



MUMBAI RETURN
मुंबई रिटर्न

This is the catalog of the "Mumbai Return" exhibition, which took place at the Bhau Daji Lad City Museum in Mumbai from July 1st to August 13th, 2017.

Special thanks to the Bhau Daji Lad Museum, the Mobile Lives Forum, the 70 Years of Swiss-Indian Friendship campaign and Dayanita Singh.

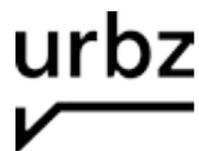
We would also like to thank Marius Helten for his work on the exhibition design as well as Natasha Jeyasingh, Sandeep Bhoir, Ishan Tankha, Rishi Chandna and Jenifer Datta for their creative contributions.

Our team: Bharat Gangurde, Jai Bhadgaonkar, Manasvini Hariharan and Samidha Patil with Bhau Korde, Fanny Wattier, Ketaki Tare Bhadgaonkar, Kartik Juwekar, Shruti Kshirsagar, Pawan Kumar and Shyam Kanle

Our friends who are featured in the exhibition from Dharavi, Bhandup, Naigaon and Shivaji Nagar in Mumbai and the villages and towns of Ratnagiri district. In particular we would like to thank the Jadhavs of Ukshi, the Takles of Songiri, the Kules of Kondhe and the Mohites of Kotluk.

Matias Echanove & Rahul Srivastava
co-founders, urbz

MUMBAI RETURN





Photograph - Ishan Tankha

Millions of Indians live away from their ancestral regions, but nonetheless remain connected to their villages. The movement from rural India does not simply end in hyper-dense urban centres. It loops back to villages which are transforming as rapidly as cities.

An immense number of families from Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore or Chennai maintain two homes – a small crowded one in the city, as well as the one they invest in, back in the village. The Indian village does not belong to the past as much as it does to the future – a future that is resolutely urban, networked and circulatory. In which the railway plays a crucial role in helping city dwellers maintain active links with their places of origin.

For many Mumbaikars, home is here and there, stretched between two inescapable and complementary polarities. The exhibition depicts the circulatory journey of urban families between their neighbourhoods in Mumbai and their villages in the Konkan. It also reimagines the relationship between the urban and the rural and invites Mumbaikars to write their own circle of connections into the story.

The work presented draws from a 3 year long research project by urbz and the Mobile Lives Forum, a Paris based think-tank fostering critical research and debate on the future of mobility worldwide.



Photograph - Ishan Tankha

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01 | THE LOOP

Tarpa Dance is a representation of festive village life amongst the Warli tribe. At the centre is the tarpa player playing folk tunes around whom men and women intertwine hands and dance, moving in gradually increasing concentric circles, a form which represents the circle of life.

In this work of Warli art, the artist has depicted the village and the city as two loops forming around a central 'tarpa' player. Except that here, the music is played by all of those who circulate rhythmically between the village and the city, forming their own spatial/ musical field. The city and village loop and move around the tarpa players.

Starting from the extreme end of one loop, the artist has represented traditional village life which slowly changes into an urbanizing village. At the other extreme the big metropolis fades into the urban village that are a common sight in Indian cities. At the centre of the installation, one is caught between the urbanizing village in the countryside and the urban village in the city- a situation we believe reflects the life of millions of urban residents today.

Artwork by Sandeep Bhoir with urbz.

Village



Urban Village



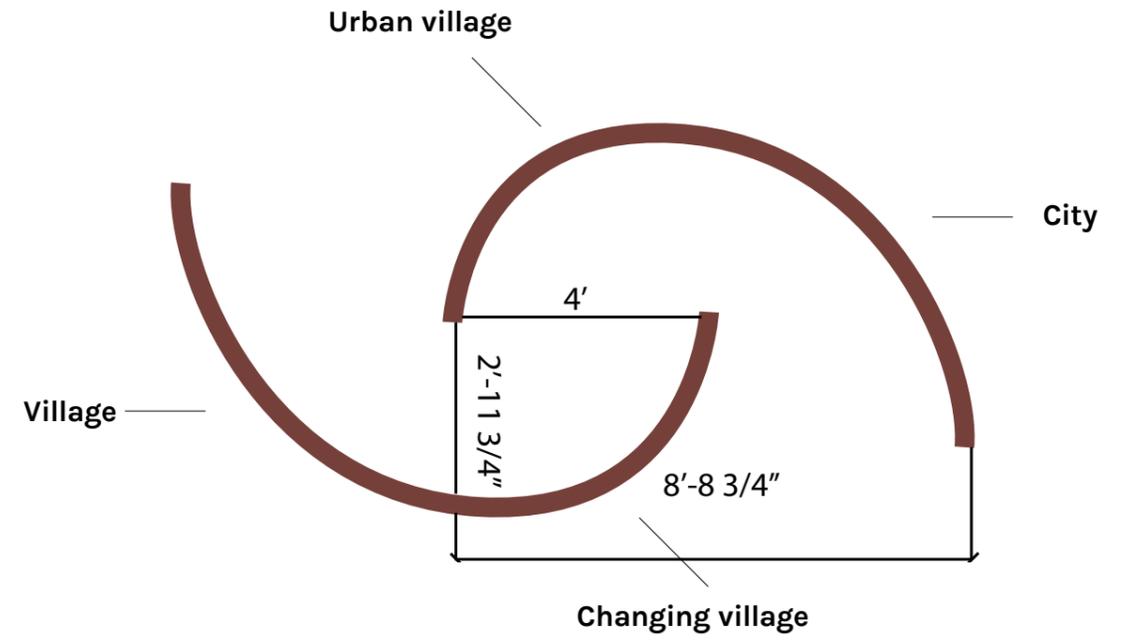
Changing Village



City



Artist: Sandeep Bhoir



Selfie time for visitors



Jadhav family at the exhibition



02 | KONKAN STREAMING

For the Mumbaikar who hails from the Konkan, the word village typically brings to mind greenery, peace, summer holidays but also tradition, family and identity. Another imagery is being shaped by its youth. These are third generation migrants to the city who identify as Mumbaikars but also love to go back to their villages to meet friends, cousins and other family members. They effortlessly bridge the gap between their two homes like the rest of the world does - using digital technology. It is not an uncommon sight to see a youngster in the village engrossed in his phone, reaching his hand up to all corners of the house to get hold of that elusive network. Through their smartphones and

laptops with Whatsapp, Instagram, WeChat, Facebook and various other applications, the village or the city is just a click away.

Pictures by Siddhi Jadhav, Rutuja Jadhav, Deepak Kule, Ankit Takle and Akshay Takle with urbz .

Photo

akshay.takale

50 Likes

akshay.takale at the outskirts #brothers #selfie

View all comments

2 HOURS AGO

Photo

deepak.kule

56 Likes

deepak.kule kids having a ball! #village #community #festive

View all comments

2 HOURS AGO

Photo

akshay.takale

50 Likes

akshay.takale ports are special #port #blue #sea

View all 14 comments

21 HOURS AGO

Photo

akshay.takale

56 Likes

akshay.takale Outside the temple #temple #pose

View all comments

2 HOURS AGO

Photo

siddhi

41 Likes

siddhi posing. #sisters #family

2 HOURS AGO

Photo

akshay.takale

50 Likes

akshay.takale at the outskirts #brothers #selfie

View all comments

2 HOURS AGO

Photo

deepak.kule

41 Likes

deepak.kule under the waterfall. #nature #waterfall

2 HOURS AGO

Photo

siddhi

60 Likes

siddhi posing. #rural #adventure #mom

2 HOURS AGO



03 | HOMEGROWN HOMES: KONKAN

Villages across the region have turned into the most dynamic laboratory for a new urban aesthetic with its varied typologies. Houses built by circular migrants reflect contemporary cultural choices and aspirations very accurately - perhaps more so than the generic architecture of contemporary Indian cities and their obsession with the form of the skyscraper.

Those who move to the city in search of better job opportunities always send back remittances to support a part of their family, pay bills and invest in land. For a lot of circular migrants, the village will always be the place where they want to 'settle down' while keeping the comforts of the city within hand.

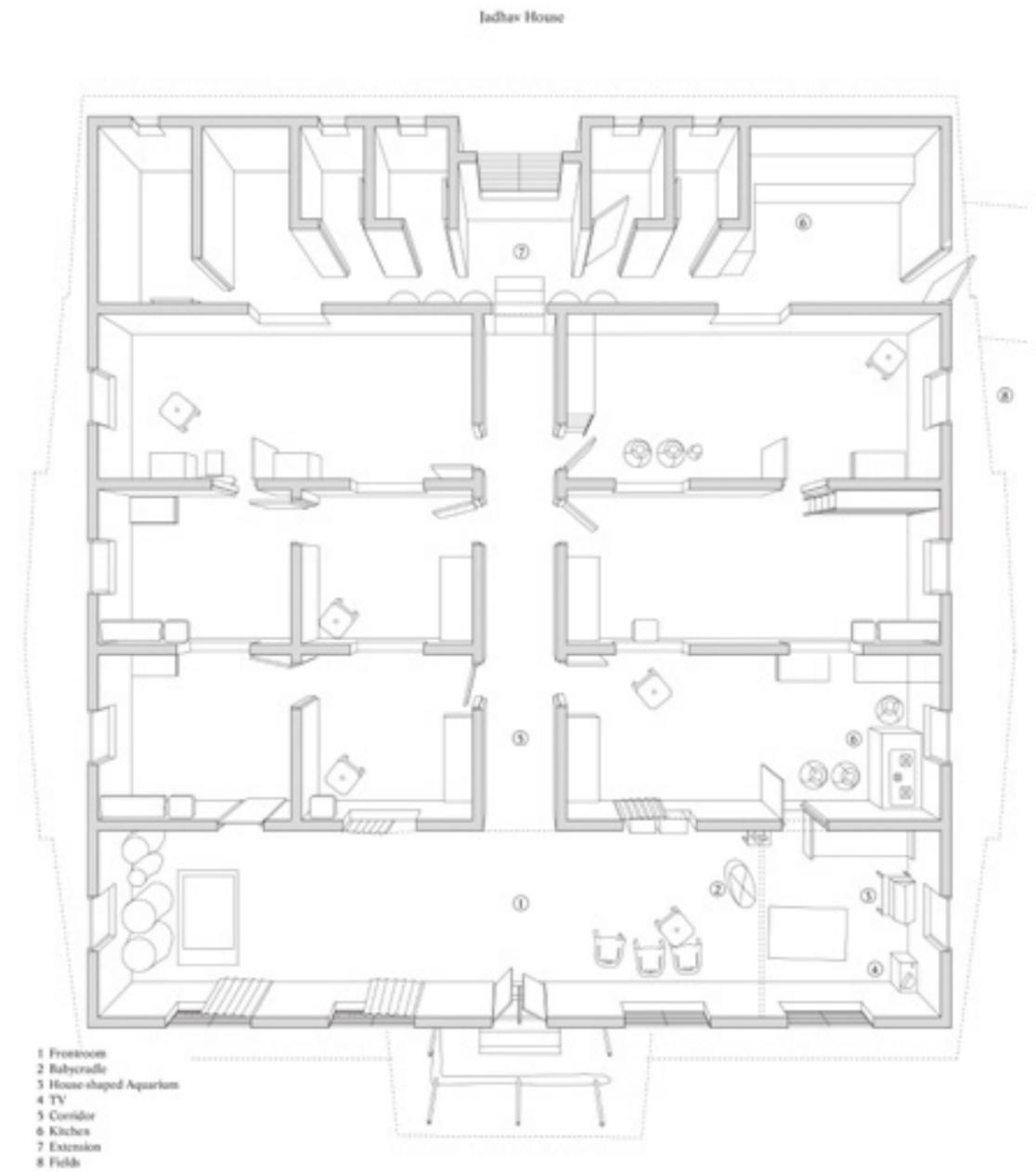
Typically, new urban-style homes are built next to traditional, old ones, ready to accommodate the extended family that returns annually for festivals and holidays. The new village home is a cross between the aspirational city house and the traditional rural home: concrete walls with mud flooring, a TV next to a choolah, a phone charging next to a scythe, all representing the changing face of the village.

Photographs by Marius Helten, Bharat Gangurde and Ishan Tankha for urbz.



Jadhav House

Built by Anil Jadhav, this house in the village of Ukshi is built from local laterite stone, which gives it a traditional look. The floor plan of the house takes inspiration from an urban 'chawl' to create a series of independent rooms for the extended family. In the back of the house, both, a modern and a traditional kitchen have been added.

