



PERI-URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT IN GUJARAT

WORKSHOP REPORT

INSTALLATION AT ATMA*

Prepared by Sandro Marpillero, Sonal Beri and Omer Gorashi

*Ahmedabad Textile Mill Owners' Association (ATMA) Building

PERI-URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT IN GUJARAT

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INTRODUCTION

Due to its historical intertwining with the seasonal phenomenon of the monsoon, the state of Gujarat in north-western India offers an opportunity to look into the dynamic tensions between social stratifications and historical agricultural practices relative to managing the regime of water. The erratic patterns of monsoon rains, and extended dry spells between them, are coming back to haunt cities with floods due to impervious surfaces and lack of stormwater management, while at the same time not providing enough nor a consistent supply of drinking water.

Peri-urban areas in the city of Ahmedabad offer a case study for the impact of urban and infrastructural colonization in relation to its current phase of hyper-development. In particular, the territory to the west of the Sabarmati River, around which the city had settled, confronts polluted and drying up underground aquifers, which had played a crucial role in the history of architecture in the form of the stepwells, sometimes characterized as inverted temples. Most stepwells, which were conceived as civic spaces to access the aquifer and contain monsoon water, are in disrepair and are the subject of significant preservation interests, as in the initiative launched in 2022 by the WMF and the Tata Group.

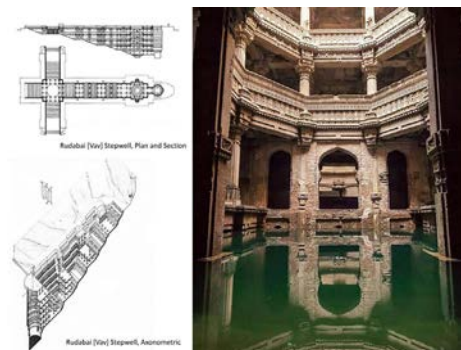
In addition to the stepwells there has been a system of man-made rainwater ponds called Talavs, closely related to a regularized pattern of agricultural villages, that not only collected water for local usage, but also helped in recharging the underground aquifer. Ahmedabad had, according to some estimates, around 2,000-3,000 rainwater ponds that have now been reduced to a few hundred, often ending up as dust bowls or garbage collecting sites, under attack by an inordinate urban growth that is swallowing agricultural settlements with high-density residential clusters and gated communities.

Method and Process:

The infrastructural paradigm that characterized India's model of modernization after its legal de-colonization and independence in 1947 has reached a point of no return relative to the effects of the culture/nature juxtaposition set by Western ontology, which considers "nature" as infinitely exploitable, thus affecting political, urban, and aesthetic categories.

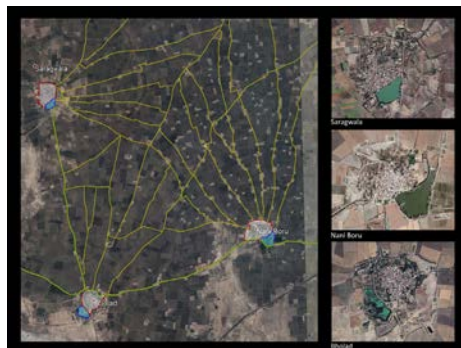
The workshop focused on an area edged by irrigation canals, at the threshold between the city and its new infrastructural boundary, tackling a systemic framework about the phenomena of water, its historical role (through step wells and talavs) and the challenges that are being faced right now between pollution, hyper-development, and storm-water management. Several villages display conflicted conditions. The workshop was organized through a first week, to be held at Avery Hall, of research and gathering of documentation on systemic topics (agriculture, topography, hydrology, infrastructure) followed by two weeks based in Ahmedabad.

The goal of the workshop has been to produce mappings that allowed students to understand the significance of the villages' ponds in the area, in terms of the regime of land cultivation and water management that had been established over time, while also documenting historical examples of water-oriented architecture. The significance of water bodies (secular, religious) and the agricultural regimes that were part of the region's settlements has lead students to formulate a vision for a strategically selected probe and/or a manifesto that re-inscribes water bodies in integrated urban/rural dynamics, with full consideration for their systemic and poetic dimensions.

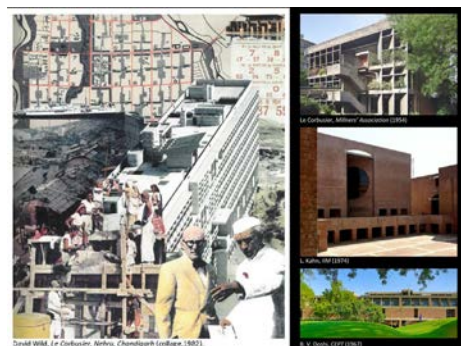


We will be traveling to the northwest of India, in an area with specific geology and significant topography. The monsoon hits India from the Southwest, ascending along the coast and discharging intense rains when it reaches Gujarat and Rajasthan. The red dot in the larger map on the left indicates the location of our base in Ahmedabad, around which a lot of stepwells are located, since the aquifer is accessible by excavating the earth, reaching its depth.

Stepwells are elaborate water buildings with stairs that descend from the ground into the subterranean, towards a water well to access water. (Section on the left). These underground buildings are like inverted temples that are usually 3-9 stories deep. They acted as social spaces for women to gather, for children to play and for caravans of travelers as a resting place in a semi-arid desert climate

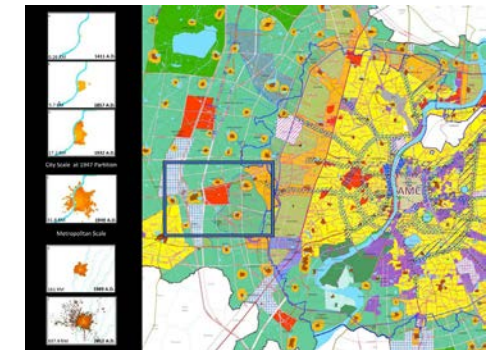


This map shows a typical pattern of cultivation with villages evenly distributed in the landscape and each one having a rainwater collection pond called Talavs, identified in the blue hatch on the map. The yellow lines are pathways connecting network of irrigation, and secondary ponds to control monsoon water as it moves from one field to another. Monsoon is a time of recharging the underground aquifer and farmers have built a very intelligent system spanning a millennium around water management.

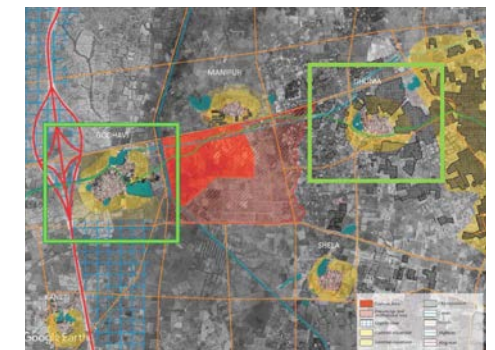


Modernity post-colonial partition of 1947, was marked by the creation of Chandigarh and influenced by Le Corbusier's rhetoric. This paradigm demonstrated the limits of Western ontology. We will visit LC's Mill Owners Association's building in Ahmedabad and other masterpieces, such as the IIM campus by Louis Kahn and projects by Pritzker Prize winner B.V. Doshi. Doshi developed a more sensitive environmental approach to architecture, his Vastu-Shilpa Foundation is a key partner in our workshop.

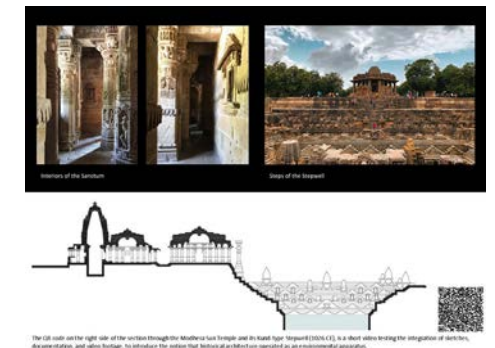
Ahmedabad's historical formation on the east of the Sabarmati river jumped to a metropolitan scale after the war, expanding towards the west. - This is accelerating under an intense real-estate development. Within the current master plan, the rectangle highlights a peri-urban area of social and urban confrontation between the city and the pattern of agricultural villages. They are shown on the left as marked by yellow rings of special regulations, called "Gamthals".



The village of Ghuma, on the right, is under siege by unregulated clusters of towers and gated communities. On the left, the village of Godhavi is trapped between the new ring road under construction, and an area planned for cultural/institutional uses (in red), with the campus of Anant University, also our institutional partner, at its center. The workshop question is: how to re-integrate Gujarat's traditional water management wisdom with a new climate sensitive notion of urban/rural dynamics?



Here you see another kind of a step well or a step pond called the Kund type fronting the Sun Temple at Modhera. The pond acts as an extension of ritualistic space. The QR Code on the right side of the section is a short video testing the integration of sketches, documentation, and video footage, to introduce the notion that historical architecture operated as an environmental apparatus.



This workshop was organized in three weeks: the first one at GSAPP for research and thematic mappings, the second and third ones in India. During the second week we visited urban sites and unique architectural works. We also got exposed to aspects of Indian culture that establish ritualistic relationships with water. For the third week we forged a relationship with Anant National University, which offered us spaces to collaborate on shared topics, since their semester was starting in mid-July.

As output of this workshop each group of students formulated her/his own vision for a strategically selected probe and/or a manifesto, with full consideration for their systemic and poetic dimensions.

RESEARCH TOPICS & MAPPINGS

The overarching framework is set by the phenomenon of the monsoon, in relation to which research topics offer multiple paths of articulation.

- 1
- ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY
- Geology, Climate, Topography, Fauna, Sanctuaries



- 2
- WATER
- Watershed, Rivers, Canals, Storm Water Management, Industries (clay)



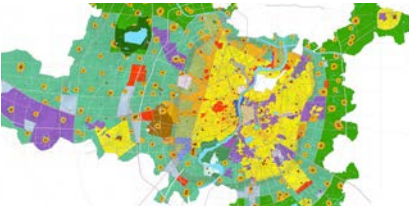
- 3
- AGRICULTURE
- Cultivations, Livestock, Waterbodies (Talavs)



- 4
- ARCHITECTURE
- Step Wells & Water Related Structures, Waterfront Development,



- 5
- SETTLEMENTS
- Urban Development Patterns, AUDA Zoning, Land Use Policies, Infrastructure, Development Incentives, Commons



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STUDENTS' INTERESTS

GROUP I

GROUP I

Post Colonial Context?
Agricultural / Architectural Production?
Water Infrastructure?
Alternative Knowledge Systems?

David Zhang - M.Arch Candidate
Interested in local material resourcing practices as they relate to environmental justice and alternative design approaches

Daniela Perleche Ugas - M.S. Candidate in Urban Planning
Researcher at URBES-LAB; specialized in Methods and Techniques of Social Research by CLACSO

“I am interested in researching and developing a critical understanding of the relationalities between endemic ecosystem resource usage (water, soil, building material), agricultural production, and architectural production. Specifically focused on the relationship between the region's water infrastructure (stepwells and Talavs), and the original systems of food production/distribution. I would like to uncover what local agriculture looked like before colonial systems of land enclosure.”

