



**BEYOND
THE
GIVEN:
WHAT?**

**ORGANISING FOR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY,
PRACTICE, AND INSTITUTION BUILDING
IN ARCHITECTURE**

BEYOND THE GIVEN: WHAT?
ORGANIZING FOR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, PRACTICE,
AND INSTITUTION BUILDING IN ARCHITECTURE

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

AVANI INSTITUTE OF DESIGN | CALICUT
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND ARCHITECTURE | MUMBAI
C.A.R.E. SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE | TRICHY
WADIYAR CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE | MYSORE

CONNECTED COLLABORATIONS

The conference aims to explore, reveal, and reflect on modes of thinking and acting in architectural academies that have become habitualized over decades; modes which remain outside of inquiry, be it the notion of site specificity and “master builder” identity, or the agency of the academic and professional practitioner in initiating and supporting real change, or faith in content-based curriculum as the path to innovations in pedagogy. These modes have become ossified over time through inheritances of institutional legacies; disciplinary modes of proceeding; patriarchal structures of governance; and professionalized identities of practitioners. Architects, professional bodies, and the academies of architecture are fiercely protective of the disciplinary ontology of architecture, defining conversations on what is and is not architecture, or what is and is not (architectural) education, or who can and cannot teach architecture. What is our role as members and leaders of academic institutions in such troubled contexts, histories, and predicaments of learning? Where and how might we connect with each other to build strength, advance new imaginations, and sustain change from within? What do radical pedagogies in architecture feel like? These are the kinds of questions we will be asking (with boldness, empathy, courage, and forthrightness), during the three-day critical-collaborative conversations between Avani Institute of Design, CARE Trichy, SEA Mumbai, and Wadiyar Centre for Architecture, in direct engagement with Professor Neelkanth Chhaya and Architect BV Doshi.

Convenors:

Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee; Dr. Kush Patel
AVANI INSTITUTE OF DESIGN | CALICUT

Ar. Anuj Daga; Ar. Rupali Gupte; Ar. Shreyank Khemalapur
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND ARCHITECTURE | MUMBAI

Ar. Judith Belinda; Ar. Senthilkumar
C.A.R.E. SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE | TRICHY

Ar. Nagesh HD; Ar. R. Kiran Kumar
WADIYAR CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE | MYSORE

PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME

05 SEPTEMBER, 2019 | THURSDAY

EXPLORING STUDIO AS PROJECT, SUBJECT, SPACE, AND CULTURE

10.00 AM | EVENT OPENING

Presentation of the Conference Theme by Convenors and collaborating colleges welcomed; Opening remarks.

11:00 am - 2:00 pm | SESSION 1

COLLABORATION AND CREATIVE INSIGHT

11:00 - 11:20 Paper 1:

The Role of Connectedness in Housing

PRESENTER: Ar. Nagesh HD |

Wadiyar Centre for Architecture (WCFA)

MODERATOR: Avani Institute of Design

11:20 - 11:40 Discussion Q/A

11:40 - 12:00 Paper 2:

**A Reflection on the Idea
of Collaboration in Education:
The Srirangam Studio**

PRESENTERS: Ar. T. Judith Belinda Laura, Ar.

Senthilkumar S, Mr. Navaneetha Krishnan,

Mr. Mukundan | C.A.R.E School of Architecture

MODERATOR: Wadiyar Centre for Architecture
(WCFA)

12:00 - 12:20 Discussion Q/A

12:20 - 12:40 Paper 3:

**Collaboration (n):
Means and Methods for Studio
as a Practice as well as a Concept**

PRESENTERS: Ar. Vinod CP, Ar. Shyam Gandhi,
Jahana Fathima, Shifana T., Talal M., Sreenayan R. |
Avani Institute of Design

MODERATOR: School of Environment and
Architecture (SEA)

12:40 - 1:00 Discussion Q/A

1:00 - 1:20 Paper 4:

**Ontological Questions
in Contemporary Architecture:
Pedagogical discourses on the nature
of Institutions**

PRESENTERS: Ar. Rupali Gupte, Ar. Vikram Veeravalli,
Ar. Nikeita Saraf |

School of Environment and Architecture (SEA)

MODERATOR: C.A.R.E School of Architecture

1:20 - 1:40 Discussion Q/A

1:40 - 2:00 Closing Comment and Thoughts

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM | LUNCH

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM | SESSION 2
NEW DIRECTIONS

3:00 - 3:20 PAPER 5:
Space within a Space

PRESENTER: Ar. Kiran Kumar R. |
Wadiyar Centre for Architecture (WCFA)
MODERATOR: Avani Institute of Design

3:20 - 3:40 Discussion Q/A

3:40 - 4:00 PAPER 6:
**Emerging Contexts for Urbanization
in India**

PRESENTERS: Ar. Shreyank Khemalpure |
School of Environment and Architecture (SEA)
MODERATOR: C.A.R.E School of Architecture

4:00 - 4:20 Discussion Q/A

4:20 - 4:40 PAPER 7:
Learning from Conflict and Contradiction

PRESENTERS: Ar. Vijaykumar Sengottuvelan,
Ar. Ramalingam Natarajan |
C.A.R.E School of Architecture
MODERATOR: Wadiyar Centre for Architecture

4:40 - 5:00 Discussion Q/A

5:00 - 5:20 PAPER 8:
**Studio as Critique, Collectivity,
and Connection: Caring for
Infrastructural Lives in Vizhinjam, Kerala**

PRESENTERS: Dr. Kush Patel, Ar. Nimisha Shajjal,
Ankitha Arun, Nirupama KS | Avani Institute of Design
MODERATOR: School of Environment and
Architecture (SEA)

5:20 - 5:40 Discussion Q/A

5:40 - 6:00 Closing Comment and Thoughts

06 SEPTEMBER, 2019 | FRIDAY

ROUNDTABLES: DELINEATING LEARNING FUTURES

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM | EXHIBITION OPENING

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM | FOUR CONCURRENT ROUNDTABLES

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM | PHASE 1

Future of Student Learning CARE School of Architecture:

An architect's responsibility has transcended beyond a process laden design realization to encompass a relentlessly expanding spectrum covering social, economic and political studies, compounded by dramatic shifts in technology, thus producing sumptuous new bodies of knowledge.

Future of Thesis Wadiyar Centre for Architecture (WCFA):

As a new school, WCFA is probing on how thesis can be a threshold between academics and practice. The roundtable discussion would revolve around the possible range of topics and scale of design explorations. We are also studying how research component can inform design thesis.

Future of Pedagogy School of Environment and Architecture (SEA):

This session will look at the potential of new relationships between students, teachers and information reconfigured amidst the introduction of new media within everyday learning environments. This brings us to consider the following questions closely: 1) The Expanded "field": the inter-folding of the real and the virtual and the critical modes of production of architecture and its discourse; 2) The opening up of new knowledge systems and spatial philosophies that may be applied towards developing an understanding our own contexts; and 3) Devising collaborative and collective forms of knowledge creation enabled in the technologies that reorient the power relationships between the teacher and the student.

Future of Institution Building Avani Institute of Design:

This roundtable will facilitate strategy-sharing and deep reflections on institution-building within and across our cultural contexts. How do we build a more ethical, inclusive, and just academy of architecture; an academy that grows out of its specific context, with the diversity and excellence of its faculty, students, and staff, and through a deliberate set of actions that inspire its community of learners to produce new scholarship and engaged models of critical architectural practice? How might we sustain these goals in terms of institutional resources, capacities, infrastructures, and forms of leadership? What are the approaches and challenges to implementing a new vision of professional excellence?

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | LUNCH

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM | PHASE 2: ROUNDTABLES CONTINUED

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM | DOCUMENTATION AND SHARING SESSION

7:00 PM | CONFERENCE DINNER

07 SEPTEMBER, 2019 | SATURDAY

PUBLIC TALKS: ADVANCING OPTIMISTIC FUTURES

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM | POOKALAM (FLOWER CARPET, ONAM)

All participants are invited.