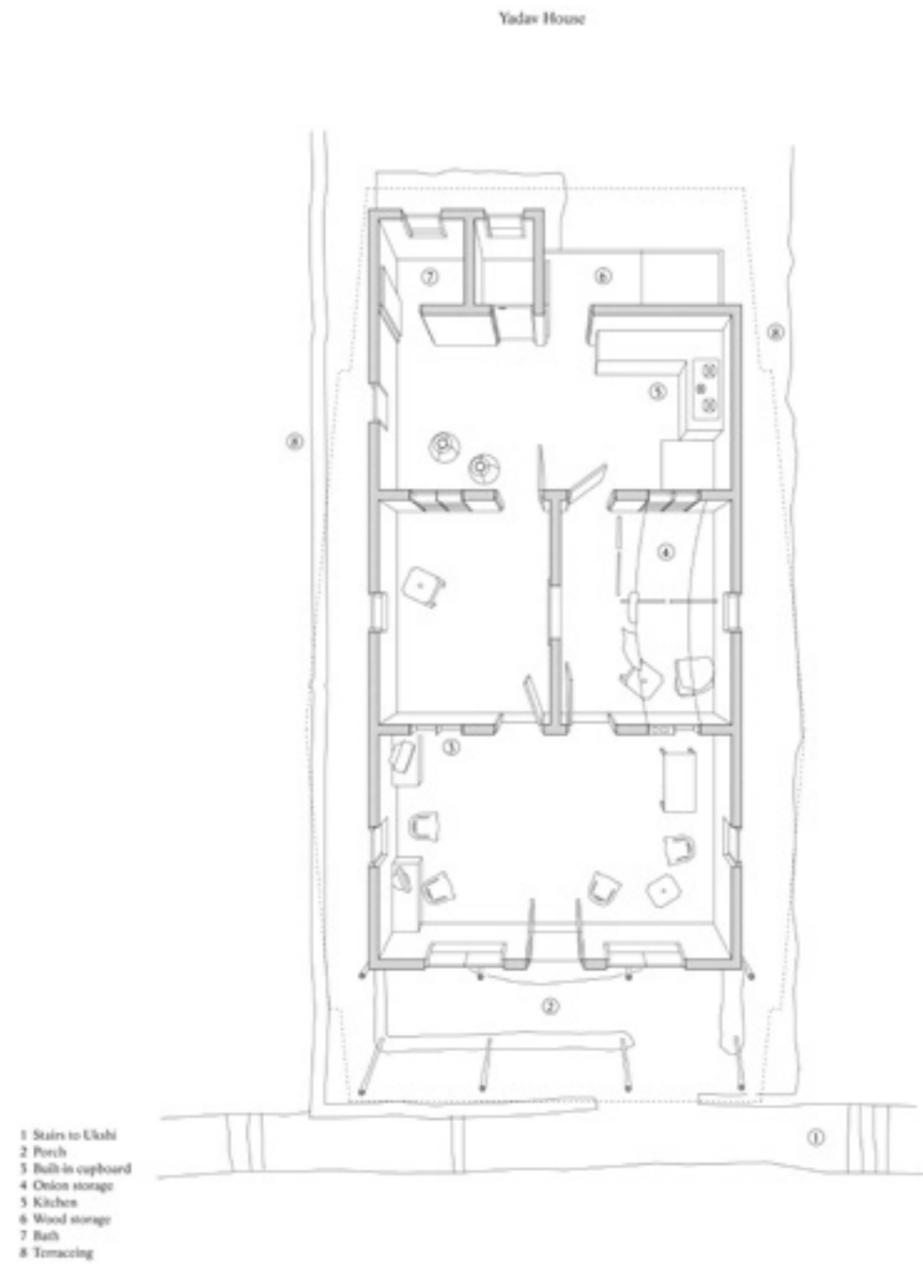






Yadav House

A longitudinal structure, the rooms are arranged symmetrically behind the front room. Like traditional Konkan houses, the exterior is made of exposed laterite stone. Internal walls have openings in which space has been made for wooden shelves.







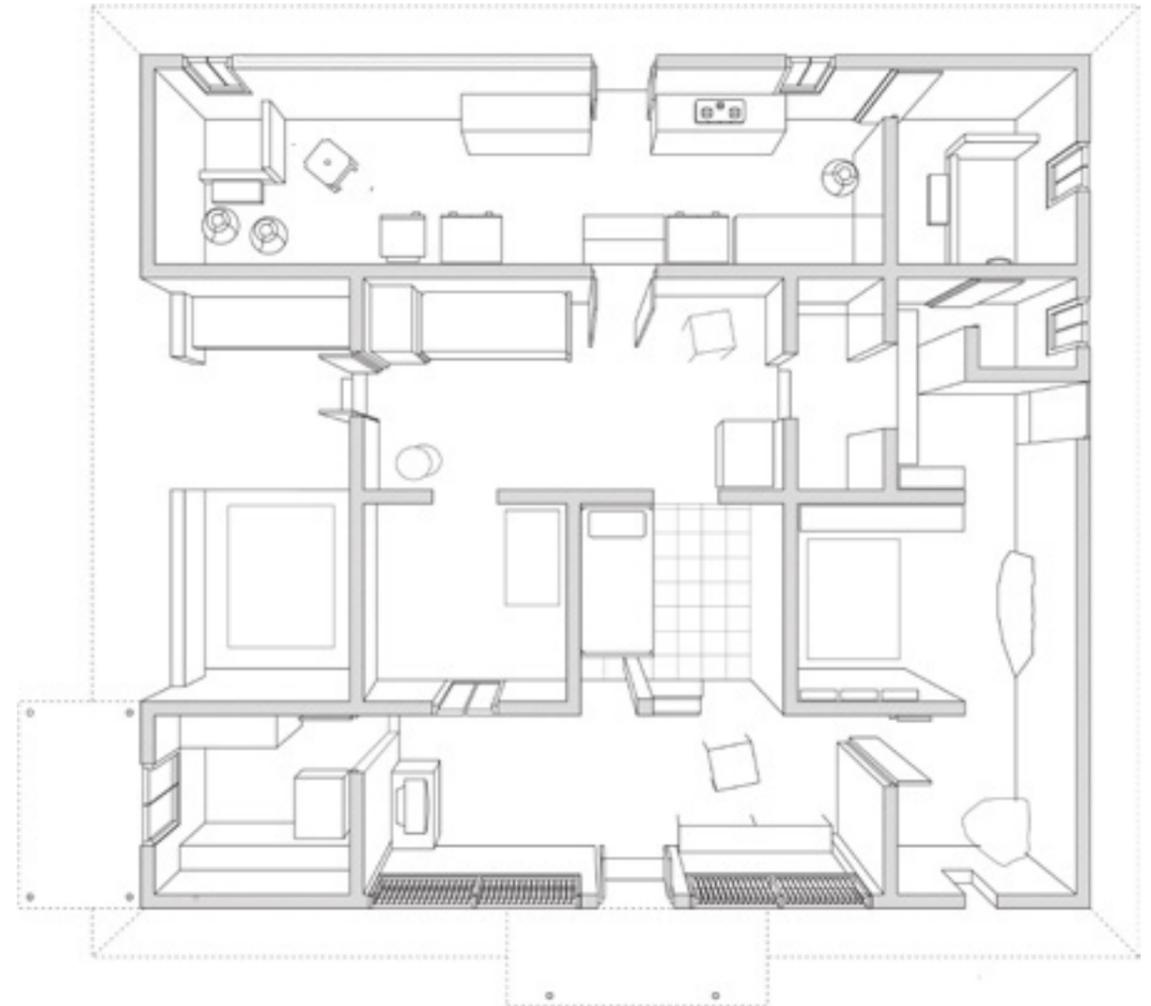
Buddha Temple

This temple in Ukshi village was rebuilt with remittances from people with roots in Ukshi village who now live in Mumbai. These followers of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in the mid-twentieth century, when the leader urged fellow Dalits (ex-untouchables) to abandon the caste system and Hinduism altogether. The temple mixes aesthetic influences from Nepal, Japan and Greco-Buddhist architecture. The result is a resolutely modern and colorful structure.



Kalpe House

This house in Ukshi has a square plan with a pitched roof. A raised platform forms the core part of the house around which other spaces are distributed. Old style blue wooden jaalis adorn the walls around the entrance while bright pink, green and blue colours can be seen inside.



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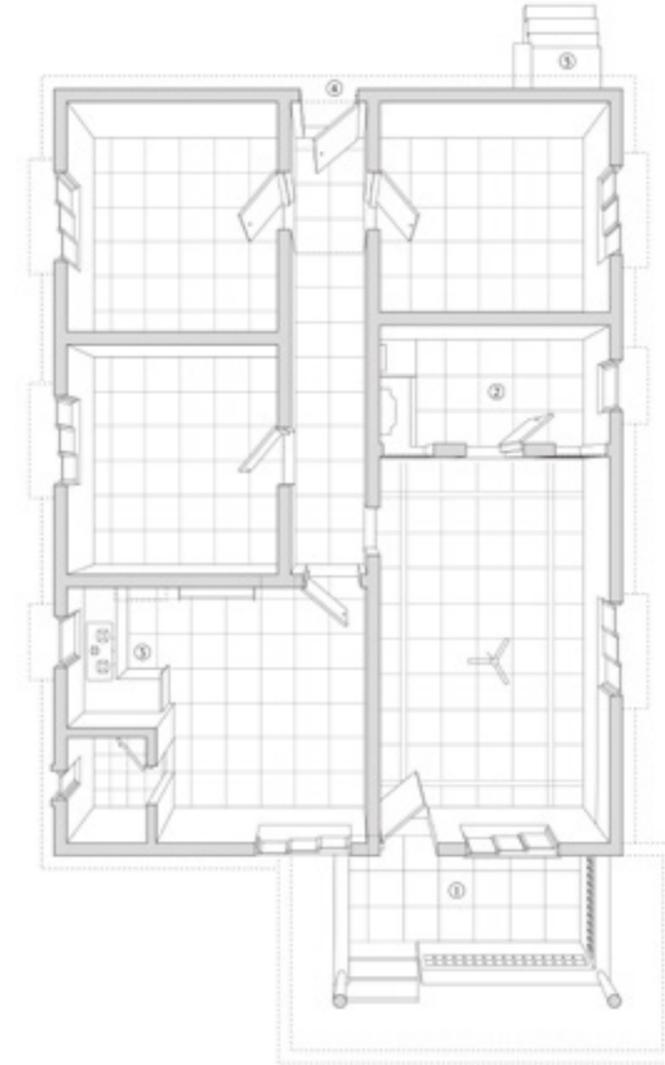




New Takle House

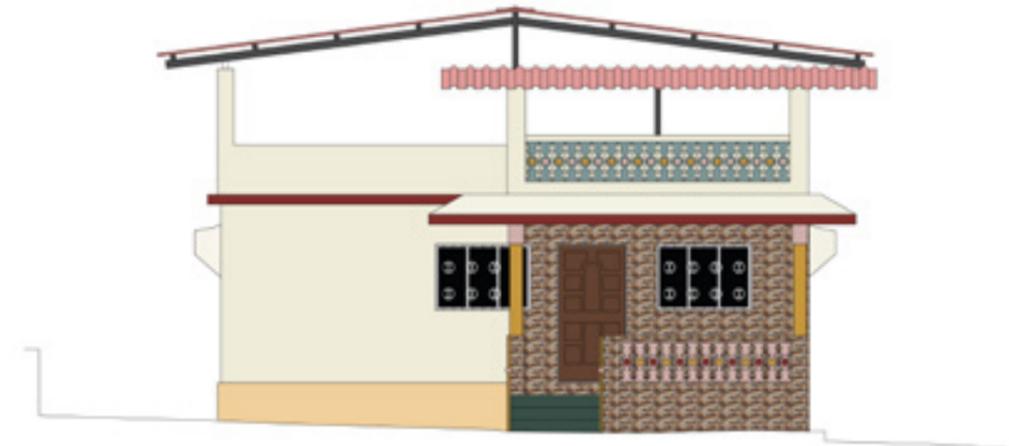
Yeshwant Takale built a new house next to his father's home in Songiri. The house has a colorfully decorated living room with an attached puja room on the ground floor. A corridor leads to three sleeping rooms, a kitchen and bathroom. The second storey is a large terrace topped with a steel roof and a beautiful view across the village and its surrounding valleys.

New Takle House



- 1 Covered Entrance
- 2 Puja Room
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Space for future extension
- 5 Stair to terrace

0 — 1 — 2 — 3



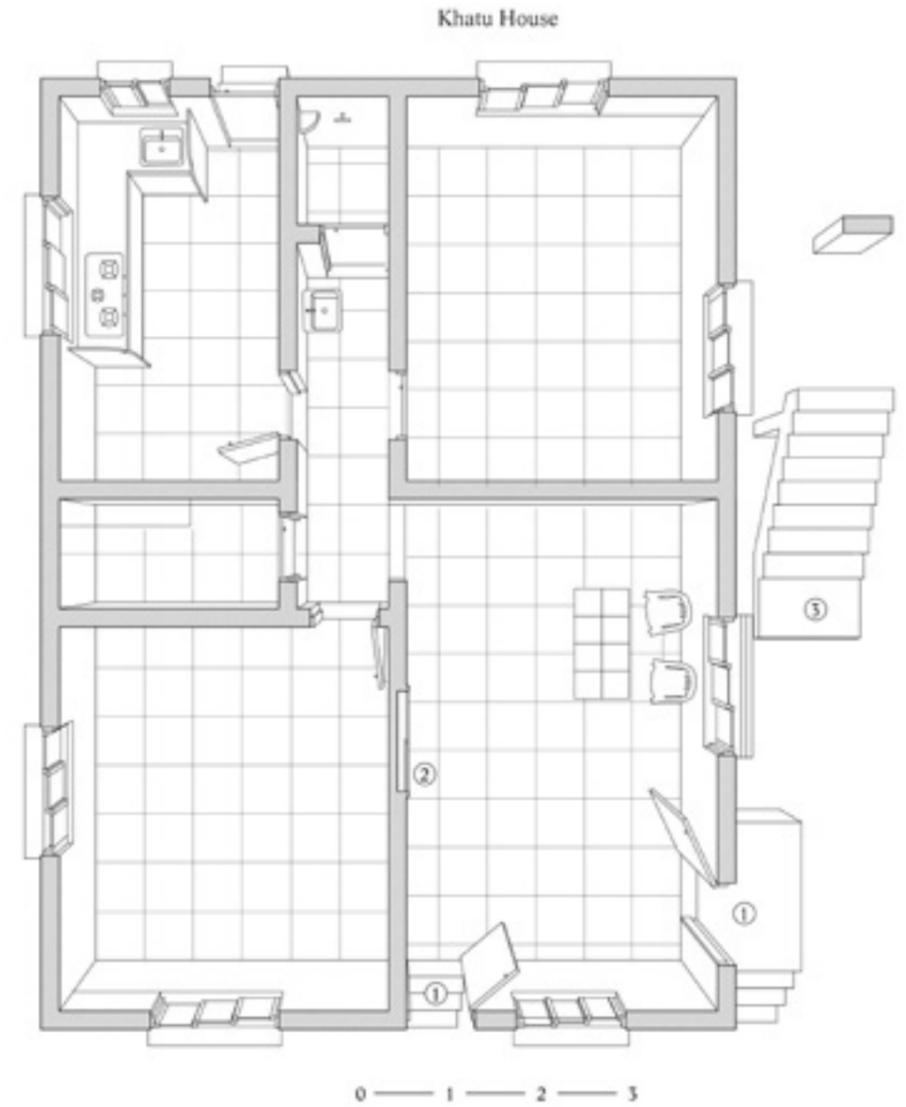
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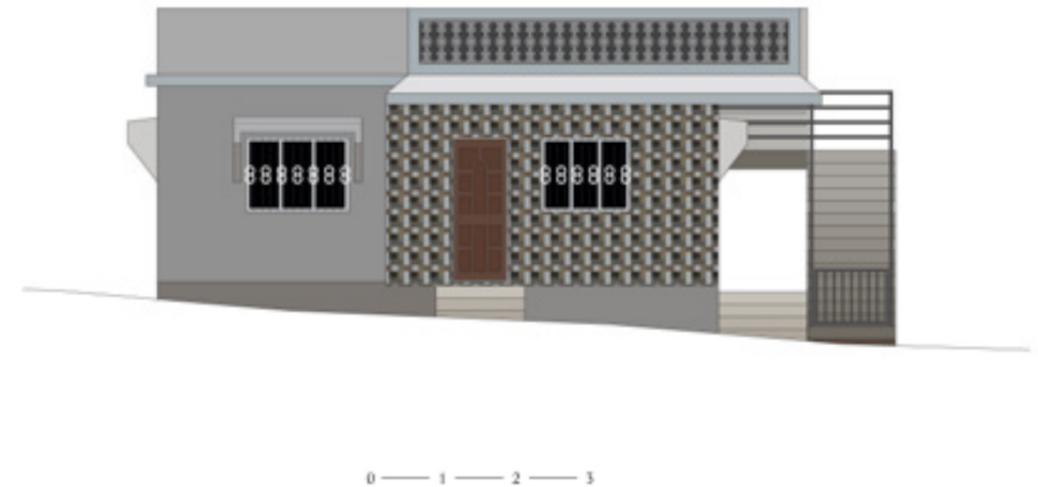
Khatu House

Taxi driver Abhijeet built a new house on a slope near his parents' village in Ukshi. The house has a series of rooms on the ground floor and a roofed terrace. While the house still shows its bare cement facade, the entrance is covered by a cantilevered terrace.