“I think this as a starting point for my research will inevitably begin to overlap with other students' research, and hopefully from there a critical position on current development and land use can be developed. I am not sure what the extent of the workshop will be and whether or not proposals will begin to form around these topics, but it would be great to have that in mind and get your thoughts on the breadth and potential of this research topic/approach.”

“I was drawn to the workshop because it delved into post-colonial contexts, where Western paradigms collide with alternative knowledge systems, particularly in the context of addressing climate change. During my academic work, I have tried to tackle this issue and rethink de-colonial frameworks that challenge our perceptions of “development”. I am particularly intrigued by the exploration of territories through mapping and strongly believe that infrastructure development should consider and integrate other organizing systems (built and natural) present within a given space. As an aspiring urban planner, my interests extend beyond infrastructure to include agriculture, as I strive to envision alternative methods of managing and optimizing both domains, especially considering current problems related to food security.”

STUDENTS' INTERESTS

GROUP II

GROUP II

Monsoon and its Socio-Cultural & Economic Significance?
Social, Spiritual & Religious Significance of Water?
Religion as Commons?
Traditional Architecture?
Storytelling?

Marberd Bernard - M.Arch Candidate
Architectural designer with a speciality in vizualization, animation and BIM
Daniel Li - dyl2131@columbia.edu M.Arch Candidate
NY-based designer and technologist creating experiments in Architecture

“Since an early age I have been captivated by the diverse aspects of Indian culture; from their music (such as my favorite, Nachle by Sunidhi Chauhan) to their movies. But when I read about this workshop I instantly felt curious about their ritualistic relationships with water. One particular aspect that truly sparks my passion is the eventful monsoon season in India. The monsoons, with their arrival, bring a sense of joy and relief after the scorching heat and drought. The parched earth eagerly awaits the first droplets, and when they finally descend, it's as if nature herself is celebrating. However, amidst this exuberance, there is also a sense of caution. The monsoons can quickly turn into a double-edged sword, bringing devastating floods that leave a trail of destruction in their wake. Rivers swell, streets turn into torrents, and homes are submerged under the weight of rainfall. Communities come together, both in preparation and in solidarity. These contrasting emotions associated with the monsoons, from elation to devastation, create a profound connection with water in Indian culture. Exploring the rituals, beliefs, and practices tied to water during this season unveils a rich tapestry of traditions that have withstood time. It is this intricate tapestry that continues to fascinate me, as it reflects the resilience, adaptability, and deep reverence that India holds for the elemental force of water.”

“I looked briefly over a few of the resources, and I'm currently most interested in the social, spiritual, and religious significance of water, so perhaps the Water topic makes sense. I enjoyed reading the introduction to stepwells/ponds and monsoon feelings, and I feel I am leaning towards traditional architecture and the culture/religiosity around water and monsoons. Since I've explored commons in relation to water in the past, I feel like a good way to expand on that is through religion as a specific type of commons. Lately, I've been invested in historical and archeological viewpoints and storytelling so I would enjoy looking at “older things” and thinking about what they mean to us in the current day.”

STUDENTS' INTERESTS

GROUP III

GROUP III

Settlement?
Water Management & Urban Development?
Land Use Policy?
AUDA Zoning?
History of Sabarmati?
Hydrology?

Camila Botero M.S. Candidate in Urban Planning
Multidisciplinary work raises questions about the instability of the present time.

Allon Morgan -M.ARCH II, M.RED Candidate
Loves the arts, GSAPP Student Council member

Omer Gorashi - M.Arch Candidate
Designer, photographer and collagist

“Starting with the preliminary indication of the research topic, I would be interested to work around the topic (2) Water: which takes into account Watershed, Rivers, and other forms of water bodies, canals, storm-water management, and industries. Or topic (5) Settlements: which takes into account urban development patterns, AUDA Zoning, Land Use Policies, Infrastructure, Development Initiatives, and Commons. Ps: I think those topics are very closely related in regard to the human variable, culture, and behaviors.”

“Taking into consideration the seasonal phenomenon of the monsoon, along with the inherent tensions arising from social stratifications and historical agricultural practices related to water management, I am interested in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the environmental and climate justice aspects within this context. Moreover, I seek to explore the intricate interplay between infrastructure, water management, urban areas, rural surroundings, and their respective environments and productive activities. It is crucial to analyze how rural areas have traditionally served urban centers and cities, while also recognizing the potential effects this relationship may have on rural territories as they evolve and grow.”

“I find the workshop intriguing because it explores the vital connection between water management and urban development in villages and cities and how different cultures address this issue and practicality in Gujarat. “They (Installations) enable the visitor to reflect upon the challenges posed by the construction of the buildings while simultaneously sensitizing the visitor to his or her own presence in space.” This quote from an article by Doshi sits by me when reflecting on other ways to learn how places create emotional reflections of memories. I am intending on finding a similar thread about Ahmedabad, the history of the Sabarmati and settlement, and how infrastructures (hydrological and agricultural) have formed around the river, as well as the architecture(s) that are formed because of it.”

WEEK I SCHEDULE

Monday, July 17, 2023

8:15 am Arrive GSAPP
8:30 am – 9:30 am Keynote lecture by Rajeev Kathpalia, Vastu-Shilpa Foundation on:
‘Celebrating the Elusive Waters of India’
9:30 am – 11:00 am Post lecture discussion and exercise (in person)
11:00 am – 12:00 pm Move to studio space @ Avery 600 S; break
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
• Intro to Site Construction and deliverable for Friday
• Work plan review with each group at desk
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm Collective discussion

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

8:15 am Arrive GSAPP room 408 Avery
8:30 am – 9:30 am Lecture by Radhika Singh on:
‘Techniques of Documentation’
9:30 am – 11:00 am Post lecture discussion and exercise (in person)
11:00 am – 12:00 pm Break
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
• Review progress on exercise 1 & 2
• Work plan review with each group
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm Collective discussion

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

9:00 am – 11:00 am
• Sonal and Sandro presentation of Videos
• Introduction to Exercise 3
(Installation at Mill Owners’ Building on August 4th, 2023)
11:00 am – 12:00 pm Break
12:00 pm – 3:00 pm Studio work
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Pinup

Thursday, July 20, 2023

8:15 am Arrive at 408 Avery
8:30 am – 9:30 am Lecture by Prof. Sharmila Sagara on:
‘Water – Symbols, Ritual and Other Stories in the Indian Subcontinent’
9:30 am – 11:00 am Post lecture discussion and exercise (in person)
11:00 am – 12:00 pm Break
12:00 pm – 3:00 pm Studio work
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Pinup

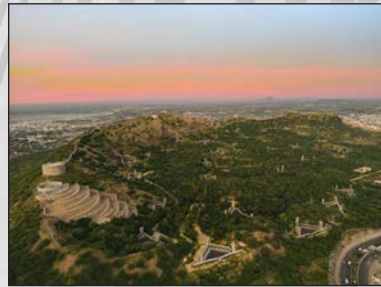
Friday, July 21, 2023

8:15 am Arrive at 203 Fayerweather
8:30 am – 9:30 am Lecture by Akshay Anand on:
‘Peri Urban Lakes - Ecological and Social Dynamics of Governance’
9:30 am – 10:30 am Post lecture discussion and next two weeks schedule
10:30 am – 11:30 am Break
11:30 am – 1:00 pm Pinup

GSAPP Summer Workshop, 2023

Peri-Urban Water Management in Gujarat

July 17 - August 04, 2023, Prof Sandro Marpillero & Prof Sonal Beri



Rajeev Kathpalia,
Trustee Vastu Shilpa Foundation; Chair Professor
Anant National University, India
'Celebrating the Elusive Waters of India'



July 17th, 8:30 AM
408 Avery
Moderated by:
Prof. Sandro Marpillero



Radhika Singh,
PhD Candidate, University of Nairobi
'Techniques of Documentation'



July 18th, 8:30 AM
408 Avery
Moderated by:
Prof. Sandro Marpillero



Prof. Sharmila Sagara,
Associate Professor, Anant National University,
India
**'Water - Symbols, Ritual and Other
Stories in the Indian Subcontinent'**



July 20th, 8:30 AM
408 Avery
Moderated by:
Prof. Sonal Beri

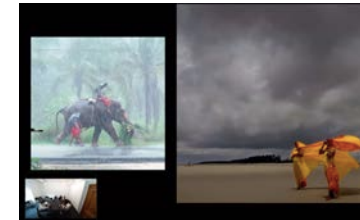


Akshay Anand,
PhD Candidate, University of Twente
**'Peri Urban Lakes - Ecological and
Social Dynamics of Governance'**

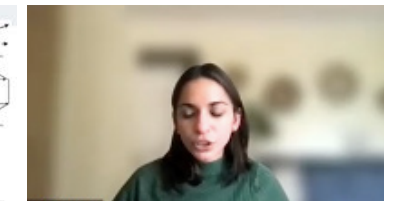
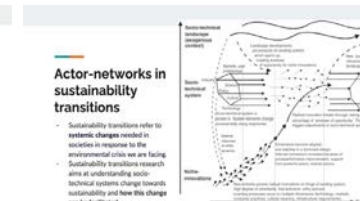
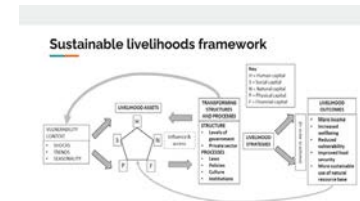


July 21th, 8:30 AM
203 Fayerweather
Moderated by:
Prof. Sonal Beri

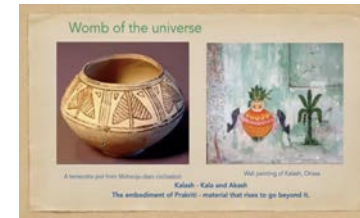
The four lectures organized for the week of preparation before the trip to India offered a range of introductory frames for different challenges related to water management. They covered the arc from larger historical interpretations of aesthetic sensibility to built architectural projects, filtered through conceptual and operational frameworks.



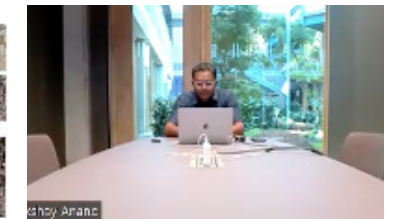
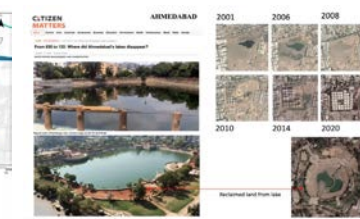
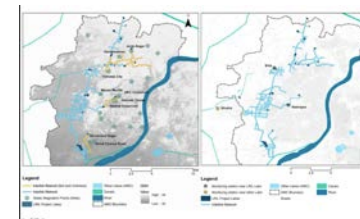
Rajeev Kathpalia's "Celebrating the Elusive Waters of India" stressed the fragile boundary between modernization and environmental attentiveness, in terms of town planning as well as specific memorial and university projects.