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM | PRESENTATION BY ARCHITECT B.V. DOSHI AND DISCUSSION

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | LUNCH

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM | LIGHTNING TALKS AND PANEL DISCUSSION

2:00 - 2:20 Talk 1 Ar. Prasad Shetty

2:20 - 2:40 Talk 2 Ar. Mahesh Radhakrishnan

2:40 - 3:00 Talk 3 Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee

3:00 - 3:20 Talk 4 Ar. Nelson Pais

3:20 pm - 4:00 pm | Panel Discussion

MODERATOR: Ar. Kartikeya Chhaya | C.A.R.E School of Architecture

4:30 PM | CULTURAL EVENT

PARALLEL STUDENT-LED PROGRAMME

05 SEPTEMBER, 2019 | THURSDAY

10:00 am | Event Opening

Presentation of the Conference Theme by Convenors and collaborating colleges welcomed; Opening remarks.

11:00 am - 2:00 pm | Faculty and Student Paper Presentations:

Collaboration and Creative Insight

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm | Lunch

3:00 pm - 6:00 pm | Concurrent Sessions

1) Writing Workshop I

2) Open Forum I - Architecture for Whom? Questions of Place, Publics, and Purpose in Architecture

7pm onwards | Games and Cultural Events

06 SEPTEMBER, 2019 | FRIDAY

9:00 am - 10:00 am | Exhibition Opening

10:00 pm - 1:00 pm | Concurrent Sessions

1) Writing Workshop II

2) Open Forum II - Studio Culture: Diverse Experiences, Shared Expectations

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm | Lunch

2:00pm - 5:00pm | Film Screening and Discussion

7pm onwards | Games and Cultural Events

STUDENT COORDINATORS: Shifana Thasni and Rohan Joseph Mathew
Avani Institute of Design, Calicut: +91 495 2225511 (Administration Desk)

PAPER ABSTRACTS

PAPER 1

THE ROLE OF CONNECTEDNESS IN HOUSING

PRESENTER: AR. NAGESH HD

Key question: How can connectedness inform architecture?

Historically the built environment is organized by the community, culture and climate. Interaction between people and form they inhabit, uniquely defines our built environment (habitat). The habitat aptly defines the living conditions in which we live, work and the way we connect to people.

In contrast, in today's context of an urban lifestyle, the settlements are not of the organic order, and strive to search for an identity and the character of the spaces man inhabits is a reflection on his specific choices and interests as against a singular nature of traditional settlements. The studio attempts to understand this phenomenon of urban settlements, and explore ways to evolve the spaces which are people centric and probably reflect on the nature of urban settlements. These factors are driven by an inquiry on the relationship between the individual and society and subsequently, on nature of the communities that are a reflection of a belief and lifestyle of the times.

The CCS Intent was to study and examine an area as the common ground in which form and place making are rooted and understand connectedness (physical, social and emotional connectedness) in architecture that helps in deriving design methodology. Exploring ideas of shared spaces, scale and hierarchy of spatial expressions, the concepts of territory and transitions shall be the focus of the studio.

PAPER 2

A REFLECTION ON THE IDEA OF COLLABORATION IN EDUCATION: THE SRIRANGAM STUDIO

**PRESENTERS: AR. T. JUDITH BELINDA LAURA, AR. SENTHILKUMAR S,
MR. NAVANEETHA KRISHNAN, MR. MUKUNDAN**

The paradox of the globalized world is that it is possible to 'be' in many places at once, to carry strong influences from seemingly disparate and geographically 'far-away' sources, and by the same token experience the world as fragmented, communities breaking and drifting, increasing atomisation and individuation. In this it seems to be imperative to find "true" connections and methods of collaborating: those which demand both commitment to particular ideological positions as well as a surrender towards being more accommodative, even taking on the colour of, differing ideologies. In the interest of resilience and indeed survival, students and schools must develop the ability to hold in one cup many contrasting and changing ideas and ways of being. Collaboration--working together--is the practice of acquiring the necessary multiplicity.