- 1 Entrances
- 2 Built-in cupboard
- 3 Stair to roof terrace
- 4 Covered car park

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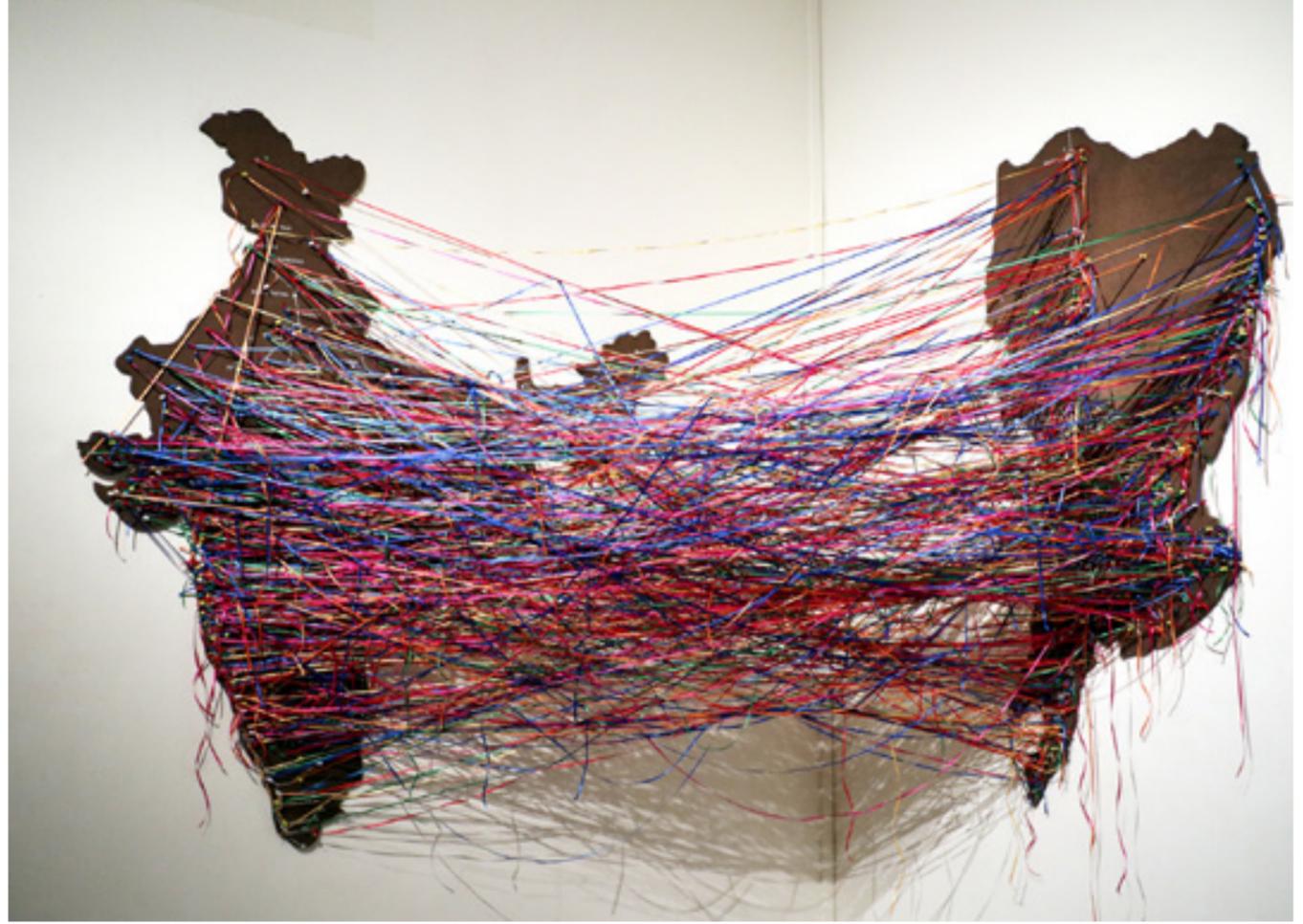


मेरा गाव
MERA GAON



04 | MERA GAON

This interactive installation comprises a map of Mumbai, a map of India, colourful threads and pins. It was generated by the visitors of the museum who responded to our invitation to put themselves on the map. We asked them to pin a thread from their neighbourhood in Mumbai to their ancestral village.





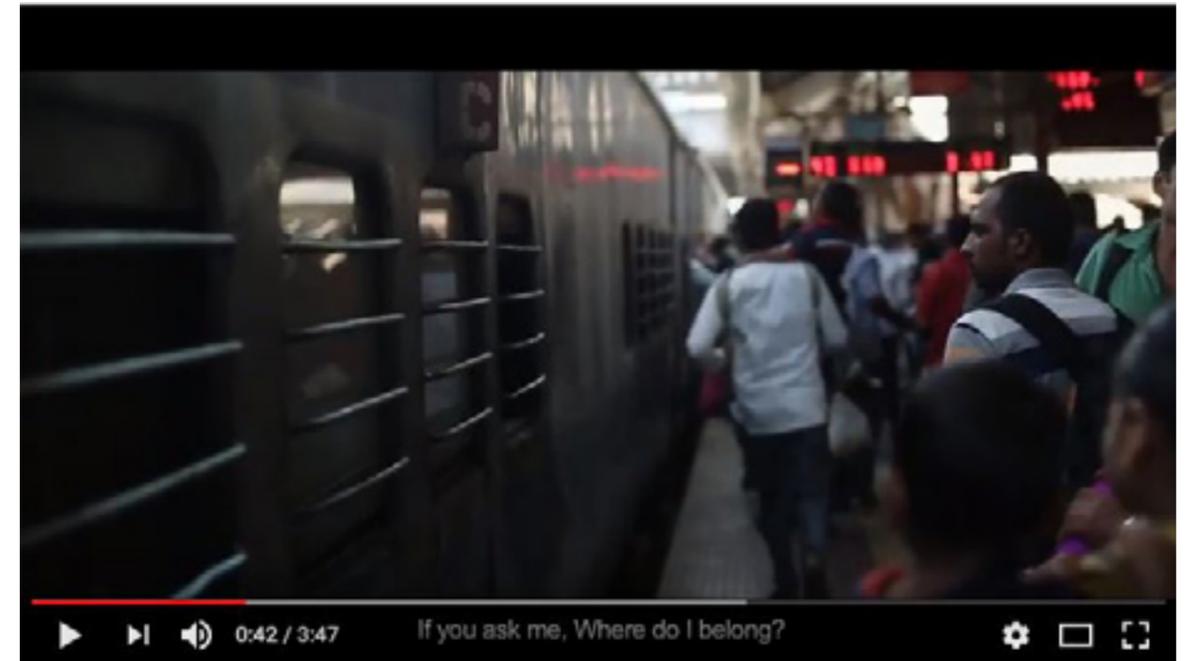
Photograph - Ishan Tankha

05 | THE JOURNEY

The early coastal migrants to the city used to travel by foot, boat or bus. The railways bridged rural and urban distances by reducing the travel time between the two. The train is the amplifier of circulatory migration connecting far-flung destinations, increasing access to the city and allowing for people to maintain dual households. It intensifies the possibility of having more than one occupation to ensure continual income, with farming and industrial activities both being integrated into the lives of many families based on seasons and specific

requirements. However, the train is not the sole facilitator of the urban-rural connect. The rail systems transformed the movement between the rural and urban while allowing older forms of mobility to adapt and exist in new ways. Autos, buses, and boats are often supplements, if not replacements, to the train for a complete door-to-door journey.

Photographs by Ishan Tankha for urbz.



Round-Trip : From the village to the city.

Setting new roots in cities does not cancel out connections in villages. Small towns fan out into the immediate hinterland to become regular commuting hubs even while habitats remain villages. Industries can be located in rural or urban areas and the peasant can become a taxi-driver or construction labourer before turning to something else. In our understanding, all this does not make India less urban.

If anything at all – it makes it far more urbane in a genuinely contemporary way – in which new technologies such as smart phones and cheap travel make connectivity combine with ancient impulses of mobility, to create a vast urban field the size of a sub-continent.



Round Trip - From Mumbai To Ratnagiri

A large segment of the population has dual affiliations in the city and in the village. Families and communities can do both, anchor people to ancestral villages, as well as support them over large mobile territories in a town or city, hundreds of miles away. In all this, trains and the railways have played a pivotal role. By keeping them cheap and affordable, people found an ally that allowed them to break rules and belie expectations of how and when they must move, migrate and return.





06 | HOMEGROWN HOMES : MUMBAI

When migrants move to the city, they rely on support from their urban family members, friends and acquaintances. The communal atmosphere of the village is revoked in the spatial arrangement of the neighbourhoods in which migrants live. Over generations, makeshift shelters have developed into large and dense neighbourhoods, which are the gateway to city life for subsequent generations of migrants. Homegrown neighbourhoods like Bhandup, Ghatkopar, Naigaon, Shivaji Nagar, and Dharavi see communities of migrants living in close proximity to each other just the way they would,

back in their villages. Their houses are built to adapt practically to the space constraints of the city. Yet certain elements always evoke their connections to the village, especially their relationship with outdoor communal spaces and infrastructural arrangements. Doors are often left open throughout the day to invite passers-by for a quick conversation and to be in touch with the happenings of the neighbourhood.

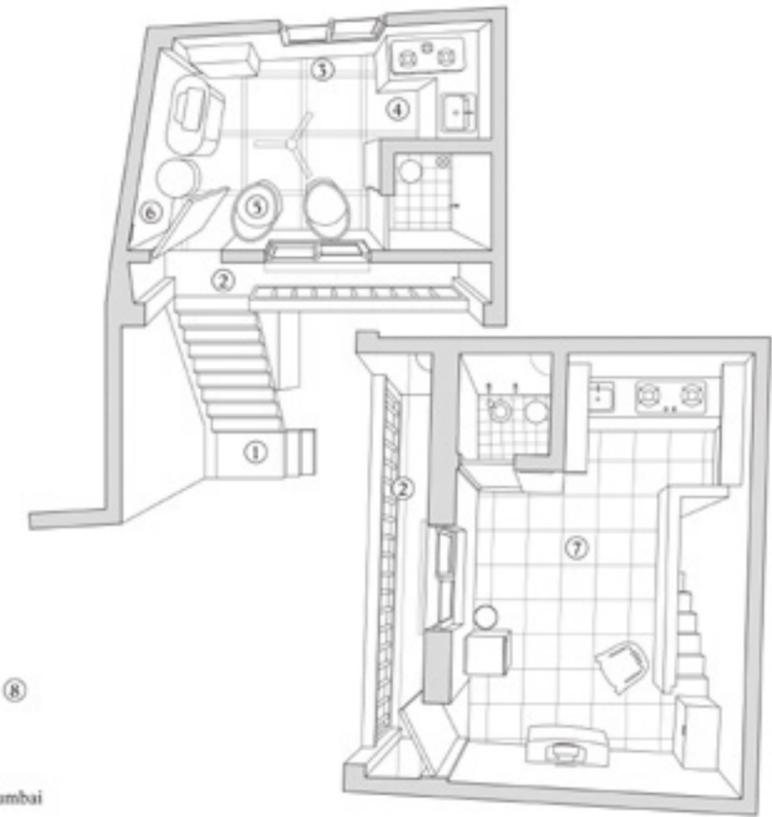
Documented by Marius Helten and Bharat Gangurde for urbz.



Tiwari House

The lower and upper units of these two houses are independent, each with a staircase leading up to the first floor. Although they are small, the spaces offer two beautiful views: one towards the temple and the other on the valley overlooking Bhandup. All three houses on the picture were built by the same contractor, Amar Mirjankar, who always pays special attention to tile work, balconies and interior design.