Radhika Singh's "Techniques of Documentation" focused on research methodologies through diagrams about water management, outlining frameworks for sustainable livelihoods and actor-vectors in sustainability transitions.



Prof. Sharmila Sagara "Water - Symbols, Ritual, and Other Stories in the Indian Subcontinent" presented an overview, from ancient to contemporary times, of how the country's rich ontology has informed the development of the arts.



Akshay Anand's "Peri-Urban Lakes - Ecological and Social Dynamics of Governance" looked in depth into the layering of decision-making processes affecting water management, with specific attention to the systems of Ahmedabad's urbanity.

GRAINS EXERCISE

Tathātā (/tætə'tɑː/; Sanskrit: तथाता; Pali: tathatā)

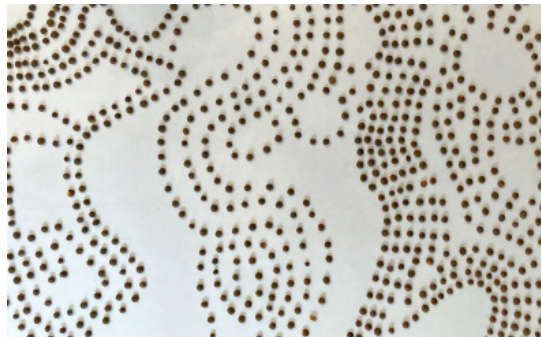
A Buddhist term variously translated as “thus-ness” or “such-ness,” referring to the nature of reality, free from conceptual elaborations and the subject–object juxtaposition. Inspired by the potency of “such-ness,” we re-tooled an exercise about mindfulness, asking students to use five different grains to compose a figure which was their own visual reaction to the lecture by eminent Architect Rajeev Kathpalia, on “Celebrating the Elusive Waters of India” and by Radhika Singh on “Techniques of Documentation”.



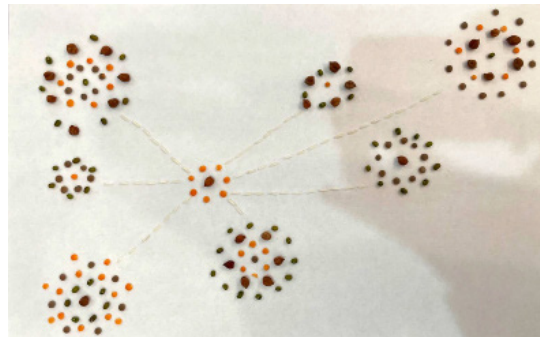
The students gathering in Avery Rm 408 for morning lecture followed by grain exercise



Daniel Yunhua Li: Section drawing about check dams, water seeping into ground and feeding trees, fruits sprouting



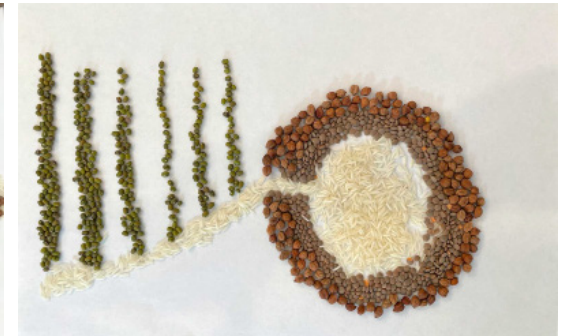
Camila Botero Echeverri: (left) Topographic patterns guide most of the decisions, trees, where water flows etc; progressive buildup of decision making; how water distorts patterns; (right) Networks.



Daniela Perleche Ugas: (left) Network of pathways; different scales; public space landmarks; social layers and transversal connections; (right) Knowledge translation; bundles of tools gets transformed.



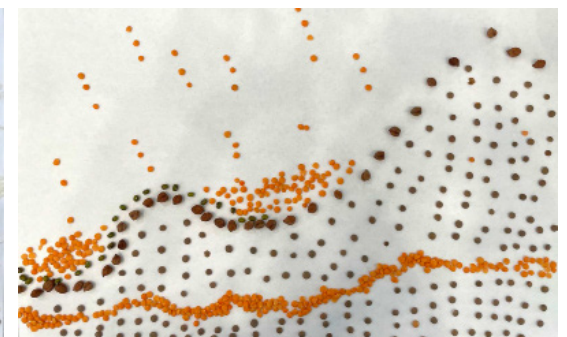
David Zhang: (left) Time and resources; how things relate to each other in a curated balance; (right) Adjacent mess; water withdrawals



Marberd Barnard: (left) Big grains is the force of a river, lighter brown grains its meanderings; orange is settlements, and green is forest; (right) Rice is water; big grains represent parched ground, smaller grains contain water used for irrigation



Omer Mohamed Gorashi: (left) Green lentils are trees; orange is pollution, rice is water; ponds; stepwells; carnival in the sabarmati; (right) Tension between hard and soft infrastructure



Allon Morgan: (left) Water travels through soil, agriculture is created by water; ground and subterranean relationship; (right) Section of how rain comes in - connection between ground water and aquifer

CONSTRUCTING LOCALE

EXERCISE I



Village of Cher: The Palace's Verandah overlooking Main Street, and Interior Courtyard towards the Talav, 2022

The first exercise consists of creating a preliminary storyboard integrating images about a suggested “locale” and/or from students’ research, towards the production of a 15-sec moving image trailer.

Based on the areas of interest formulated by each student, three Groups have been formed, loosely defined as Agricultural Practices, Culture and Rituals, Settlements and Urban Development.

Each Group has been engaged through a few questions, that could orient the exploration of topics of research based on a preliminary list of systems influenced by the framework set by the phenomenon of the monsoon. Five suggested trajectories of articulation were introduced during a first meeting held on 05/02/2023, offering paths of work that address Environment/Ecology, Water, Agriculture, Architecture, Settlements, in relation with an introductory reference about “Monsoon Feelings,” five case studies, and general references about Miniatures, Films, and Raga Music.

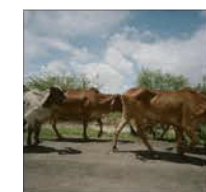
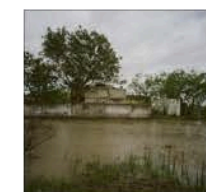
In order to encourage conversations within each Group, different resources were made available on the cloud as “02_Handout to Students,” containing folders with more references, organized under the same five headings, plus one about art & culture. Each Group received a dedicated folder related with their topics of interest, to navigate through a wealth of information which included videos and photos taken last year in three proposed “locales,” centered on the villages of Cher, Dholka, and Sheila.

In support of possible lines of investigation, the following material was made available for each of the three Groups and associated “locales:”

- a map of the “locale” indicating the paths followed in producing several videos
- a selected video, that could offer a direct engagement with the “locale’s” spaces`
- a screenshot selected from available photographs of the same “locale.”



The village of Cher, located in the Dhandhuka province, approximately 150 km to the west of Ahmedabad, sits at the center of an agricultural land whose topography carefully subdivides the fields through seasonal canals that converge towards the communal Talav. Through it, underlying fresh water aquifer remains accessible throughout the year via six wells.

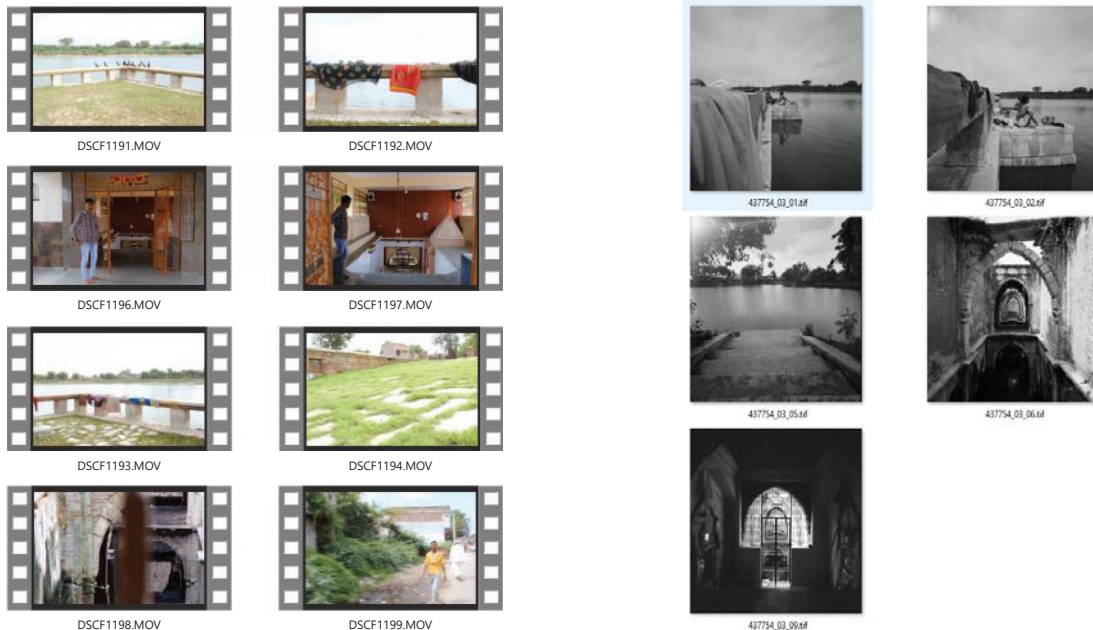


DHOLKA TOWN

GROUP II



The village of Dholka, the oldest municipality in Gujarat, approximately 50 km to the South-West of Ahmedabad, is rich of historical artifacts, including a stepwell and a lake created in the 12th century in the shadow of a mosque. Its stepped edges are still used for daily activities, while a passageway reaches the center of the lake leading to a pavilion.