The Srirangam experiment approaches this idea by ways of both form and content. One, as a trial of method-- bringing students of varying backgrounds and pedagogical training together in a single exercise, forced to look, think, work, together. Two: Srirangam as the subject of study is exemplar of the idea of collaboration itself. The study of this ancient city, and specifically of the range of learning environments found within is an analysis of the effects of years of collaboration on the evolution of a specific built environment. Both students and teachers are ensconced within the exercise to bring out the nature of working-together as a mode of space making and cultural production that are the very hallmarks of resilience built into its daily community processes.

This experiment is a first foray into the crucial attempt to make more stable and open pedagogical structures. Collaboration of educational practices that are not completely congruent, not having the same cultural and intentional benchmarks, still embark on this trial towards a dialogue, away from rigidity and monoculture, to make more inclusive and sustainable structures of education, practices of inquiry and institution-building. This paper is a reflection of the experiences of the Srirangam Studio.

PAPER 3

COLLABORATION (N): MEANS AND METHODS FOR STUDIO AS A PRACTICE AS WELL AS A CONCEPT

**PRESENTERS: AR. VINOD CP, AR. SHYAM GANDHI, JAHANA FATHIMA,
SHIFANA T., TALAL M., SREENAYAN R.**

This studio is a combined reflection on and an inquiry into the role and meaning of collaboration in the context of the semester IV design studio, bringing together individual lessons gained from the workshop on 'Care and Connectedness' and the Avani Away Day faculty colloquium. We often discuss studio as a space in architecture and academia or any other design oriented field, where deliberations, discussions, reviews, making, and explorations emphasize student-centered learning. 'Care and Connectedness' was a collaboration between students from different backgrounds, where "Studio" became a medium and space, and much of what the students learned and produced in that medium was about practice. On the one hand, and following its relevance to the subject and situation, this academic experience was an attempt at collaboration between distinct social groups and the school, emphasizing studio as a concept that connects. On the other hand, a post-studio colloquium called "Avani Away Day" involving faculty members at Avani Institute of Design was an attempt to relook at this idea of studio being a space but also an inquiry into a possible type of practice as well as concept. This presentation will highlight the conceptual and material dimensions of collaborative work and concrete lessons gained from our studio and its reflections in the context of the faculty colloquium.

PAPER 4

ONTOLOGICAL QUESTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE: PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF INSTITUTIONS

**PRESENTERS: AR. RUPALI GUPTA, AR. VIKRAM VEERAVALLI,
AR. NIKEITA SARAF**

Challenging pedagogical notions of the incremental approach, which states that students should be first taught letters, then words, and then allowed to make sentences, this paper will try to outline a methodological approach to design teaching where a 'Design Provocation' becomes the departure point in a studio. Instead of the 'case study method' where students learn to design given building typologies from standards and previously successful examples, here the design process is opened up by asking ontological questions about an institutional programme for the contemporary context through a two pronged provocation. The first provocation is to pose an ontological question about the idea of 'institution' today. The provocation places the inquiries, within the seminal texts of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. While Foucault showed the relationship between Power, Knowledge and Space with regard to modern institutions, Agamben delved deep into the notions of the contemporary by developing the idea of the apparatus outlined by Foucault.

By steering the definitions of the contemporary away from a periodizing tendency, via Agamben, we are open to varied influences including those from philosophies of Indian aesthetics to draw clues for what might be the approaches to re-think contemporary institutions in South Asian cities. The second provocation is located within the complexities of the city. City as provocateur, brings in the agencies of people and geography to make informed decisions on architecture, rescuing it both from modern tabula rasa approaches as well as the revivalist tendencies of the post independence architects. This paper will lay out the methodology followed at the School of Environment and Architecture in semester four and demonstrate its working through its latest project 'What is a Clinic? Reimagining notions of Health-Care'.