Tiwari House



- 1 Stair to Tiwari House
- 2 Terrace
- 3 Window with view overlooking Mumbai
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Eggshaped chair
- 6 Clothhanger
- 7 Second House by Amar Mirjankar
- 8 Temple

0 — 1 — 2 — 3



0 — 1 — 2 — 3





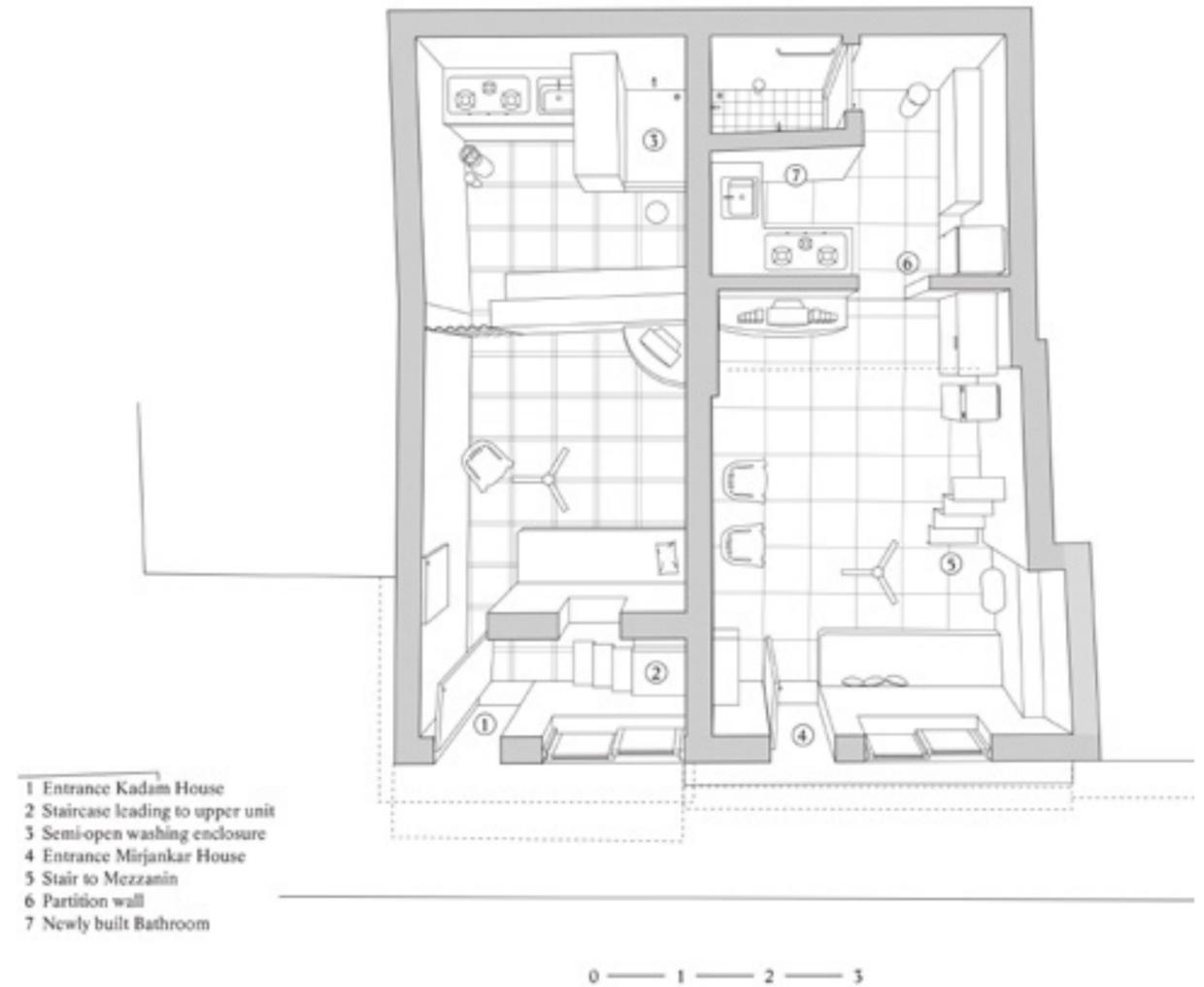
Kadam House

The neighbouring house offers a view of the original shape of Amar's house - a small front room which has a steep staircase leading to a mezzanine, a medium sized living room and a small kitchen with a walled corner for bathing. Brightly coloured walls and quintessentially tiled floors make up the living room which are in stark contrast to the house next door.

Mirjankar House

Amar Mirjankar has built many houses in Bhandup. He rebuilt his own, which was part of a row of three homes. Learning from his own experiments with space, he has entirely remodeled the interior to create a large, double-heighted living room. A ladder leads to a mezzanine floor used for sleeping. The interiors of the house exude a contemporary feel with the use of beige paint and slick and shiny materials.

Kadam House - Mirjankar House



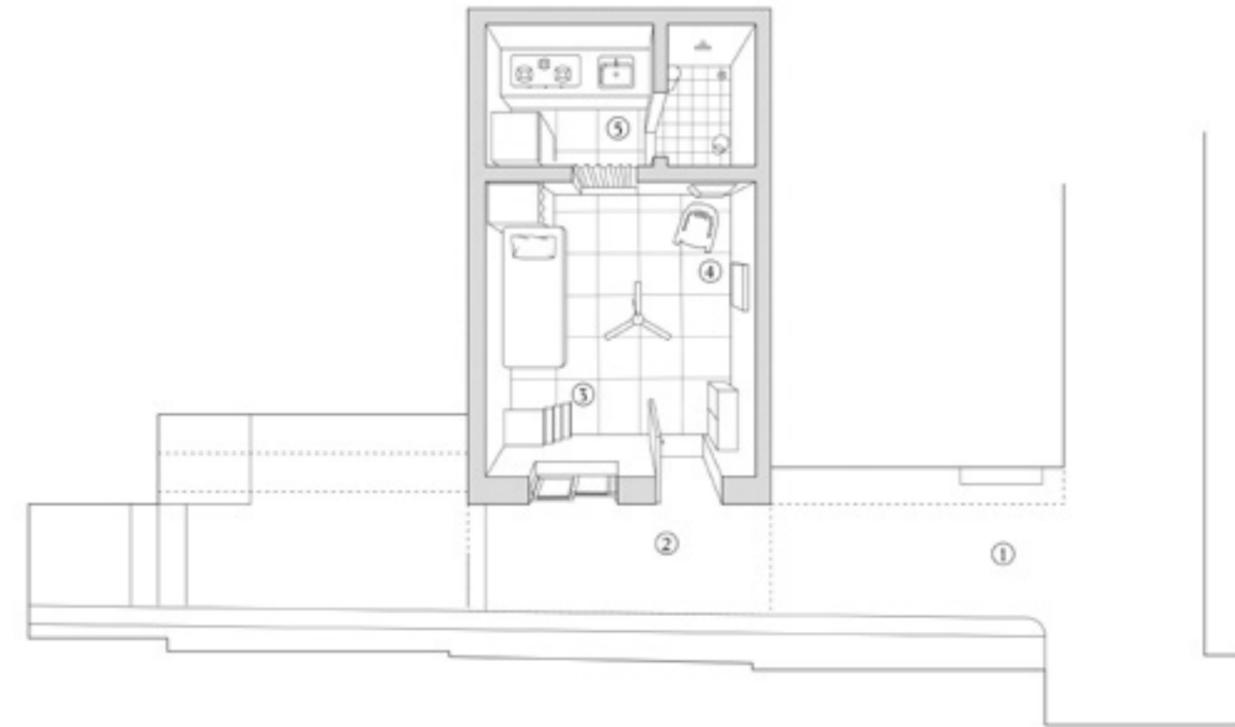




Takle House

The Takle House follows the sloping contour of Bhandup and seems embedded into the hill. The interiors feature modern tiles, wallpapers and granite surfaces. It was built by Yeshwant Takle, a family member and a contractor by profession, who just built another house for his family in Songiri village, Ratnagiri district.

Takle House



- 1 Entrance to the dead-end
- 2 Entrance to the Takle House
- 3 Stair to the upper floor
- 4 TV
- 5 Kitchen

0 — 1 — 2 — 3



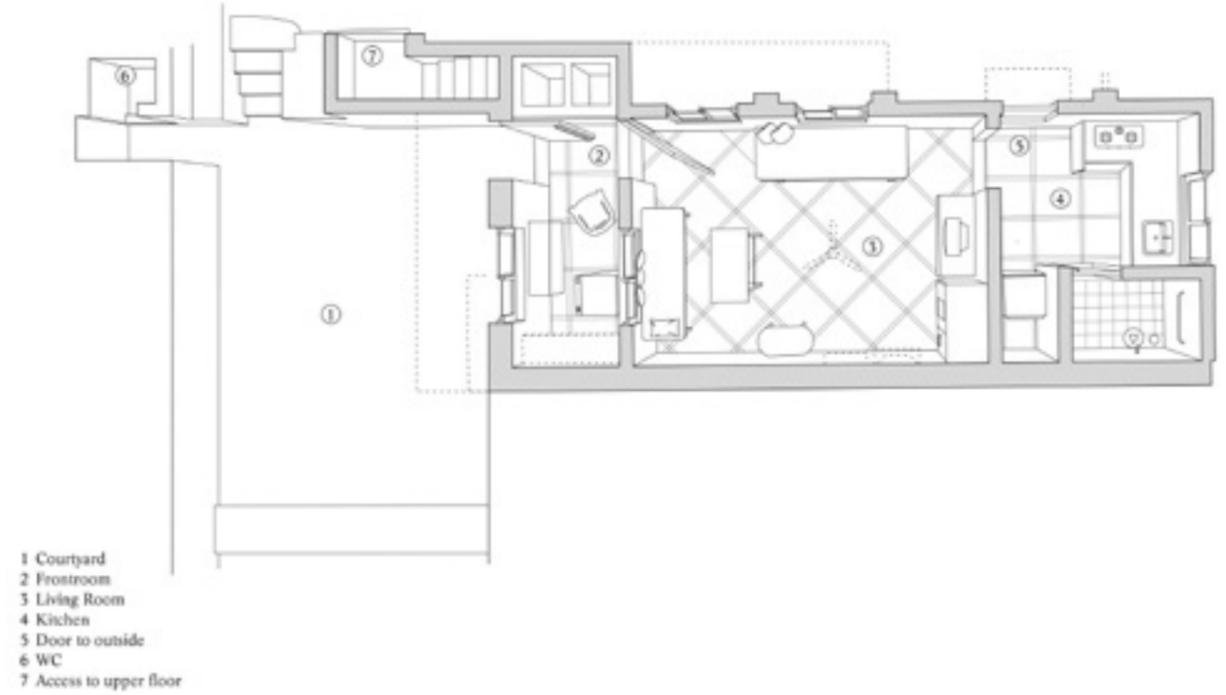
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Kule House

Orange tiles on the front facade highlight the entrance of the Kule Family's house while stucco ornaments are seen around the balcony. An upper storey has been converted into an independent unit by adding a new staircase in front of the house.

Kule House





Kule House



Prabhu House



Prabhu House

M Prabhu and his wife live in a unit that is a part of a bigger structure. In their unit, each wall has an opening through which the exterior can always be seen. The facade of the house is colourful with many modern decorative elements.





07 | THE DESIGN COMES AS WE BUILD

These models represent 'ideal' homes imagined by contractors from Dharavi for their own neighbourhood. They respond to the hyper-dense condition of Mumbai. The designs were translated into physical models by artisans with expertise in carpentry, welding, pottery and glass cutting.

These models are a testimony to the know-how embedded in neighbourhoods throughout Mumbai. Without much help from officials and professionals, inhabitants produced their own rich habitats and economies.

By choice or necessity (usually a mix of both) people take their destiny into their own hands: traveling long distances in search of opportunity, or by building their own homes. India's urbanity is by and large user-generated, something that needs to be valued and celebrated.



MAX - Glass Model

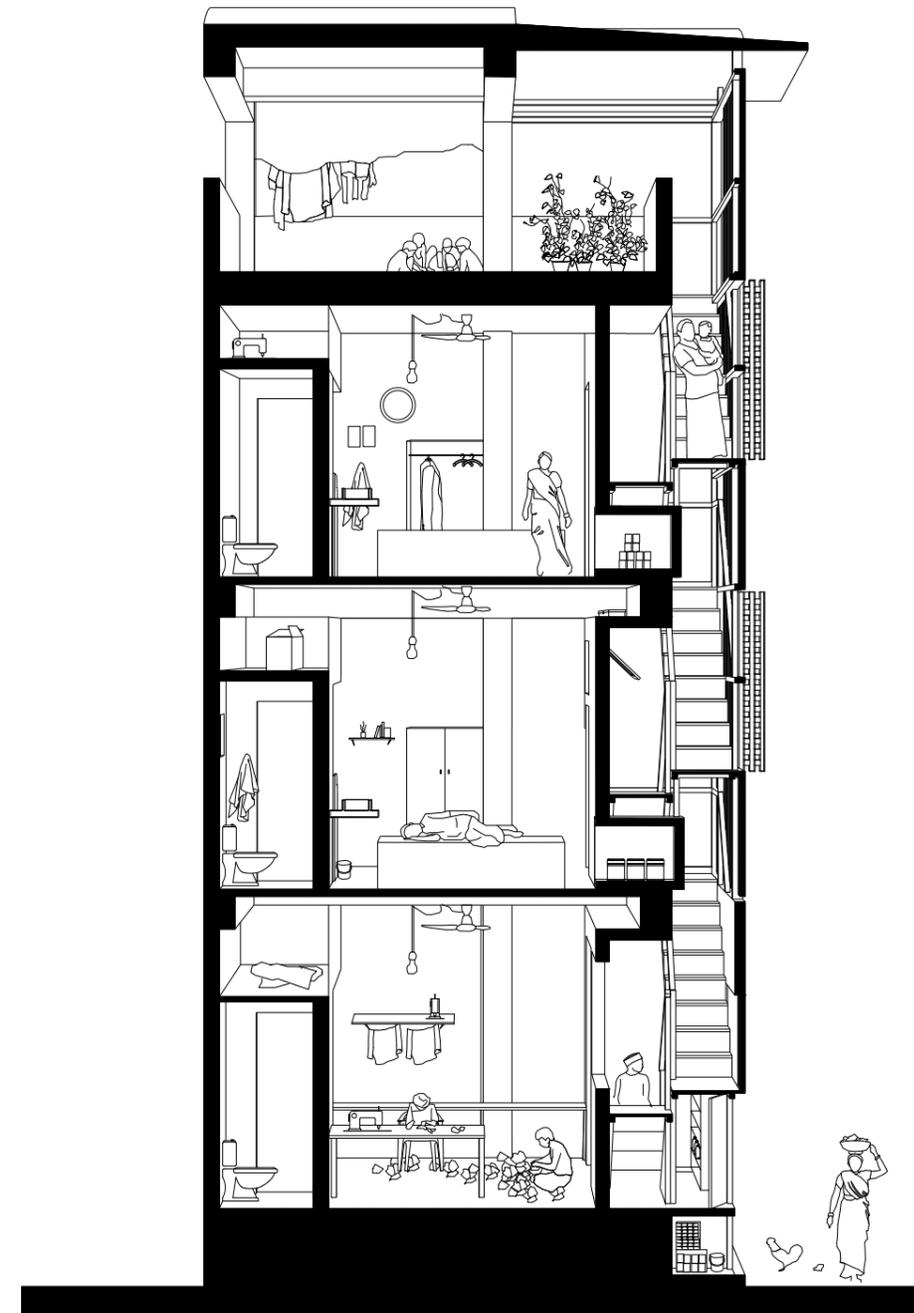
This humble yet refined house plays with fantasy and could well have featured in an ancient tale. The house itself seems to be designed to accommodate many interrelated lives - that of a paanwala, a merchant, a family, and their encounters under the curved roof of the terrace.