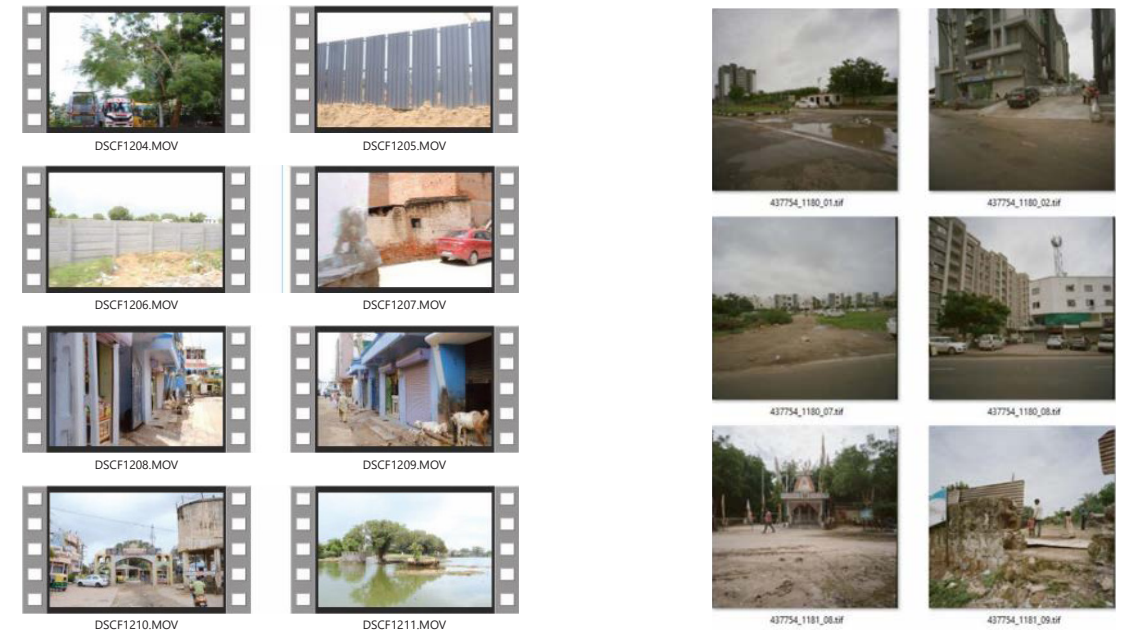


PERI URBAN DEVELOPMENT

GROUP III

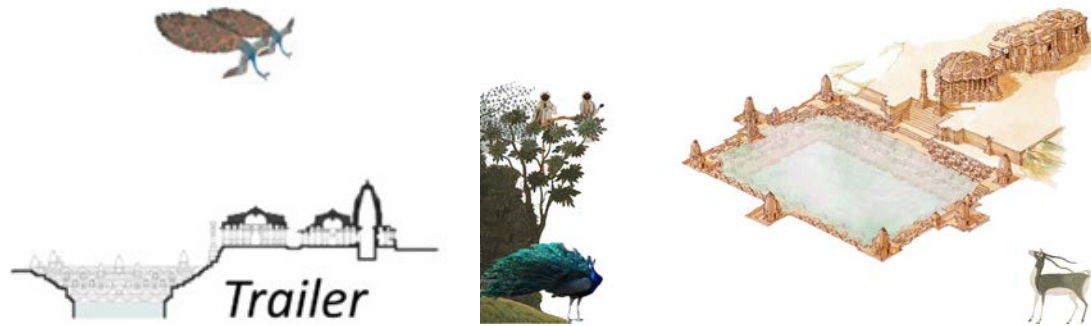


The peri-urban development of Ahmedabad is marked by new infrastructural grids provided by the city's administration in support of real-estate development. The radical re-configuration of agricultural land rewards its owners through projected increase in value which, in the absence of political control, favors higher and disorderly density.



ACTANTS

EXERCISE 2



Video Modhera's Flood: image of trailer with temple+kund section, and final image with kund filled with water

The goal of this exercise is to make two collages, which can represent the conceptual seeds for a storyboard geared towards the possibility of making a short video.

The presentation about the Sabarmati River Project is divided in two parts: the first one about the “Sabarmati River Project,” and the second one introducing the notion of “actants”. Starting from maps about the river’s watershed and relation with the city of Ahmedabad, the first part traces a critical account about its transformation into a pool artificially inscribed in an infrastructural logic, with negative effects on the social and environmental conditions along its banks and after the dam that establishes its ending. The second part introduces an environmental approach to monsoon patterns and bird migration paths, also emphasizing the historical relevance of water management systems, as opposed to the master planning logic through which the city is currently expanding.

The goal of this exercise is to establish an imaginary contact with “actants”, who could locally interact with two images selected from the first part of the Sabarmati River’s presentation. “Actants” can be humans or non-human figures, whose introduction into the river’s narrative express a critical position about it, effecting a productive tension. The imaginary character of “actants” is related with artistic and film references, from both the past and present, establishing a connection with the emotional role played by the monsoon in multiple manifestations of Indian culture. Since the notion of “actant” implies the possibility of changing roles during the interaction with characters and/or objects depicted in the selected images about the Sabarmati River

The two images above are taken from a one-minute trailer about the stepwell at Modhera, introducing the figures of two peacocks above the section drawing through the temple and pond. These two animals are an example of “actants”, announcing the arrival of the monsoon, whose effects on the historical monument are shown in a second video embedded into a narrative development also marked by the radical change in soundtrack from rainy to ceremonial. The appearance of more animals, in the closing sequence about the filling of the kund to its brim, indicates the power of spiritual integration between nature and culture effected by the monsoon’s impact, towards the possibility of supporting the agricultural needs of the surrounding territory.

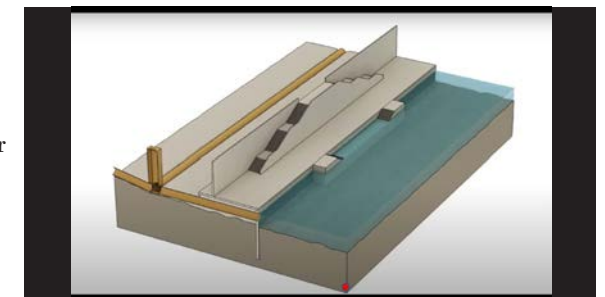
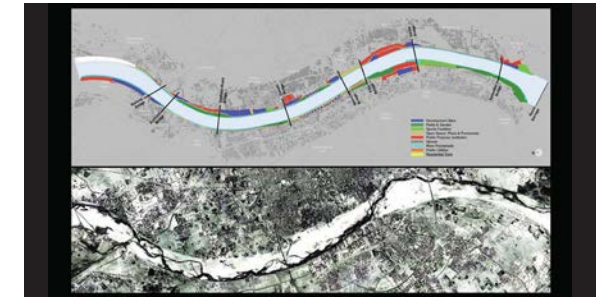
The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project by Bimal Patel is based on the transformation of the river’s undulating seasonal course into a pool, lined with concrete embankments, with a “public promenade” to “make it accessible.” The river has been subjugated to the flow of urban traffic. It is framed by two dams, and crossed by seven bridges, establishing new surfaces ready for real estate development.

Before this top-down infrastructural intervention, the banks of the river were used by multiple publics, for many different activities like fishing and washing clothes. The banks, seasonally accessible as public land, were available for farming, regularly hosted a market, and sometimes a circus, in support of the vitality in the historical city established on the river’s east side.

The project is a big piece of infrastructure, justified for preventing waters to flood the city, with a wall against traffic, which establishes the limit of a new public space along the waterfront with a hard-edged lower promenade. From the upper embankment, set up for program spaces and real estate development, a few concrete stairs reach the lower level.

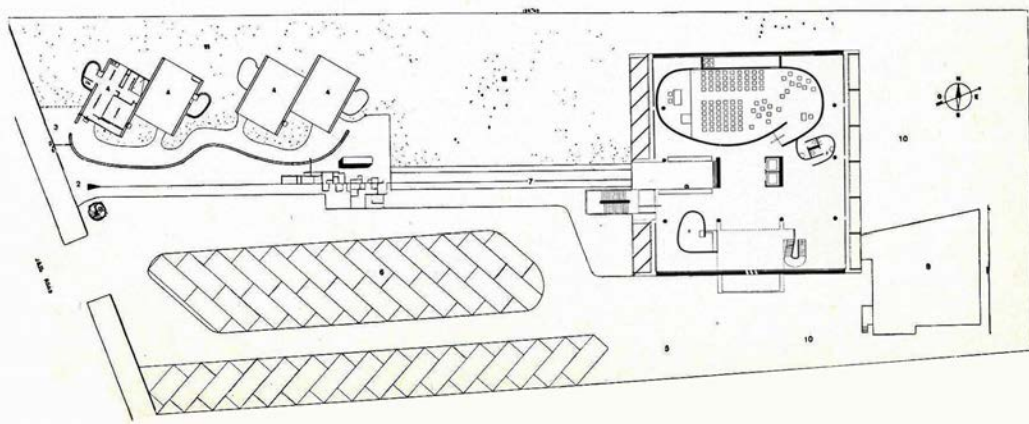
New sewer lines have been installed under the sand-filled embankment, displacing informal settlements and their occupants re-located to areas ill-prepared to receive them on the edge of the city. The Vasna Barrage marks the end of this artificial transformation, and institutes a different water regime with very polluted effluents discharging sewer overflows and industrial pollutants into the river.

The modernist infrastructural logic, manifested by Nehru’s post-partition reliance on Le Corbusier for Chandigarh’s foundation, is inadequately carried on by Modi, who has directly supported the Sabarmati Riverfront Development project and used its inauguration as platform for his political agenda on a world stage, by inviting the Chinese leader to visit it.



PERI URBAN VERANDAH

EXERCISE 3



Le Corbusier's Millowners' Association Building in Ahmedabad (1951): second floor site plan

This exercise points towards the possibility of making an installation at the Millowners' Association Building by Le Corbusier, whose second floor the workshop will get to use for a full day.

The building can take on a very specific role by operating as an apparatus in environmental terms, rather than according to the rhetoric of the machine with which it is often associated. The post-war expansion of the city took place on the west side of the Sabarmati River's banks, reaching the peri-urban areas that are the focus of our investigation. The building's second-floor plan, reached via a ramp coming from the west, has interesting nooks and crannies which regulate flows across spaces comprised between the western edge of angled brise-soleils and the grid of concrete fins on the east side, which open towards the river.

The building faces the historical city, which integrated stepwells within its own fabric, having established a productive relationship with the aquifer the regime of water management. The riverbed included many actants, such as laundry people and other social groups, who were inhabiting its banks in the dry season with daily occupations and rituals, performed in informal settlements, markets, temples, and even a circus. Understood as a verandah, the building engages this social landscape, acting both as a receptor and filter, an active component of larger scale environmental flows. Such layering establishes a dialogue between the presence of many different narratives in the immediate context and the building's geometrically inflected shapes, which are capable of absorbing multiple activities.

These spaces can be interpreted as generators for virtual modes of occupation, which could take the form of an installation. Our exploration of the building will encourage focusing on elements such as the auditoriums' topological curvature, where some aspects of the workshop's outcome could be hosted. An installation could itself assume the role of another actant within the verandah's porosity, expressing socially aware multi-scalar dynamics among different narratives, including a critical position towards the Sabarmati River Project's landfill, held by concrete embankments along an artificial pool of unsanitary and still waters.