SPACE WITHIN A SPACE

PRESENTER: AR. KIRAN KUMAR R.

Semester 2 Explorations

The larger intent of the studio is to bring all the basic design skills learnt in first semester into comprehension in the design of their first architectural project in the second semester. There is a two fold enquiry in this exploration. How to prepare a design brief around a theme? And what method is employed to break the theme into time bound shorter exercises?

Theme

To understand the 'sense of enclosure' (which fits into the overall WCFA Academic Framework) in architectural process. The theme through which semester will proceed is 'aedicule' (space within a space) This theme we are currently exploring is the ability to perceive two spaces simultaneously. Even though the smaller space is embedded inside the larger one, both have distinct sense of enclosure independent of each other. The original trigger was the reading of the Orinda House designed by Charles Moore, in which the two rooms (the bathroom and living) are embedded as pavilions within the larger perimeter of the house. The thematic idea is to explore the condition of 'simultaneity' in crafting of space.

Methodology

The second agenda of the semester is to focus on the proceeding of the semester. Some of the issues we tried to address - The conduct of the studio between 4 faculty and 40 students, without diluting the nature of the theme. Number of smaller design problems and their connection to the theme. Introduction of the design brief with a lecture highlighting the keywords. Emphasis on the medium of explorations (models and drawings). The attempt was to build shorter exercises which will help to explore the 'aedicule' theme with the design project (second family home) of the semester.

EMERGING CONTEXTS FOR URBANIZATION IN INDIA

PRESENTER: AR. SHREYANK KHEMALAPURE

Contemporary urbanization in the second cities of India, and even across South Asia, presents its students with a wide range of contexts and conditions where a singular and universal idea of housing does not find a complementing universal space.

Across India, emerging urban conditions such as changes in the economy, new social conditions, change in labour forms and practices, emerging aspirations, environmental issues, cultural dimensions are creating new contexts for housing. For instance, a large number of students migrate temporarily to cities such as Kota and Vijayawada to attend coaching classes for competitive exams; peripheries of cities such as Mysore and Pune have become favourite post-retirement destinations; villages near Sriperembudur are attracting large numbers of migrants from north and east India as labor for Samsung and Nokia factories; Mysore and Mangalore are transforming into educational and health hubs; remittances from the Middle East are shaping the built fabric of several cities in Kerala. Each of these contexts has created its own response to housing and living. These plural contexts bring with them an impetus for plural ideas and responses to housing and living. Thus housing today can no longer be simply understood as a quantitative or even affordability question.

SEA is engaged in a five year long research project in which researchers are studying two Indian cities from a state every year. So far we have covered states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The study will cover Kerala and Telangana over the next two years. Each research is compiled in the form of dossiers that structure discussions on the emerging housing contexts, practices and spatial characteristics, policy landscapes, responses and delivery systems. The dossiers articulate new questions for housing and its architecture that go beyond the conventional questions formulated around affordability. This project extends into the pedagogy of SEA as a series of design studios with the seventh and ninth semester students of the undergraduate programme who also speculate new imaginations of housing for these contexts.

The study has evolved in the last years to articulate two research streams around second cities in India: 1. The City That Difference Makes and 2. Housing, the new questions.

PAPER 7

LEARNING FROM CONFLICT AND CONTRADICTION

**PRESENTERS: AR. VIJAYKUMAR SENGOTTUVELAN,
AR. RAMALINGAM NATARAJAN**

Every architectural school today faces realities of a shape shifting world. The field covers a multitude of subjects and disciplines each responding to the flux. Taking too hard a stance means risking being defined by or swept away by the force of a single intractable idea; bearing little or no provocation in the world risks falling into irrelevance and routine.

The students entering the arena at CARE bring with them, and give the school, a specifically local agenda. The school, on the other hand, makes various efforts to have this agenda meet broader fields of vision. The location of CARE, geographically, socio-politically, technologically as well as in terms of the students' worldviews and aspirations, makes the chasm between these two far larger than schools located in more metropolitan contexts. Nearly a decade of freewheeling experiment finds the school's major questions being framed by these specific conflicts and contradictions afforded by this collection of specifics. From the point of view of the student, the lens that the school provides performing a very general focusing of the world to come after: too specific visions may narrow their vision of possible futures.

