



Many of its disciples do not have a clear reason why is it their trade of choosing; and the little idealism that it arms them with, when they set forth as young practitioners seems to slowly ebb. Society barely thinks of it as a relevant discipline, and most don't even know of its existence. And increasingly it has lesser and lesser to do about making an impact on mankind and society at large. And all the accompanying distractions have undercut the basic but primal joy of beautiful spaces, as if that was an irrelevant pursuit.

When faith is at peril, monks, believers and the converted congregate, and find reasons to keep it safe, to find what ails it, but also to proclaim its promised joys.

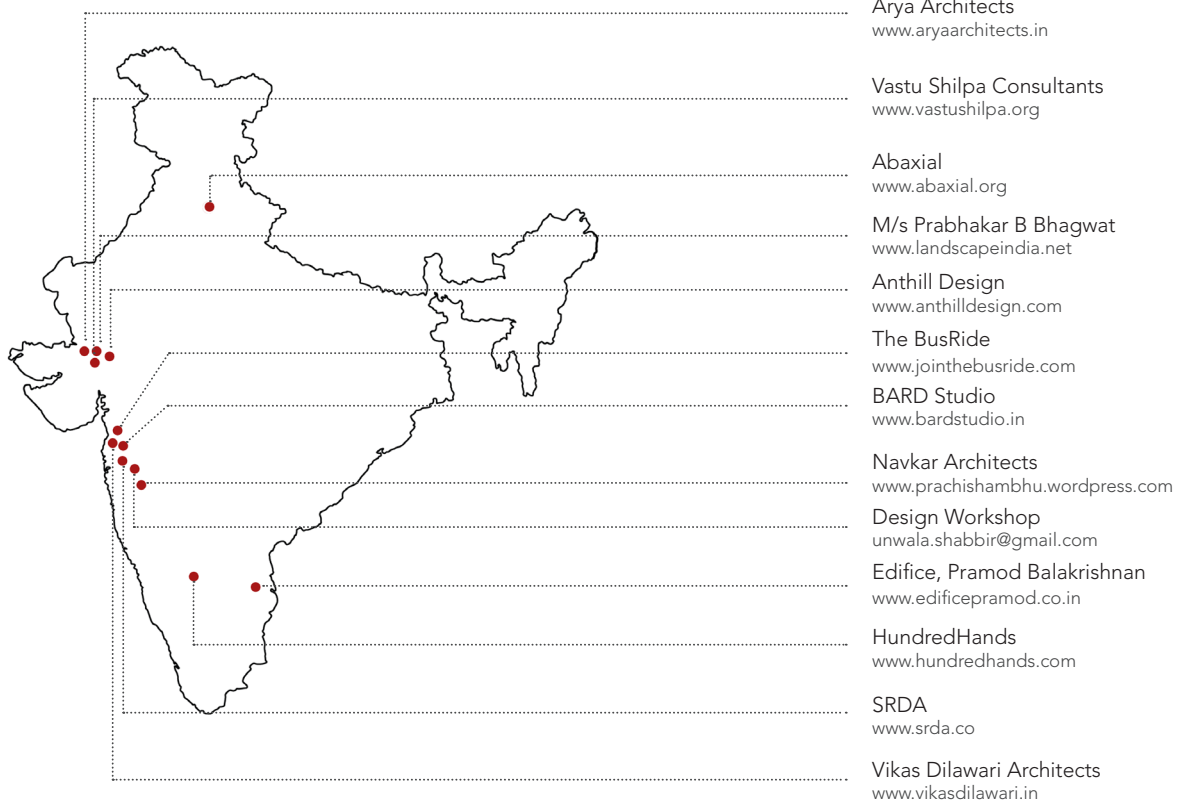
Architecture is a balm and even an opiate; it is a perspicuous, rational and intuitive structuring system that can create spatial arrangements in ways that can have bearing on intellectual and emotional deliberations that leave indelible impressions across time.

And yet today, its death is once again being whispered.

13 firms, across the country, try and construct this narrative, find reasons, state their cases, so that we can all render selves in moments of soliloquy and find cause to reaffirm conviction.

Or to be part of the wake.

Aniket Bhagwat
January, 2018.



Absolute is assertive, independent and unquestionable.
Compliance is submissive, sightless and docile.
The ambiguous is debatable, uncertain and by that a domicile for interpretation.

The Death of Architecture, Circa 2000 is an exhibition that embraces the ambiguous to elucidate through artwork, poetry and prose, five among the innumerable expositions of Death as;

a *Slaughter*, a *Renewal*, an *Ailment*, a *Demise* and a *Transition*.

SLAUGHTER

Architecture as a palpable edifice of expression defines participation, collaboration, a sense of belonging and hence an identity. The characteristic permeability it exhibits makes it absorb and showcase the changing cultures across several cross sections of time.

Power, patronage and policy have silenced the expression of humanity, over the years and ignorance has led to banality in conviction, approach and performance.

While narcissistic minds seek prominence through frivolous and unjustified replication. The negligent still remain unconcerned.

The terminated relationship between humanity and the built environment needs mindful scrutiny, a courageous discussion and an evidence of existence.

RENEWAL

Is the present constant? Or a fluxing collective of narratives? Or a hazy threshold uniting the past with the future? The known is what it is as we are told it is so, because the existence we know is backed by a pre-existing nomenclature.

It is seeing that establishes our place in our surrounding, but the relationship between what we see and what we know need not be analogous.

Distinctive progress demands to evaluate and see without a pre-conception, by getting rid of the known. A cleansing that negates the obvious gives room for the indistinct.

Death is not an absolute but a medium that leads one to new sensibilities, and renewed ways of seeing