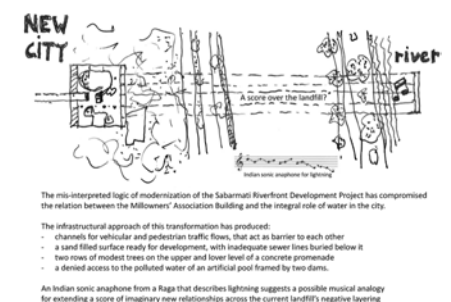
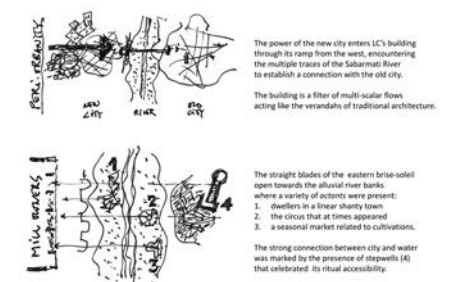
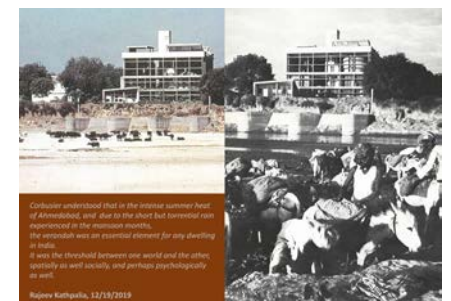
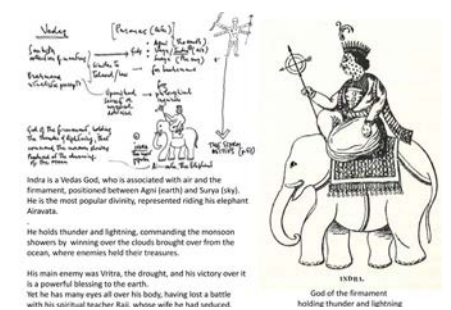
How to imagine an installation in the second floor's open spaces, that could render visible the approach of our Workshop? The linear thrust of the ramp connecting the building to the ground is doubled-up by the stair entering the space, both pointing towards the brise-soleil's grid that opens onto the river and city. This becomes a primary site for installation, in counterpoint to the small volumes that float inside the void framed by the two-party walls.

Indra is a Vedas God, who is associated with air and the firmament, positioned between Agni (earth) and Surya (sky). He is the most popular divinity, represented riding his elephant Airavata. He holds thunder and lightning, commanding the monsoon showers by winning over the clouds brought over from the ocean, where enemies held their treasures. His main enemy was Vritra, the drought, and his victory over it is a powerful blessing to the earth.

The power of the new city enters LC's building through its ramp from the west, encountering towards the east multiple traces of the Sabarmati River, that establish a connection with the old city. The straight blades of the eastern brise-soleil open towards the alluvial river banks where a variety of actants were present: dwellers in a linear shanty town, the circus that at times appeared, and a seasonal market related to cultivations also taking place on the riverbed's exposed land.

The mis-interpreted logic of modernization of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project has compromised the relation between the building and the integral role of water in the city. An installation can bring in a renewed commitment to look at both the river and city through environmental lenses. The musical analogy of an Indian sonic anaphone, from a Raga describing lightning, suggests extending a score of new relationships beyond this negative layering.

The building is a filter of multi-scalar flows acting like the verandahs of traditional architecture. As Rajeev Kathpalia has summarized: "Corbusier understood that in the intense summer heat of Ahmedabad and, due to the short but torrential rain experienced in the monsoon months, the verandah was an essential element for any dwelling in India. It was the threshold between one world and the other, spatially as well socially, and perhaps psychologically as well."



HAVELI LODGING



During their two weeks in India, students lived together by taking over the full capacity of the Dewanji-ni Haveli in the city's historical center. In this fully restored palace spaces are organized around an open courtyard that gathers rainwater, feeding an accessible water tank located in its basement level.



The building relies on interconnected passages, balconies and terraces opening onto the courtyard.



The dining room offered a smaller scale setting to the courtyard's collective breakfast table.

INTERVIEW SCREENSHOTS VIDEO BY NUNDRISHA WAKHLOO



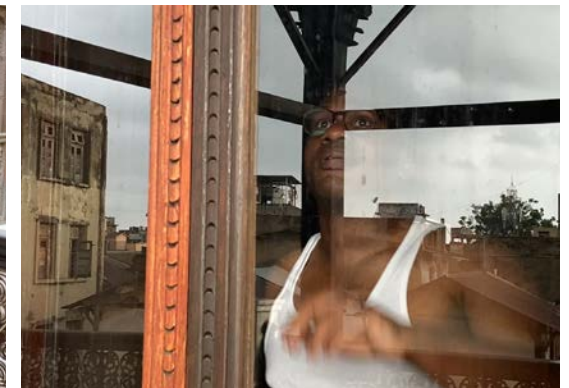
"We have been able to find a space to work out, just when prayers happen at 6:00 AM" -David



"We have come here to explore water phenomena, which this place also activates" -Daniela



"A balcony that looks inside, a little heaven where I can say hi to everyone, all the time." - Camila



"This place offers opportunities for reflection and meditation, every new day." - Allon



"The shrine next to the dining area has a drum that I can play, to symbolize rain." - Yuna



"An enchanting private space from another time period, opening onto urban events." -Marberd

WEEK 2 SCHEDULE

SITE VISITS

From the Haveli, students traveled both through the city of Ahmedabad, with its crowded streets characterized by different trades, and a great variety of architectures, including the mosque and tomb complex of Sarkhej Roza and the spiritual space of Gandhi's Ashram. Modern architecture included the Ashram museum by Charles Correa, three buildings by B.V.Doshi, and the two masterpieces by L.Kahn (IIM) and Le Corbusier (ATMA). Out of town trips included visiting historical stepwells of both 'kund' (Modhera) and 'vav' (Rani-Ki and Abhaneri) types, whose regimes of water management relate to the traditional wisdom evident in rural villages.

Monday, July 24, 2023

Ahmedabad Heritage Walk (2km)
Asarva Lake and Mata Bhavani ni Vav, guided by Mansee Bal
Sarkhej Roza Mosque & Tomb Complex

Tuesday, July 25, 2023

Gandhi Ashram by Charles Correa
Institute of Indology by B.V.Doshi
School of Architecture, CEPT by B.V. Doshi
Amdavad ni Gufa by B.V. Doshi and M.F.Hussain
Sangath, B.V. Doshi's office

Wednesday, July 26 2023

Indian Institute of Management by Louis Kahn
Mill Owners Association Building by Le Corbusier

Thursday, July 27, 2023

Sun temple at Modhera (97.9 km)
Rani ki Vav, handloom weavers at Patan (34.8 km from Modhera)
Back to Ahmedabad (130 km from Patan)

Friday, July 28, 2023

Shilaj Lake, guided by Mansee Bal
Anant National University Campus & Surrounding Sites

Saturday, July 29, 2023

Dholka Town
Cher Agricultural Village

Sunday, July 30, 2023

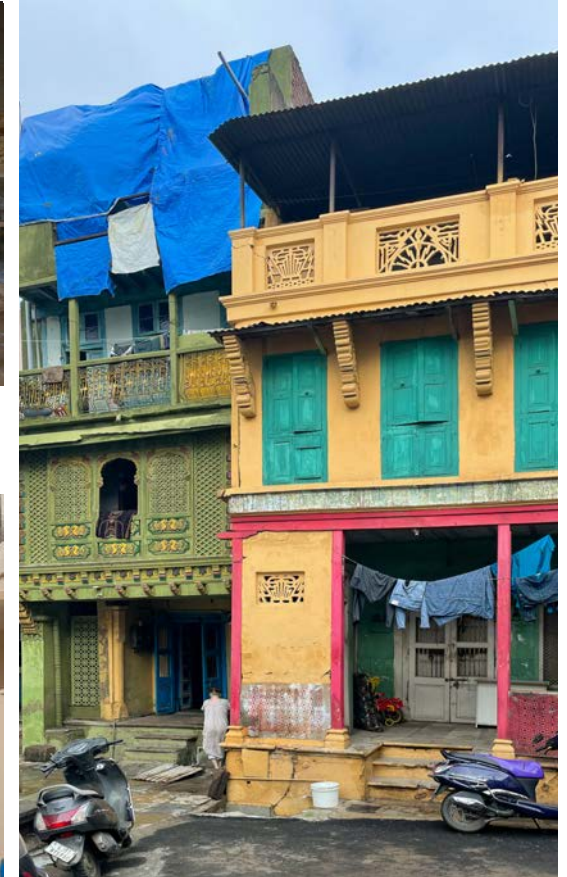
Lothal Archeological Site

HERITAGE WALK & SARKHEJ

VISIT I



Traditional motives and traces of new urban mobility.



Contrast of colors in traditional dwellings above street level.



Islamic architecture's presence in the historical city.



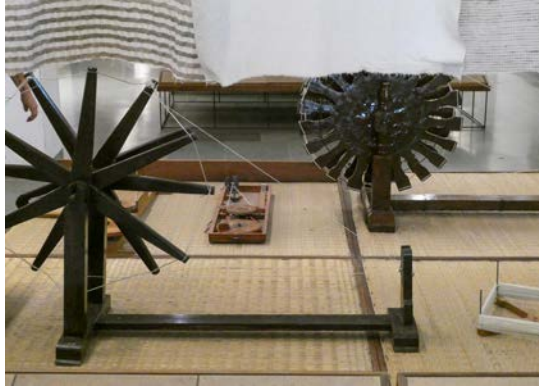
Sarkhej Roza's lake was open to the public for recreation.



Hindu craftsmanship overlaid on Islamic sense of geometry.

GANDHI ASHRAM

VISIT 2



The centrality of loom tradition for hand spinning cotton.



Charles Correa's Gandhi Memorial Museum's open porches.



A field of modular units surrounds the courtyard's spaces.



Simple wood construction in the legacy of cottage industry.



Buildings convey Hindu trabeated architecture.

INDOLOGY

VISIT 3



A floating building in concrete with moats and skylights.



Ancient manuscripts and artifacts in the sub-basement.



Museum collections complement the research institute.



Ventilation and natural light address climatic conditions.



Peripheral circulation spaces act as traditional verandahs.



Covered spaces for students' interaction.



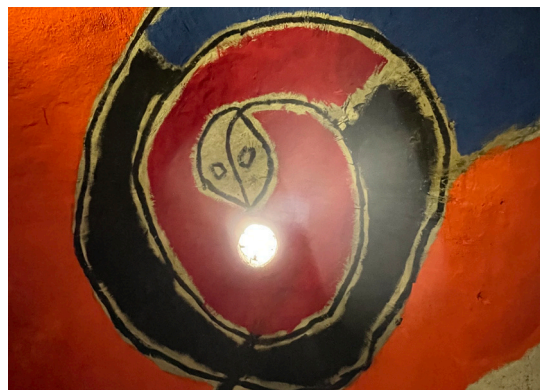
New workshop for wood, metal, weaving and printmaking.



Studio with north-facing skylights on double-height spaces.



Brick walls and concrete frames with operable wood doors.



Underground vaults of Amdavad ni Gufa next to CEPT.



Large two-story opening at the end of the classroom wing.



Structural intersection at stairs in the classrooms' wing.



Passage in-between classrooms towards central plaza.



Dormitories block open onto the planned open pond.



Entrance to the library opens onto the central plaza.

MILL OWNERS' BUILDING

VISIT 6



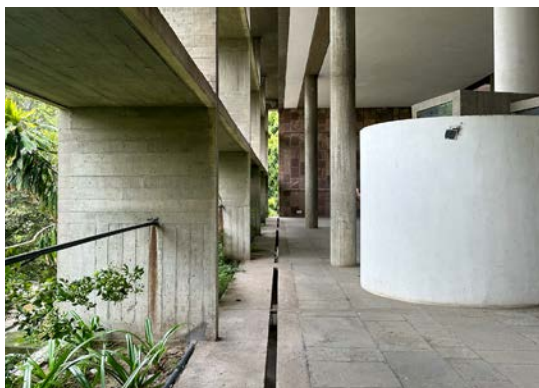
Ramp from the west towards the angled brise-soleil.



Discussing how to engage the second floor's vast spaces.



Large pivoting door on second floor at stair's landing.



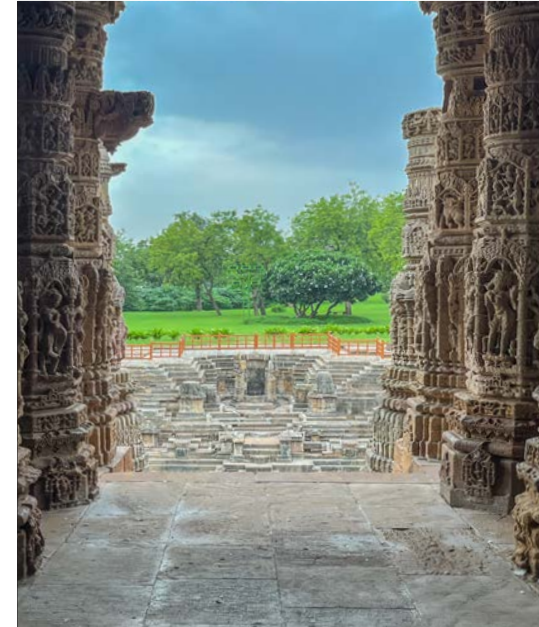
Bathroom volume facing the brise-soleil towards the east.



Confronting the Modulor in the building's exhibition space.

MODHERA

VISIT 7



The kund type pond as seen on axis from the assembly hall.



Shrine dedicated to the deity Vishnu and a smaller one.



Sculpted corner of the main hall's entrance and perimeter.



Detail of ornamentation around the top of a minor shrine.



Detail of steps descending to water on the pond's south side.

RANI KI VAV

VISIT 8



Staged encounter complementing the bas-reliefs' narratives.



Descending the vav-well towards its layers of thresholds.



Recurring bas-reliefs celebrate earth and mother goddesses.



Looking into the well's depth, towards the stepped entrance.

DHOLKA/CHER

VISIT 9



Walkway across Malav lake towards its central pavilion.



Pavilion and surrounding terrace at the center of the lake.



Courtyard porch and terrace of palace in the center of Cher.



Balcony of Cher's palace overlooking the main street.



Stone wall & steps along the edges of Dholka's Malav lake.

B.V.DOSHI

The Acrobat Architect

[Visiting ATMA – Ahmedabad Textile Millowners’ Association]



Brise-Soleil on West Façade next to ramp (Ph. Allon Morgan).

“This building is the cause of my being in Ahmedabad. All my life starts here. I had worked on this project in Paris and I came back to Ahmedabad. The first time, I came to Ahmedabad to supervise this building, and then I settled down. So, for me, it’s a fountainhead. It is the My Life source.

Come... [while ascending the ramp]. It’s the most important thing. This ramp. It is almost like a big shake hand. You know, you stretch your arm and you reach to the building and look at the river afterwards. Nobody has ever done such a building. This is one of the most important buildings in the world. And when Frank Gehry came here, he mentioned that this is the fountainhead of architecture. It’s such a great building, a building without doors and windows. A building dedicated to sun, rain, wind, birds. It’s almost like the great ancient buildings, monuments in India. But most contemporary. Nobody has ever done a building like this. This is Le Corbusier’s great offering to the city of Ahmedabad.”

When I had to design this building, Le Corbusier gave me an envelope, yellow envelope, and a little sketch, one-line sketch. And then there was a written note, that there is going to be an ATMA building, Ahmedabad Textile Millowners Association: president, vice president, boardroom, staff. And a little scribble. And that scribble had an inclined line, then a building on top and on the other side a dip, and then it said: river. And he told me: “now you design the building.” That’s how my journey began, from nothing. So that was the lesson that I learned: how do you respect land? How do you respect the place? How do you respect climate? And how do you create something which is not only enigmatic, but something which is always mesmerizing? And I think this building has that character.

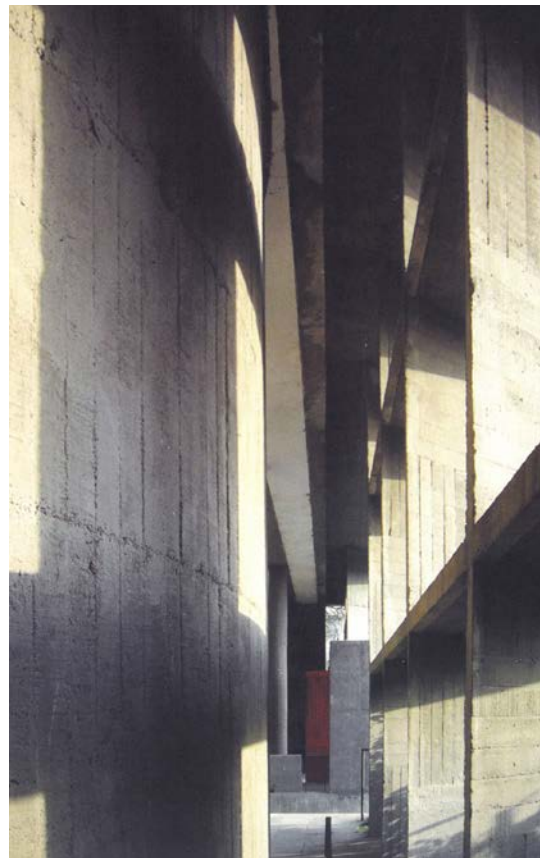


Pivot door on West Façade at the stairs arrival. (Ph. Doshi).



Volumes juxtaposed to the East Brise-Soleil (Ph. Kathpalia).

I think this is something which I learned. That a building also has stories, a building also has memories, a building also has a dialogue with the land, with the place, with the climate, with culture. And I think this is really what is the lesson of architecture. Connectivity, rooting, and inviting people and things. The birds can fly. The air can come. The sun can come in. So, there is a dialogue with the cosmic forces like the mosque that we saw [Sarkhej Roza, in another video]. There are all kinds of people who come here. It's a place which is a welcoming place, almost like a temple. It can be flexible. It can be used in many ways.



Gap between Auditorium and Brise-Soleil (Ph. Doshi).



View of Building from the Sabarmati River (Ph. Doshi).

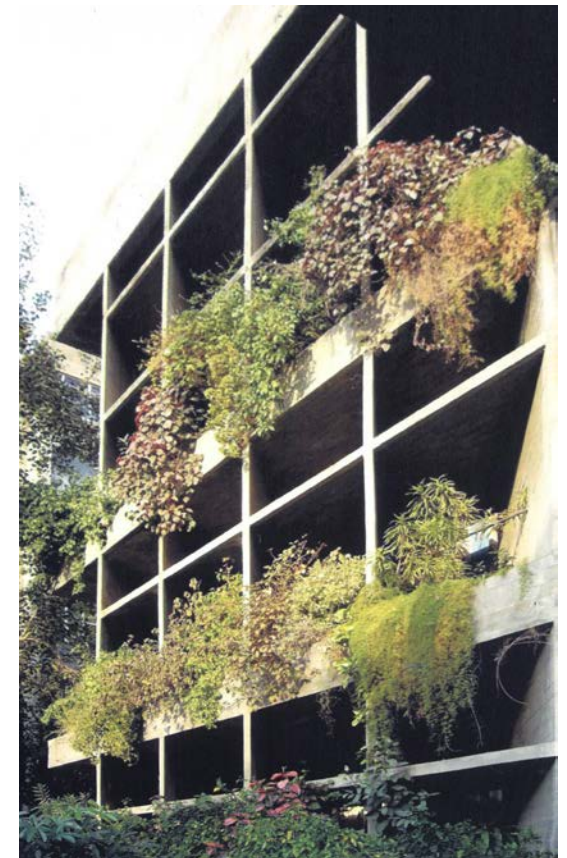
These are the presidents of the Ahmedabad Textile Mill Owners Association. And all this tells you the story. You can look at their dresses, their faces, their costumes, and you can see how over generations things have happened. Ahmedabad would not be existing the way it is, or growing as it is, without the participation of these people. Very generous, very forthright. And so much in love with the city and the people. And this is something which we miss in our country, or our culture. How do you really remember those who made what we are today? This furniture was done by Jennaret in Chandigarh. And today these have become great art works. Most expensive objects to collect. So this is really what a building like this shows. But this is really the essence of what architecture is. Proportional relationship to the land and the simplicity by which it happens.

[Points to Le Corbusier's original statement]

An acrobat is no puppet. He devotes his life to activities, in which, in perpetual danger of death, he performs extraordinary movements of infinite difficulty, with disciplined exactitude and precision. Free to break his neck and bones, be crushed. Nobody asked him to do this. Nobody owes him any thanks. He lives in an extraordinary world, of the acrobat. Result: most certainly! He does things which others cannot.

I worked with him in Paris from 1951 to 1954. One of the jobs toward the end was this job, which was given to me with total freedom and a challenge for me. And that has really made me what I am. I always remember the **Acrobat**.

Text transcribed from:
Bijoy and Premjit Ramachandran, Doshi, Hinterland Film, Chapter Two, "Architecture as Throughness," 2019.



Brise-Soleil on West Façade next to ramp (Ph. Doshi).

