

242

00:25:14.250 --> 00:25:27.930

Nikhil Anand: Thanks, everyone, very much for joining us today. It's really wonderful to have as many people joining us from different parts of the world between Mumbai and here in Philadelphia.

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00:25:29.040 --> 00:25:41.280

Nikhil Anand: My name is Nikhil Anand and I'm an Associate Professor of Anthropology here at the University of Pennsylvania, and I'm here with Anuradha Mathur, who is a professor of landscape architecture at the Weitzman school of Design, also here at the University of Pennsylvania. We're pleased to be moderating the first event of Inhabited Sea projects, titled, "Living with Rain."

We invite you to briefly introduce yourself; Your name, affiliations and your interests, perhaps that bring you to this event in the chat box. Ordinarily would have liked to have had an open conversation around our works, but the numbers today don't permit that to happen.

248

00:26:15.660 --> 00:26:33.510

Nikhil Anand: In January of 2019, with support from Penn's Global India Research Engagement Fund, we launched Inhabited Sea; a trans-disciplinary research initiative that seeks to imagine or reimagine Mumbai from what is its relentlessly wet terrain.

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00:26:34.650 --> 00:26:38.040

Nikhil Anand: In doing this, we wanted to rethink the city with the provocations that were generated in Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha's book, *Soak*. Published in 2009 after Mumbai's floods the book made a series of interventions demanding we reimagine the city and it's futures from a terrain of wetness.

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00:27:01.350 --> 00:27:17.220

Nikhil Anand: 10 years later, in that future the floods or even thinking of them as floods haven't gone away. They've gotten worse. And so we thought this might be an important time to return to thinking about the city in the sea.

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00:27:19.230 --> 00:27:28.050

Nikhil Anand: As I mentioned the floods are getting worse, our really heavy rainfall days are even more heavy and even more frequent in these times of climate change.

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00:27:28.590 --> 00:27:41.910

Nikhil Anand: Garbage and sewage that the city's seas have peacefully held are now being disturbed and returned to the city and Mumbai's future is in question with rapid sea level rise.

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00:27:43.140 --> 00:27:51.840

Nikhil Anand: Riffing off my colleague and friend's work, I described Mumbai as frequently at the top of the endangered cities list.

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00:27:52.890 --> 00:28:02.460

Nikhil Anand: So how might we rethink the city from it's wet and muddy terrain; one that is not made just of land, but also of water.

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00:28:04.260 --> 00:28:07.710

Nikhil Anand: We began this project with two provocations.

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00:28:08.730 --> 00:28:25.080

Nikhil Anand: First, how might we think of other processes, not from land or to even assume that the city can be in a state of permanent dryness, but to consider the city in and from and with the different waters that its residents also inhabit.

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00:28:26.400 --> 00:28:32.190

Nikhil Anand: In particular, the waters we often call rain, rivers and sea, but are always in processes of mixing.

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00:28:33.690 --> 00:28:53.520

Nikhil Anand: And second, how we think about the city, not from above, but from the sodden grounds of everyday practice. Residents in the city are already living with that; they already live with climate change inequality and wet infrastructures. What might we learn from their practices?

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00:28:55.200 --> 00:29:17.040

Nikhil Anand: The projects that we have on the website (two of which you will hear today) were born out of initial conversation at a workshop at IIT Bombay in 2019, following which we crafted a series of eight projects and we met twice a year since 2019 as a group to workshop our work in progress.

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00:29:19.260 --> 00:29:31.230

Nikhil Anand: The projects we have been working on actually intersect and are connected in very many ways and one set of clustering you see here.

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00:29:33.450 --> 00:29:39.330

Nikhil Anand: Today's seminar is the first in a series of three seminars that will be sharing the results of this work.

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00:29:40.260 --> 00:29:53.880

Nikhil Anand: Today we will be presenting "Living in Rain," which is the collection of SEA's work on Wetness and Exfoliation and housing, and CAMP and R&R's work on monsoons at Lallubhai compound.

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00:29:55.290 --> 00:30:07.380

Nikhil Anand: Next month on February 24th, we will be presenting a series of three other projects that include work by Lalitha Kamath and Gopal Dubey at TISS, as well as Penn Research Associate Rhea Shah.

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00:30:08.760 --> 00:30:18.180

Nikhil Anand: Here we will be thinking about how fisher understandings of space and time and ecological change reimagined the coasts from their movements.

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00:30:18.750 --> 00:30:27.270

Nikhil Anand: We also are thinking with the work of flamingos living the Creek and the ways in which they respond to green facilities and wetness.

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00:30:28.080 --> 00:30:38.640

Nikhil Anand: And finally in late March will be having a series around intertidal plasticity where citizen scientists of Marine Life of Mumbai have been writing biographies of Mumbai phenomenon marine life amidst the plastics and oils of its shorelines. And they'll be joined by oceanographer Helen White at Haverford College whose been writing biographies of those very same oils and plastics that Mumbai's phenomenal coastal biodiversity resides in. So we do invite you to stay tuned and to join us for those events if you can.

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00:31:04.590 --> 00:31:17.640

Nikhil Anand: All the three seminars have a synchronous and asynchronous component by joining us today. You're already part of the synchronous event, an event that is being recorded and will be hosted on the website.