CONTENT

Watermarks, Arya Architects

Death of Place, Edifice, Pramod Balakrishnan

The End of Local, The BusRide

Dissolving RE-ticence, M/s Prabhakar B. Bhagwat

Re-membr-ane, Abaxial

Fading of the City Grains, Vikas Dilawari Architects

Pune, Navkar Architects

Architecture of Transactional Capacities, BARD Studio

Celebrating the Power of Ruins, Vastu Shilpa Consultants

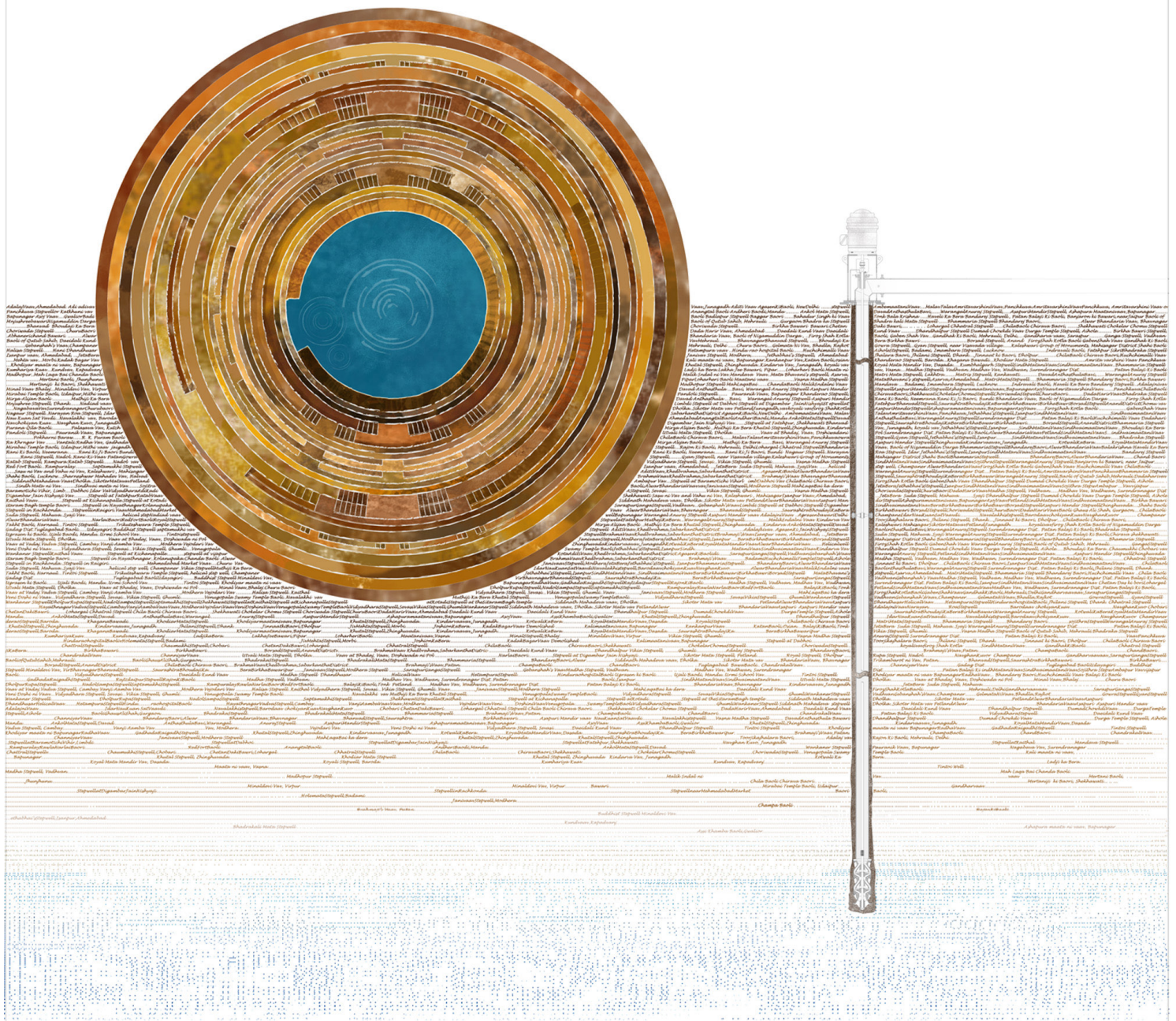
Halasuru, HundredHands

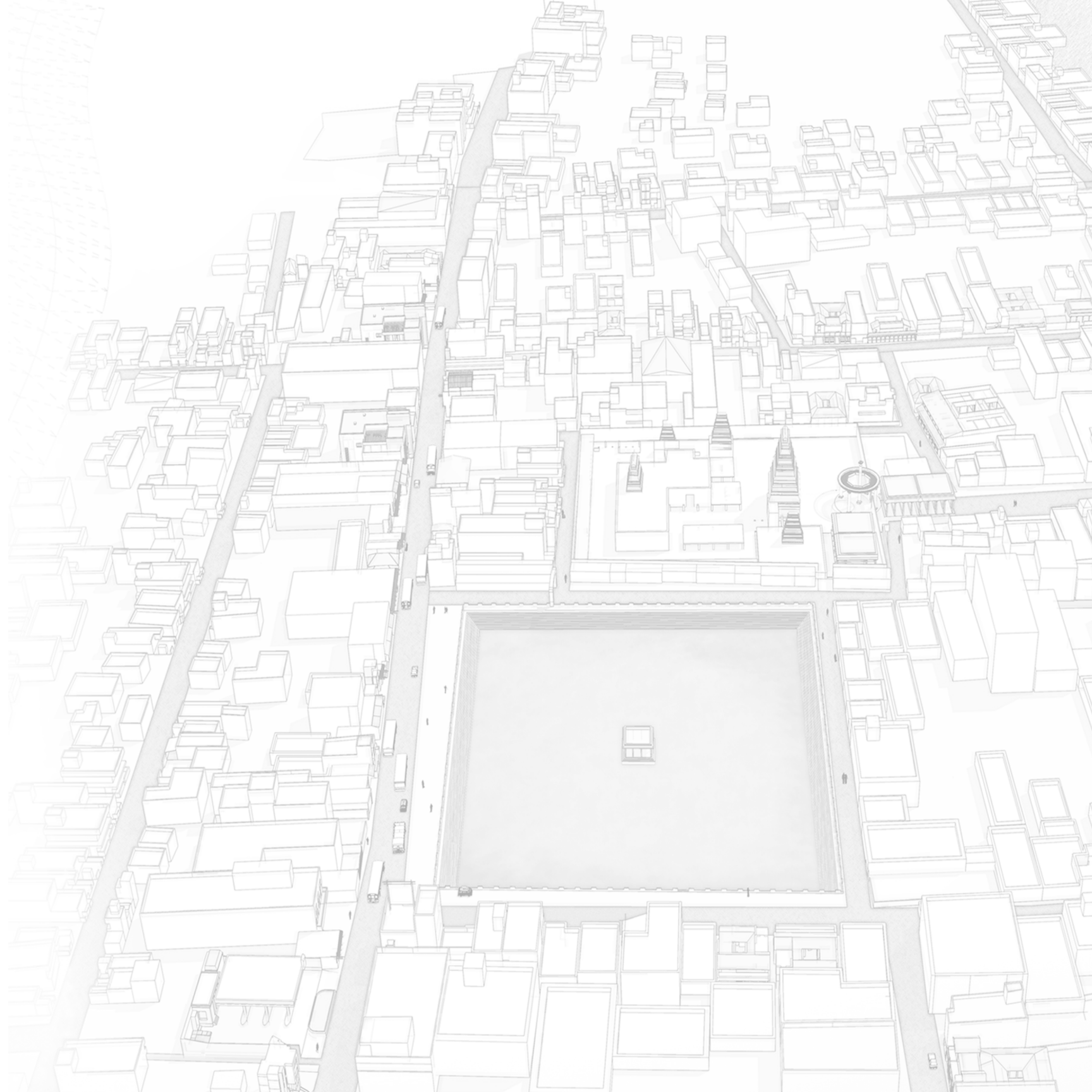
In the Presence of Absence, Samira Rathod Design Atelier

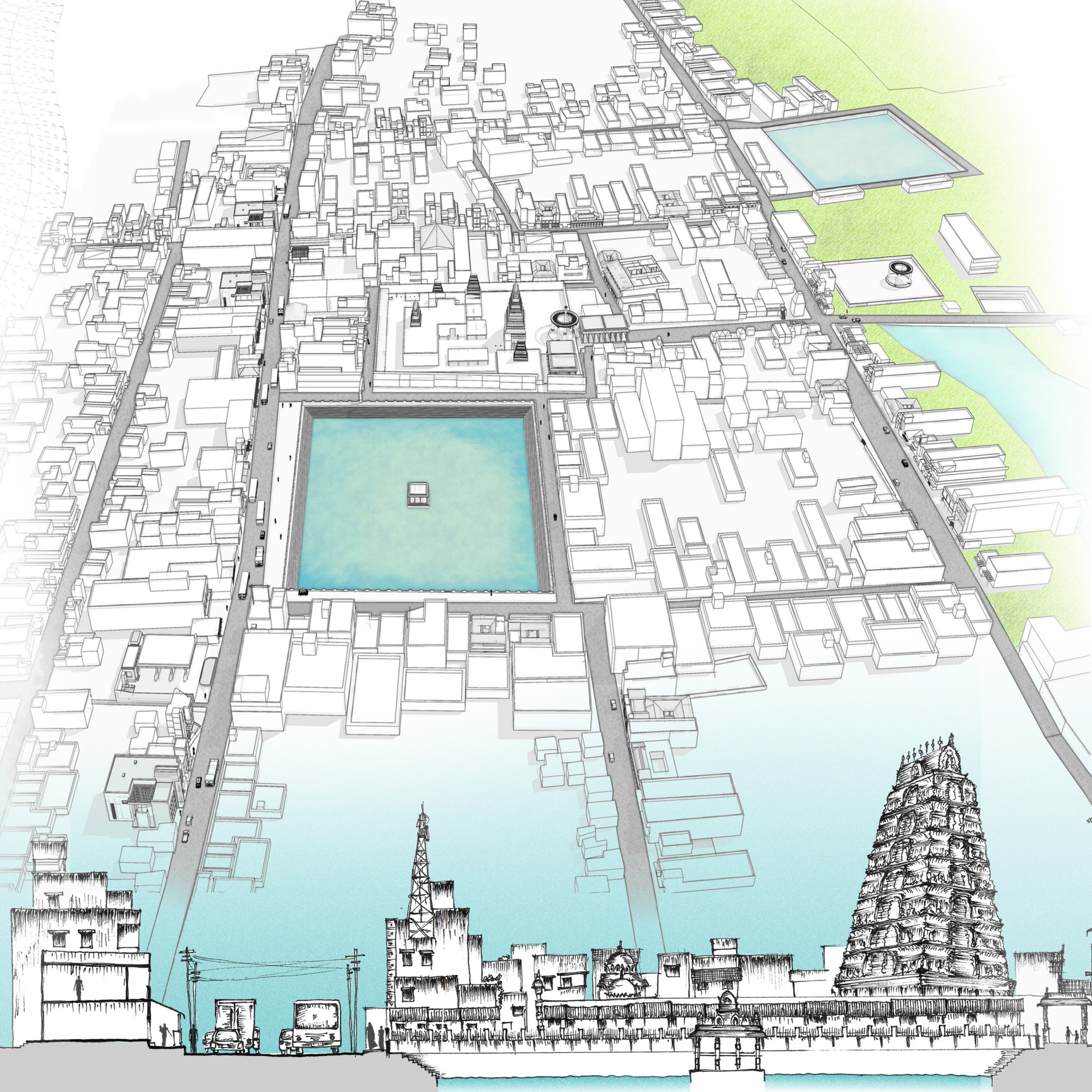
All in Good Time, Anthill Design

Redux, Design Workshop

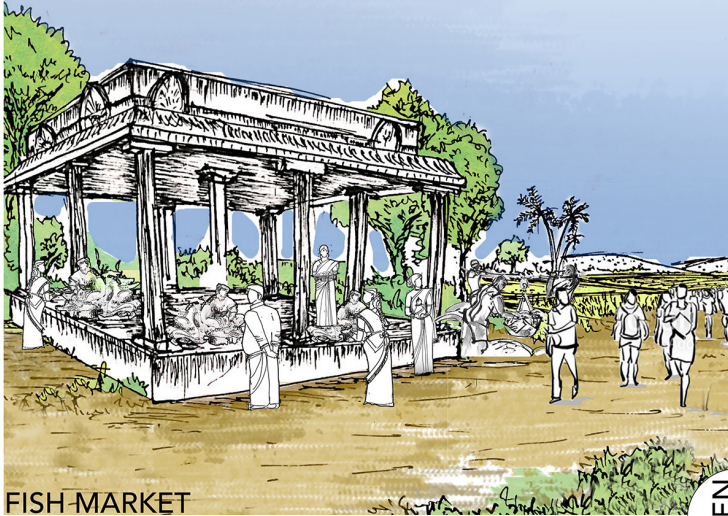
Digging deep into my memory cell,
I found a trail that led me to a well,
the sweet, cool water I gain,
with the taste of the stone, the sky
the earth and the rain ...
A center in sight
for rituals and rites,
an occasion to converge
a chance to converse,
a place to be, was that well.
Today as I seek to dwell,
which is the trail to the well?
The narrow deep pipe, a death knell,
I bid adieu to that well.





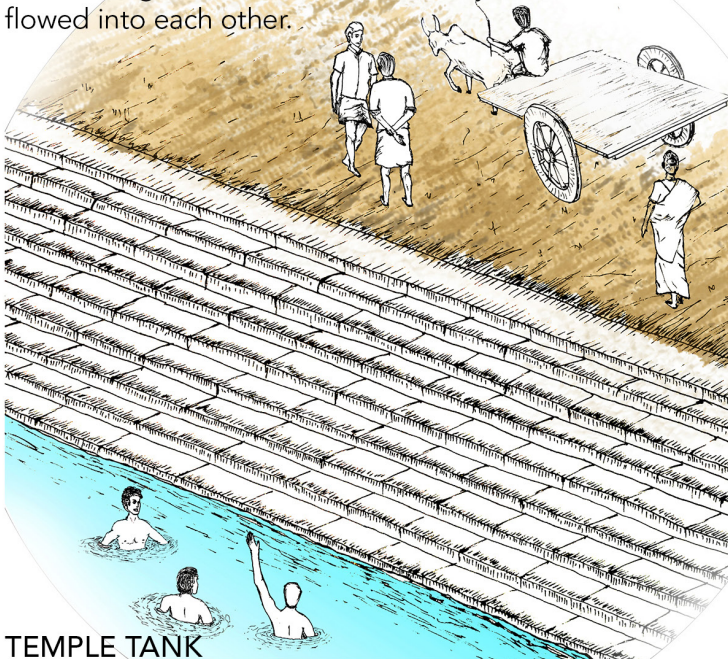


The fish market, placed a little away from the bazaar to avoid proximity to the temple, marked the entrance into the town from the east side.