Designer

Mohammad Azad came to Dharavi in 2002 from Bahadurganj, Uttar Pradesh. He started as an apprentice to a local contractor and learned the requisite skills in 3 years. In 2005 he started his independent contracting service.

Artisan

Ziyaul Haque was born in Dharavi. His family is from Allahabad city in Uttar Pradesh. He owns a glass shop and is an expert glass cutter. This is the first time he has built such an intricate object with this material.



Section



INTERACTIVE – Clay Model

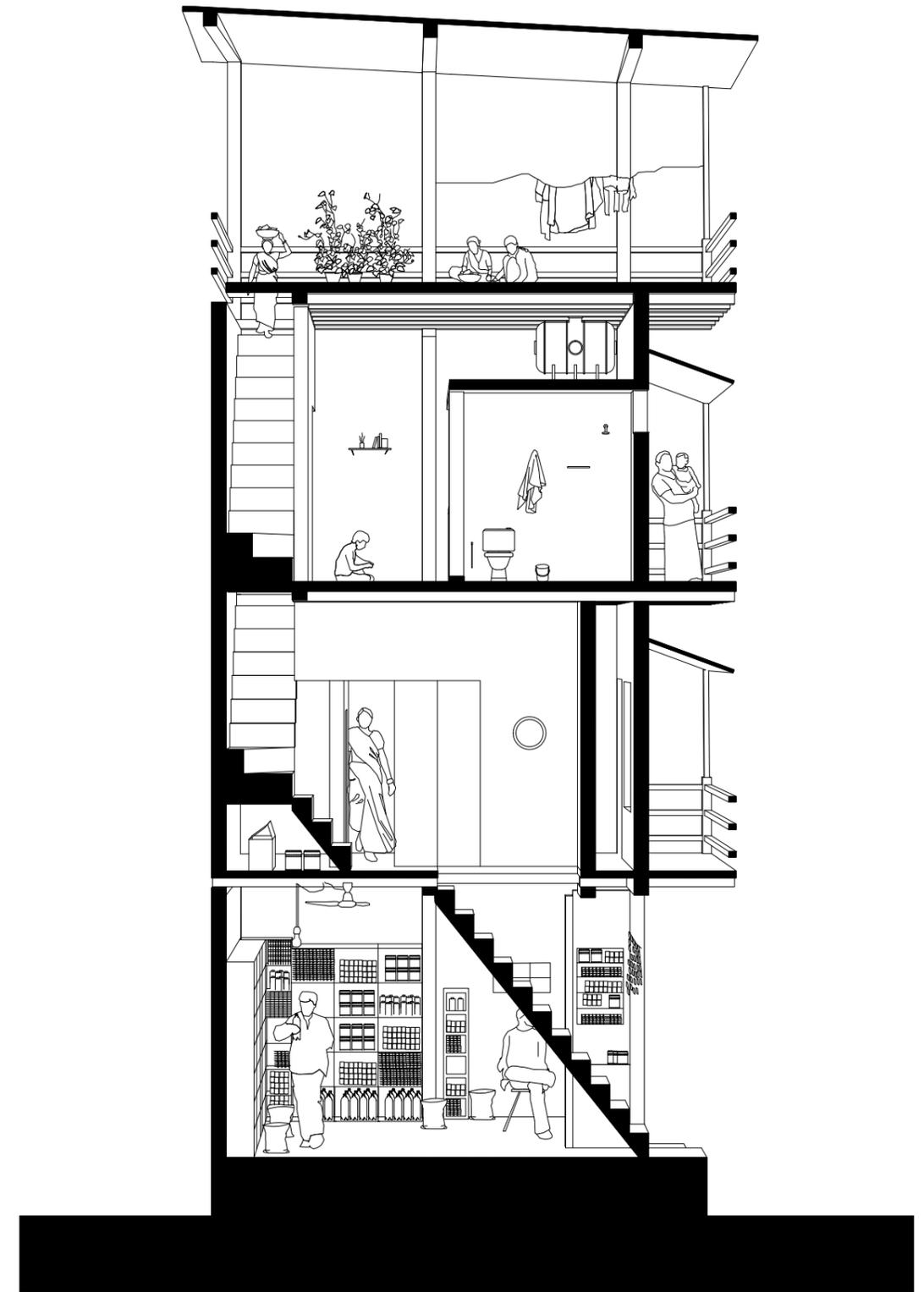
Balconies on every floor mean that this house shows its best side to the neighbourhood. The feature also allows for conversations and interactions to flow throughout the structure.

Designer

Entrepreneur and builder Joseph Koli is a native of Dharavi Koliwada. He is known for his signature design: letting coconut trees grow through the houses he builds. The years of practice, have helped him develop an expertise in recycling concrete.

Artisan

Ashwin Narshi Bhai Wadher was born in Mumbai, but his family originally came from Gujarat. They are from Lodhva village, close to Veraval town. He is part of the Kumbhar community that has settled in Dharavi. He has over fifteen years of experience in ceramic, terracotta, clay and other types of pottery.



Section



ECO - e-waste model

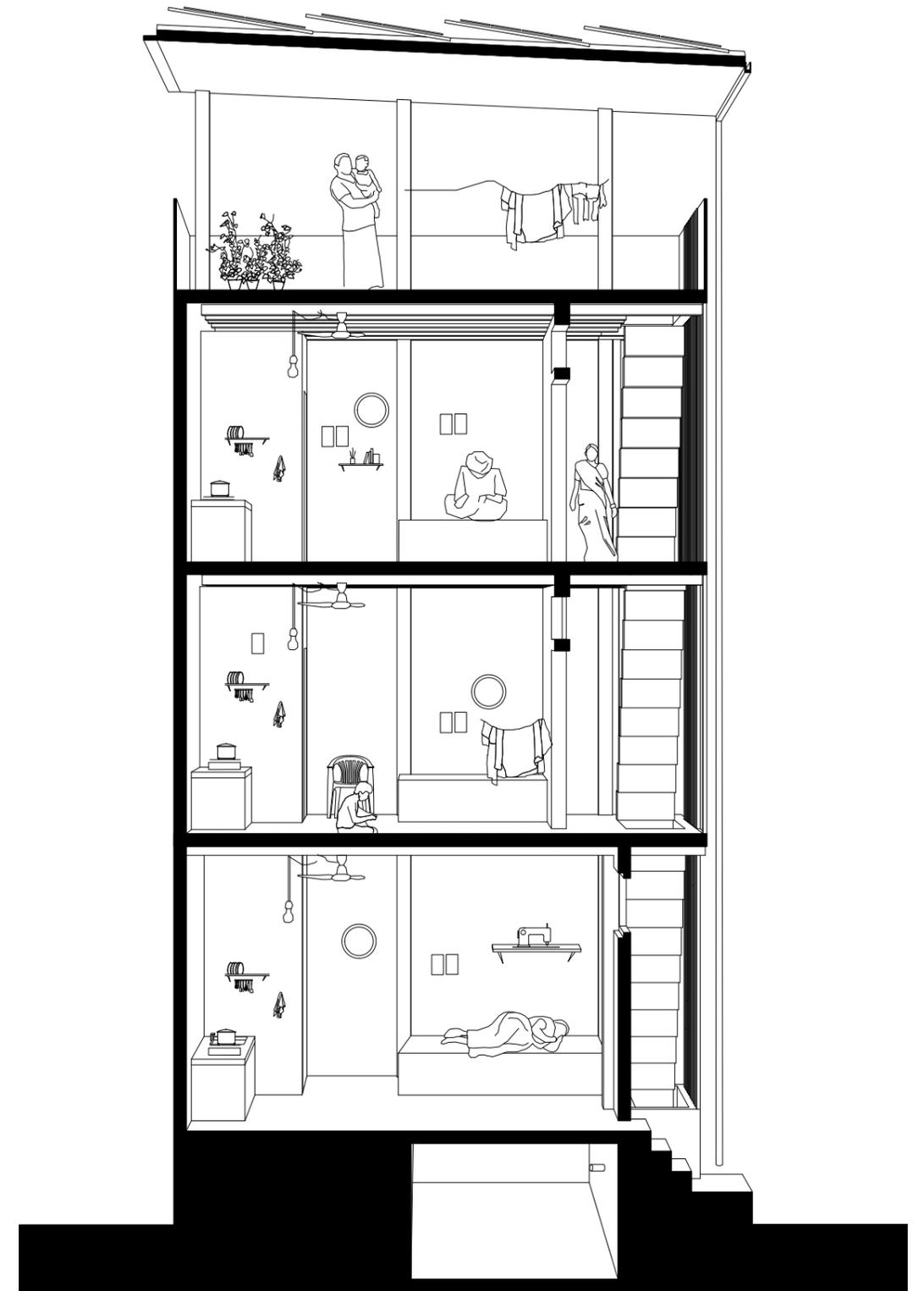
This economical house has everything a family needs and more: A living room, workspace, rental unit and an open rooftop. It is also ecological as it collects monsoon water and stores it in an underground water reservoir.

Designer

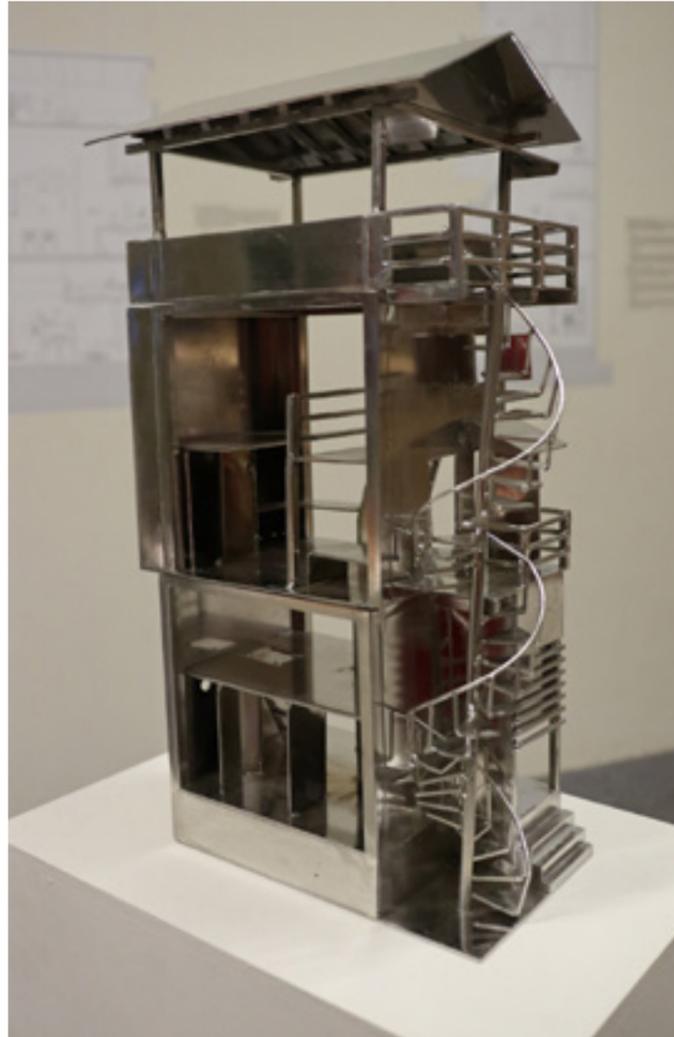
Devraj Anant Negi was born in Dharavi. His family belongs to Kengeri, Karnataka. He started work as a contractor 25 years ago. Through his career as a local builder, he has built over 70 homes.

Artisan

Manoj Viswakarma was born in Uttar Pradesh, he has lived and worked in Dharavi since 1996. He is a carpenter with interests in design, model making and photography.



Section



CIRCULAR – Steel Model

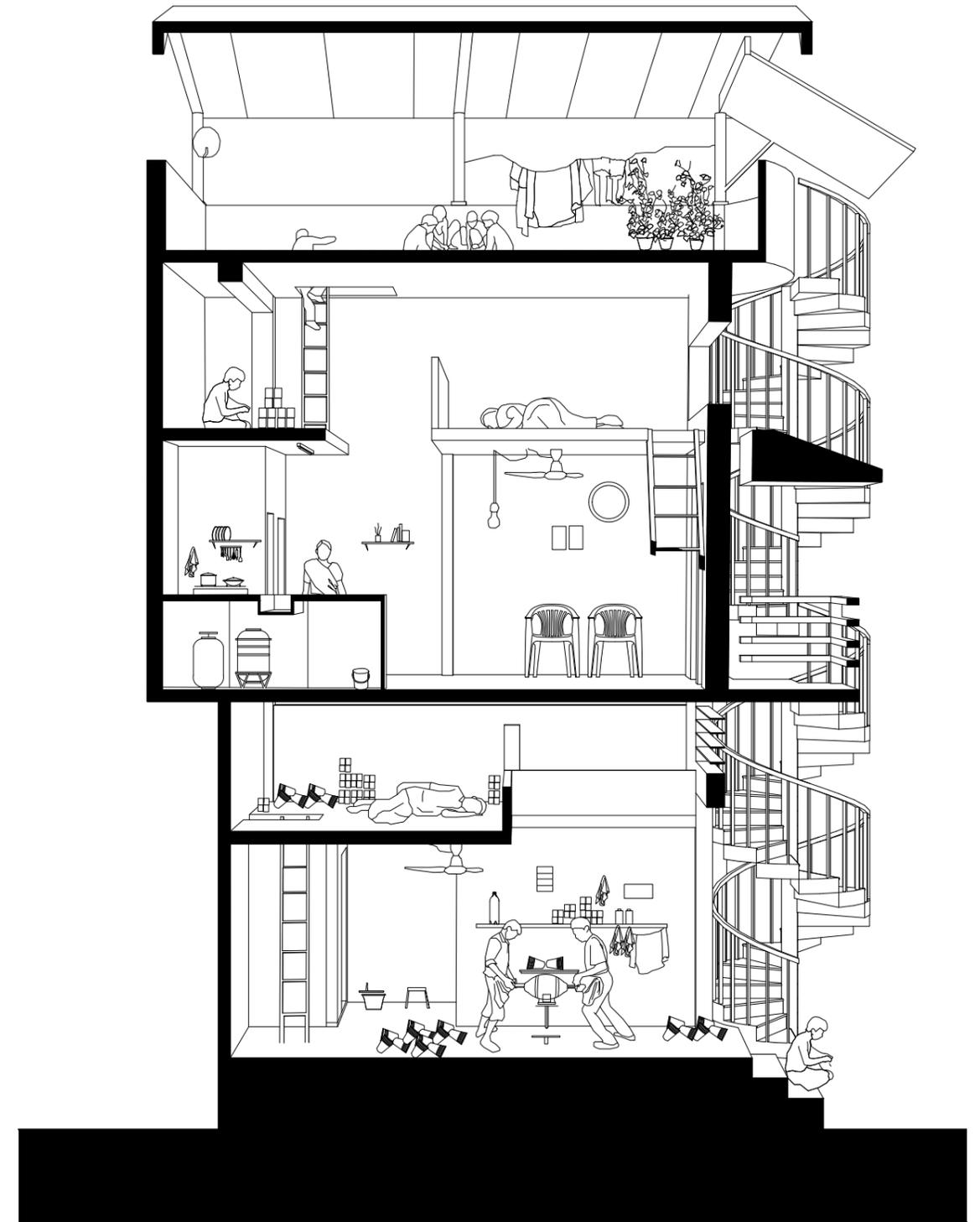
This design brings a new element into Dharavi's standard vernacular construction: a spiral staircase. This is no mere architectural extravaganza. It optimizes space and provides an independent access to each floor. The house also lets the air circulate through the floors, creating a natural ventilation system.