Given the region and demographics, should the school have any dominant narratives? CARE has found, through students' responses to studio programs, several oppositions that manifest in discussions and their work. Rural/urban, ecology/development, conservation/commercialization – and so forth. The school has held in cautious grip narratives that seem not to gel, seeking to find with the students solutions that seem necessary of situation, time and place.

PAPER 8

STUDIO AS CRITIQUE, COLLECTIVITY, AND CONNECTION: CARING FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL LIVES IN VIZHINJAM, KERALA

**PRESENTERS: DR. KUSH PATEL, AR. NIMISHA SHAIJAL,
ANKITHA ARUN, NIRUPAMA KS**

The first engagements with the semester nine pre-thesis studio in Vizhinjam were revealing. For every two steps forward, the faculty took a step back to rethink how might students make visible the otherwise palpable infrastructures of access, equity, waste, economy, and climate change involving the local fisherfolk's lived realities. Vizhinjam, a port community located towards the south of Trivandrum, is also one of the major fishing harbours in the region with a long and turbulent history of growth, displacement, and fragmentation; a history intensified along faith and economic lines since the 1960s. Today, the shared livelihoods of these fisherfolks are under further risk from the construction of another major project: the International Transshipment Terminal, currently being built in close proximity to the villages, towards the south.

This presentation will discuss and reflect on our elected approach to develop a critical urban storytelling studio, where we study the relationships between land, sea, and communities at the level of lived-in infrastructures. Depth, scale, and pacing matter. Students' ongoing questions about who are we drawing for touch deep, and brilliantly with the core questions of this study: Who are these developments for? How might architects' narratives address the tensions between exclusionary plans and community life whilst also offering alternative visions of urbanism oriented towards socially just and connected futures? How might we reclaim a position for our expertise in society that is neither complicit in, nor indifferent to, existing exclusionary protocols? And what kinds of urban possibilities might we propose with our drawings, words, and even songs so that our spaces embody a dynamic interchange between theory and practice drawing from and contributing to deep infrastructural realities? Co-presented by studio faculty Dr. Kush Patel, Ar. Nimisha Shaijal, and students Ankitha Arun, Nirupama KS, our paper will conclude with a discussion on what it means to care for lives, land, and ecologies; and how might the methodology of understanding, citing, and working with the publics of this work inform the future of advanced studio initiatives at the intersections of architecture and the engaged humanities.

EXHIBITION CURATORIAL ESSAYS: Collective Imagination and Social Futures

Under the larger curatorial banner of Collective Imagination and Social Futures, there are four independent but interconnected exhibitions: 1) Revisiting Settlement in/through Rural Kerala, Avani Institute of Design; 2) What can Architecture do?, School of Environment and Architecture (SEA); 3) Thematic Explorations, Wadiyar Centre for Architecture (WCFA); and 4) Guild, Atelier or Think Tank? The Future of Learning; CARE School of Architecture. The four schools of architecture first collaborated on a two-week student exchange studio around the theme of Architecture of Care and Connectedness, which asked: How does architecture augment the ideas of care and connectedness between its inhabitants? How does architecture care or connect? How does architecture care, connect and situate itself in the ecologies of things? However, Collective Imagination and Social Futures is a presentation of critical insights not only from the collaborative studio, but also from other academic experiments and innovations that critically examine the limits of the discipline of architecture and architectural education.

Curators: **Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee, Alaka Kavallur, Usman Pakkath**

REVISITING SETTLEMENT IN/THROUGH RURAL KERALA

The Studio was led by Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee, Dean Academics in collaboration with Ar Mithun P Basil, Ar Shyam Gandhi, and Ar Vinod CP. The studio project was post disaster rehabilitation and resettlement for persons affected by the Kerala Floods. The dwelling and settlement design were informed by the significant amount of original and field-based research on collective dwellings, infrastructure, and spaces undertaken during the Collaborative Workshop with SEA Mumbai, CARE Trichy and Wadiyar Centre for Architecture, Mysore.