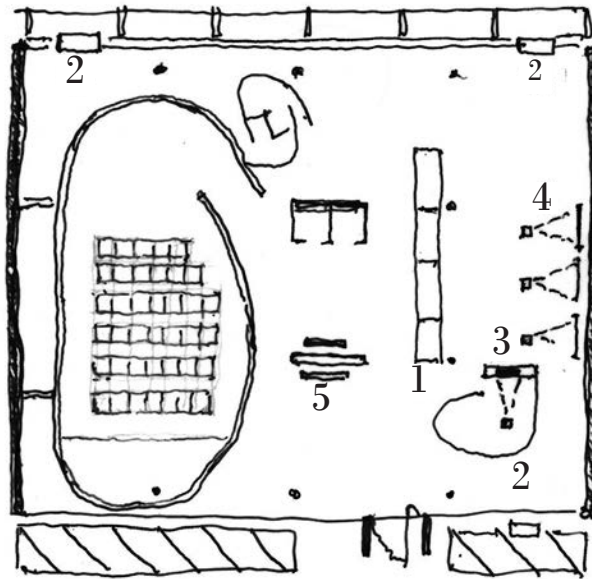


Still from 2019 film - Doshi points at Le Corbusier's poem

INSTALLATION PRODUCTION

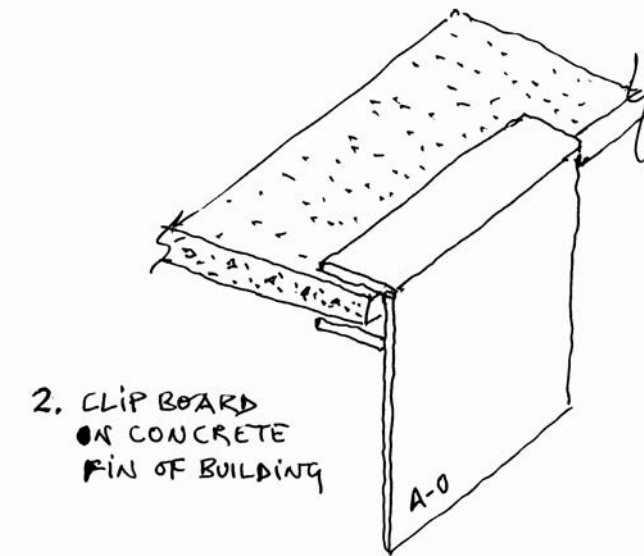
The overall concept of the installation is to continue the horizontal thrust impressed by the ramp and stair entering from the west facade, by disposing on the floor a sequence of scrolls until they encounter the Modulor's cut-out screen. The scrolls, bordered by a lotus motif, include an introduction to the Workshop's agenda and a layout of the main materials produced by each of the three groups of students.

1. Scroll of prints on the floor
2. Clip board on concrete fin
3. Projection screen at coat check desk
4. Panels for video projection
5. Hanging banners on fabric



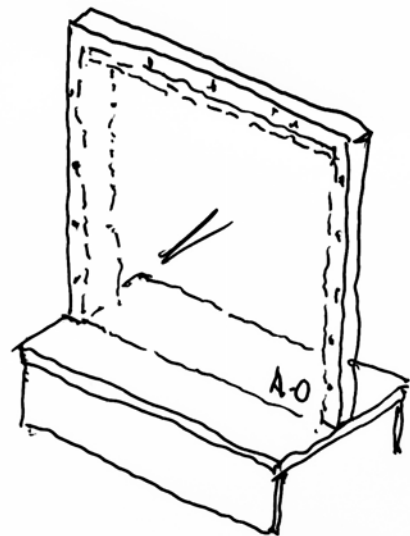
INSTALLATION PRODUCTION

One of the conditions set by ATMA for the installation is that no display system should scar any of the building's surfaces. The regular grid of concrete members that sets up the east brise-soleil suggested bracketing them with a simple plywood sleeve to which the students' three final boards could be anchored, suspending them at eye level above the vegetation marking the building's perimeter.



INSTALLATION PRODUCTION

The coat check is one of the two single-level volumes floating in the open space of the second floor, with a dark curved space punctuated by small circular openings. A rear-projection screen supported by a simple frame bracketed the check-in counter's surface. Two videos about our visits to a stepwell and an agricultural village were projected from the depth of this small space.

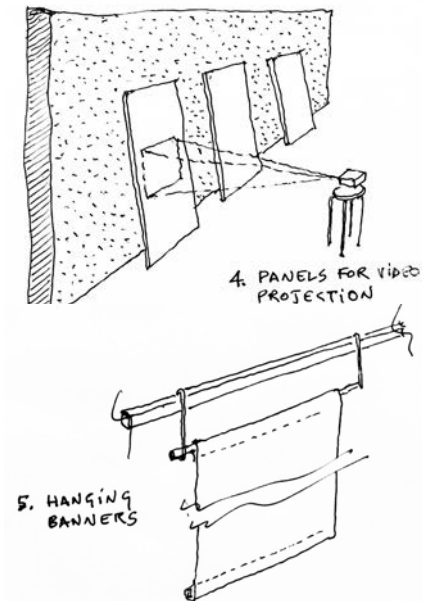


3. PROJECTION
SCREEN AT
COAT CHECK
COUNTER



INSTALLATION PRODUCTION

For the projection of the three group's videos, the simplest solution was to lean standard-sized rigid boards finished with a white surface against either the side walls or the second single-level volume of the disused bathroom, covering its most visible door. Two banners framed access to the conference room by taking advantage of existing rods projecting from the nearby concrete walls.



4. PANELS FOR VIDEO
PROJECTION

5. HANGING
BANNERS



EXHIBITION

INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants presented an installation titled “We Stand in a Crisis with Water”. The presentation encompassed a series of scrolls outlining narratives and rituals of water in Gujarat. The graphic and video works installed on the second floor of the building, considered as a verandah between the historical city and the peri-urban areas, focused on the brise-soleil’s threshold facing the once monsoon-flooded river, which is now bounded in concrete as an artificial pond.

The mappings featured as part of the installation explore the significance of the ponds in the nearby villages, in terms of the regime of land cultivation and water management that has been established over time, while also documenting historical examples of water-oriented architecture. The significance of water bodies (secular, religious) and the agricultural practices that were part of the region’s settlements led students to formulate a vision for a strategically-selected probe and a manifesto that re-inscribed water bodies into their interconnected urban/rural dynamics, with full consideration for their systemic and poetic dimensions.

The students’ poetic manifesto reads: “What will you do without water? / Is water separate from anything? / All-knowing, humans yearn to control it. / Borderless, with rhythms of its own / Birthing traditions and rituals / Only to be replaced anew, in justice / Or convenient injustice / To sip the last drop. / Rivers protest their march / The land refuses that gift. / Where does water go when we draw it?”



Photo Credit: Bryan Denton, New York Times

WE STAND IN A CRISIS WITH WATER

GSAPP Summer Workshop, 2023
Peri-Urban Water Management in Gujarat

August 4th, 2023, 1:00 PM - 5:30 PM

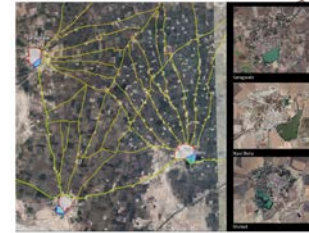
Ahmedabad Textile Mills Association (ATMA),
The MillOwner’s Building, Ashram Road,
Navrangpura, Ahmedabad - 380009, India



In collaboration with



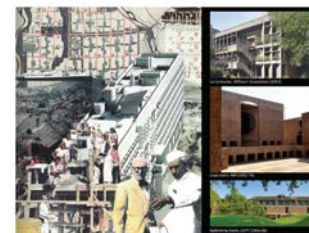
INTERNATIONAL STUDIO ON PERI-URBAN DEVELOPMENT, HARNESSING WATERS IN GUJARAT



This satellite image of the region shows a typical pattern of cultivation, with villages evenly distributed in the landscape and each one having a rainwater collection pond called Talavs. The yellow lines are pathways connecting network of irrigation lines, and secondary ponds to control monsoon water as it drains from one field to another.

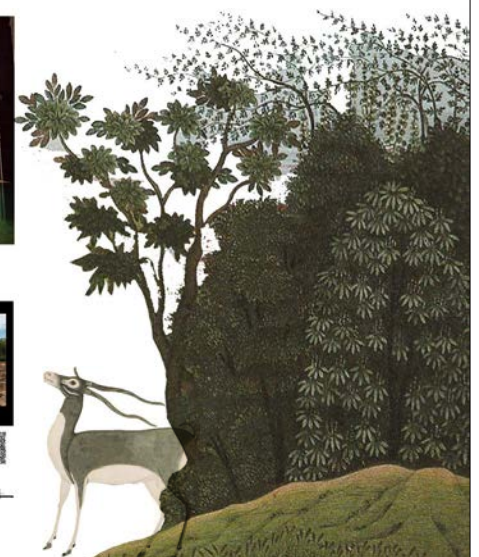
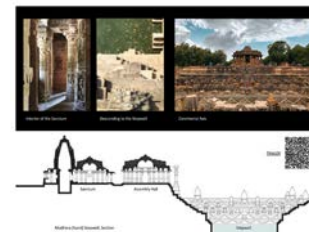
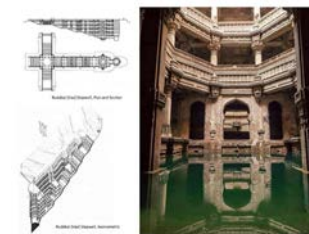


The city of Ahmedabad and its growth to the west fringes is pushing into agricultural land, absorbing historical villages. The area of study includes: the Village of Ghuma which has already been encroached by clusters of new development; while the Village of Godhavi that lies between a planned “knowledge and institutional zone” and the freight corridor under construction.



Left: David Wild, Collage: LC, Nehru, Chandigarh (1982)

Right: Three examples of Architecture Masterworks in Ahmedabad that we will visit



Conflicting Relationalities

Godhavi, Gujarat is a locale that represents the tensions and intersections of different logics in the postcolonial context, highlighting the conflicts between different scales, temporalities, and agendas. In our research, we seek to highlight the conditions of a question framed by researchers Neil Brenner & Nikos Katsikis:

"Will the violent, profit driven illogics of planetary urbanisation continue to degrade, erode and destroy the fabric of political, social, and ecological existence?"