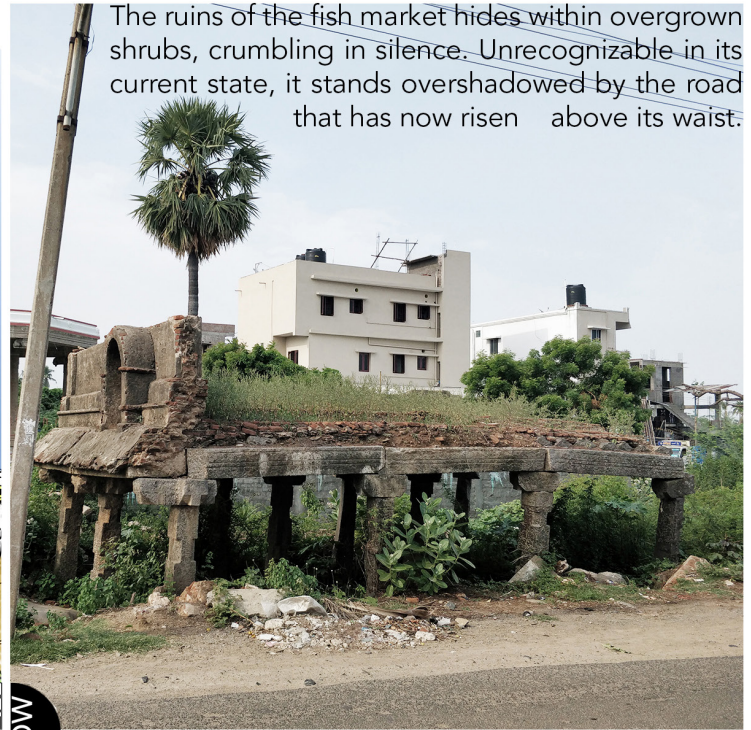
FISH-MARKET

The temple tank had direct access to the streets surrounding it such that the activity from both flowed into each other.



TEMPLE TANK

The ruins of the fish market hides within overgrown shrubs, crumbling in silence. Unrecognizable in its current state, it stands overshadowed by the road that has now risen above its waist.



Around the tank rose a wall, that contained the spirit of the quaint little town. Bound to its place, unable to spill out its allure and activity, so that the city of Chennai may do all the spilling.



Growth and change are inevitable. It is positive as it reflects a society that is growing , changing and adapting.

But when it comes to the built environment this growth and change should be channelized, organized and controlled within reasonable limits.

Our journey intended to empathize with those places that have existed for many years and have been violated by this unchallenged and thoughtless growth of the urban agglomeration.

What happens to them? Do they adapt? Do they just wilt away? A lifestyle and environment that could have still survived is struggling and at loss.

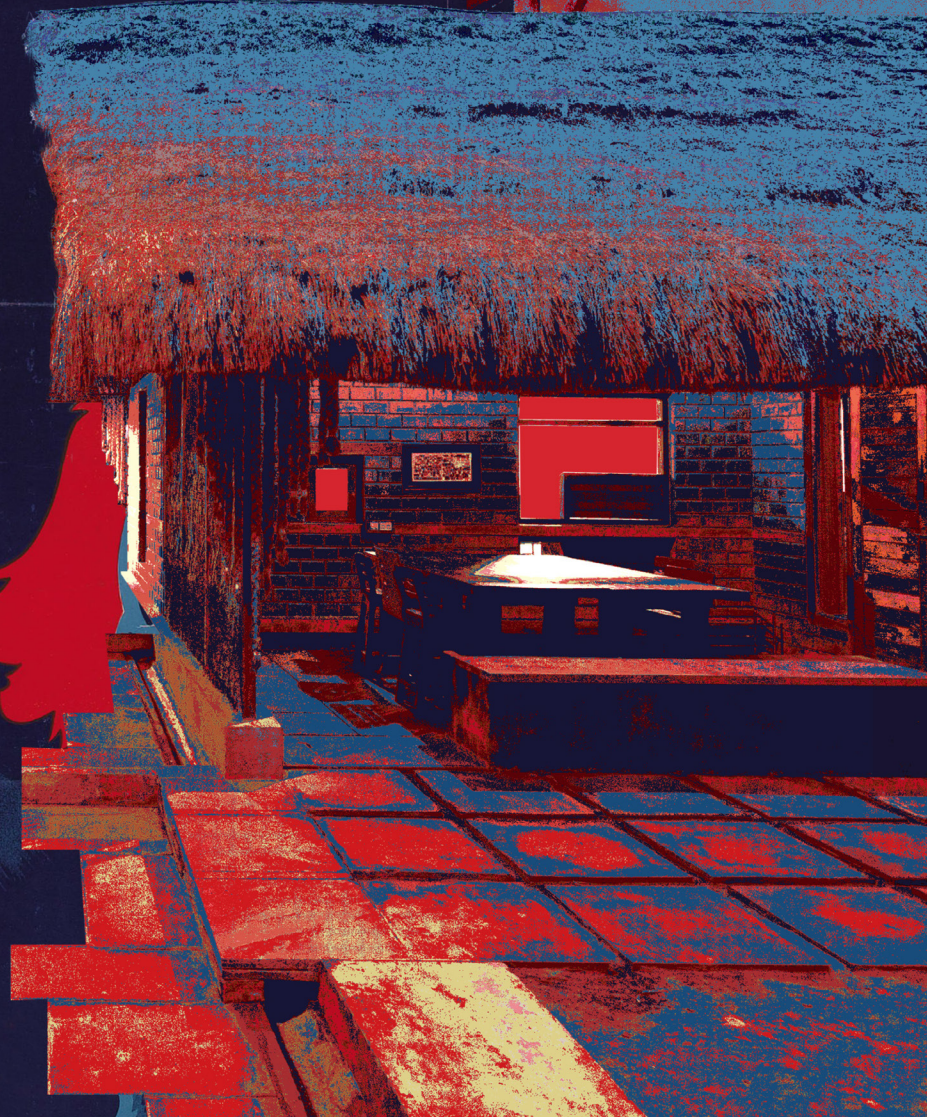
Can this not be saved by simple non interventions that allow the growth but keep these places as is?

We showed this with two examples within the city.

All it required at Thiruporur was not to have the arterial road plough through its heart. It could and should have circumvented to leave her alone and if needed, she might have changed slowly and in a manner benefitting her ethos.

Many such places face this annihilation. We need to stop, think, involve, talk and show ways of how to re-look, so that these islands can and should exist.

THE END OF LOCAL



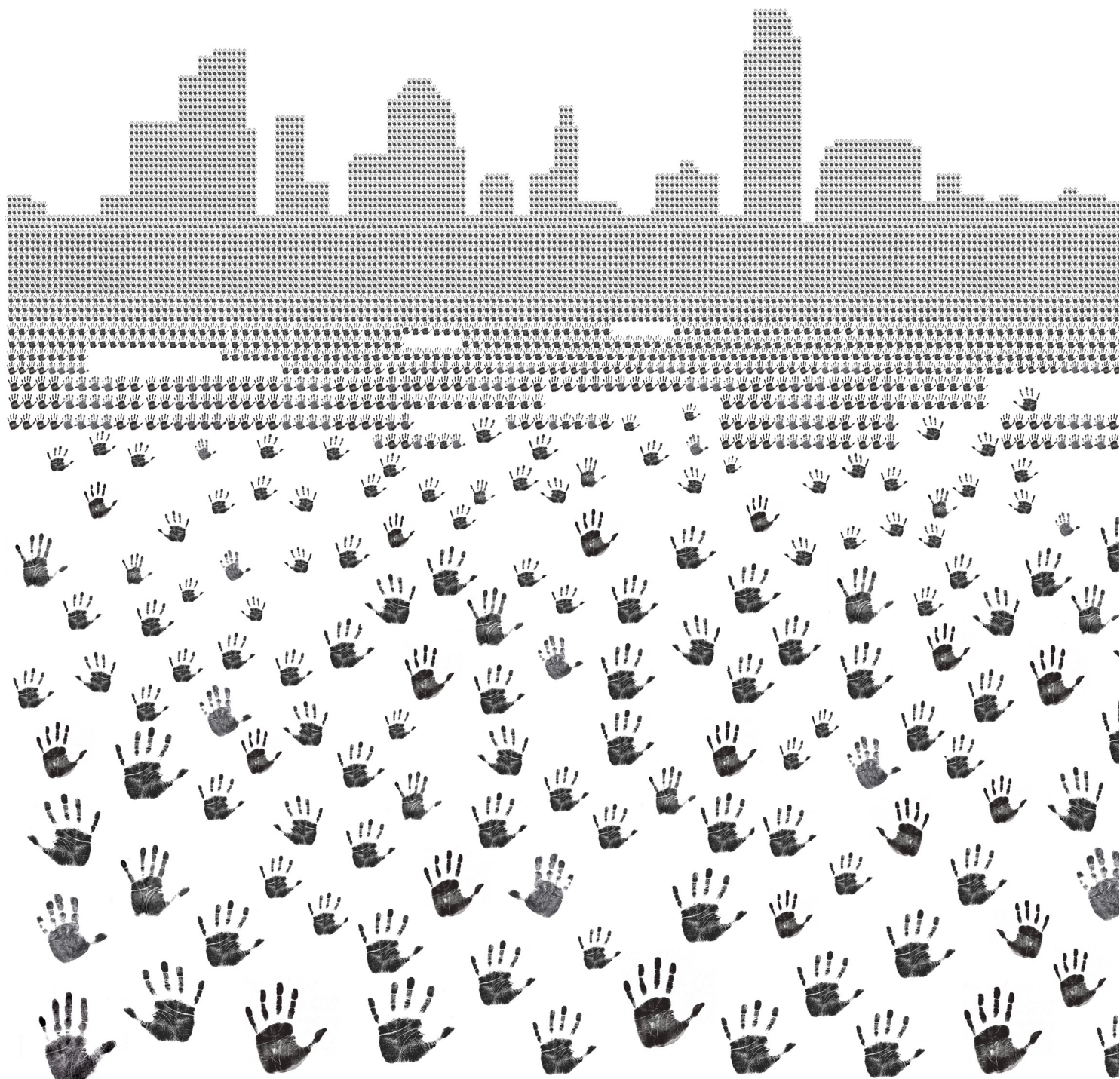
In effect, projects in the last twenty years have looked for legitimization through these tropes of local architecture, local craft, local identity. This 'local' is only a representation of local. It has little or nothing to do with an actual locality.

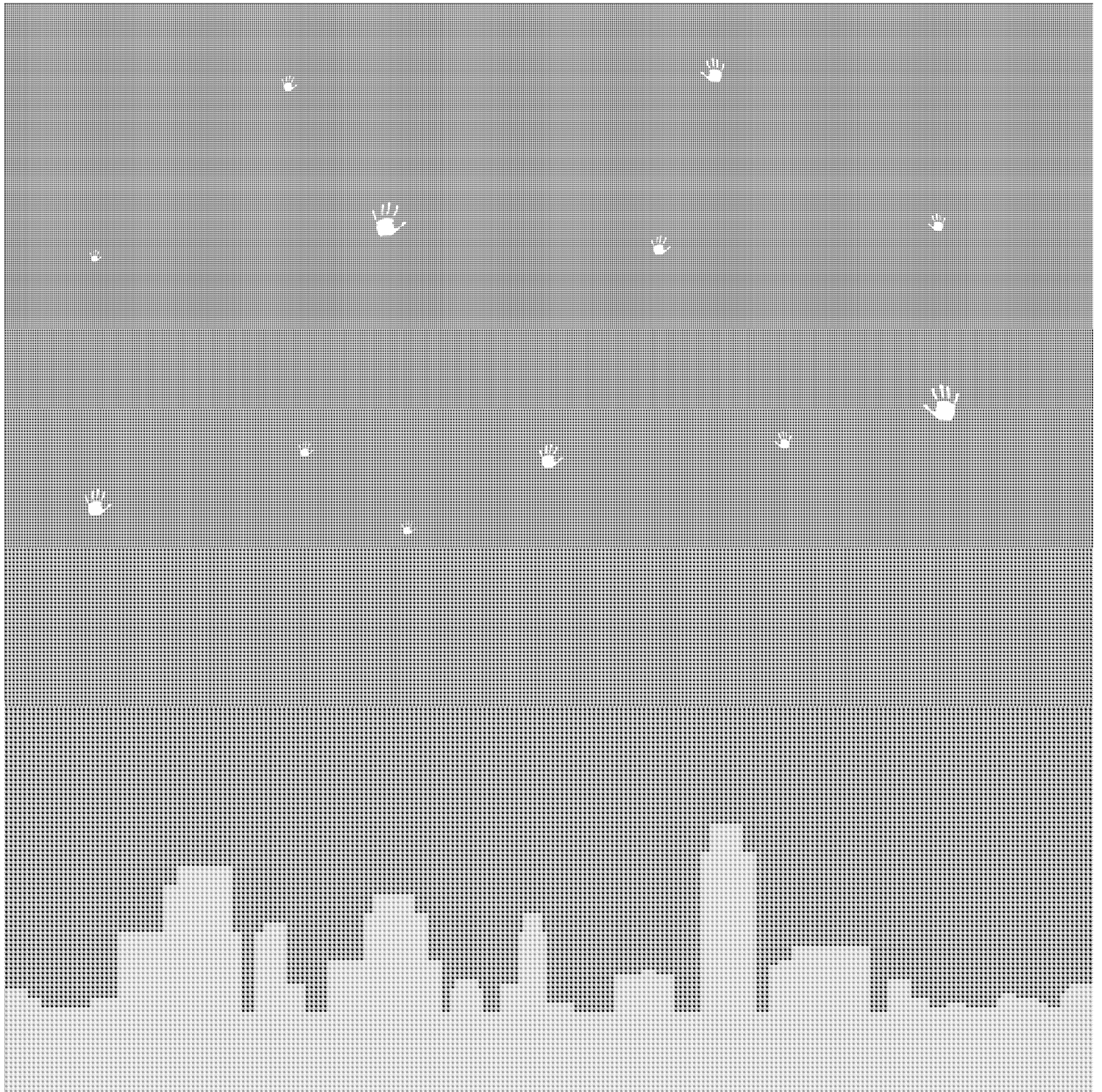
So just building in rammed earth or bamboo, or borrowing decorative and structural elements from buildings in the vicinity, laying Rajasthani stones with Marwari masons, designing immaculate joineries in wood, or even creating earthy textures, can indicate 'local' architecture. These are universal locals and as patronizing as the forces they choose to resist. They might even be in spite of the local, produced in sharp contestation with the local context.

This preoccupation with being local takes us further and further away from being consequential. We become more and more representational. Often a complex of socio-political relations, human endeavor, material resources, local production, local anxieties and aspirations are coalesced into a choice of stone masonry (random or coursed or dressed).

This tokenism we find ineffective to context.

Time only moves forward
From birth until death
There are beginnings, and there are ends.
But what of the rising and setting of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the changing
seasons?
What of the mundane? the repetitive? the everyday?
The monotony of recurrence often yields ignorance.
Until broken by celebration
Between the ignorance and the celebration lies...You
You look around, You notice, You observe,
You Re-reflect.
You listen, You speak, You listen some more
You Re-respond.
You create, You rejoice, You destroy
You Re-view.
Time only moves forward
From birth until death
There are beginnings, and there are ends
and in between is You.





Re-member-ane

The premise of death relies on the finiteness of time. Where every moment can be defined and described. And yet time is infinite. It continues even after death. A vast void. A universe perhaps, where things and events are constantly being added on.

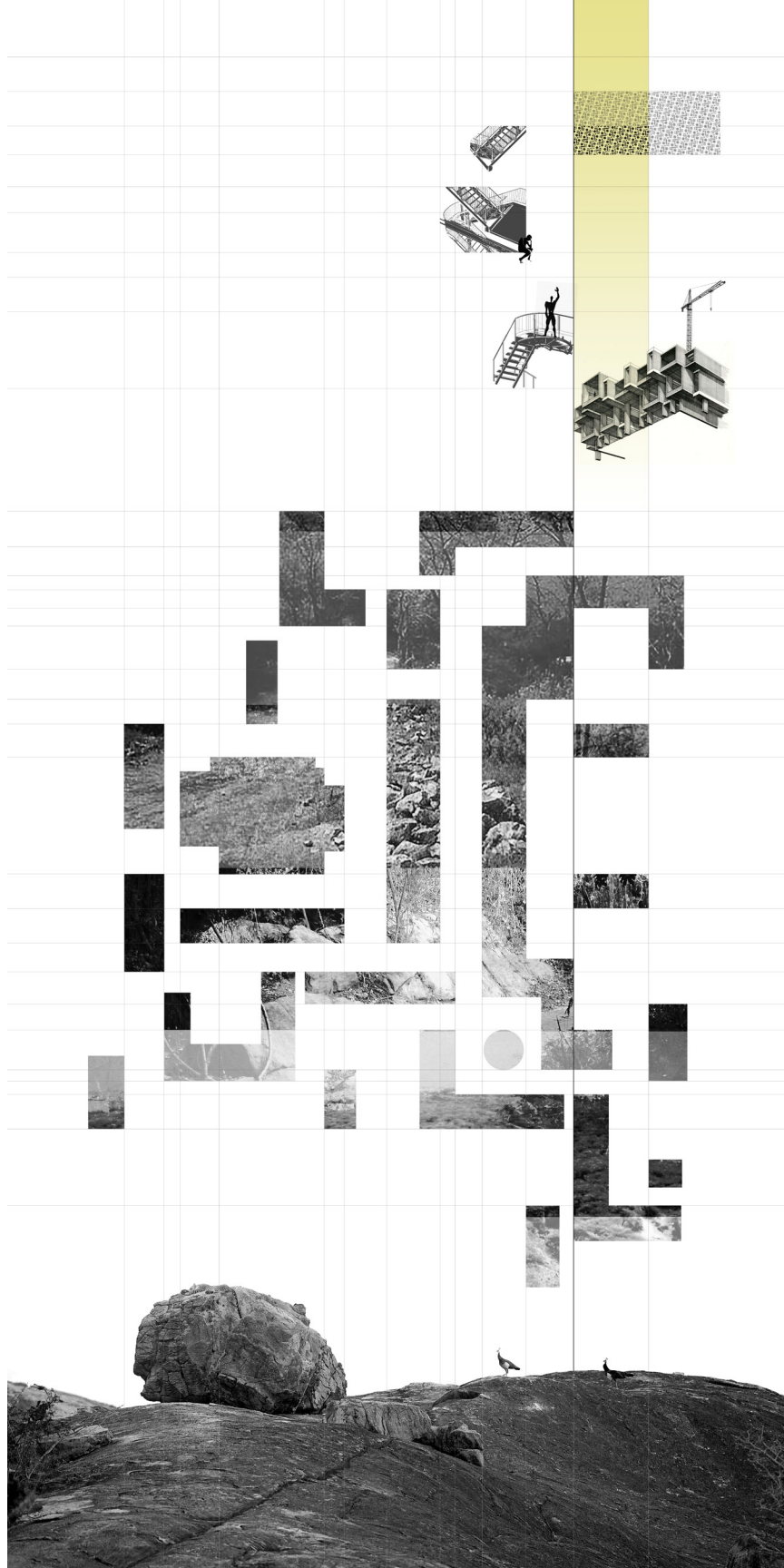
If architecture is a 'relationship between the measurements of space and the events of its past' then it must see itself as a closed whole that can end. However, the broken bend in the railing where once a heavy gas lamp hung ends in a floral curve at the fluted column whose cracks nest an irreverent peepul plant, whose vines encourages a flurry of pigeons to sit on the clothesline that crisscross between the balustrades and eroded stone jallis. That in turn, is held together by overlapped election posters, that has become the corner office for the makeshift astrologer, who sits on his gunny bag perch and tells of the time, when the third son of the fourth king, was born on a still moonless night, in the room that was destroyed by lightening; the day that Nehru died.

Thus, does architecture die? Or it merely adds layers into the vastness of this time landscape. Each of these seemingly opaque layers, are made transparent by memories creating an obtuse lens through which we view our present. These memories soak into the landscape of the city. Saturating it, bloating its present like a sponge. Expanding the architecture. This project examines the lens that is built as an assemblage of tangible memories stitched together through narratives of those who remember.

Re-member-ane is a sectional view of the architecture as seen through this lens.



RMZBane

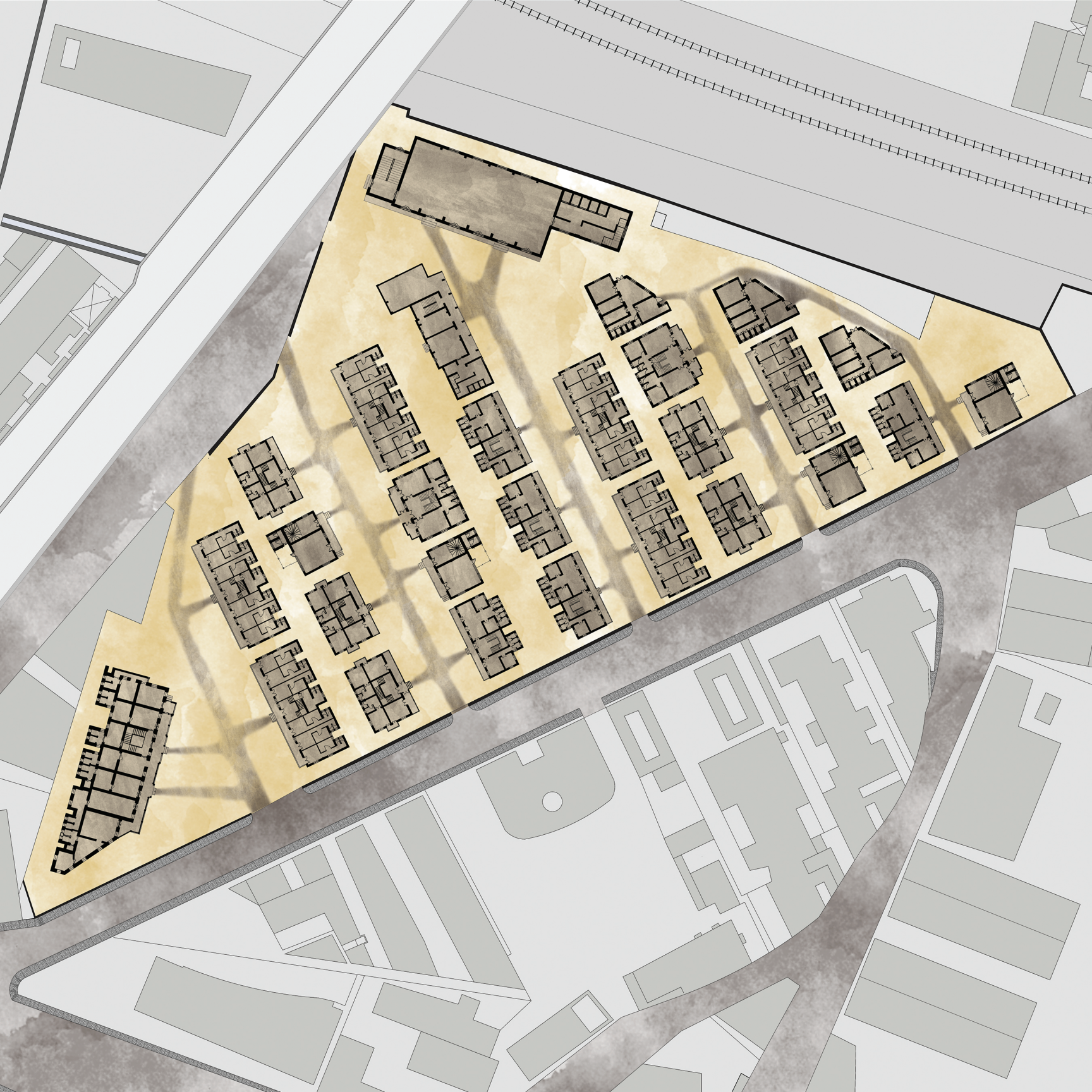


Bombay to Mumbai

The transformation of Bombay to Mumbai has been a journey shaped and restructured by its inhabitants and the many migrants who contributed to its industrial emergence. Migration led to the advent of chawl systems, followed by community housing around workplaces like the mills and docklands. Reclamation of land became a significant way to cater to the growing needs and aspirations of the growing city and was distributed for elite housing, while low lying areas were used for the lower class housing. Some areas were assigned as compulsory open spaces the race course, golf clubs, parks and maidans.

Initially, the roads handled the increase in vehicles and a good public transport system catered to the city's needs. However, the development control rules brought in the concept of parking related to apartment sizes and not on economic criteria. This changed the typology of the built form, which earlier was a response to climatic conditions and social needs. FSI-free parking increased the heights of the built form without widening existing roads resulting in complete chaos architecturally and from an urban design point of view. Stilts, followed by stack parking on podiums resulted in the decay of Mumbai's urban architecture. Public transportation that urgently needed upgradation was deferred for a long time and is only now being attempted by way of building the metro and monorail lines. The connection of a house to the ground was weakened to the point that it seems lost today.

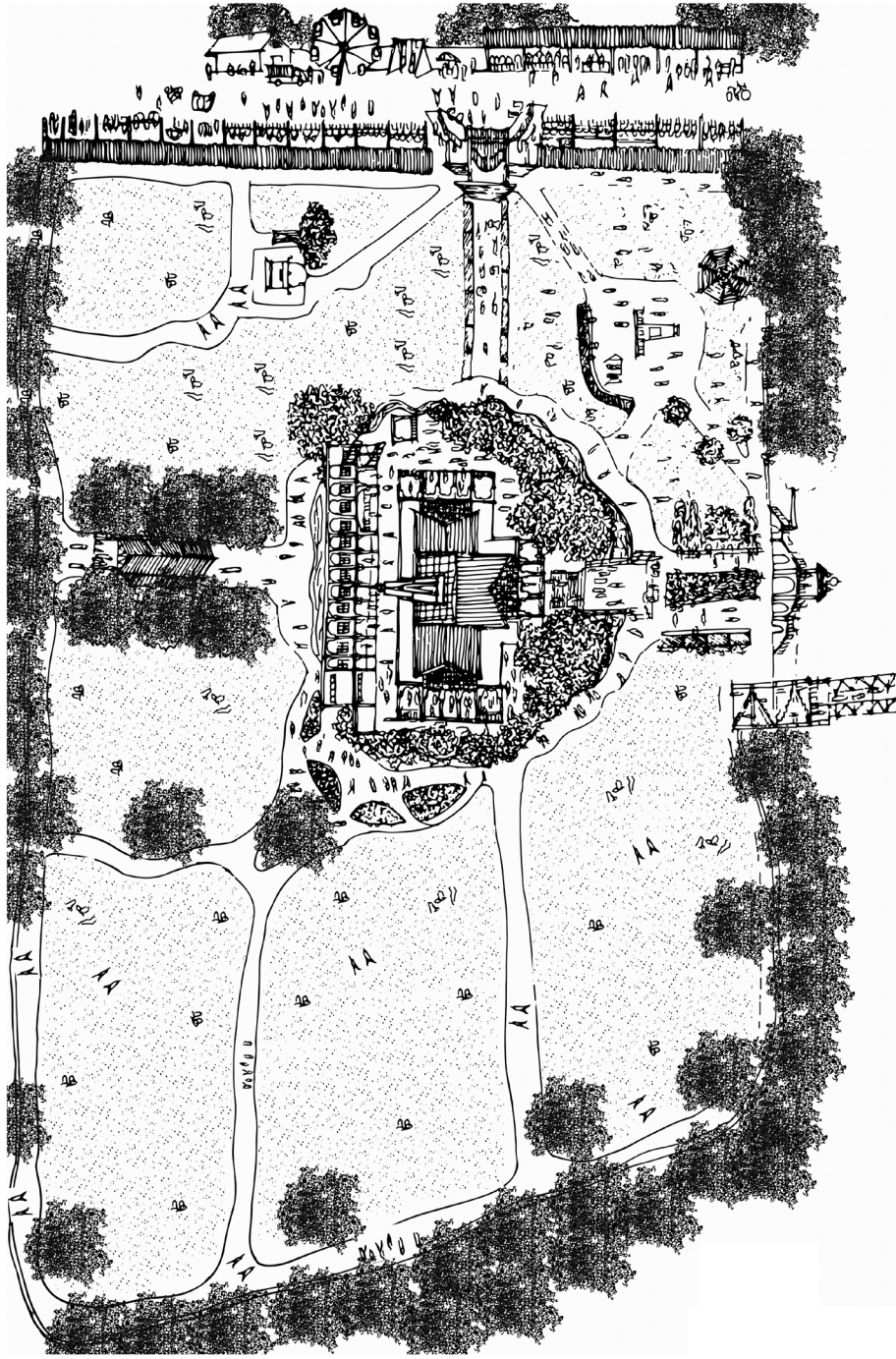
Mumbai's architecture today is a result of real estate, with individual greed and aspiration rather than the need of the city in mind.



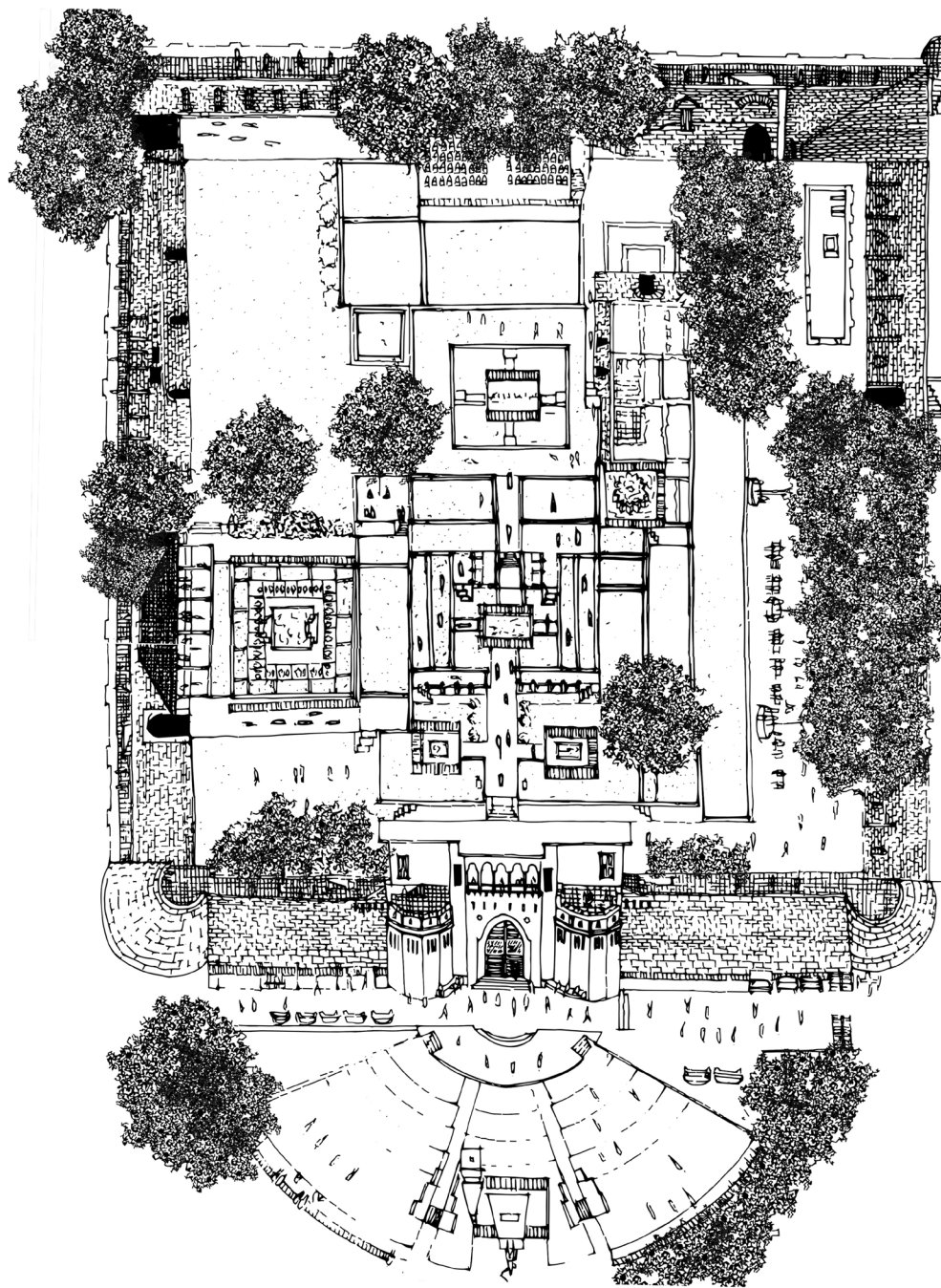
"DEATH OF ARCHITECTURE"

"It is alarming that publications devoted to architecture have banished from their pages the words beauty, inspiration, magic, spell bound, enchantment, as well as the concepts of serenity, silence, intimacy and amazement. All these have nestled in my soul and though I am fully aware that I have not done them complete justice in my work, they have never ceased to be my guiding lights." These were words of Luis Barragan on receiving 1980 Pritzker Architecture prize.

The whole sense and hope in architecture to me is related as a calm existence and a depth in what one feels and experiences that, might be one of the essential problems of architecture today." Death of architecture....?"



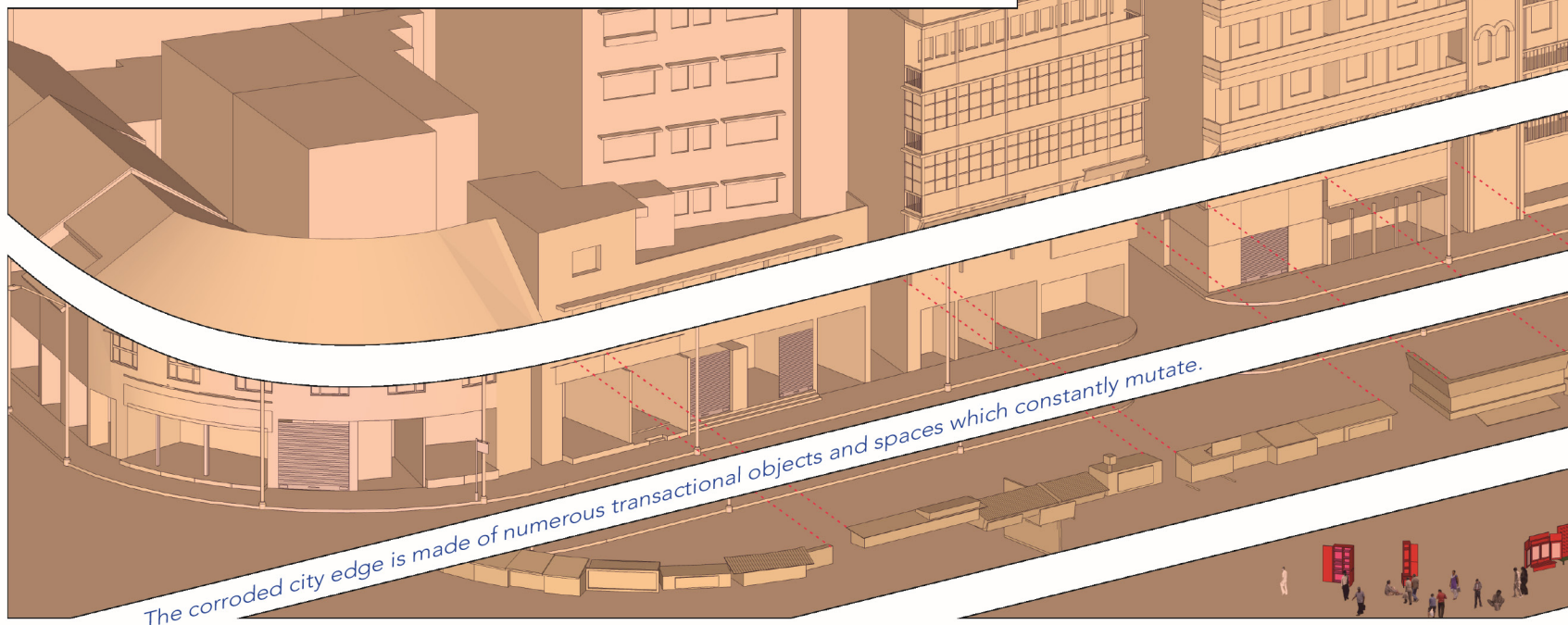
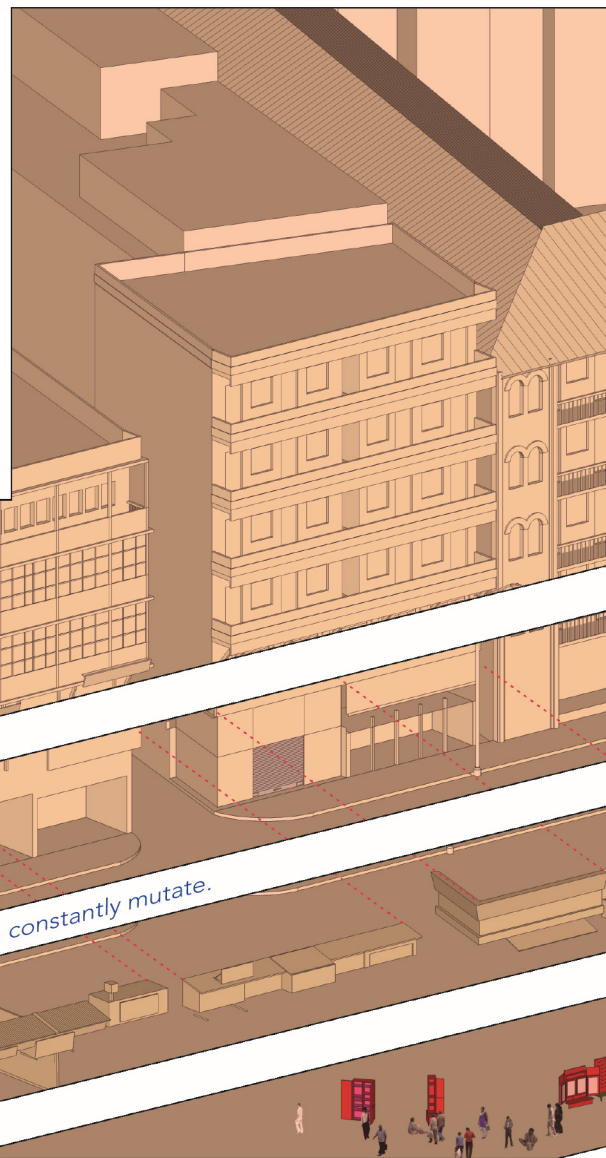
Saras Baug, Pune