The focus of the Collaborative Workshop was on the discovery and the articulation of collective realms of livelihood, resource management, education, care, socializing, entertainment, and so on, which might exist or might have existed in the affected community. These spaces were atypological in the sense that they may not fit into the requirements of taxonomic categorization. The key question for the workshop was “What does it mean to settle?” While all forms of connectivity are always spatial, they may not always be architectural or tectonically expressed or expressible, especially in the context of rural Kerala. The two-week workshop required students to revisit the site and interact with the local stakeholders, using critical approaches of seeing and listening. The search required students to value and inquire about the seemingly ‘ordinary’ and ‘everyday’ practices, rituals, and spatial habits as meaningful evidence into a way of life, which the resettlement would try to support and enable. The two-week workshop was organized into three modules across two weeks.

Module 1: positions, frameworks

This module focused on creating a foundation of critical frameworks through short lectures, discussions, and readings. It aimed to unsettle and challenge the conditioning of architecture students, and to prepare them to be able to see, listen, feel, and draw out the ‘invisible’ in the built environment. Students were asked to become acquainted with conceptualizations of rural space; the history, theory and epistemological limits of architectural typologies; architecture of the everyday (based on the work of Henri Lefebvre); and the sociology of attention that informs what is visible and invisible not just in visual culture but also in social relations.

Module 2: discoveries, insights

This module focused on the field study of the affected area, as well as the proposed site, which involved mapping, observation, and conversations with the people in the area, as well as research into the cultural, social, economic profile. This was supported by research into patterns of settlement as well as collective infrastructural spaces observable in the geospatial information on the area, which was supplemented by information held by local government bodies like Panchayat. The module was focused on a variety of documentation-

formal and informal; drawn, photographed, and recorded; plans, sections, and elevations; maps, mind maps, diagrams, charts, and others. The students were able to delineate social typologies and formal typologies of dwellings plans, sections, and elevations; maps, mind maps, diagrams, charts, and others. The students were able to delineate social typologies and formal typologies of dwellings, as well as the collective spaces of socializing, entertainment, care, education, livelihood, and resource management that support the dwellings.

Module 3: collaboration, creativity

In the last two days of the workshop, students tested their understanding through a quick design charette. Student teams designed dwellings and groups of dwellings for families and communities with specific livelihood and occupational profiles. They designed their first sketch settlement plan using their own designs as well as those designed by other student teams, negotiating multiple occupational and spatial possibilities.

Postscript: impacts, after effects, shifts

The critical and creative insights and discoveries were many: students started to look at the ‘unremarkable’ in the built environment as epistemologies of the local. Instead of having the persona of the ‘expert’, they begin to exercise their agency with humility. The conversations, which were around people’s ways of life, their ambitions and aspirations, histories and stories, and trials and tribulations provided opportunities to approach and engage with empathy and deep understanding. The collaborations between students and students and faculty shifted the emphasis from compartmentalization and ownership of knowledge to a community of practice, whereby knowledge is seen as co-constructed collectively and open to all. Rural space, rural public space, and rural collectivities were a timely challenge to our (very urban) understandings of domestic, social and communal spaces. Rural space emerged as an under-researched area but one that has the potentiality of shifting ways of thinking about territory, hierarchy, and collectivity. The non-planned and non-formal are not just romanticized, fetishized notions, but seen as thoughtful forms of community-driven spatial practice.

WHAT CAN ARCHITECTURE DO?