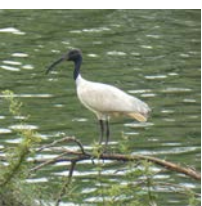
Conflicting Relationalities collage



Godhavi stakeholder map

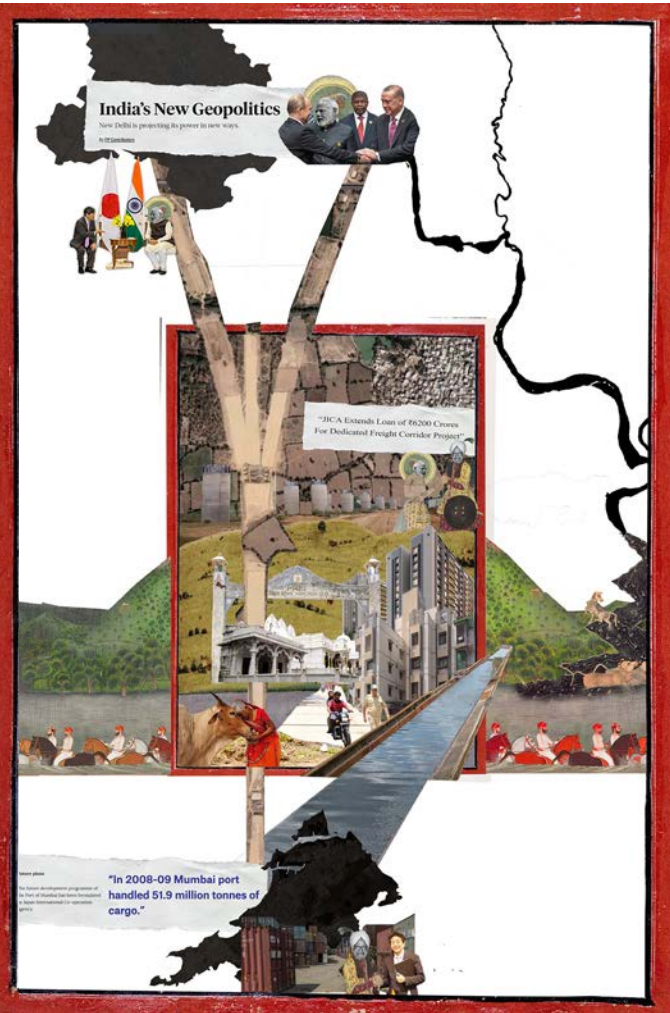


Godhavi stakeholder diagram



EXHIBITION
GROUP I

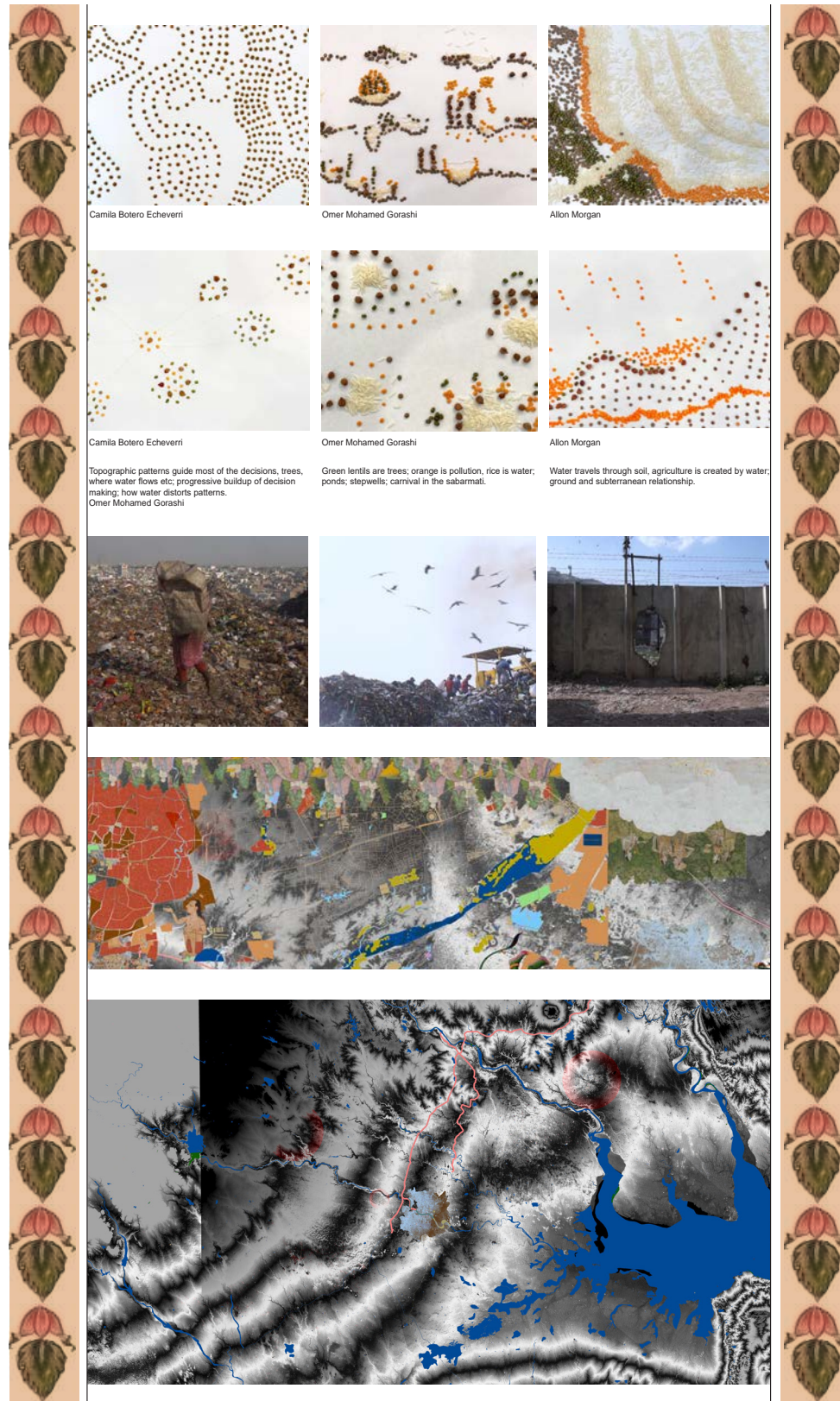
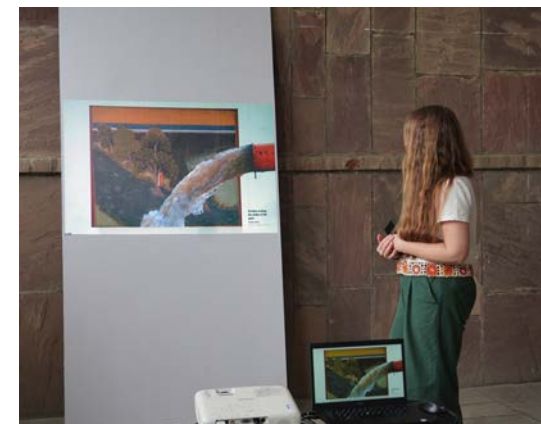
“Conflicting Relationalities of Peri-Urban Villages in Ahmedabad” is a research project focused on documenting the complex entanglements of traditional and modern water infrastructures at the peripheries of urbanization. The collaborative effort with Anant U students helped us to facilitate deeper understandings of the effects of Gujarat’s global and local capital investments in shifting the reliance of local villages from embedded, ecologically responsive resource practices to standardized, imported forms of resourcing. Thus, these areas become contested spaces between development and tradition. This can be seen in varied scales of planning and design, from the territorial planning of freight corridors to the environmental design of hardened, typified lake edges.



EXHIBITION

GROUP 3

In collaboration with Anant U students, we embarked on tackling the issues of waste management, urban expansion, and development in Ahmedabad. As one shifts away from direct resource utilization towards product consumption, it is crucial that we question our actions and become more conscious of their impact on the environment. Thus, our shared efforts are focused on identifying tangible issues related to the creation of a collage that holds a concealed but illuminating context of the problem. Moreover, the video showcasing a person observing the artwork in the gallery exemplifies the clash between waste and consumption through the medium of classical Indian paintings.



VIDEOS



The interview with a farmer who is in charge of the village of Cher revealed important information about the agricultural practices informing the management of monsoon rains. The talav was located since past generations by sloping the fields towards it. There are six wells in the talav, which allow access to fresh water from the aquifer, located 30 feet below the surface above a layer of salty waters and soils.

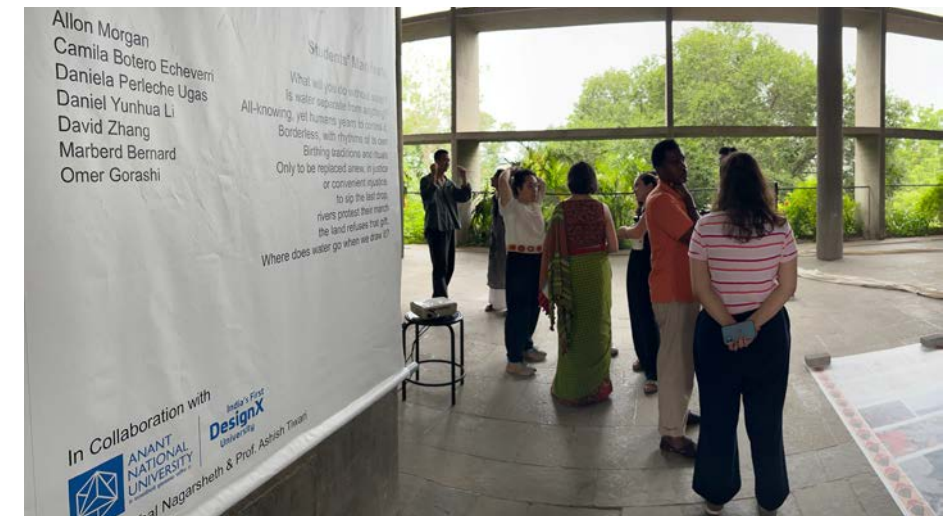


In this video, shot during the visit to Rani-Ki Vav, a guide unfolds the narrative related to one of the bas-reliefs, located in the third layer of the stepwell, below those of sky and earth, corresponding to hell because of its proximity to water. A wealthy man was humbled by his dialogue with the divine Vishnu. As the man's generosity fueled his arrogance, Vishnu simply asked him for place to plant three feet: one for the earth, one for the sky while the third one, once put on his head, crushed his ego.

REVIEWS



Formal presentations took place with invited guests such as Rajeev Kathpalia, founding Trustee Vastu-Shilpa Foundation and Chair Professor at Anant-U, who was interested in the mode of collaboration developed among students. The GSAPP students led Anant-U's undergraduate class at the launch of their semester-long studio on the same topics. This collaboration resulted in a productive dialogue as described in each group's statement.



In the course of the last day's event, the GSAPP students had the opportunity to introduce visitors to their work, which included explorations at different scales and a poetic understanding of monsoon related phenomena. Their considerations opened up the geometric ordering of Le Corbusier's concrete framework, to establish an active engagement with the natural and urban landscape visible beyond the architectural layers of materials, set up by the vegetated brise-soleil.

FINAL DAY



SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR COLLABORATORS :

GSAPP FACULTY & ADMINISTRATION:

Adj. Assoc. Prof. Sandro Marpillero, Adj. Assoc. Prof. Sonal Beri, Office of the Dean, Columbia Global Center Mumbai

ANANT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY FACULTY & STAFF:

Dr. Anunaya Chaubey, Ar. Rajeev Kathpalia, Prof. Snehal Nagarsheth, Assoc. Prof. Ashish Tiwari, Anand Kateshiya, Mayank Suthar, Girish Gajjar, Prachi Vyas, Urmil Trivedi, Lakshami Krishnaswamy

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ANANTU STUDENTS:

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GUEST LECTURERS:

Rajeev Kathpalia, Radhika Singh, Prof. Sharmila Sagara, Akshay Anand, Dr. Mansee Bal

COLLABORATION



At the end of the last day of the workshop, the faculty of both schools (GSAPP - Beri, Marpillero; Anant U - Nagarsheth, Tiwari) convened around a concrete table on the first floor of the building, to review the experience, with the participation of Prof. Sagara, Chair Kathpalia, and Provost Chaubey. The positive aspects of the students sharing studio spaces for the second week, after visiting together multiple sites, included the support by Anant-U's fabrication shop to realize the simple elements that allowed for a successful installation at the ATMA building.