Designer

Mallappa Kotam comes from Telangana. He has been working as a local builder in Dharavi for a decade. His goal is to build homes that match the aspiration of his clients.

Artisan

Rehmat Ullah Khan hails from a small village in Uttar Pradesh. He moved to Mumbai 20 years ago and started working in a steel workshop. Eventually he set up his own business in Kamathipura which specialises in metal work.



Section



Social - Wood Model

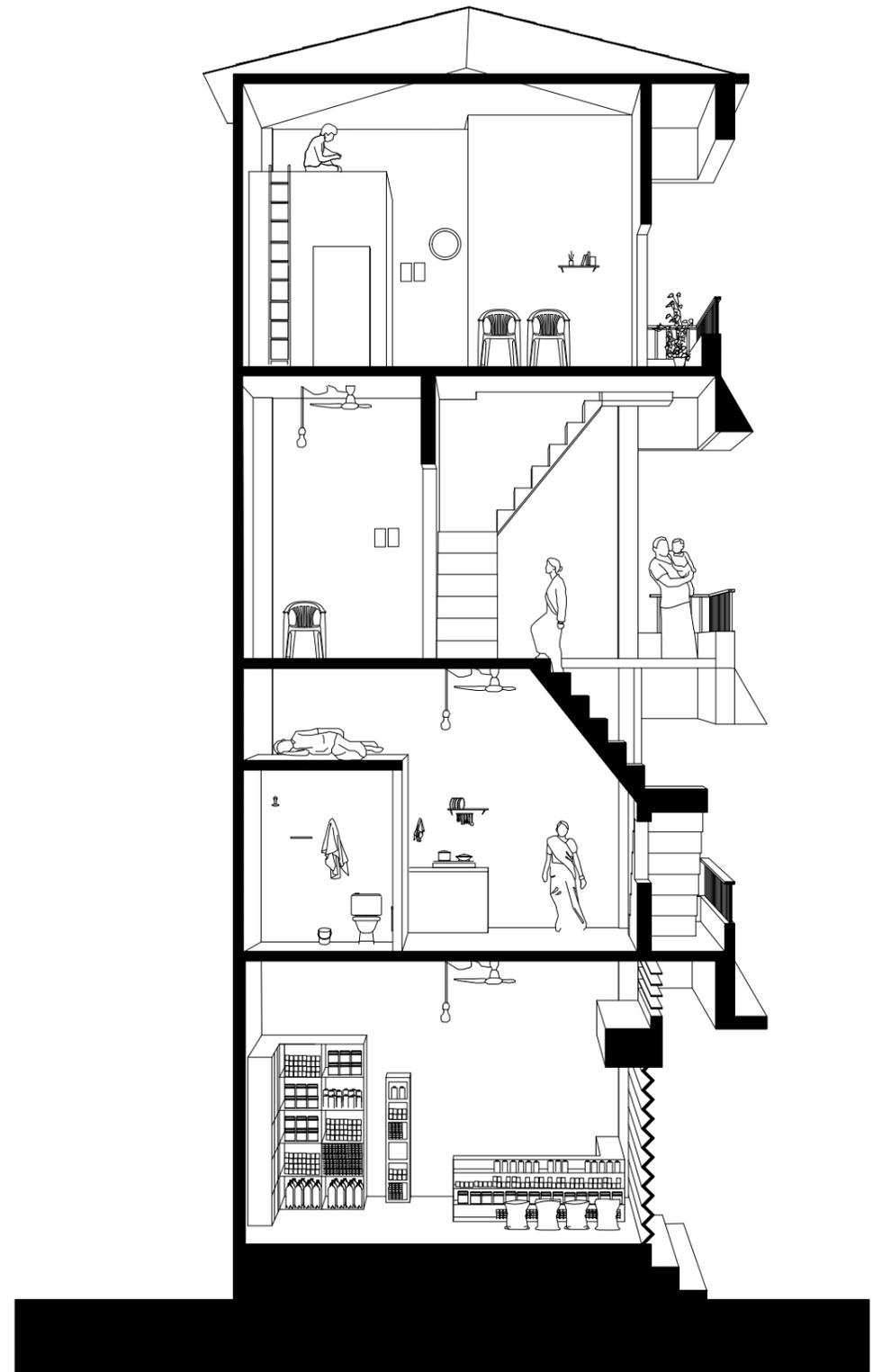
This corner house was designed to welcome the passerby. It has a shop on the ground floor. Social gatherings can take place on the second floor which is half-open. Its pitched roof gives it a homely feel.

Designer

Murugan Sundaram hails from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He has lived and worked in Dharavi for 22 years. He believes that designs for homes he builds must emerge from conversations with homeowners.

Artisan

Manoj Viswakarma was born in Uttar Pradesh, he has lived and worked in Dharavi since 1996. He is a carpenter with interests in design, model making and photography.



Section



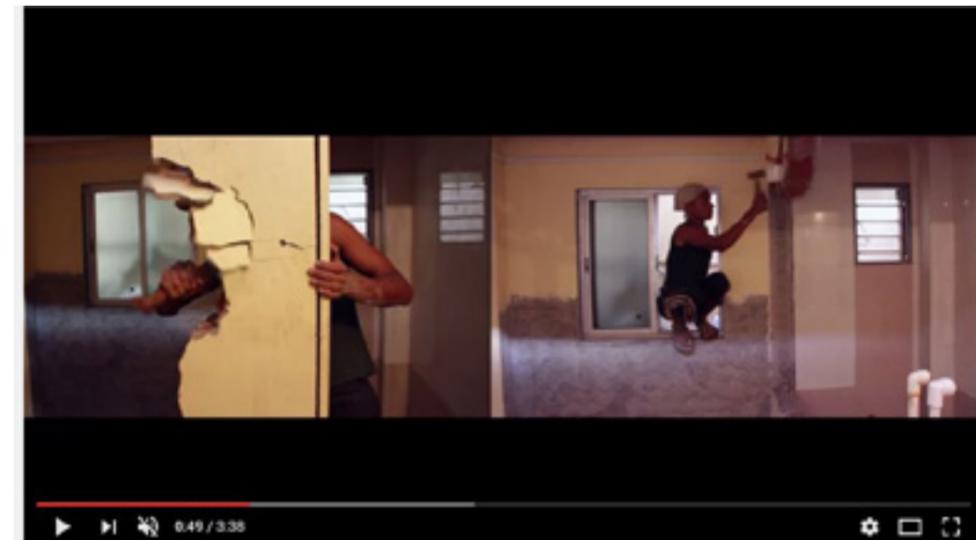
The two films together document the different moments of a house we helped build, in Shivaji Nagar, Mumbai. The neighbourhood is located near the city's largest dumping ground and is home to hundreds of thousands of people from marginalized communities. The films showcase two stages in the incremental life of the house. In one, we see its professional and efficient construction a year ago, to its permitted height of 14 feet. In the second we see its vertical expansion in September 2015, following an authorized revision of the legal limit. The choice which the new resident

made, of keeping the unintended space, on increasing the height, is typical of the adaptability of urban incremental growth. The films make evident the potential, skills and resources inherent in such places, which need very little, except for appropriate state support, to transform their living standards.



[A House We Built](#)

This video shows the process of construction of a house in Shivaji Nagar, Govandi, Mumbai, built as part of urbz' Homegrown Cities Initiative, 2014.



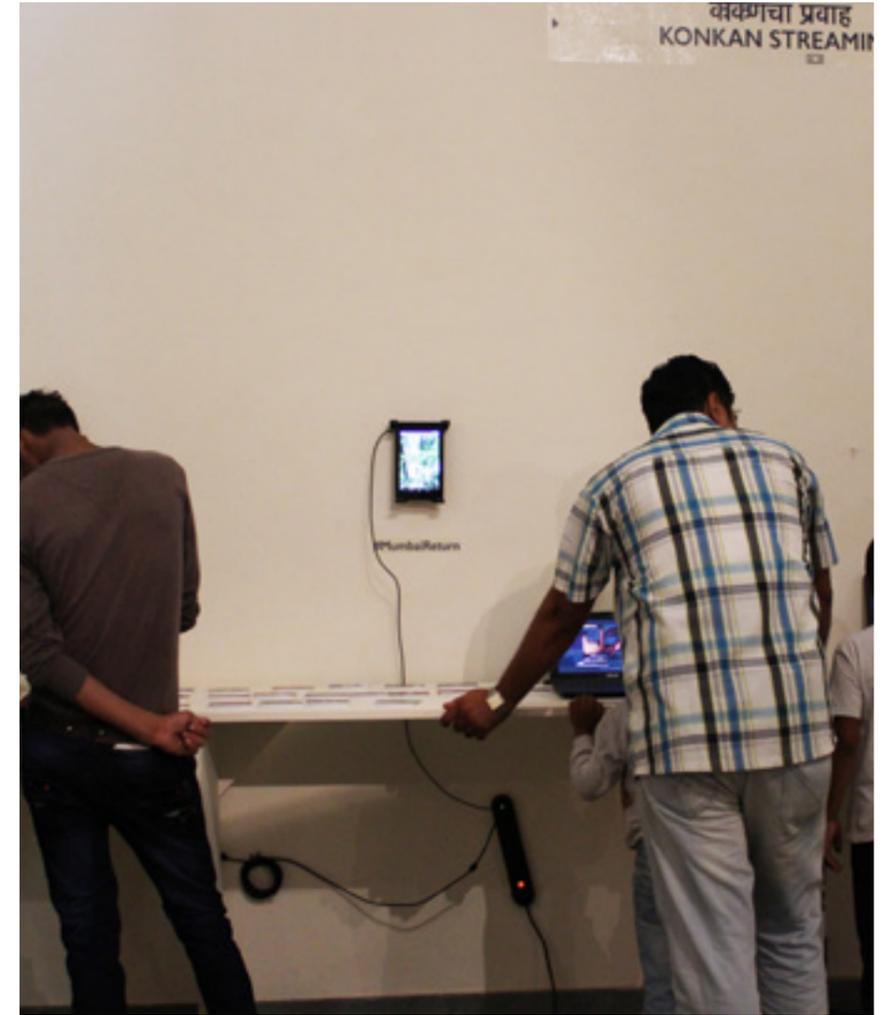
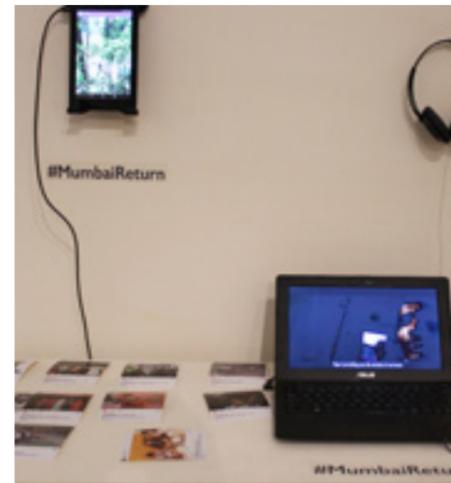
[A House We Built Bigger](#)

This video shows the second stage of construction of our pilot 'homegrown house' in Shivaji Nagar, Mumbai. It was built with local resources for a local family - with the help of urbz.