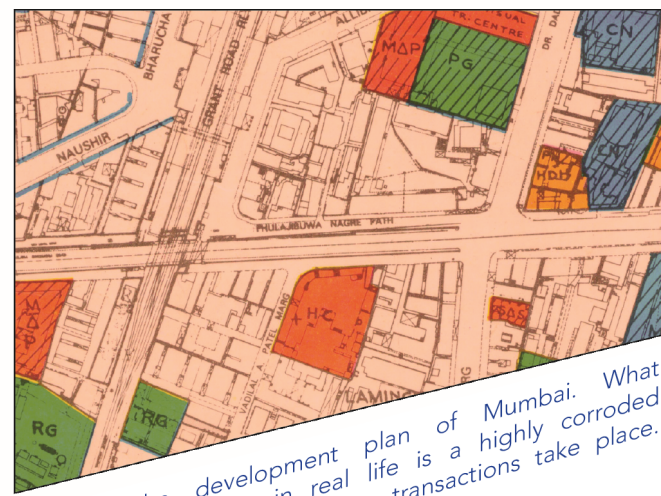
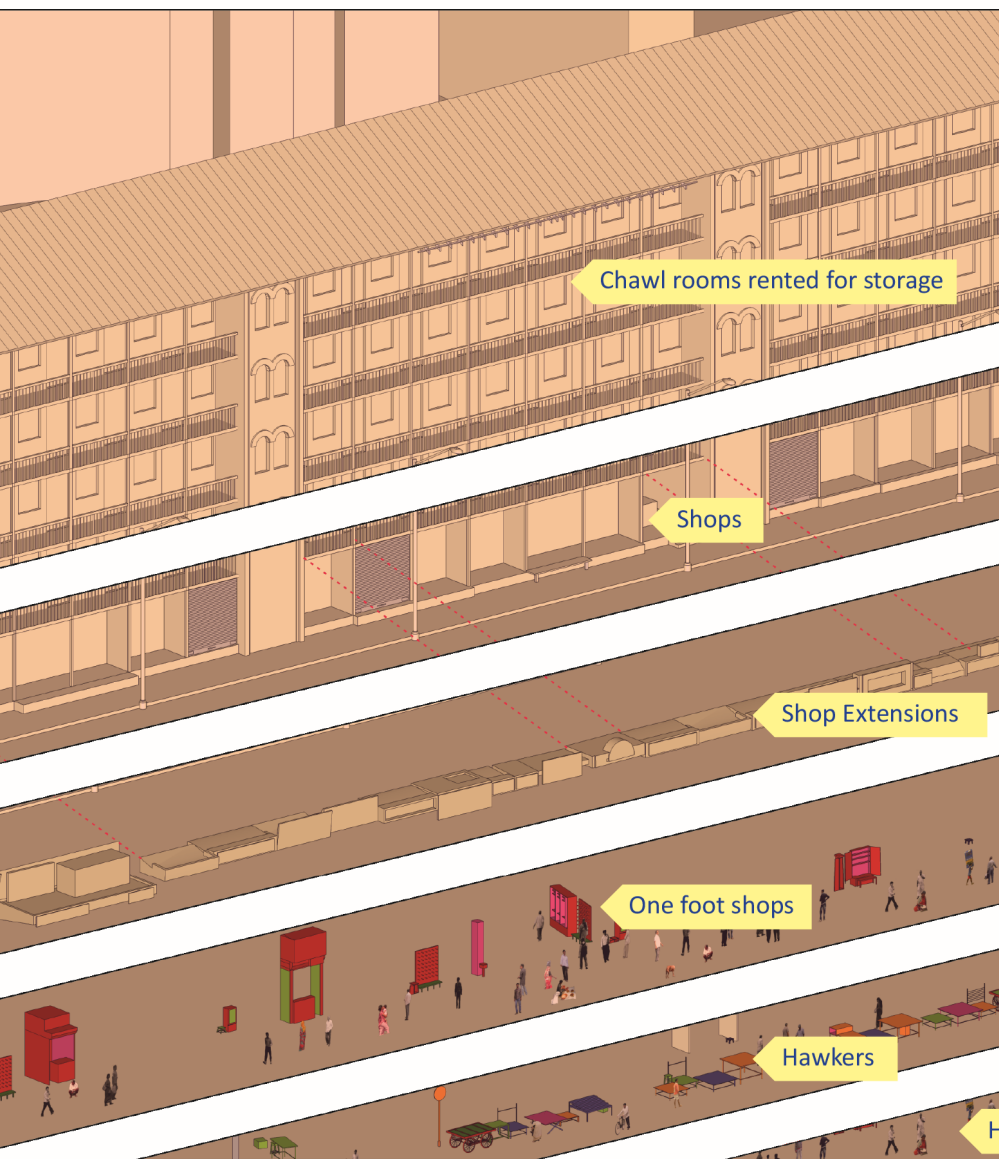


Shaniwar Wada, Pune

These spaces are constantly changed and readapted for newer imaginations. The logic of this transformation is often incremental, sporadic and based on parameters that are beyond the detection of empirical methods. In the case of Mumbai, this constitutes the bulk of how the city is made. Life appears to be residing in the numerous corroded edges of built form that makes our cities.

New forms of urban renewal and redevelopment are however threatening to harden these edges. With clear boundaries, gates and a clear sense of what should be inside and what should be kept out; they are defying the logic of the city of transactions. This is in turn creating a city of high polarities. We predict that the consolidation of edges of cities in this form will contribute in the long run to the death of the city, or atleast the death of the idea of a city, which is a set of intense and vibrant relationships. In the face of this impending death, this project aims to document, through a series of drawings, the Architecture of cities that have transactional capacities, in the hope that some of our new emergent built forms can learn from these. However the cautionary note for design is that Design practices often find themselves awkwardly positioned with respect to transactional spaces. The logic of design practice is often in contradiction with the logic of transactional spaces. Design practices produce certain fixity and create a one-time space/object. Even when they attempt to create transforming spaces, such transformations are often based on clear parameters that can be measured. Design can only be anticipatory to the extent of the parameters that are taken into consideration while designing. But cities throw up parameters beyond imagination. Design practices themselves will need to change their modalities to be able to participate in the creation of an architecture of transactional capacities. They





Here is the development plan of Mumbai. What appears as one line in real life is a highly corroded built form, where many diverse transactions take place.

The old city has lessons galore for how to humanize cities. Everywhere it houses an architecture of transactional spaces.

Prologue : Death of Architecture

Can Architecture really die? Is it alive? Or is it that people who inhabit a place live and die and their life and death is perhaps, affected by the architecture they conceive and inhabit? Does it mean that our emotions are affected by the spaces we inhabit? Are our emotions and memories related to our experiences of life, tempered by the spaces, the atmosphere within which they occurred?

These and many more questions, it seemed to us, would be best served by creating an experience - this installation.

The cubicles represent two extremes, life and death. We live our lives negotiating at any point of time between these two extremes. Paradoxically, being on the edge of death makes us alive and curiously, we become numbed by alive-ness and could be called dead. Our search as architects' lies somewhere in between, negotiated, by our own desires, experiences, questions and hauntings. We hope these two experiences along with the questions in between will help each individual who visits the installation to search within them of what architecture can be?