In the pursuit of activating the latent possibility of architectural tools to impact the environment, education at the School of Environment & Architecture (SEA) reorients itself into three distinct domains through a critical mode of inquiry:

1. Intimacy with the field: Moving away from the comfort of the studio, to observe and experience the conditions in the field is integral to the pedagogical approach at SEA. Through building a close relationship with their surroundings, students are provoked to challenge their pre-existing biases, make new friendships and immerse themselves into the nuances and politics of the city.
2. The invention of programs: Studios at SEA are structured around the proposition that there needs to be fresh investment into the emerging forms of social and physical dynamics within the city. This demands for an interrogation into existing institutional forms, organizational patterns and shifting relationships between humans and their extended environment. Such an approach inevitably demands the invention of programs that are more suitable to the contemporary times.
3. Crafting new spatial types: With advancing social, technological and material cultures, vocabulary of form and space ought to reflect new values of built environments. Further, new programs call for a reworking of spatial typologies. Can architecture be an instrument through which such values may be embedded into living processes? Design processes at SEA investigate constantly into methods through which the built environment can be crafted into critical, relevant and humane habitats.

The projects presented here are a cross-section of various scales of inquiry in the trajectory of SEA. Through these experiments, one may begin to find answers to our call, 'What can architecture do?' Over the first graduation cycle, our experiments have sharply pointed at strengthening the integration of research and practice, inducing design and art into the everyday and investing consciously into critical forms of thinking and making.

THEMATIC EXPLORATIONS

The concept of the exhibition is to showcase two attempts to explore design studios which are theme based. The larger component is presenting our two week CCS workshop as conducted in WCFA. The larger enquiry of 'connectedness' was attempted by three smaller studios (each led by a different team of faculty) on the same theme. Exploring the role of 'connectedness' through three layers (Physical, Social and Emotional). The smaller component of the exhibition is showcasing the explorations of Semester 2 Design Project under the theme of 'Space within a space'. Both studios were exploring the notion of home, even though working at different scales. Here is a short brief of both the studios.

Semester 4 : Explorations of CCS workshop

The CCS Intent was to study and examine an area as the common ground in which form and place making are rooted and understand connectedness (physical, social and emotional connectedness) in architecture that helps in deriving design methodology. Exploring ideas of shared spaces, scale and hierarchy of spatial expressions, the concepts of territory and transitions shall be the focus of the studio.

Semester 2 : Design Exercises

The larger intent of the studio is to bring all the basic design skills learnt in first semester into comprehension in the design of their first architectural project in the second semester. There is a two fold enquiry in this exploration. How to prepare a design brief around a theme 'Space within a space' ? And what method is employed to break the theme into time bound shorter exercises?

GUILD, ATELIER OR THINK TANK? THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

“Postmodernity means the exhilarating freedom to pursue anything, yet mind-boggling uncertainty as to what is worth pursuing and in the name of what one should pursue it.”

— Zygmunt Bauman

Professor Bauman, the Polish philosopher, has characterised our times thus: it is like being on an aircraft and suddenly finding out that there is no pilot. That the airport at the destination is not only under construction, but is yet on the drawing boards, yet to be visualised. In this fast-shifting world it is not certain that what is learned today will be useful, relevant, five years hence. In the nine years since the inception of the CARE SoA, the faculty have been surfing wave after wave of a great number of experiments in architectural education. The key of the approach is to invite multiplicity— and as many various views and practitioners as possible— into the mix to try and create an environment of healthy conversation. This creates, very often, in the studio as well as behind-the-scenes, a series of conflicts and differences in approach that need to be resolved through conversation. In this way the attempt has been to learn what the world needs, what the world wants, to catch the pulse(s) of currents that flow today by engaging unrestrictedly in all manner of exploration. The students here are well aware by their 5th year that there is no one right way to do something, to think, to design.

This exhibition is a collection of glimpses of some of these experiments. Placed together, this is an introspective feedback about the several threads that hold the story of our journey together. Some questions and observations precede, and hold back, the urge to specifically curate this collection:

Should there be a specific pedagogy, informed by a specific philosophy, at the School?
Does an aggregation of directions, congruous or otherwise, actually make up a real methodology?

Is the school experimenting or is it a platform for experimentation?

Is the school a Guild, an Atelier, or a Think Tank?

NOTES:





