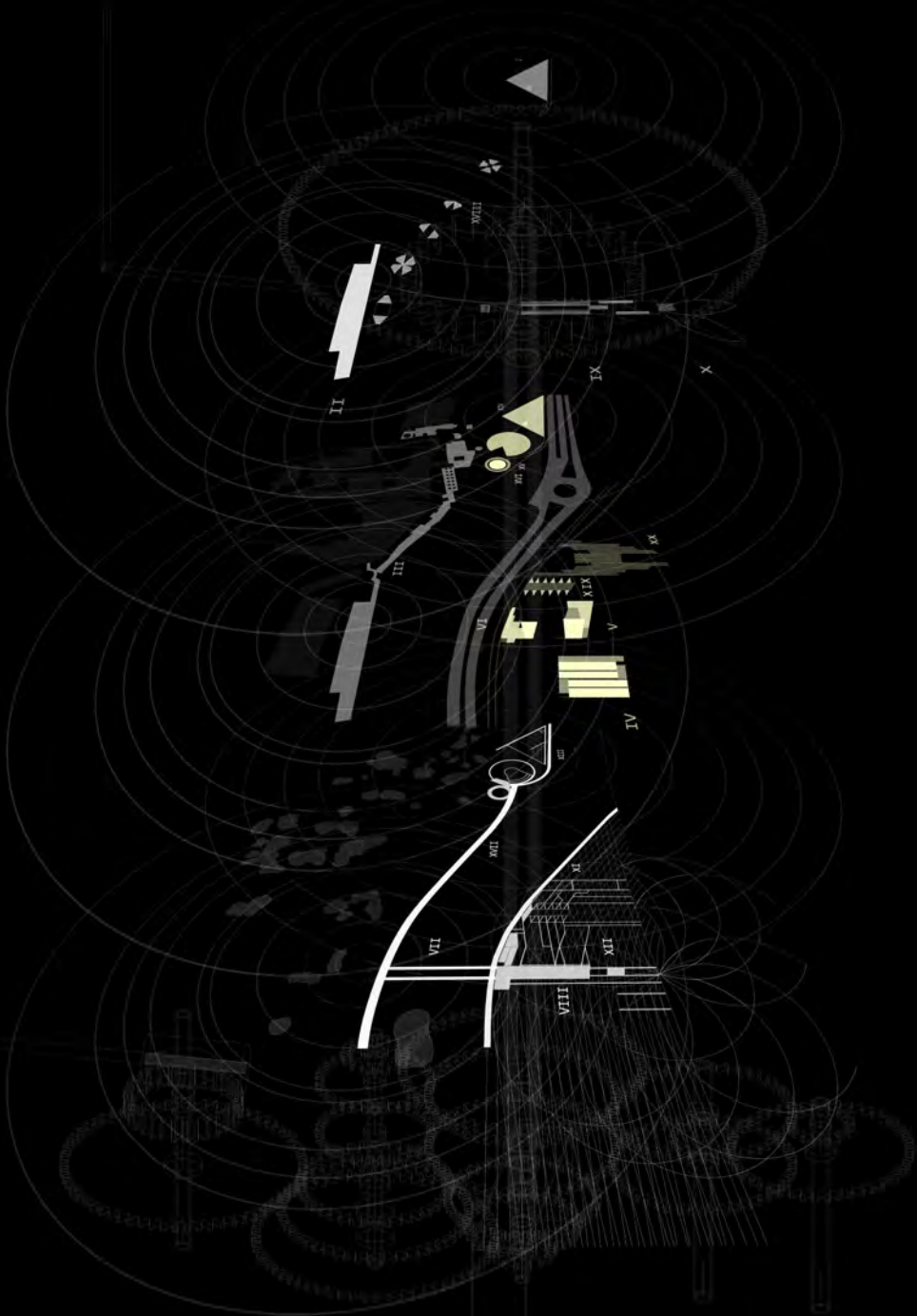
The “Palimpsest” is a writing that has been superimposed on effaced earlier writings. It is a situation of multiple writings and multiple simultaneous readings.

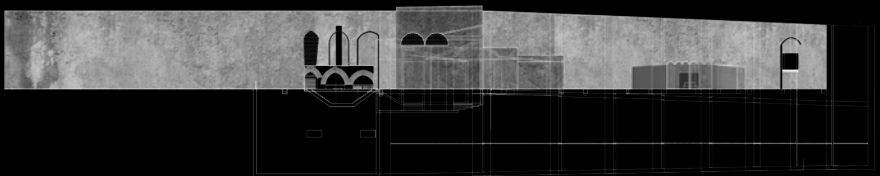
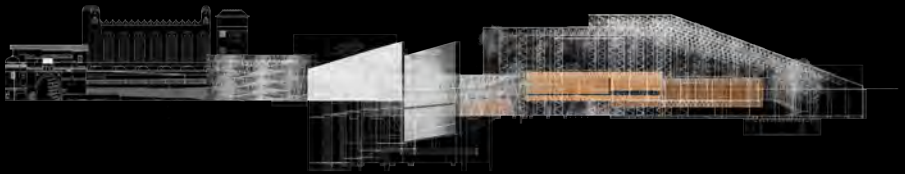
In the old wall times and spaces collide. In the new walls times and spaces collide.

The methodology studied here deals with extrapolating different elements (material, immaterial, natural...) from the site and making them become new “spaces” that will be described in a specific time chosen from an infinite number of possible times. This echoes the title of the studio: “Ahmedabad: Past, Present and Possible.”

The results are a cosmogony of elements and an incomplete cosmology of “immaterial” materials, like a shore that collects and connects to give a new sense to once disparate drifting material fragments, fecundating them with greater life as the Sabarmati wetness does to the Gujarat dryness.







Site: Sabarmati Riverfront, Kalupur Darwaja, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Gujarat Dye Institute, School of Dye Technologies, Sabarmati Dye Pavilions, Marigold Seller's Garden.