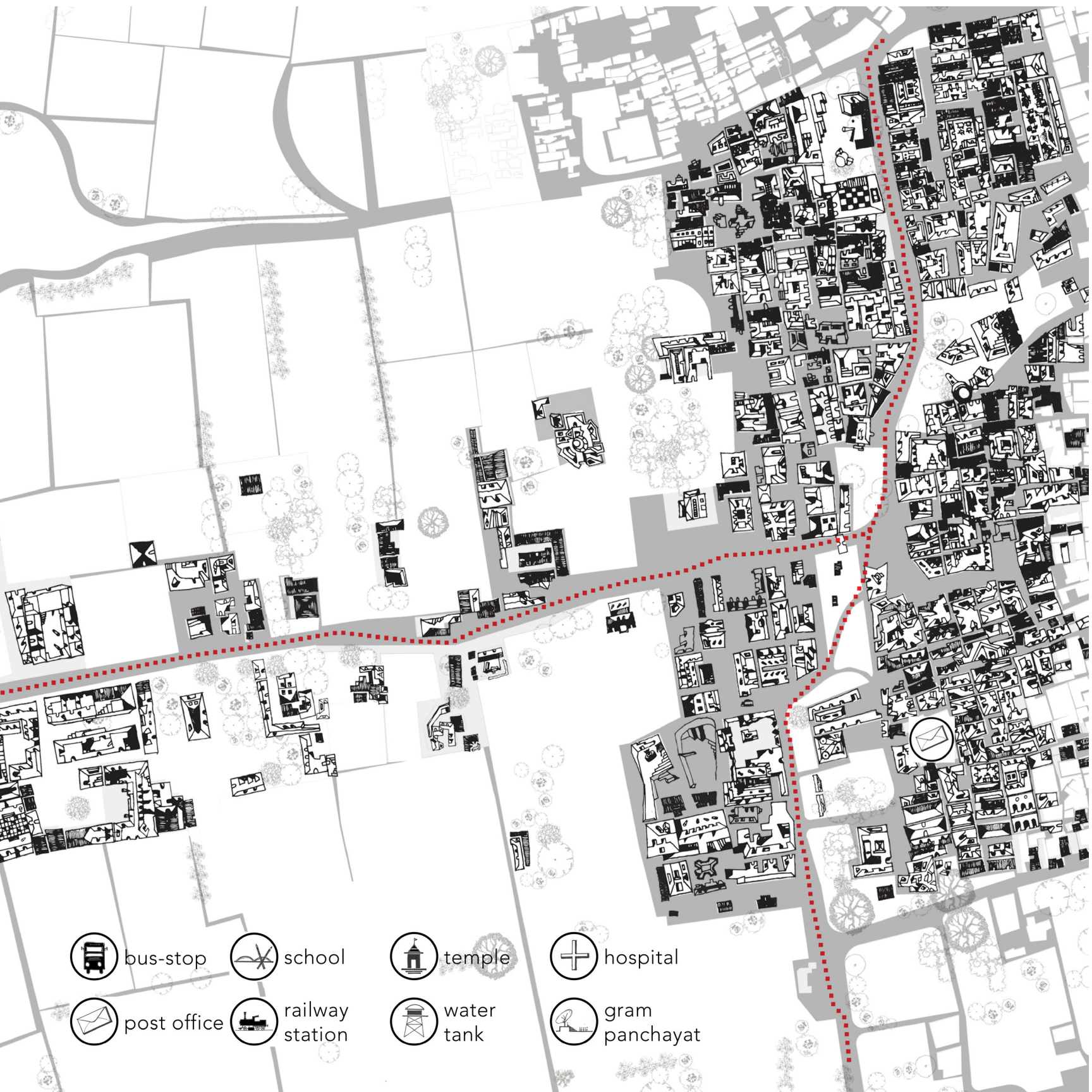


1 - CHURCH NODE









bus-stop



school



temple



hospital



post office



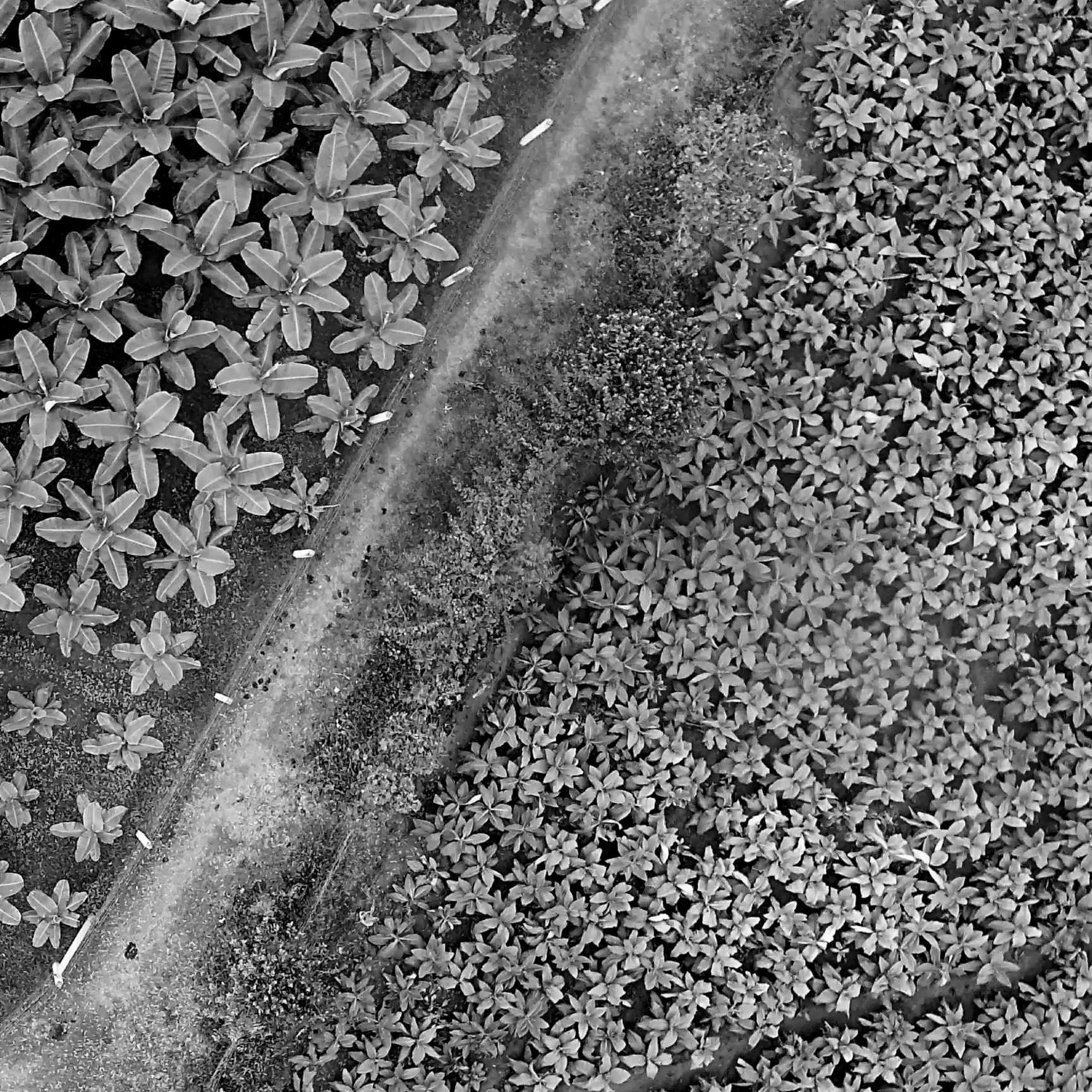
railway station



water tank



gram panchayat

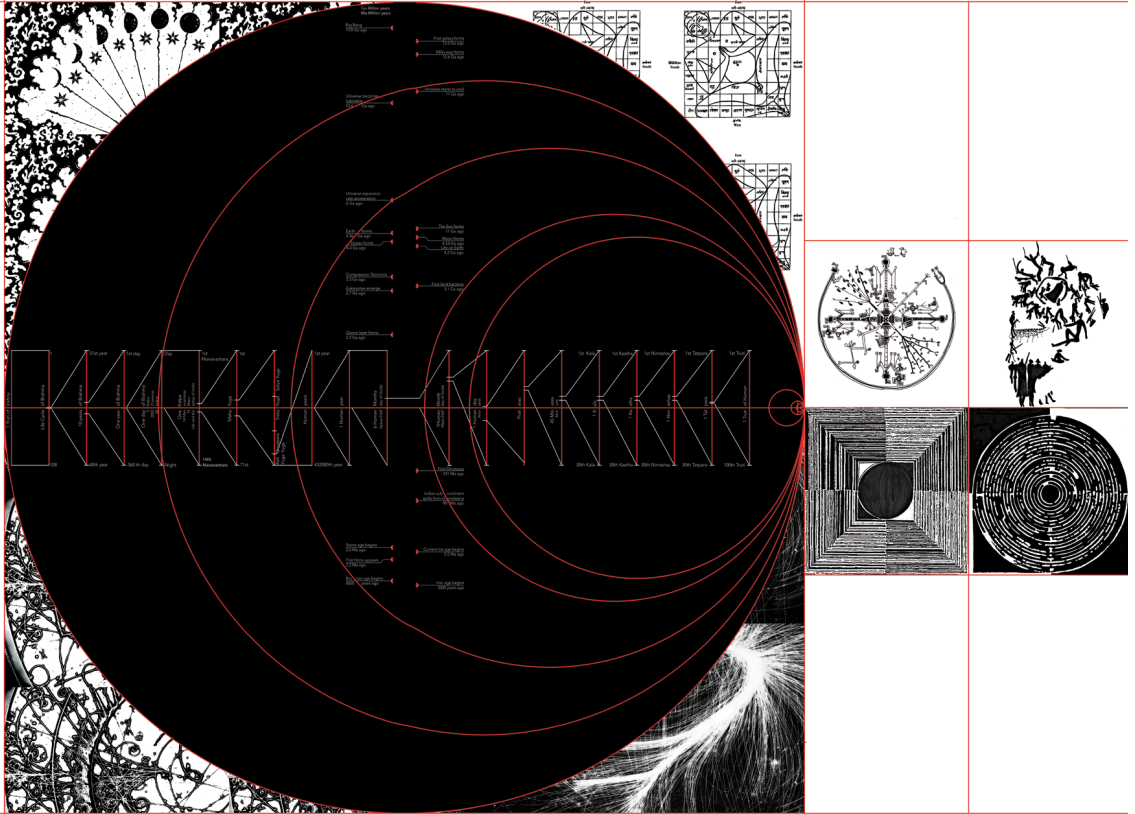




Spaces slowly weathered by time, like the old abandoned people within,







246

SCENE 1: TIME 1: STELLAR

Breath is our first indication of life and TIME.

A mouse breathes 36 times every minute.

A dog about 24 times. As humans we breathe about 12 times in this duration, while for an elephant its about 6. A whale on the other hand, breathes voluntarily, to a cycle of about once every hour, if it so pleases. Time slows down for the larger creature.

We now know of entities in the universe that are 1500R (Solar Radii)¹ in diameter. To put this in perspective we have represented the diameter of VV CEPHEI by a circle of one metre. At this scale the earth would measure 0.0012mm, about the size of a bacteria nesting amongst the molecules of this paper.

At this stellar scale, encompassing 10,000 light years and more, time as you can imagine would be very, very slow. What inhale and what exhale would be the measure of this time? Inhale and the universe contracts, exhale and the universe expands. The universe some say is presently expanding, others say it is the exhale of Brahma².

Imagine that you are immortal and so are those around you.

Imagine living forever. You walk the sky like the gods once did. You reside in the heavens but descend to the earth to live amongst men: envious of their mortality. Life is a mirage of shimmering circumstance waiting for the solidity of a promised infinity. And you are dying for some consequence in a world that is all of your 'will'. You wish you could relax, and resign yourself to your fate. You have none.³

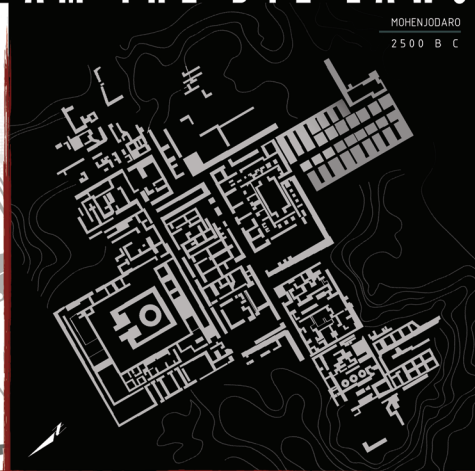
We have always wondered at the stars. We have always possessed a stellar imagination. We have mapped the sun and the planets on to the gnostic lines of what we call plans. Some might call this map a Mandala, others a sun path. Architecture registers this dimension with a Centred Geometry, an Axis Mundi and Ritual. "With these the gods have been the fugitive guests of architecture".⁴

We now know more about our universe, and with greater precision, than at any other point in history. And yet, there has never been less of its imagination imbued in the making of our concrete world.



S C E N E 2 : T I M E 2 : T E R R E S T R I A L

I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA I AM THE BYE LAWS



Death whenever it happens is either Natural or Accidental or Premeditated murder. Death is individual or collective and what we are seeing in this-mo, is the Death of Indian Cities. This death is both accidental and premeditated murder. Accidental because the intent of modern bye-laws is to give life to Indian Cities but it ends up killing it. The elder is the poison. Premeditated murder of the Indian Cities is fuelled by unbridled greed of the developers where Architecture becomes a commodity to maximise the profits. And its this deadly combination of stupidity and greed is taking us down the road of perdition. Architecture on death bed.

In this essay I want to explore how the Death of the Indian Cities is today carried out by the nemesis called Bye-laws, supposedly framed by Enlightened Planners, those faceless wise people who make the laws that control the development which control the fabric of the cities. These same bye-laws instead of making Indian Cities more people friendly, happier places achieve exactly the opposite of the intent.

Cities per se belongs to everyone irrespective whether you are rich or poor, but when the paradigm shifts and it gets planned for the rich and their cars, it not only becomes inhuman but it also destroys the city.

An example of how the Bye-laws are inadvertently killing the cities one could look at the example of Central Business District in Mumbai dating back to British India and how the Buildings were designed keeping in mind the pedestrian and the climate. It was mandatory for the buildings to provide a covered arcade over the footpath. This arcade provided them shade in summer and protected them in rains. Its not only a great urban gesture but it also gave a sense of place by defining the streets.

In fact if one were to look at all great cities of the world and even our older cities they had this very strong Sense of Place which was achieved by alignment of the streets, buildings of uniform heights standing next to each other and deriving light and ventilation from the courtyard in the centre. As a matter of fact a study conducted by British University claims that the courtyard planning is better design strategy vis a vis the present by laws which make buildings to derive light and ventilation from the street. The net result is then open streets all around against the central undivided space. The example of this application of the by laws is everywhere to see but I would like to take Nariman Point as a case in point. It's just a couple of kilometres away from Colonial Business District mentioned above but in terms of Place making, is going away. A perfect urban dystopia. There is no here, here anymore.

As a matter fact all smart cities planned by the Government of India would do better to tweak the bye laws to lay the ground work for pedestrian friendly, environment friendly buildings with sensitive Architectural and green spaces which have forgotten in a hurry that made our cities a great places to live, share and work. Cities which would make even bad Architects design Good Buildings and Good Architects, Great Buildings.



BYE LAWS ARE THE SUB TEXT CITIES ARE THE TEXT

THE MAZE OF INDIAN CITIES



NOTES OF CACOPHONY

The catalogue of forms is endless :
until every shape has found it's city,
new cities will continue to be born

When the forms exhaust their variety,
and come apart,
the end of cities begin

-Italo Calvino