APPENDICES :

01 | EXHIBITION PHOTOS





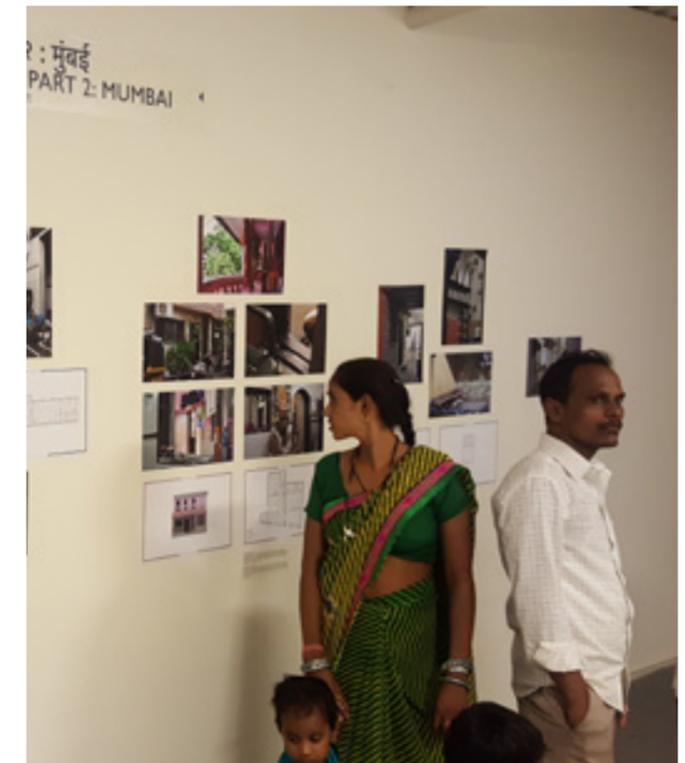
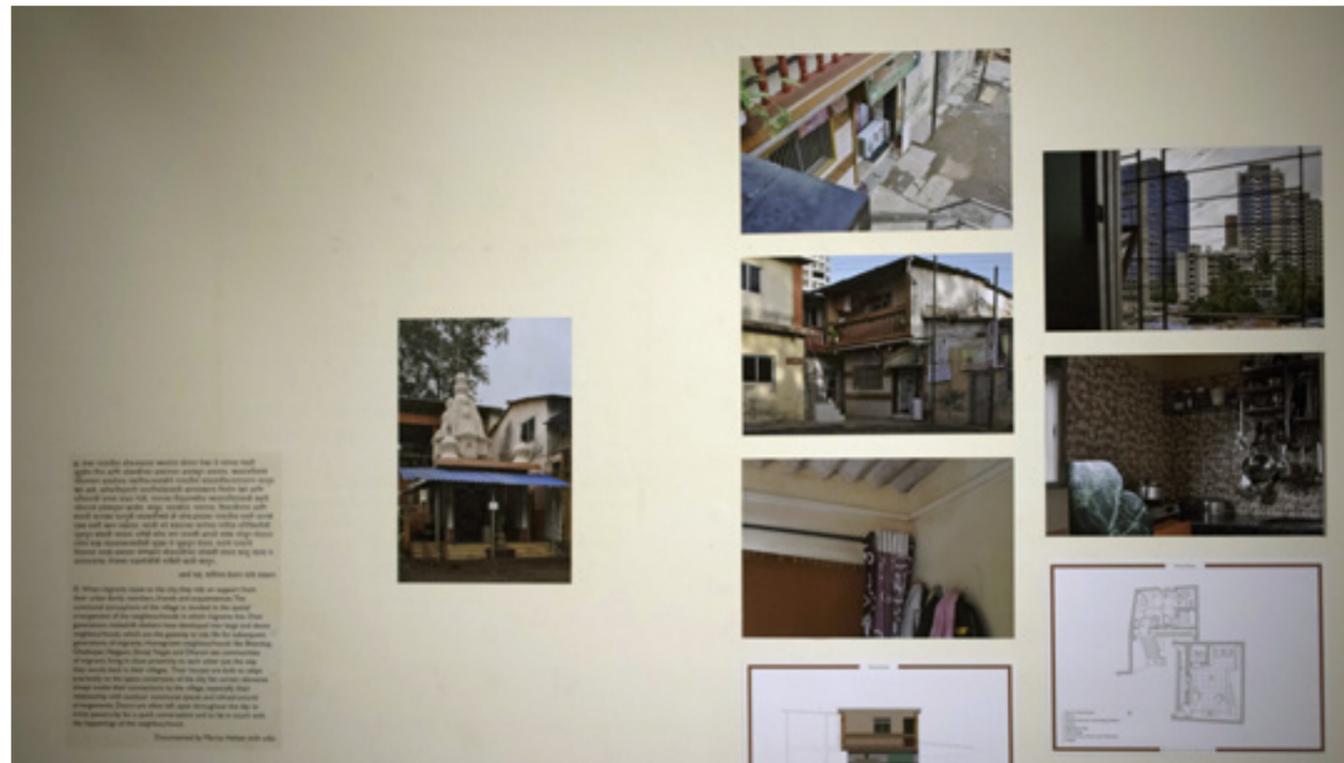




Anil Kanhu, Jadhav family, in front of his house on the konkan architecture wall



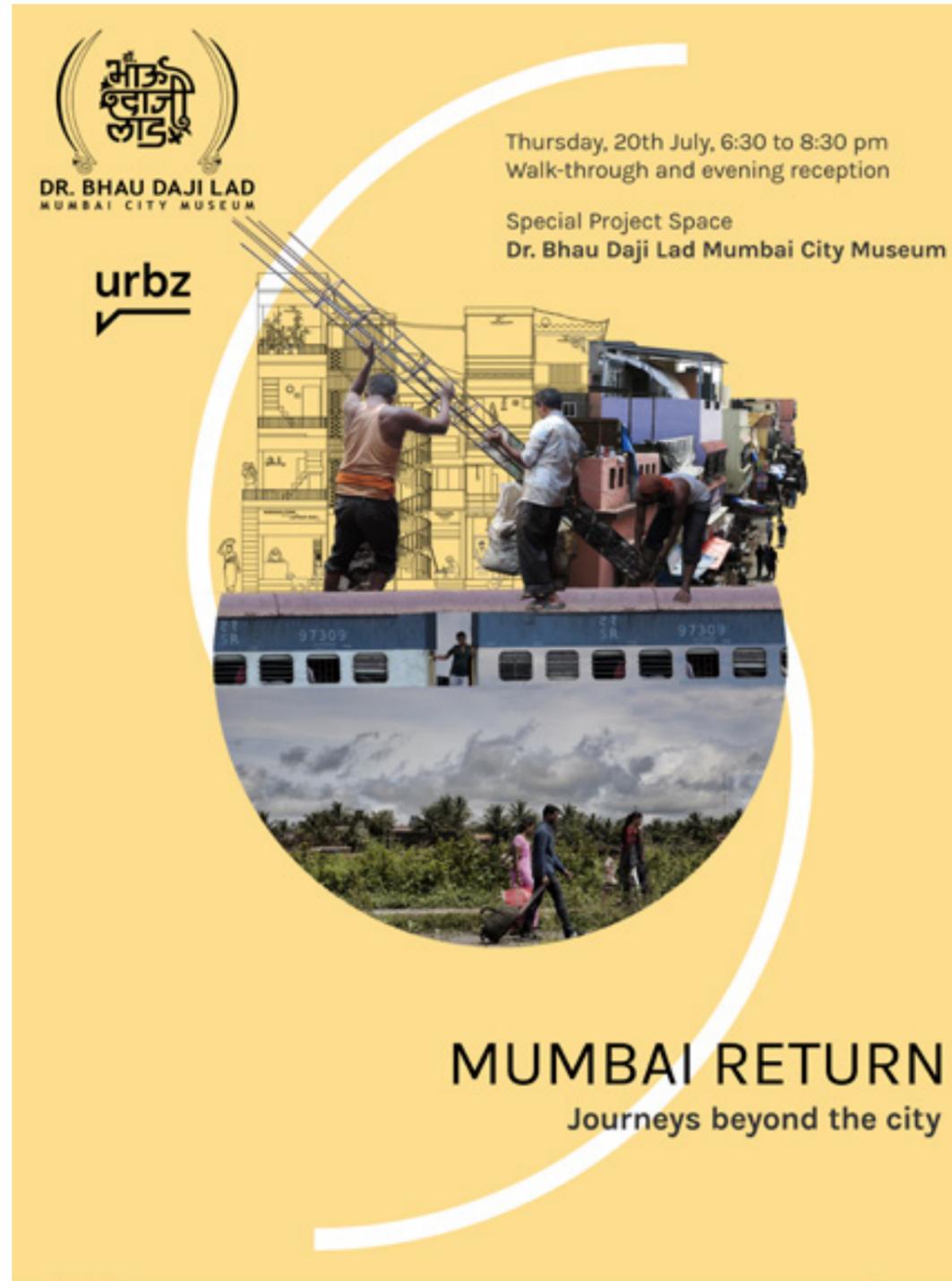
Walk-through from the Mapping Circulatory Lives workshop.



Walk-through by Manasvini and Samidha



02 | EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS



This exhibition is based on research conducted as part of the Mobile Lives Forum's research program on mobility transition



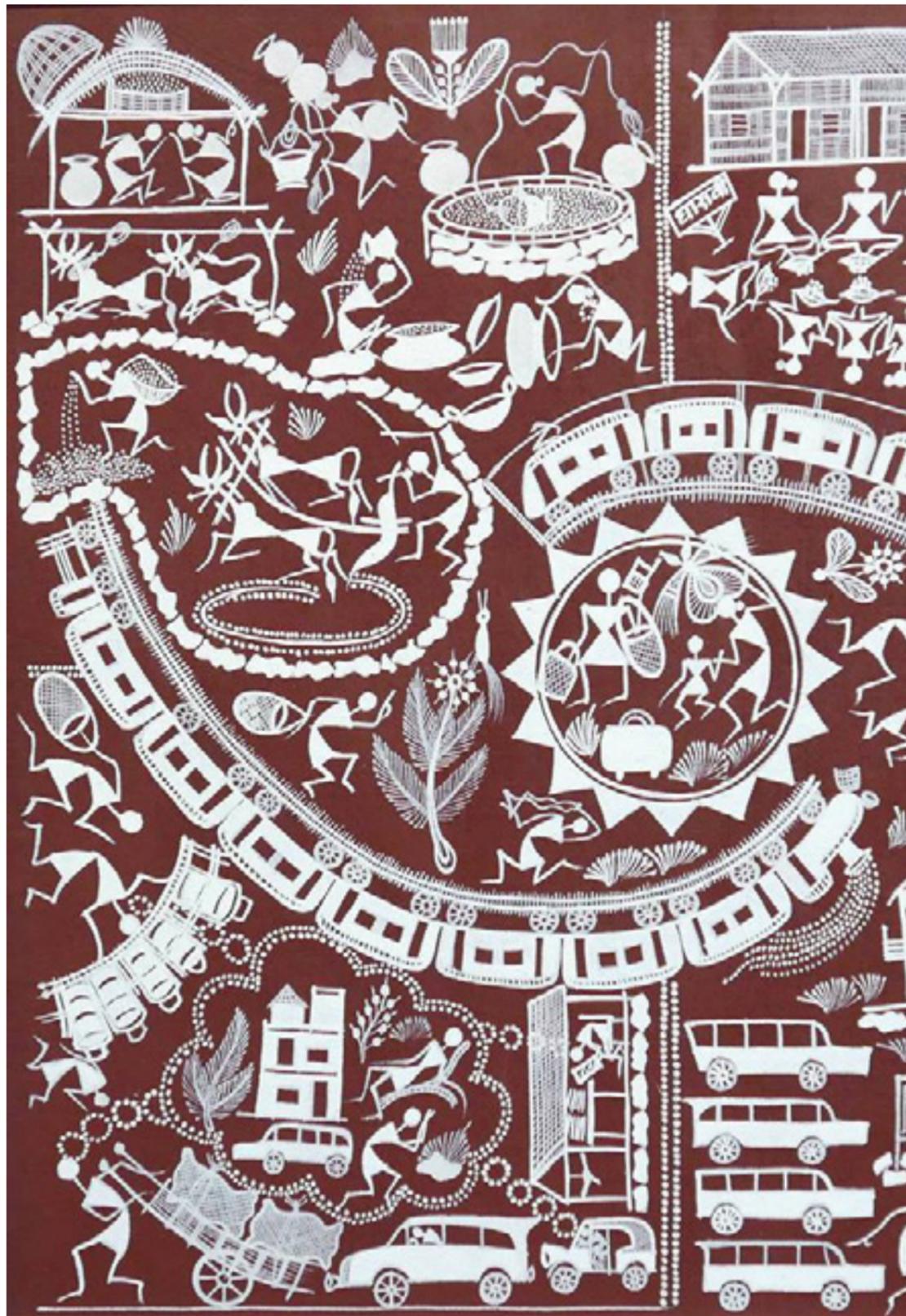
Reception with swiss embassy



20th July 2017

Discussion with Abhay Sardesai and Yehuda Safran

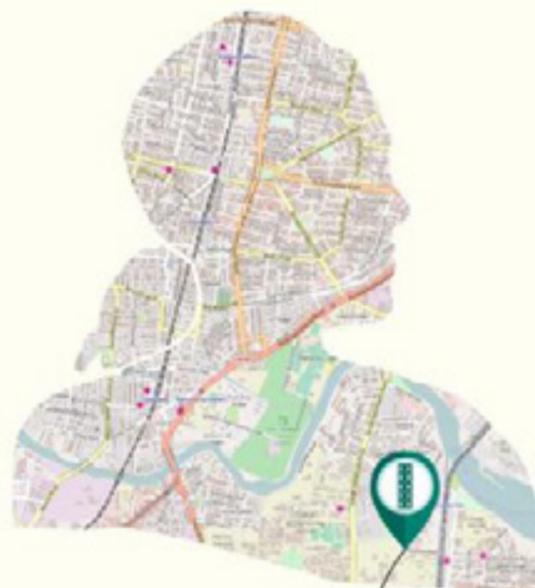
Warli Workshop with Sandeep Bhoir



9th and 13th July 2017



DR. BHAI DAJI LAD
MUMBAI CITY MUSEUM

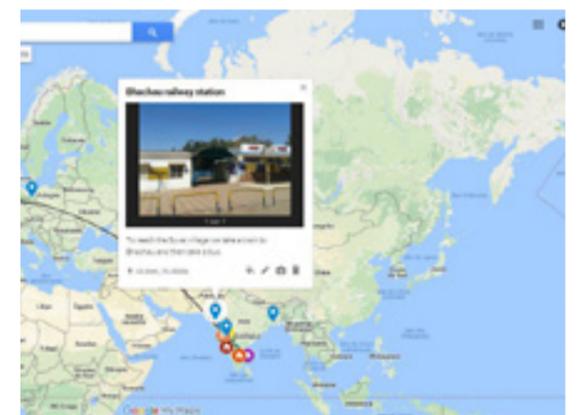




Workshop
**mapping
circulatory
lives**

Date: 06 Aug 2017
Time: 3 pm - 5 30 pm
Age Group: 16+
Charges: Only Museum entry ticket applicable

Contribute to our ongoing special exhibition 'Mumbai Return' by Urbz Mumbai between 3-6 pm in 'Mapping Circulatory Lives'. This session will be led by the Urbz team. Participants are requested to bring along photos of their homes, native places or their lives in Mumbai in physical or digital format.

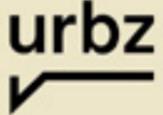
For inquiries: education@bdlmuseum.org



6th August 2017

Circulatory lives's visitors mapped


 DR. BHAUI LADA
 MUMBAI CITY MUSEUM



Workshop
 Date : 13th August 2017
 Time : 11 am to 2 pm
 Age group : 16+
 Charges : Only Museum entry ticket
 ₹5 / student with ID card
 Register : education@bdlmuseum.org



**TOOL HOUSE
 OF THE
 FUTURE**

Presentation of tool house typology to the participants



13th August 2017

Group of work and discussion around tool house of the future

03 | MEDIA COVERAGE



An ongoing exhibition explores the connection migrants have with their new homes and old lives

The Special Project Space at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum has been transformed into a makeshift train compartment. As you enter, Warli paintings mapping the circulatory journey of a person from their village to the city and back home, welcomes visitors. Multiple screens on the walls of the room are playing diverse stories of such people in endless loops. One of these video installations features Anil Jadhav who is excited to give viewers a sneak peek into his village Ukshi in Maharashtra. The artwork is part of an ongoing showcase based on research done by Urbz (an experimental urban collective based in Mumbai) and Mobile Lives Forum (a Paris-based think tank).