10



DYE & DUSTSCAPES

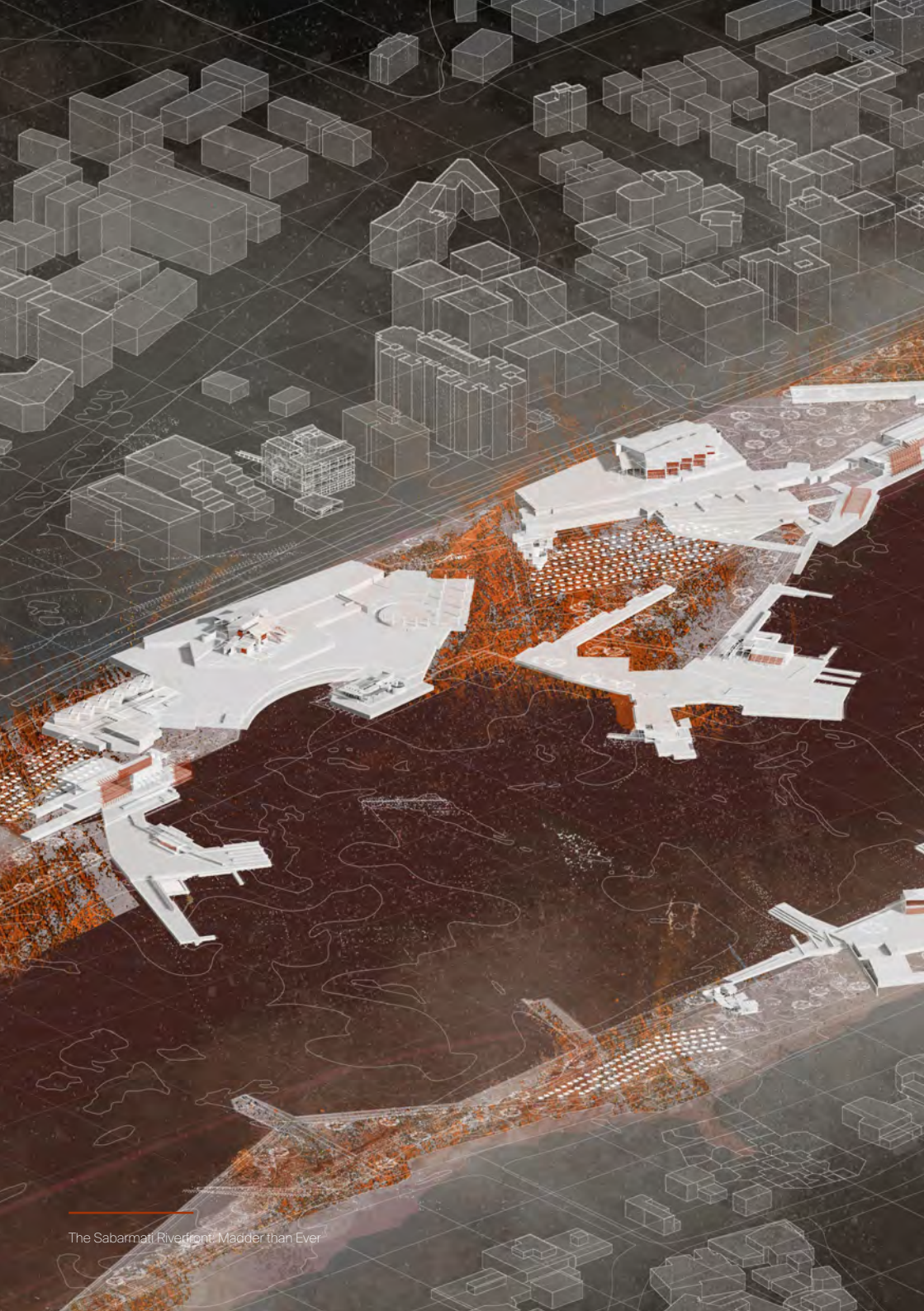
MADDER THAN EVER

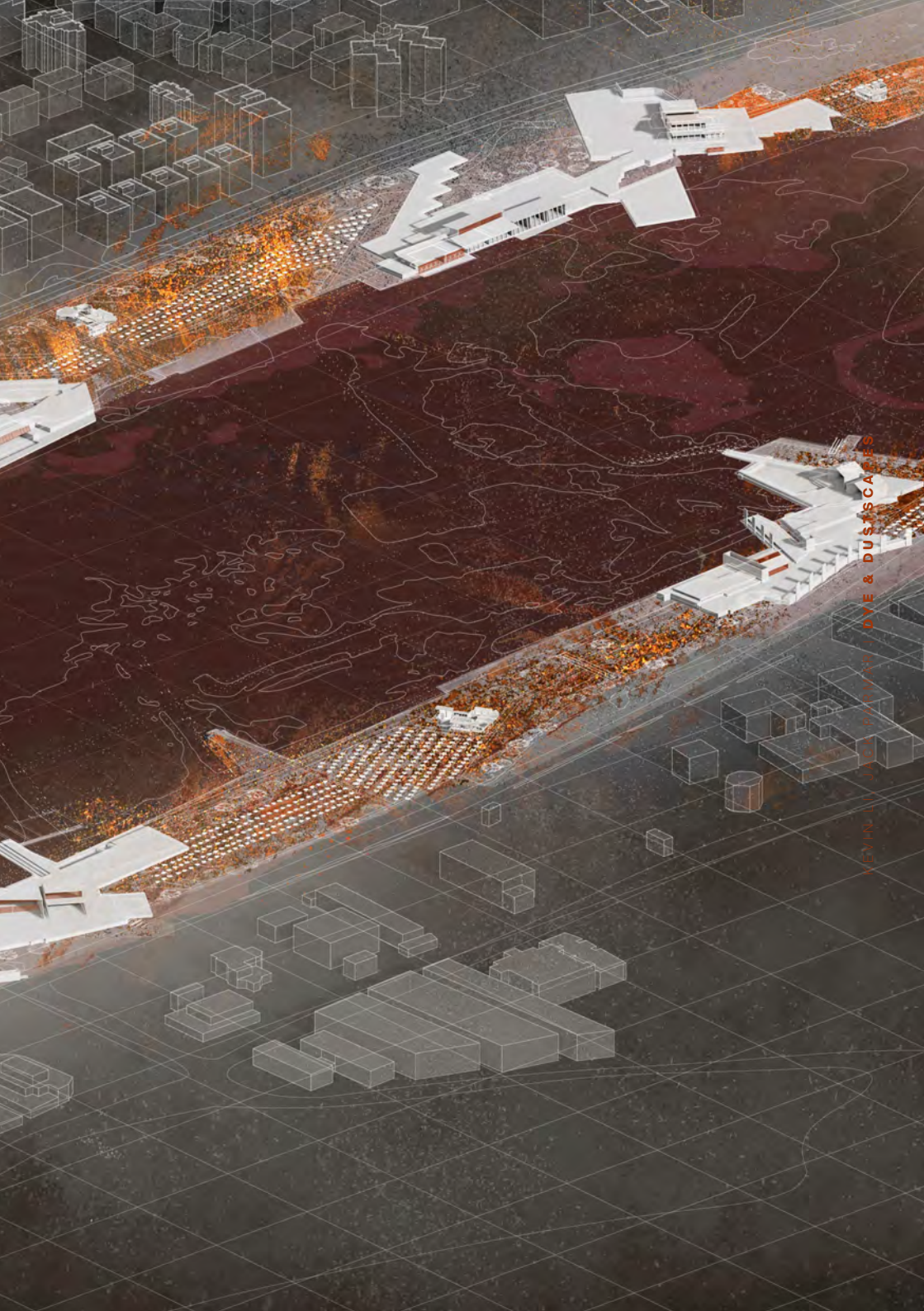
KEVIN LI | JACK PARMAR

Dye & Dustscapes provides a methodology for the urban design of Ahmedabad, responding to the arid desert of the Gujarat climate, the new impermeate edges of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development and the desire to redistribute the water, economy, and culture according to enriched ecological relations. A city regarded as one of India's industrial and economic hubs is at risk of submitting to the abysmal edge of its New Walled City. The Riverfront project has created a void in the terra, overwriting the temporal flows and fluctuations of the Sabarmati River during the three main seasons, of Summer (March to June), Monsoon (July to September) and Winter (November to February), to a static condition of wet-dry opposition. Nicknamed 'The Manchester of the East', we understand the significance of the traditional processes used in the manufacture of textiles, and the natural dye processes which have been lost with the introduction of automation and synthetic dyes. We use Madder, a plant dye native to Gujarat, as an apparatus to realise a new enzymatic urbanism that reinvests in the textile industry and the historical rhythms of the now overly regulated Sabarmati.

We view Ahmedabad as a cloud of dust, exacerbated by both the crumbling walls of the Old City and the dry landscape of the New Walls. The dust cloud is harnessed by rhythmic redistribution of wetness, with patterns of adherences formed by fragments of the Old Walls, kite strings and stained ground. Through the process of tooling and wetting the dust, the Dustscape becomes a sublime, moist, fecund, and yet productive landscape.

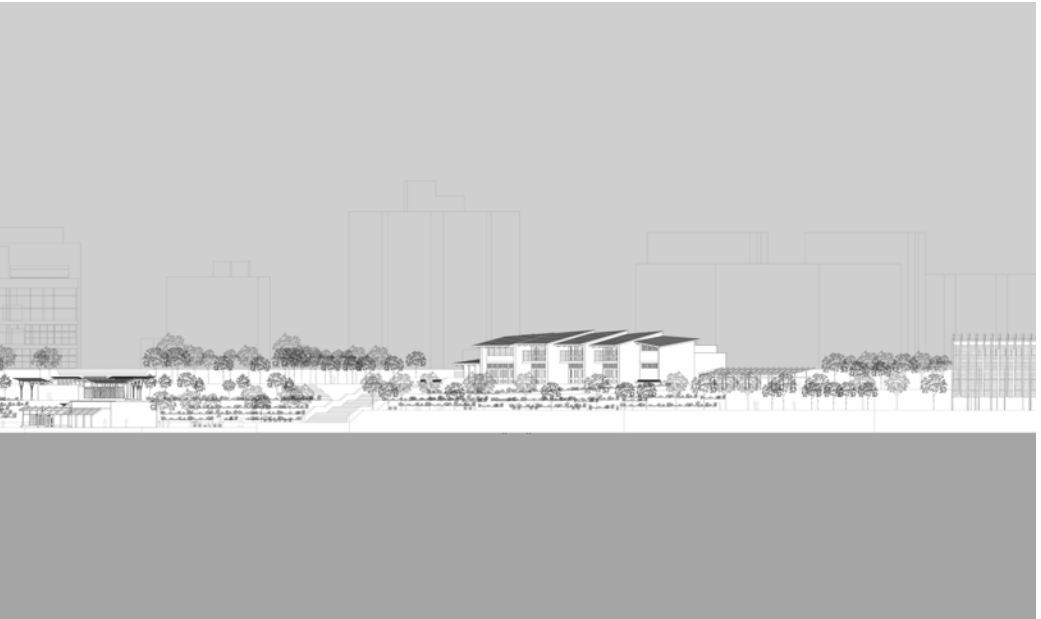






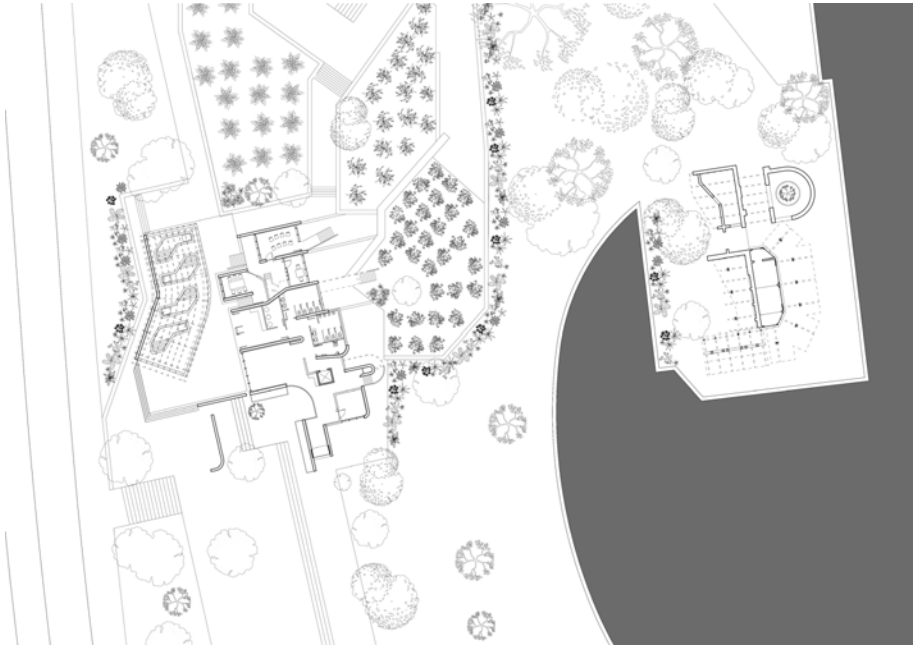
NEWARK | 1101 PARKWAY | DYE & DUST SCAPES

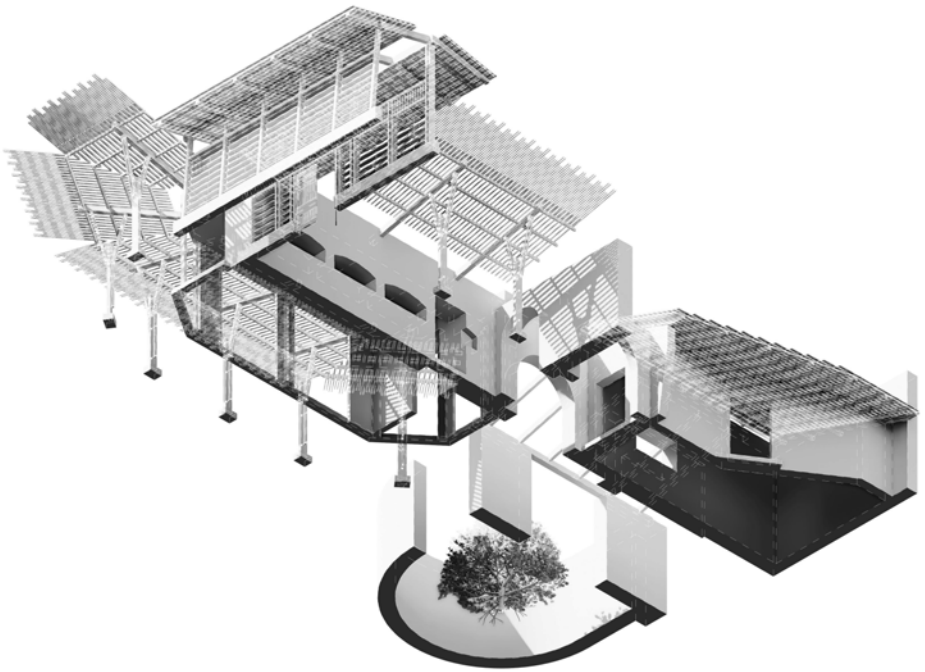




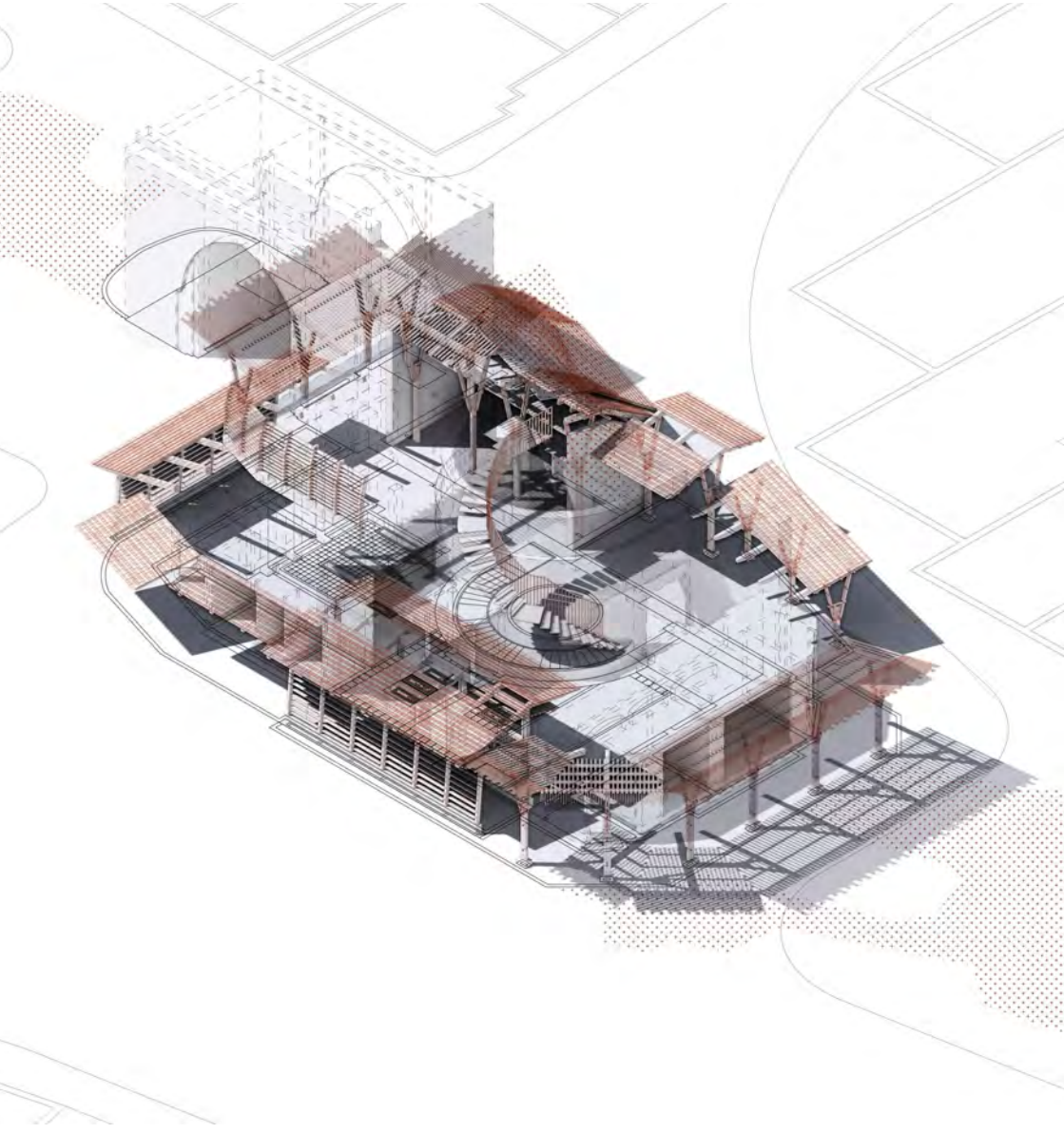
Resaturating the Temporal Sabarmati, Elevation. (top)

Resaturating the Temporal Sabarmati, Section (above)





Sabarmati Riverfront S.E.T. Agencies: The School of Dye Technologies. (adjacent top)
The Dye Baths (adjacent)
Sabarmati Dye Pavilion (above)





The Marigold Seller's Garden, Isometric. (adjacent)

The Marigold Seller's Garden (top)

Virtual Exhibition East Wall (above)

Site: Between Gandhi Bridge and Nehru Bridge, Ahmedabad.
Programme: New Mill Owners' Building, Office Building, Public Washroom, Residence Building and Water Treatment Building.

11



RECONNECTING AHMEDABAD TO THE SABARMATI NEW MILL OWNER'S ASSOCIATION BUILDING

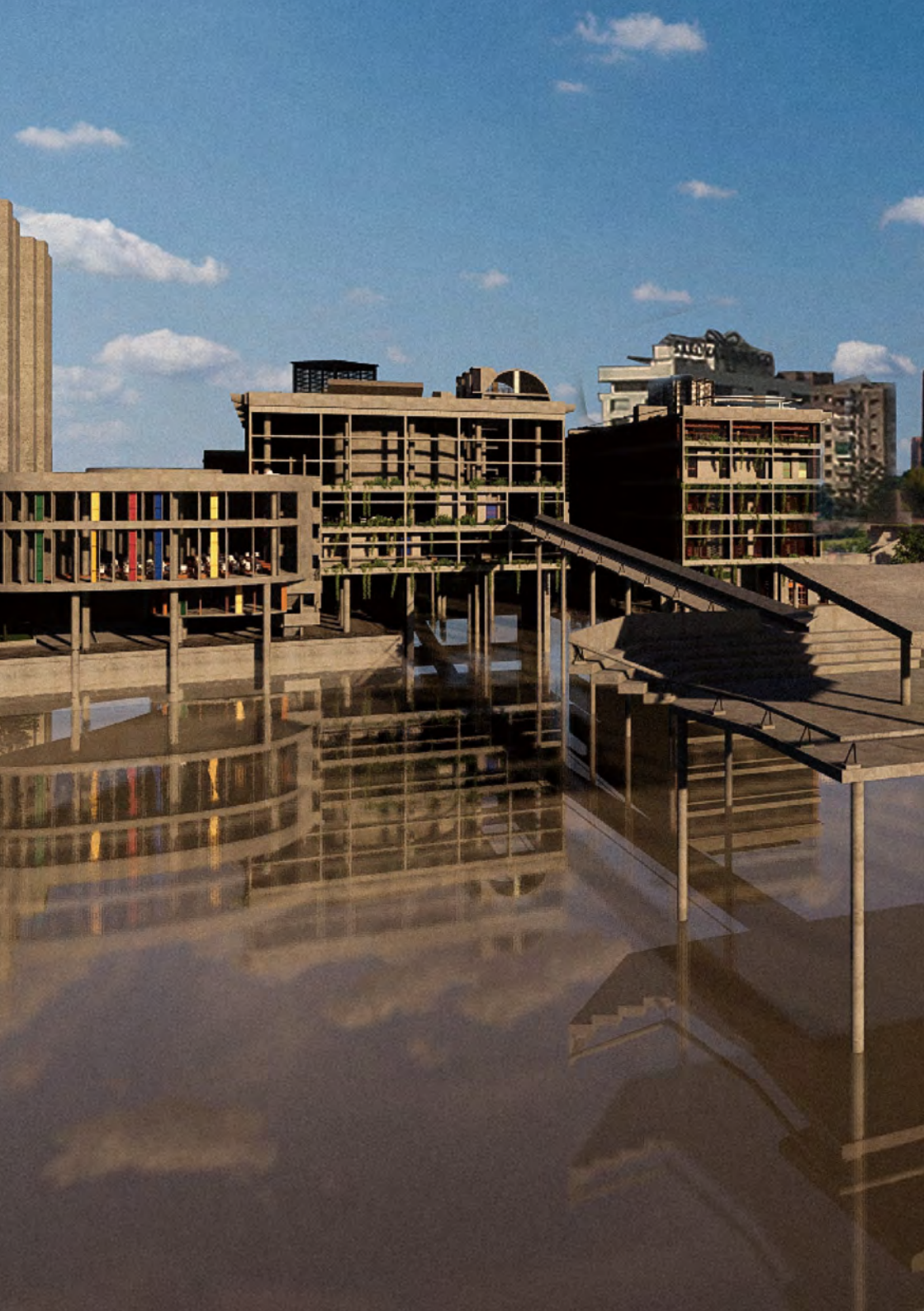
XUYAO ZHOU

The post-independence city of modernity is one of six versions of Ahmedabad city¹. Indian modernity holds something of the modernism of Europe but has developed a very particular calibration suited to its situation and further developed not only by its own architects but also by those who commission architects. The Mill Owners' Association building, City Museum, and Indian Institute of Management evidence a particular moment in this pursuit of modernity in Ahmedabad. This thesis argues that they provide an example for further advancing the development of Ahmedabad's modernity and the Sabarmati Riverfront Project.

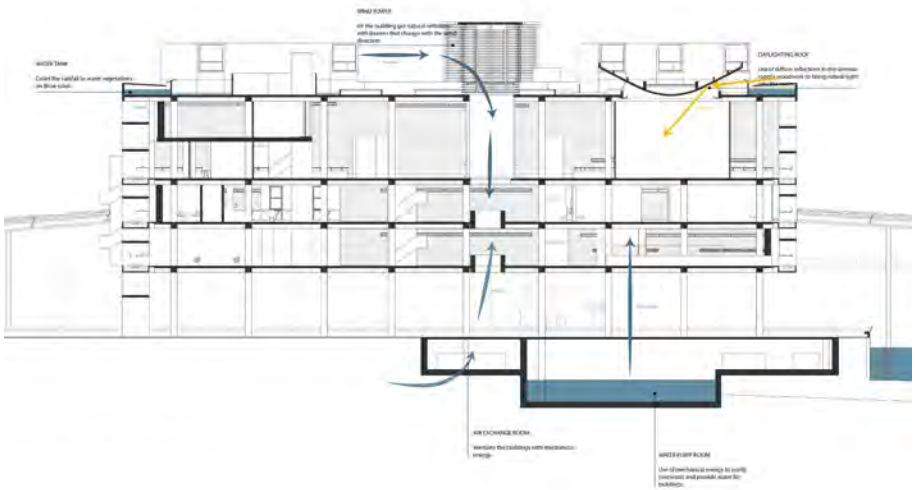
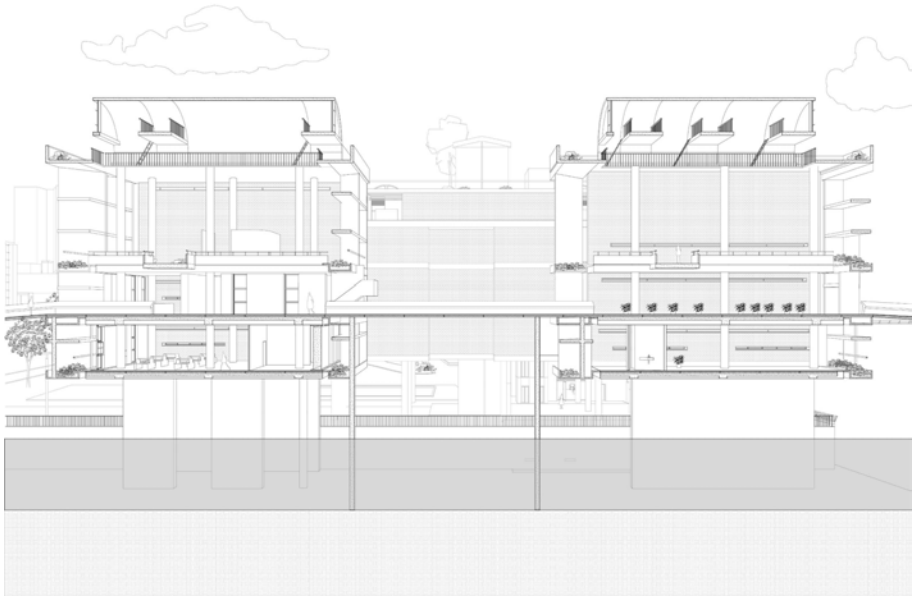
Seasonal rainfall has a big impact on the city. The new Sabarmati Riverfront project tries to regulate these temporal shifts. Le Corbusier's Mill Owners' Association building was originally located on the bank of the Sabarmati River, where the textile industry of Ahmedabad flourished in the 1950s, creating a progressive architectural intervention yet harmonious natural scene with the building and textile workers working with the flux of the river, the textiles drying and the animals drinking on the riverbank.

With the development of the new Riverfront city, old connections have been severed. Furthermore, there are still large amounts of industrial water discharged into the Sabarmati river, straining the new infrastructure. This speculative design project is located next to the old Mill Owner's Association and, by following its progressive character, takes on environmental issues whilst trying to reconnect the city to a more performative Sabarmati river.

¹ See Wiszniewski, D., *A People and Pals Study*, in *Parasituation* [Ahmedabad]: People and Pals (Volume 1), pp. 10-15.







New Mill Owners Building with a Ramp (adjacent top)
 Environmental Control Strategy. (adjacent)
 Section through the Ramp (top)
 Section through the Main Building (above)

Site: Raikhad Gate and Vasna Barrage, Ahmedabad.
Programme: Raikhad: Raikhad Bathhouse and pier; Vasna: Vasna foresters house, nature park entrance and Pier.

12



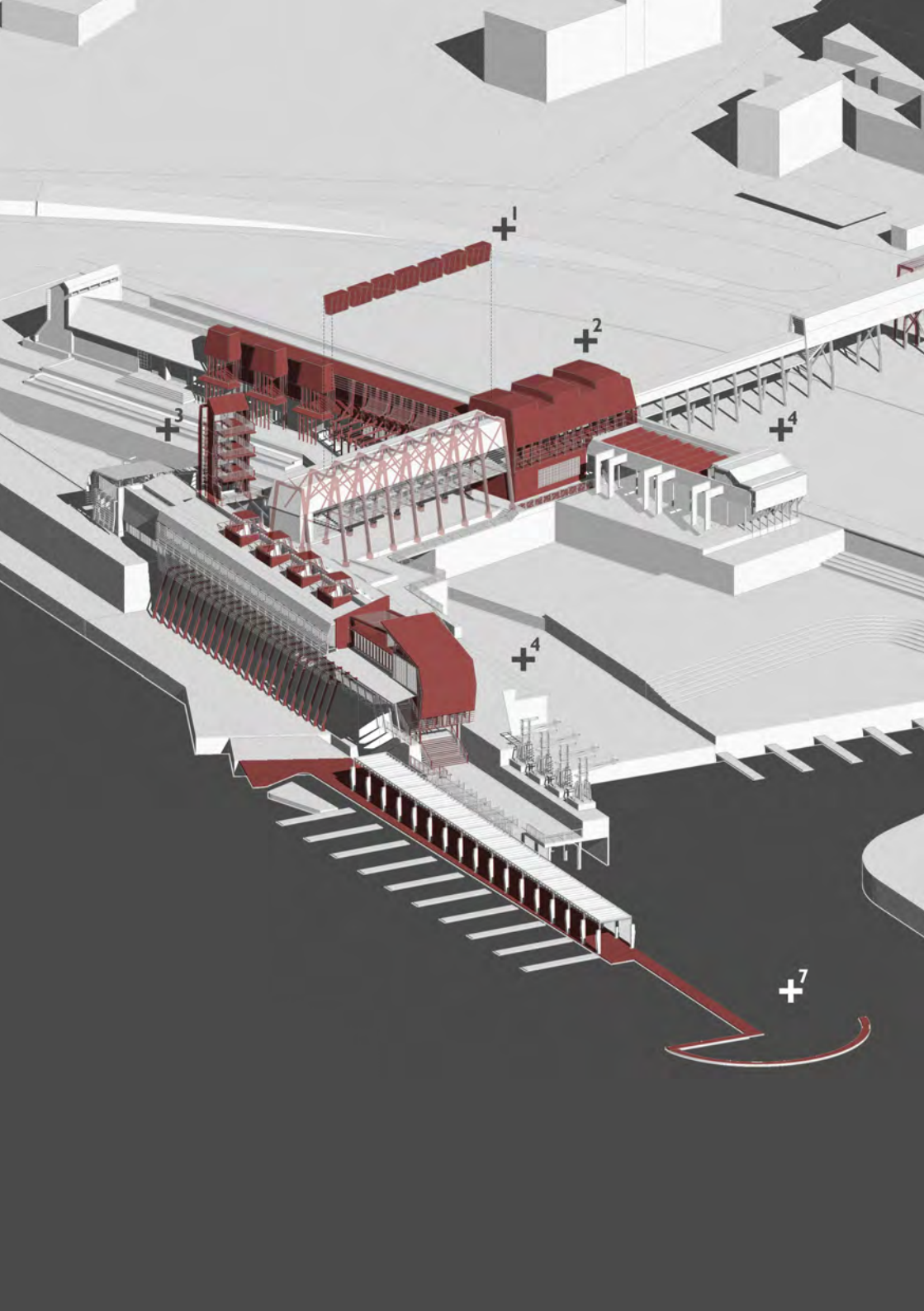
SYNTACTICAL DEVICE

EXPANDING THE NETWORK OF FECUNDITY THROUGH TRANSPORTATION, GREENERIES AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

RIDWAN NAIM

Ahmedabad is culturally diverse. Gujarat displays the expressions of different cultures. Gujarat's cultural expressions are both multiple and hybrid. Ahmedabad's new Sabarmati Riverfront and new metro system speak more towards India's Smart City Initiative than its historical past. However, developing in parallel to the instruments of society - religion, climate and everyday practices, the architecture has more generally surfaced over time to accommodate and facilitate the needs that evolved through arts and necessity. Local architecture plays a major role in sustaining the ecosystem and can be traced back with the evidence of the main components - Stepwells, Gates, Pools, to the long established Citadel. This ecological sensibility could still become the basis of how the "New Wall" of the riverfront of Sabarmati River develops.

The framework of urban ecosophy is paramount in both developing methods for sustaining while also developing a city across the different timeframes of "past, present and possible". This project sees the Sabarmati river as a water element that can bloom again Ahmedabad's metropolitan territory into a fecund land. The river simply witnesses a subtle yet progressing transformation since India's Mughal governance. The river is deemed a holy natural occurrence but simultaneously establishes a terrestrial hierarchy of land use, which anchors developments with political, industrial and cultural resilience.



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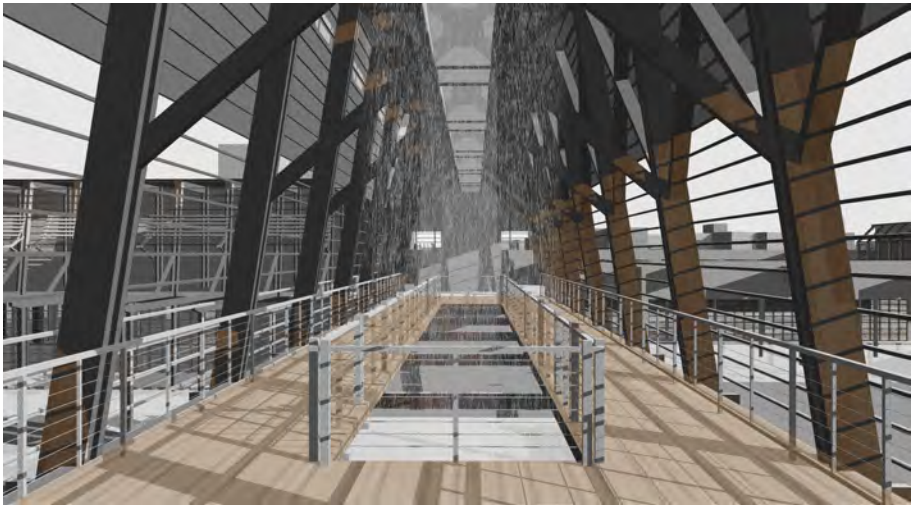
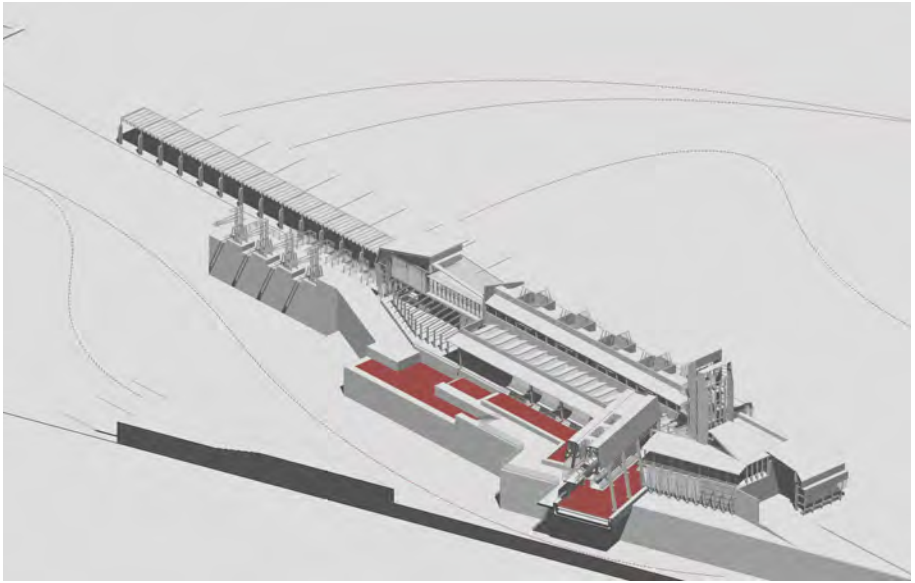
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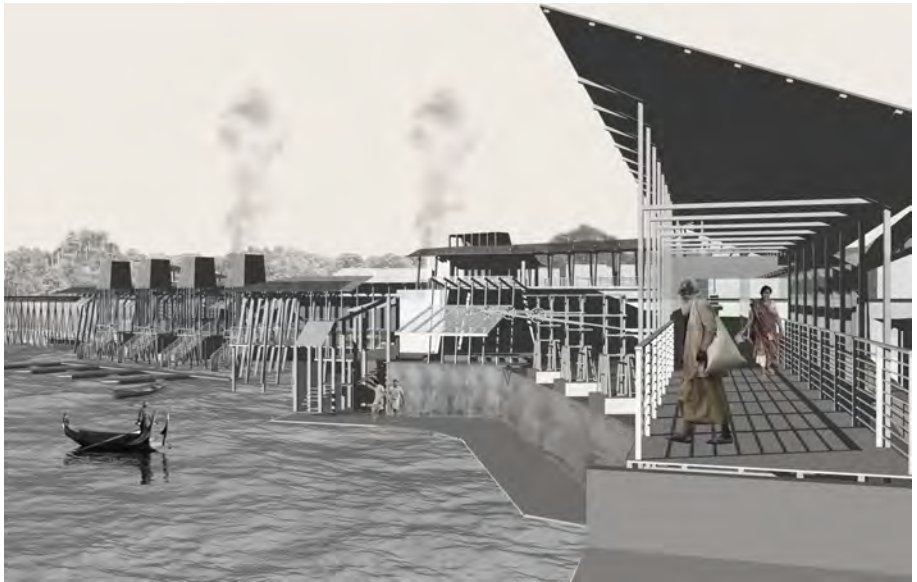
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Raikhad Bathhouse Bridge Iso Section. (adjacent top)

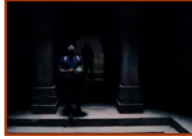
Raikhad Bridge Render (adjacent middle)

Raikhad Pier Render (top)

Vasna Forester House Section (above)

Site: Shahpur Metro Station, Ahmedabad.
Programme: An Exemplar Metro Station for Ahmedabad Metro.

13



BOUCHES D'AHMEDABAD

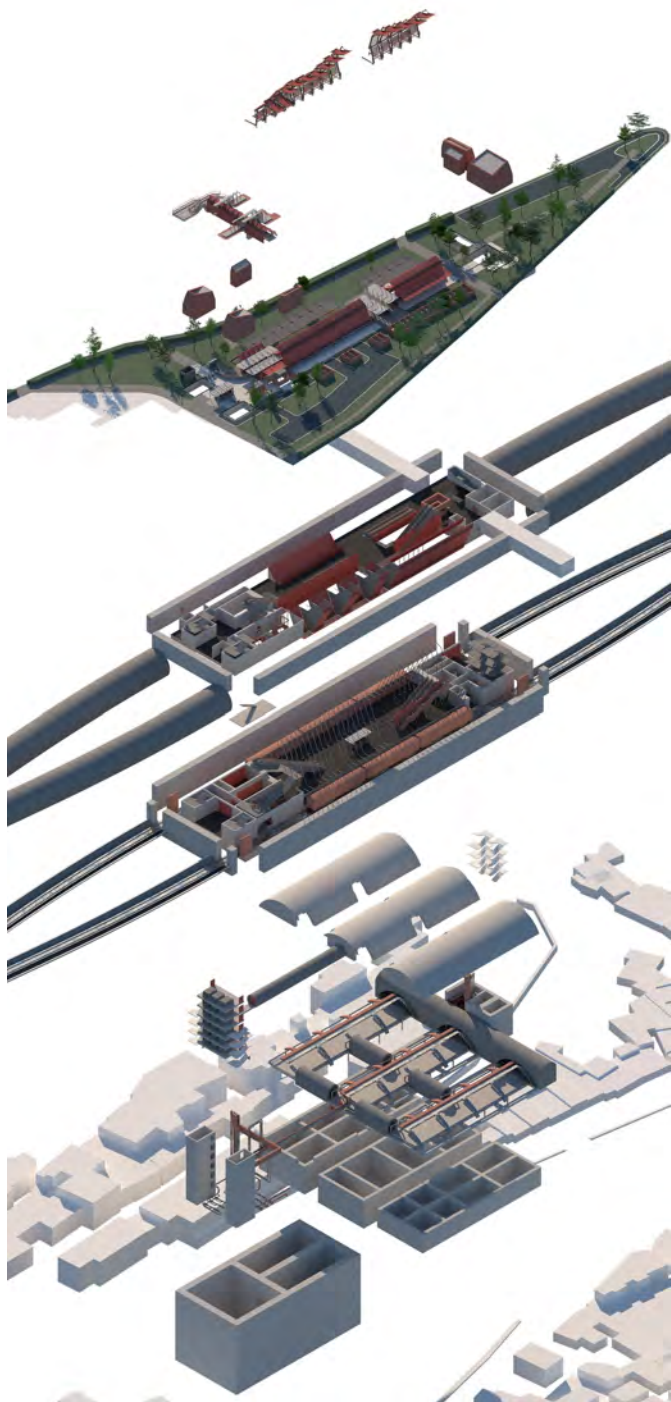
A SUBWAY WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

JORDAN MOK

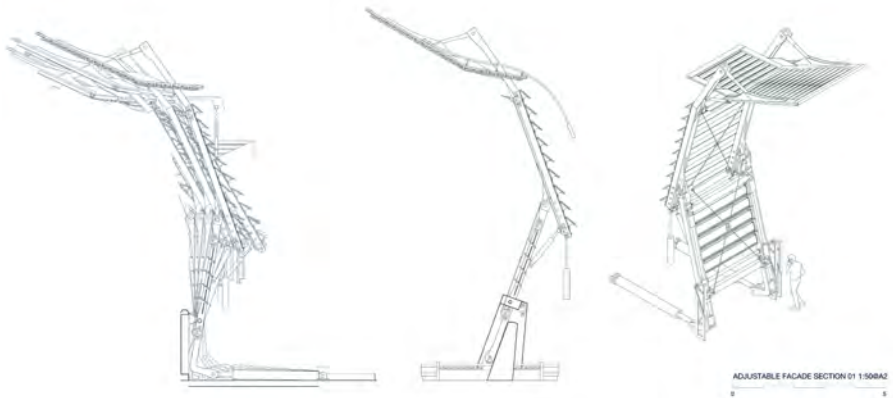
Bouches d'Ahmedabad contemplates architecture and its devices as the mouths of Ahmedabad. This design thesis investigates the culture of circulation in water, sewage and people in the city. It proposes an architecture that alleviates and responds to the temporal wetness in terms of the daily usage of water and the seasonal natural water distribution in this city of dust.

The design thesis researches the accommodation of the local water cycle by codifying architecture as a sophisticated living organism and drawing inspirations from anatomy where consumption, digestion, absorption, detoxification, and excretion are referenced under close examination. One goal that directs the design decisions of the thesis is the flourish of life in the architecture. This flourish is indicated by how well the plants and the people, both carrying elements of water, would prosper and be enhanced by the architecture. The proposed architecture breathes, filtrates, and blows life into the city by reconciling the water body with an embedded water infrastructure through the heavy-rail metro network. While it is a challenge to express the drama behind a water infrastructure, the architecture manifests its purposes as a cavity that not only swallows and vomits passengers, but also renews much desired water and nourishes plants, which are signatures of each station, to scatter residues of garden across the city.

As the embodiment of a water treatment plant, an urban oasis (gardens) and a transport hub, the design finds its form as a porous structure which screens, permeates and repatriates water elements in the atmosphere of Ahmedabad.







-
- Render. (adjacent top)
 - Thematic Exploration (adjacent)
 - Adjustable Facade Section (top)
 - South Section (above)

Site: Kalupur Gate & Riverfront by Manek Burj; Panchkuva Darwaja to Kalupur Darwaja; Sabarmati Riverfront beside Manek Burj, Ahmedabad.
Programme: The Auction House (for selling pomegranates); Ahmedabad Institute of Pomology; Fruit-Farmers Dwellings.

14



PARADISE POMEGRANATE

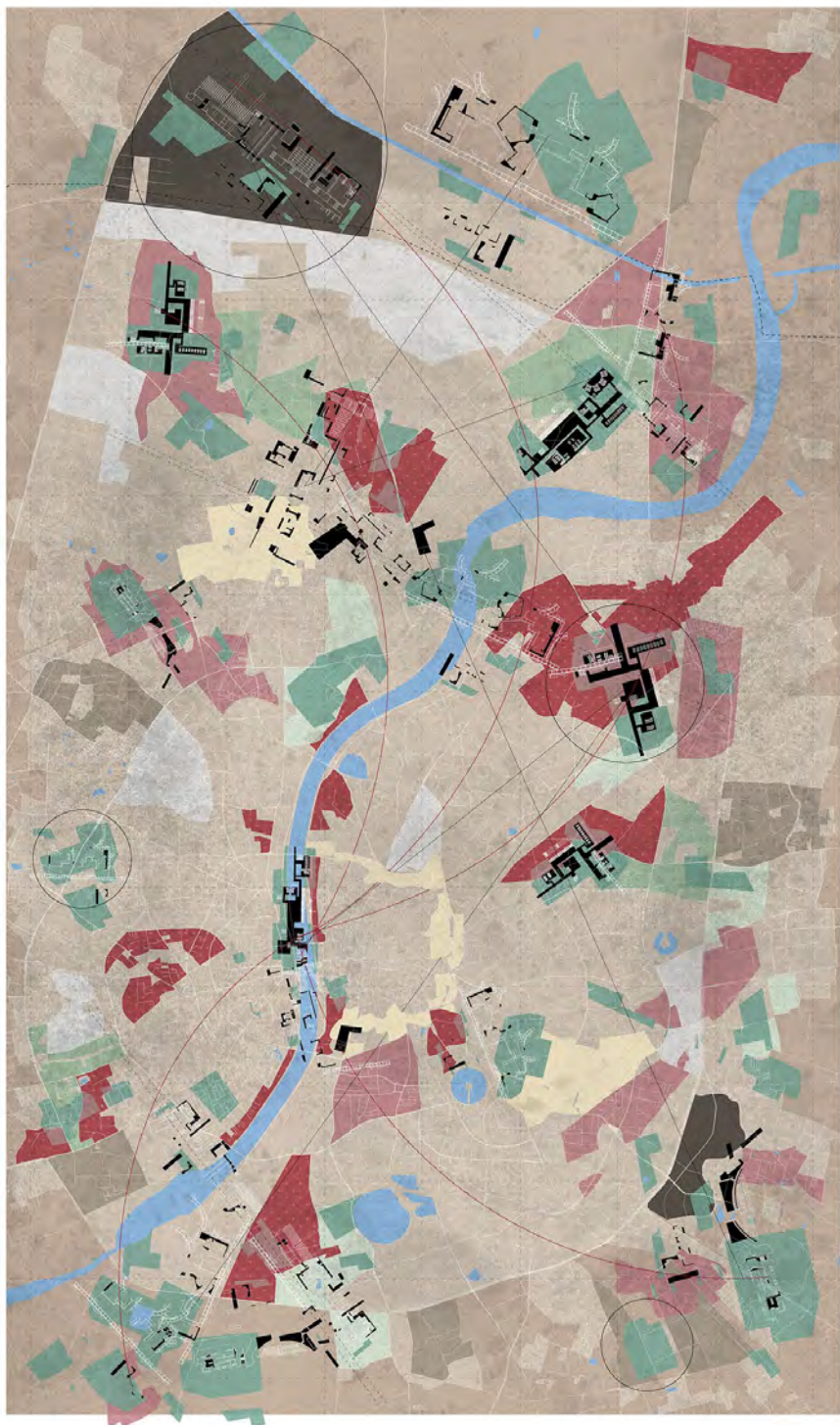
CULTIVATING THE [IN-BETWEEN] LOCATION IN AHMEDABAD

RACHEL DUNNE | DE RUI LEE | LILY GONLAG

Ahmedabad's Old City is a ruptured pomegranate. The thickness of the old city walls has been peeled back; its seeds have spilled to the periphery. Simultaneously, fruit production is facing challenges due to inefficient post-harvest systems, poor irrigation and decentralisation. Large transport distances result in high wastage and reduced quality fruit, diminishing farmers' profits. *Paradise Pomegranate* tests the potential of Ahmedabad's old city walls as an instigator for reconfiguring Ahmedabad's *fruitscape*, and its consequential role within the larger metropolitan network.

Visualising the [*in-between*] zone of the Old City Walls as both an inside and outside, three architectural agencies of Selling, Growing and Dwelling become the apparatus for forging fruitful interventions and creating conditions of continual wetness. The intensity of this liminal condition is transposed to the Sabarmati Riverfront Project, where vast openness offers potential for further cultivation. As the agencies emerge, so does the etymological link between culture and cultivate: tilling the land, and the acquisition of skills. Paradise Pomegranate does not aspire to utopian ideals, but gestures instead towards evocations of lushness and delight, rooted in the modest origins of the term *Paradise* in Old Iranian as a 'walled enclosure'.

In *Invisible Cities*, Calvino writes: "My Empire has grown too far towards the outside. It is time", the Khan thought, "for it to grow within itself," and he dreamed of pomegranate groves, the fruit so ripe it burst its skin..." (73).



Paradise Pomegranate.