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from Mumbai to Ratnagiri, their hometown to spend some quality time with their relatives and stay close to their roots. A third screen captures the story of the Tiwari family, residents of Shivaji Nagar, who are moving into their new home a few blocks away from their earlier residence. The ladies of the house smile at the camera and share how this entire journey has been a dream come true for them. The work on display is part of *Mumbai Return: Journeys Beyond the City*, an



Home and back

The show depicts the circulatory journey of urban families between their neighbourhoods in Mumbai and their villages in the Konkan belt. It explores the relationship between the urban and the rural through traditional artistic renderings, architectural drawings of vernacular houses and settlements, portraits of families and model homes made by contemporary artisans. Plus, there's also a range of interactive digital installations and videos. Founders of Urbz, Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava, started questioning this link while working in Mumbai localities such as Shivaji Nagar, Bhandup, Naigoan and Dharavi. They were intrigued by how Mumbaikars continuously returned to their ancestral villages for visits. It was clear that a detour to the village was essential to understand the inner workings of the city. The knowledge of the railways as being a unique institution in terms of its reach and affordability added to the line of questions, followed by a rereading of the history of migration in India.



The exhibition has been divided into four sections. The first comprises Instagram photos; short videos shot by the migrants; and layout plans of their houses in the villages of Konkan. Another segment chronicles their journey from the village to the city and how it has become easier over the years due to the railways and the advent of technology. The last two sections depict how migrants build their home away from home once they move to Mumbai. "Our work which we had done for four years with a focus on the Circulatory Lives theme was getting some attention in forums and spaces outside the research, policy-driven and architectural academy that we normally engage with," says Echanove adding that the exhibition was a great opportunity to bring all their research together in a context that was so embedded in the city and the region. Especially since Mumbai had people who visited the space from a variety of backgrounds, including those with whom we worked with closely. "All this prompted us to draw from our work and assemble it especially for this particular space," he says.

Though they have explored the concept of "circulatory lives" in their previous exhibitions in Bordeaux and Geneva, Urbz maintains that this show is widely different from what they have done before. "Mumbai Return is on a much bigger scale and covers more ground than the two previous exhibitions on the theme," says Srivastava. "In our previous exhibitions, we [tried] to figure out if [circulatory lives] was also relevant to people in Europe. We asked the public if they too lived across more than one place, and we were amazed to see that a concept that we developed to reflect India's contemporary condition was also relevant in Europe." The ongoing show's connection between the public and the topic of circulatory movements is immediate.

Where are you really from? An art show traces the history of migration

Explore the 'loop' between Mumbai and villages in the Konkan through photographs, installations and renderings, at an exhibition titled Mumbai Return.

Updated: Jul 01, 2017 16:15 IST

Roshni Nair
Hindustan Times



Mera Gaon, an installation on display as part of the 'Mumbai Return: Journeys Beyond the City' exhibition.



MUMBAI RETURN: JOURNEYS BEYOND THE CITY

- WHERE: Shau Dalji Lad museum, Byculla
- WHEN: July 1 to 31, 10 am to 5.30 pm (closed on Wednesdays and public holidays)
- CALL: 2373-1234
- Entry: Rs 10

When Rahul Srivastava and Matias Echanove embarked on the Mumbai Return project five years ago, they didn't expect to come across Mumbaiites with ties that still bound them to ancestral villages.

"Even after two or three generations here, families have extensive relationships back in villages, despite the prevailing belief that rural-urban migration is a one-way street," says Srivastava, co-director of the

design collective, urbz. "Some younger people in our ethnographic study said they don't want the village to become the city. The distance is part of what allows both places to retain specific qualities."

This 'loop' between Mumbai and villages in the Konkan is explored in Mumbai Return: Journeys Beyond the City, a collection of photographs, installations and artistic renderings of rural homes and urban settlements.

Going Home

An exhibition proposes a new way of understanding the circulatory lives of many migrants in India.

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Written by **Pooja Pillai** | Published July 15, 2017 11:39 pm



Circulatory Lives Project- Konkani Coast by Ishan Tankha

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In the inner room of the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum's Special Project Space, is what looks like a makeshift train compartment, with two wooden benches facing each other. A screen placed on the wall between them is playing on loop a video featuring Anil Jadhav, a Mumbai native who has moved back to his ancestral village of Ukshi in Ratnagiri. In the video, Jadhav muses on the connection he feels with Ukshi. "My grandparents came from Ratnagiri," he tells us, before explaining that he himself was born and brought up in Mumbai. As he shows us around his village and his house there, he wonders aloud about his roots. Where do I belong, he asks, adding, "Going to my village feels like going home, but returning to Mumbai is no less about

returning home."

This video forms the core of the ongoing exhibition "Mumbai Return", the result of three years worth of research done by urbz, an experimental urban collective and research institute, and the Mobile Lives Forum, a Paris-based think tank that is fostering research and debate on the future of mobility worldwide. The exhibition begins by proposing an alternative way of understanding rural to urban migration in India, and proceeds to discuss the larger idea that people might be rooted in more than one place. "We assume that in this very mobile world, people would be uprooted. But what we have found is that people are more likely to have more than one root, and this is particularly strong in India," says Matias Echanove, urbanologist and co-founder of urbz.

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This video forms the core of the ongoing exhibition "Mumbai Return", the result of three years worth of research done by urbz, an experimental urban collective and research institute, and the Mobile Lives Forum, a Paris-based think tank that is fostering research and debate on the future of mobility worldwide. The exhibition begins by proposing an alternative way of understanding rural to urban migration in India, and proceeds to discuss the larger idea that people might be rooted in more than one place. "We assume that in this very mobile world, people would be uprooted. But what we have found is that people are more likely to have more than one root, and this is particularly strong in India," says Matias Echanove, urbanologist and co-founder of urbz.

This installation is part of the first section of the exhibition that documents life in Konkani villages, using Instagram photos, short videos shot by the "migrants" themselves and the layout plans of houses that have been built by them. The next section of the exhibition talks about the journey between the village and the city — how it has changed over time thanks, firstly, to the railways, and secondly, to mobile technology that has all but eliminated the temporal distance between the two locations. The final two sections explore how migrants, once they move to the city, build communities and dwellings that create and transform neighbourhoods. Echanove says, "Many neighbourhoods that come up like this are classified as 'slum areas', but they are much more than that. They have, over time, become real places, with a sense of identity and aesthetics."

As people moved to the big city, they continued to maintain a link with their villages in various ways — sending back money, buying land, setting up businesses and building homes. "We found that these relationships are characterised by a projection towards the future and towards reinvestment," says Echanove. "It isn't just about spending the holidays in the village, or building a holiday home there. They will open small shops or invest in agriculture. Often, the economic and industrial development in these villages is triggered not by government policy, but by the people. And there are all kinds of patterns here. It's not just the old who live in the village; we see young people, born in Mumbai, going back to the village because they see a role for themselves there or an opportunity." It is part of a distinct pattern of urbanism that is seen across India, and in this pattern, the difference between the city and village represents not an unbridgeable gulf, but the distance that exists between two points on a continuum. Therefore, it is not useful to merely think of the village as representing the "rural" and the city representing the "urban". "Both the village and the city form a part of the 'urban realm'," says Echanove.

The exhibition is on at Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, till July 31

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HOUSE PROUD: URBZ'S NEW EXHIBITION 'MUMBAI RETURN' EXAMINES THE MIGRANT'S IDEA OF HOME

July 11, 2017 | TheDaily.Pao



Konkan coast. Photo: Ishan Tankha.

The idea of the migrant's physical home is the locus of *Mumbai Return: Journeys Beyond The City*, an ongoing exhibition at the Dr. Bhabu Daji Lad Museum by Urbz, the city-based collective of urban researchers, architects and activists. Housing is perhaps the most pressing concern for the migrant in Mumbai as it's unaffordable to most and perennially in short supply. Yet the difficulty of finding a place in which to live does little to seriously deter people moving here from other parts of the state and country. *Mumbai Return* focuses on the Konkan region, underscoring the fact that a substantial number of migrants to the city are from within Maharashtra. This seems significant in the context of the rhetoric spun by nativist parties in whose books they're exempt from migrant status. For the Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, who like to blame 'outsiders' for many of Mumbai's ills, migrants are folks from beyond the state borders.



'Design Comes As We Build'.

The show examines, through photographs, architectural drawings of village homes, videos and models of houses, the way architectural elements of the city have travelled to the village and vice versa. 'Homegrown Homes Part I' is a set of images and drawings of several houses in villages in the Konkan built by individuals who work in Mumbai and dream of eventually settling in their

native places. Anil Jadhav's residence in Ukshi, for instance, has both a modern and traditional kitchen and a layout inspired by the urban chawl.

'Design Comes As We Build' is an intriguing look at how contractors living in Dharavi imagine their ideal homes. The exhibit is a series of models of houses in various building materials. Most have an element that allows the residents to interact with the world outside, a nod to the sense of community found in the villages the contractors come from. For example, the wooden house designed by Murugan Sundaram, who is from Tamil Nadu, has a partly-open second floor meant of gatherings. Joseph Koli from Dharavi Koliwada has designed a clay model house with balconies on every floor with a view of the outside.



Wari art by Sandeep Bhoir.

The prettiest exhibit is a set of panels arranged in a spiral painted by Wari artist Sandeep Bhoir (a section of the work is pictured above). The shape of the piece indicates the circular nature of the exchange between the village and the city. The painting begins with pastoral scenes, moves on to an urban mid-section and ends with the gaathan, the village in the city, suggesting that the idea of the rural home travels to the city and metamorphoses into a uniquely urban phenomenon.

Mumbai Return: Journeys Beyond The City will run until Monday, July 31 at the Dr. Bhabu Daji Lad Museum, Rani Baug, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Road, Byculla. Tel: 022 2373 1234.

Open Thursday to Tuesday, from 10am to 6pm; Wednesday, closed. Get directions here. Tickets for Indians are priced at Rs10 per person for adults and children above the age of 13 and at Rs5 per person for children below the age of 13, and tickets for foreigners are priced at Rs100 per person for adults and children above the age of 13 and at Rs50 per person for children below the age of 13.



Exhibit in Mumbai explores urban-rural relationships

By Krutika Behrawala | Mumbai | Posted 01-Jul-2017



Why does a home in a Ratnagiri village resemble a Mumbai chawl? Why do Bhandup houses look like rural settlements? An exhibit asks and answers



Karam Bele, a retired employee of Bank of India travels regularly on the Konkan line between Mumbai and Roha to see his son who works there

Last year, when Rahul Srivastava and Matias Echanove, co-founders of urbz, a Mumbai-based collective of urban researchers and architects, visited Ukshi village in Ratnagiri with a five-member team, they came across a home with an unusual layout. A living room led to a long corridor with three rooms on either side, occupied by six brothers and their families. "Living in a Mumbai chawl inspired them to rebuild the house on the same pattern," says Srivastava.



A Warli creation by artist Sandeep Bhoir

He adds, "We also discovered that every month, Mumbai residents hailing from villages in Konkan meet at Five Gardens near Wadala to offer donations to associations named after their village. The money is used to build infrastructure back home."

These, among other stories that explore urban-rural relationships, feature in Mumbai Return: Journeys Beyond The City, an exhibition presented by Dr Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum in collaboration with urbz.



Rahul Srivastava and Matias Echanove

Echanove says, "The exhibition emerged from questions that we found ourselves asking about urbanisation in India. Why do several urban residents continue to keep connections with the villages they come from? How do families maintain active relations across vast territories? Does India really reflect the global expectation of rural-urban migration as a one-way street?"



In and around Udupi along the Konkan coast. Pics courtesy/Ishan Tankha, urbz Circulatory Lives Project

Through a series of photographs, the exhibition depicts the circulatory journey of five urban families between their neighbourhoods in Bhandup and Naigaon (Dadar) and villages of Ukshi, Kondhe, Songiri and Kotluk- all in Ratnagiri district.

The team started documenting these journeys over a year ago but research began four years ago in association with the Mobile Lives Forum, a Parisian think tank connected to the French Railway Company. The first stage involved looking at the network of urban systems along the Konkan coast stretching from Mumbai to Mangalore.

"We travelled with them. On one level, the stories are so ordinary- about the journey by train or bus, spending vacations, excitement about building a house in the village, the celebration of festivals- that they are overlooked completely, especially by commentators of urbanisation as they don't fit into a standard expectation of a rural-urban one-way story. Yet, each family's journey is distinct, and must be highlighted," says Echanove.

The exhibition also features traditional artistic renderings, architectural drawings of vernacular houses and model homes created by Dharavi artisans. Several exhibits also reflect how rural influences creep into an urban habitat. For instance, an architectural drawing of homegrown settlements in neighbourhoods such as Konkan Nagar of Bhandup shows how families, though residing in separate units, still live close by. "It's similar to a village imprint where the next house belongs to a relative," he adds. Interactive digital installations and videos are also feature in the exhibition.

From: Today till July 31, 10 am to 6 pm
At: Rani Baug, BA Marg, Byculla (E)
Call: 23731234



urbz is a collective of urban researchers, anthropologists, architects, designers and activists specialized in local development, mobility, participatory planning and governance. We are based in Mumbai, Goa, Geneva, Bogotá, São Paulo and Seoul.

Our team brings various skills and perspectives to projects and places we get involved with. We engage with cities through a user-centered approach that considers the existing condition as a starting point for future development. We do this through a combination of research, planning, workshops, design interventions and exhibitions.

urbz's work has been exhibited at various venues including the Istanbul Design Biennale, Centro Cultural São Paulo, MoMA in New York, MAK in Vienna, Chicago Architecture Biennale, Contemporary Art Centre in Bordeaux, The House of Architecture in Graz, the MAXXI in Rome. urbz also presents ongoing work all year long at its studio and gallery located in Dharavi, Mumbai.

मुंबई रिटर्न

MUMBAI RETURN