The Possible, Fruit-scape Carpet Collage

14a

PARADISE POMEGRANATE

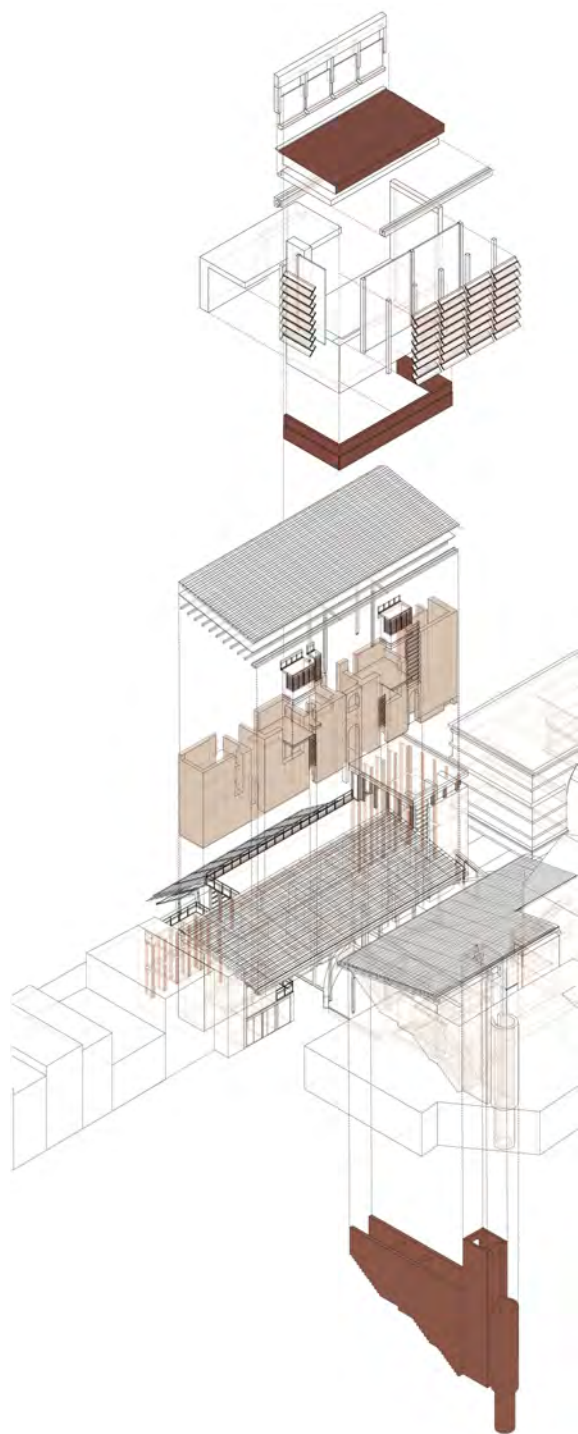
WALLS, WELLS & SELLING

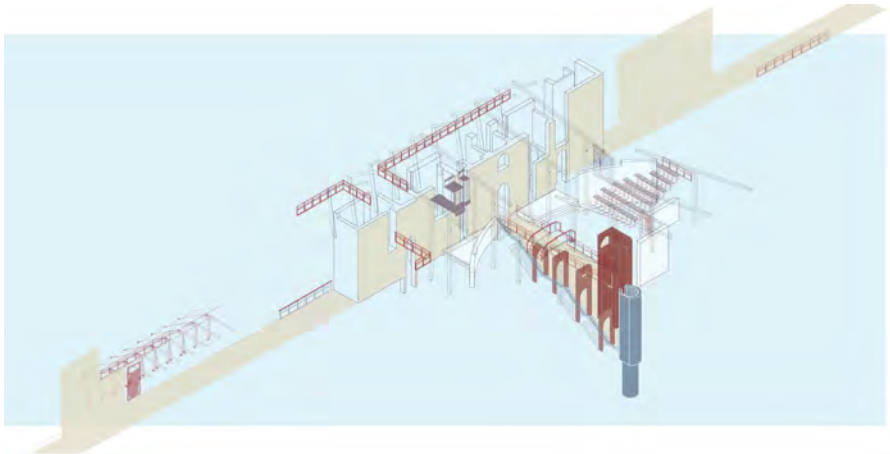
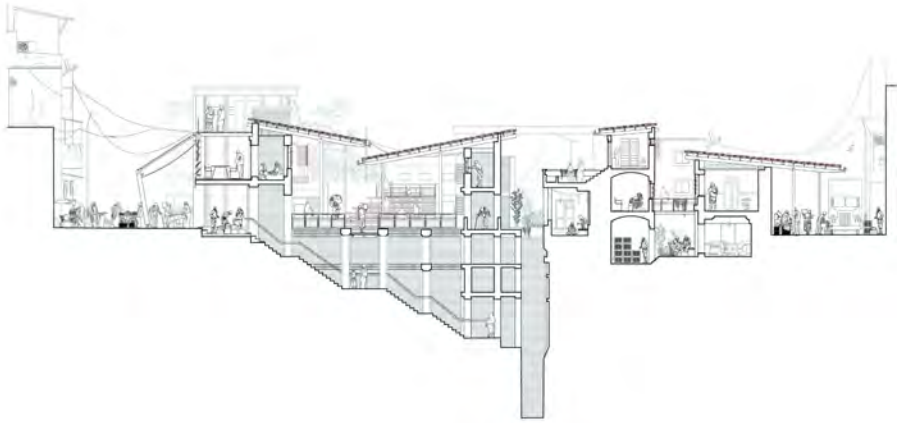
RACHEL DUNNE

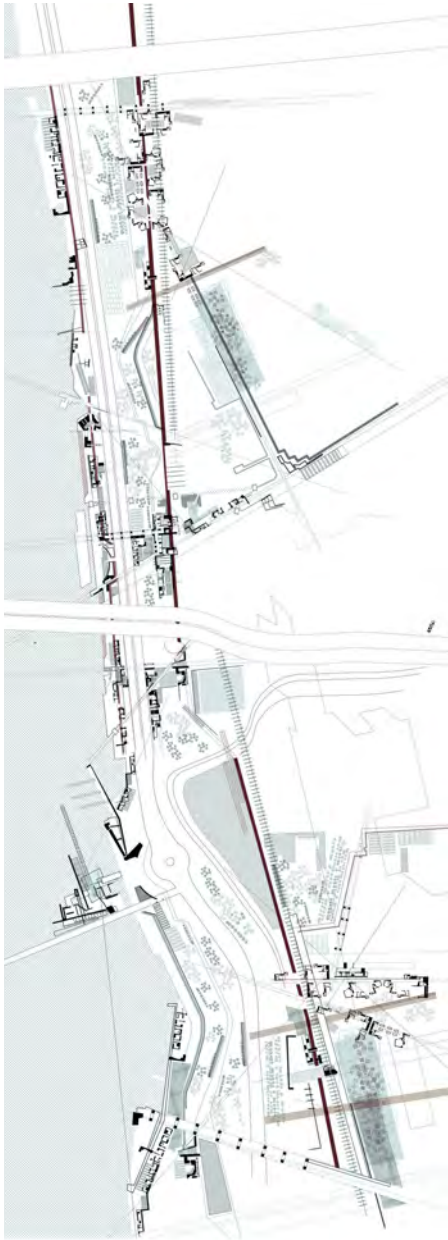
Based on an architectural language derived from the pomegranate - Skins, Membranes, Mesocarps & Seeds - the Auction House mediates the worlds of old and new Ahmedabad. The building simultaneously fulfils a civic duty to mend the city walls and re-establish the functionality and sociality of the stepwells, whilst also introducing the infrastructure for the economic potential of a centralised fruit-network. It is the first in a series that will emerge from a process of transpositions, as the pomegranate trees come to bear fruit and the potential yield increases.

An open stepwell intersects the Auction House in half, creating a separation of producer and consumer, that is crossed by a bridge. Stepwells are not only a method of water collection, but also are spaces of refuge from the heat and noise of the city and were once considered amongst the greatest charitable gifts that the wealthy residents could give to the city. By creating a presence of absence in the form of the stepwell, the excavated clay earth – the absence of presence – is reused to create rammed earth grounds and walls across the rest of the site.

Like the propagation of a seed, the Auction House roots itself in the ground, develops its own network of water transport and storage, provides shade from its canopy, and grows outward over time.







Section through the Stepwell & The Auction House. (adjacent top)

Outside the Old Wall; Looking in [section through The Auction House] (adjacent middle)

Transpositions & Mending Old Walls, Isometric (adjacent)

S.E.T. Scale Transpositions to the Riverfront (above left)

3 PARA-Situations: the Auction House; the Orchards, the Riverfront (above right)

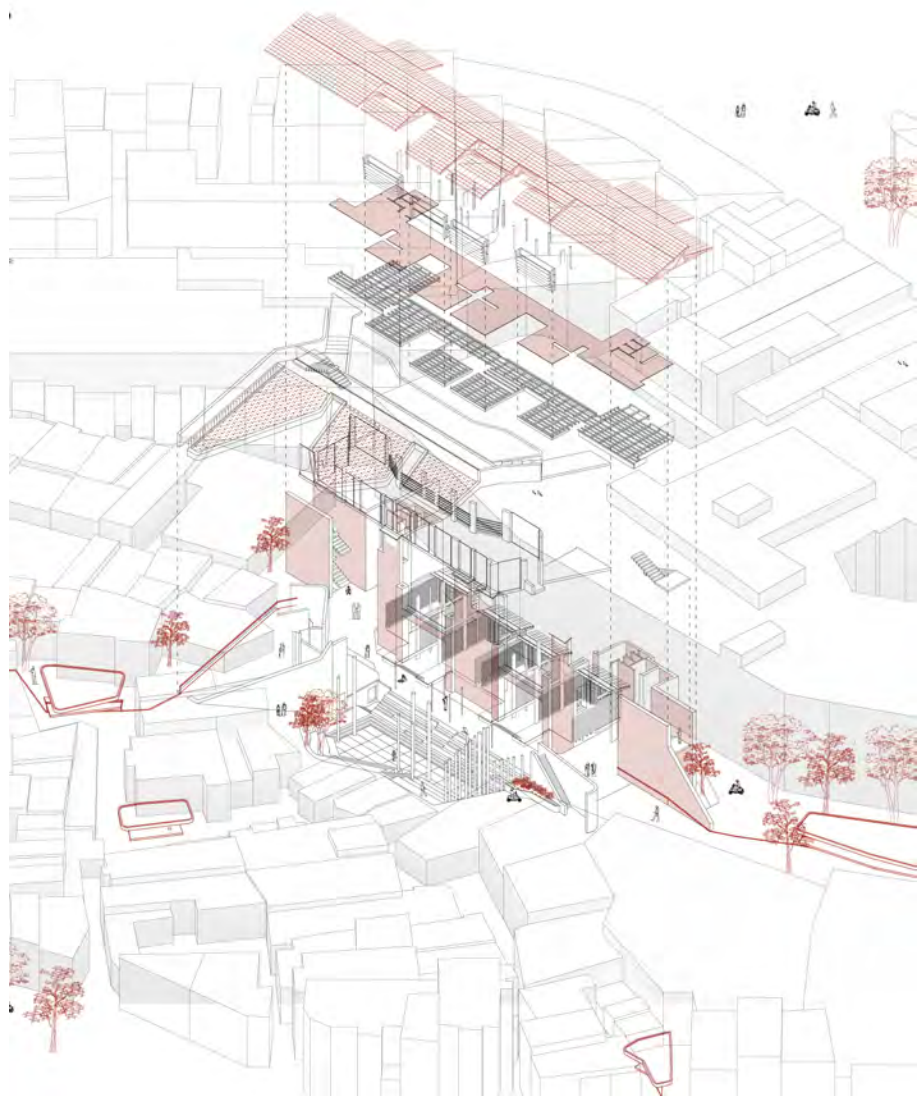
14b

PARADISE POMEGRANATE

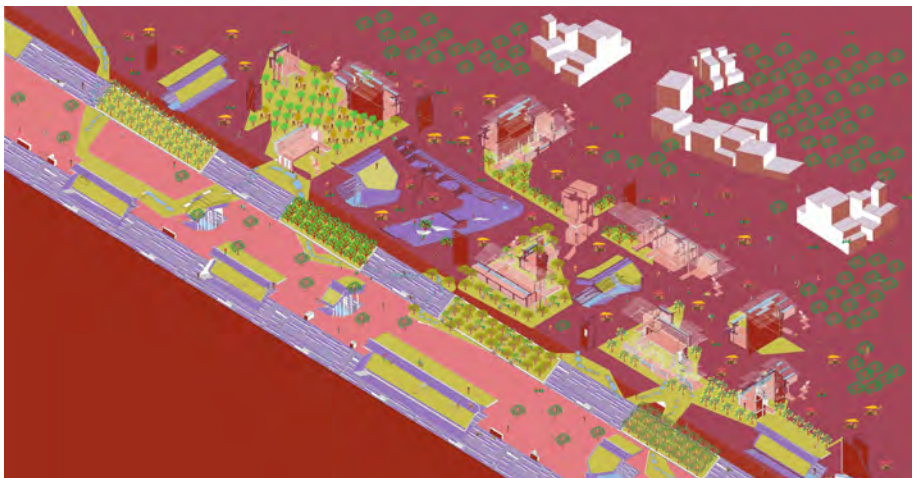
WALLS, GARDENS, GROWING

DE RUI LEE

Education in Ahmedabad, in its modern avatar and from the very beginning, was an institutional form that received great emphasis and patronage. Despite having neither the climate nor the proximity to resources such as coal, Ahmedabad's success in the textile industry in the 19th century is indicative of the spirit of its residents and their ability to adapt to the rapid changes happening around them. With industrial modernisation, thus came also the birth of demand for modern institutions. Operating between the lost city walls, the *Ahmedabad Institute of Pomology* functions as the nodal agency for restating the cities' significance of pomegranates on the macro export scene. The facility looks to continue this institutional tradition by furthering the promotion of agro-industrial education through two key drivers: Research and Education. The Learning centre attracts stakeholders from all stages (growers, processors and traders) to introduce proper cultivation/processing techniques and harnesses the fuller cultural and economic potential of fruit. Research conducted is focused on introducing sustainable pomegranate cultivation in non-traditional areas through scientific management practices in the necessarily high density planting conditions of an urban setting. The speculations imagine that over time, further satellite campuses will emerge along the periphery of the city and along the riverfront. Not unlike the cyclical process of refinements and seasonal changes of fruit cultivation, such agencies are not generated instantaneously but gradually over time. Negotiating between the interfaces of old and new, agencies comprising the *Ahmedabad Institute of Pomology* form just the beginnings of bridging the gap towards greater scale liberalisation and hope of a shared cultural paradise across the wider agro-industrial sector.







Moment of Paradise Bridging the Sabarmati Riverfront and the Space between the Wall. (adjacent top)

"Imagined" Axonometric of Satellite Pomology Institute Campuses between the Wall (adjacent)

"Imagined" Axonometric of the Situation between the Wall (top)

"Imagined" Axonometric Drawing of the Sabarmati Riverfront (above)

14c

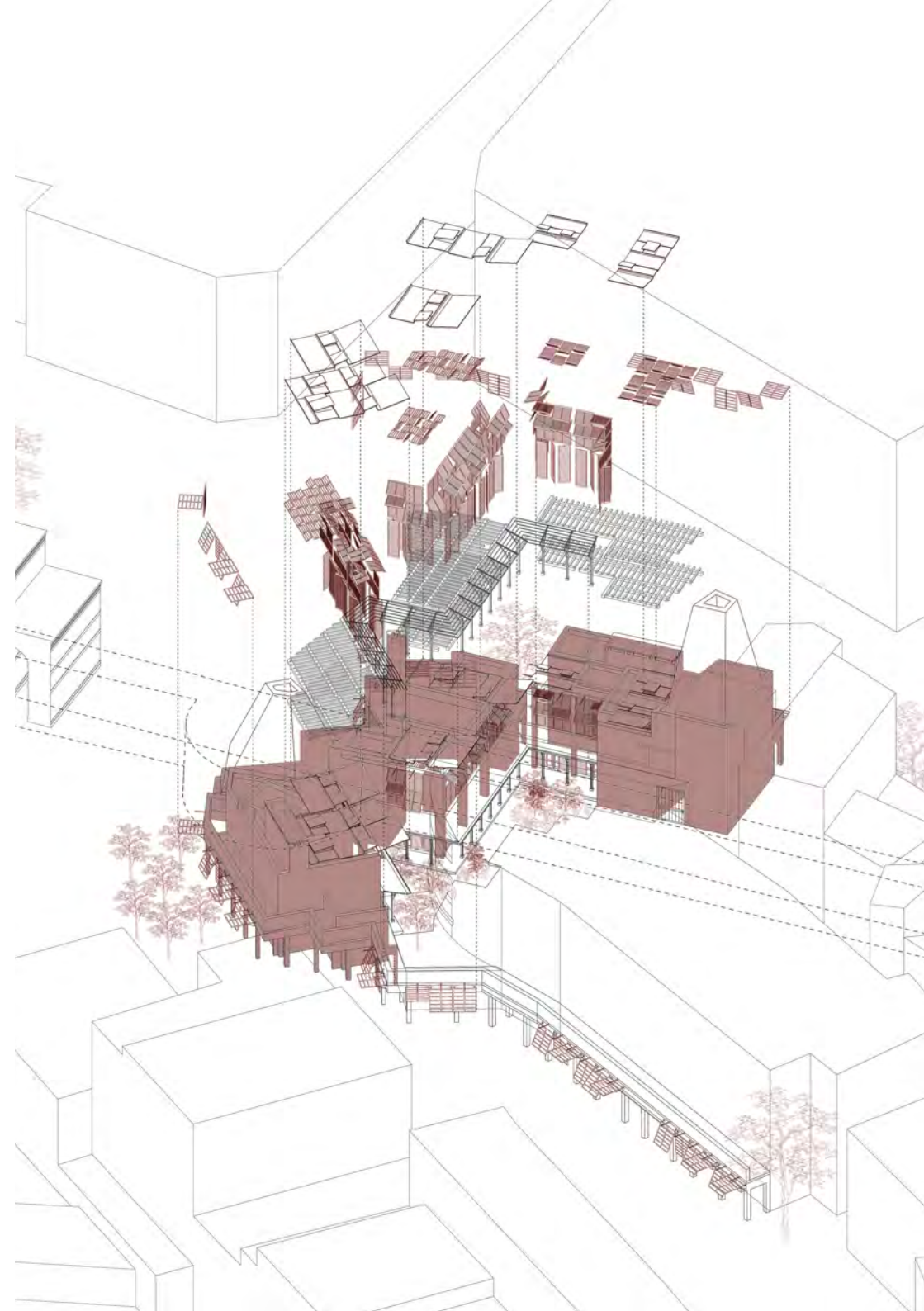
PARADISE POMEGRANATE

WALLS, GARDENS AND DWELLING

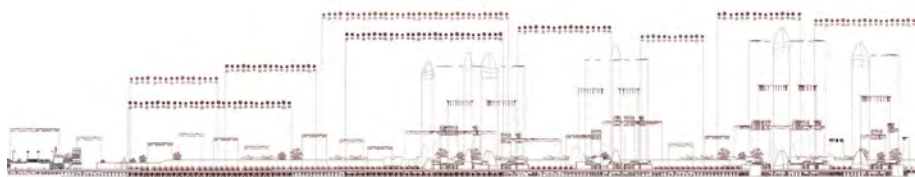
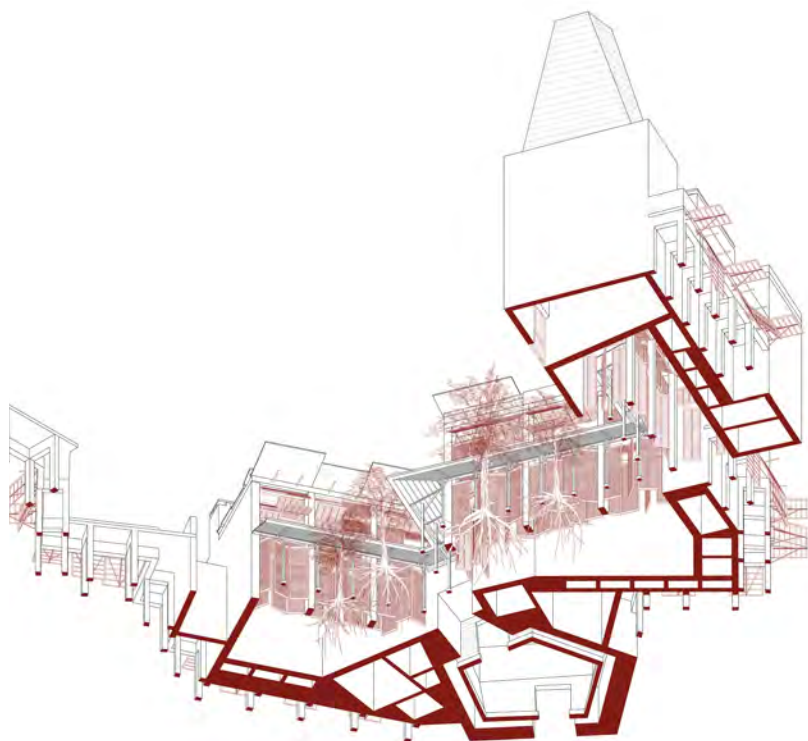
LILY GONLAG

Paradise Pomegranate points towards the opportunity to speculate a reconfiguration of Ahmedabad's **fruit-scape**; it tests the merits and limitations of cultivating the 'in-between' zone of Ahmedabad's old city walls as an instrument for fruit production in Ahmedabad, and its role within the larger metropolitan fruit network. As one of three architectural agencies developed as an apparatus for forging fruitful interventions – **Selling, Growing and Dwelling** – the **Fruit-Farmer's Dwellings** create *clusters* which focus on maintaining a strong connection between farming and community, between *culture and cultivation*. A study into the architectural qualities of the pomegranate allows for the **Fruit-Farmer's Dwellings** to take on the properties of seeds. **[Un]peeling** and laying the ruptured pomegranate along the path of the old wall offers a method for agitating the existing condition as the dwellings *spill* into gaps left along the path of the old city wall. Courtyard spaces act as thresholds between old and new; they opportune transitions between private dwellings and the street. Within each cluster of dwellings, a community hall acts both as a place for inhabitants of the **Fruit-Farmers' Dwellings** to meet and spend time informally, but also as a formal meeting house for members of the **Fruit-Farmers' Guild**.

Combining knowledge of the pomegranate with analysis of the social and environmental impact of current farming systems has driven the thesis towards a proposition that argues for a mutually beneficial productive landscape and accommodating city, fulfilling a duty to rebuild the old city walls as socio environmental skins that hold and protect the fecundity of both a community and landscape that give back reciprocally to the city.







A House for a Fruit-Farmer. (adjacent top)
Paradise Pomegranate, New Riverfront Wall (adjacent)
A House for a Fruit-Farmer, Worm's eye Isometric (top)
Paradise Pomegranate, Riverfront Elevation (above)



New Visualisation for the Sabarmati Riverfront.

Lily Goniag



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IMAGE REFERENCES

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