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00:31:18.780 --> 00:31:33.990

Nikhil Anand: Following this for the next one month, the presenters today will also be participating in asynchronous discussions where you will have an opportunity to ask them questions and they will respond through the feedback forms that we share with you in the chat.

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00:31:35.460 --> 00:31:46.740

Nikhil Anand: So we invite you to have this conversation today, but also to continue the conversation with us and with Inhabited Sea over the next month.

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00:31:48.000 --> 00:31:57.120

Nikhil Anand: So do join us now and in the future. And with that, I'll pass it over to Anuradha Mathur to make her introduction. Thank you.

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00:31:58.860 --> 00:32:09.120

Anuradha Mathur: Thanks Nikhil for that. For everybody who I don't know, I'm Anuradha Mathur. I'm an architect and a landscape architect and I'm a professor at the Weizmann School of Design.

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00:32:09.990 --> 00:32:25.380

Anuradha Mathur: So before we introduce our speakers, I would like to introduce our invited respondents for today's event. We're very fortunate to have Dr. Anant Maringanti and Professor Anne Whiston Spirn, who have agreed to join us today and to be respondents to these sessions.

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00:32:26.520 --> 00:32:36.630

Anuradha Mathur: Dr. Anant Maringanti is the executive director of Hyderabad Urban Lab in India. After completing Electrical Engineering from Osmaia University Dr. Maringanti pursued his MA and PhD in Geography, Environment and Society from the University of Minnesota in USA. He did his postdoctoral work at the National University of Singapore.

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00:32:49.770 --> 00:33:01.770

Anuradha Mathur: He has authored several research articles related to urban social political issues. He has also been involved in various initiatives like the tacit urban knowledge Research Network, also known as TURN.

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00:33:03.150 --> 00:33:09.930

Anuradha Mathur: Through the Hyderabad Urban Lab Dr. Maringanti and his team are working on several pertinent urban issues.

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00:33:10.470 --> 00:33:17.370

Anuradha Mathur: They're also actively working with other educational institutions to provide students with relevant educational experience in urban studies.

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00:33:17.910 --> 00:33:26.940

Anuradha Mathur: So thank you for being with us. And we also have Professor Anne Whiston Spirn who is a landscape architect photographer and author residing in Boston.

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00:33:27.690 --> 00:33:35.490

Anuradha Mathur: She's a Cecil and Ida Green Distinguished Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning in the department of urban studies and planning at MIT.

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00:33:36.690 --> 00:33:47.790

Anuradha Mathur: Since 1987 Professor Spirn has directed the West Philadelphia Landscape Project in West Philadelphia. This is where I first came to know her. She was the chair of the department as well.

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00:33:48.540 --> 00:33:57.150

Anuradha Mathur: It is an action research project, whose mission is to restore nature and rebuild community to strategic design, planning and educational programs.

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00:33:57.990 --> 00:34:10.410

Anuradha Mathur: Now she's also the recipient of major national and international awards in 2018 Professor Spirn received the National Design Award in the US and the Sir Jeffrey Jellicoe medal.

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00:34:11.490 --> 00:34:19.380

Anuradha Mathur: In 2001 she was awarded Japan's international Cosmos prize for contributions to the harmonious coexistence of nature and mankind.

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00:34:20.700 --> 00:34:36.930

Anuradha Mathur: Professor Spirn is also the author of several seminal books on urbanism and ways of seeing. Her most recent book, *The Eye is a Door: Landscape, Photography and the Art of Discovery* is about seeing as a way of knowing and photography as a way of seeing.

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00:34:38.700 --> 00:34:45.720

Anuradha Mathur: With this quick note and before I introduce our first presenter, I would just like to give you a sense of the format of today.

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00:34:46.410 --> 00:34:55.980

Anuradha Mathur: So, what we will be doing is that after this we will have each presenter from our collaborative present for about 15 minutes after which

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00:34:56.880 --> 00:35:04.080

Anuradha Mathur: Dr. Anant Maringanti and Professor Anne Whiston Spirn will give their response and initiate a conversation with the participants.

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00:35:04.770 --> 00:35:08.670

Anuradha Mathur: Following that we will open it to all of you, the audience for Q AMP a

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00:35:09.540 --> 00:35:23.730

Anuradha Mathur: But, you know, while these presentations are going on, if you feel the need, you can put your comments and questions in the chat at any time. So you don't have to wait for that moment and we'll start to pick up some of the questions from the chat as well. When we open the forum.

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00:35:25.200 --> 00:35:31.410

Anuradha Mathur: With that, I would like to present our first presenter for today and for this series of seminars.

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00:35:32.460 --> 00:35:40.980

Anuradha Mathur: This presentation will be made by Ashok Sukumaran. Who is part of a group called Camp.

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00:35:41.580 --> 00:35:54.000

Anuradha Mathur: Now Camp are a group of artists, technologists and activists based in Mumbai since 2007. They also run an online footage archive called pad.ma and the film encyclopedia in

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00:35:54.480 --> 00:36:01.020

Anuradha Mathur: Indian sign.me (Many of you probably know that), and run a rooftop cinema. For the last 15 years

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00:36:01.650 --> 00:36:15.000

Anuradha Mathur: Camps art and research projects have entered. Many modern social and technical assemblies, energy communication, transport and surveillance systems, sports, ships archives; things much larger than itself.

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00:36:16.200 --> 00:36:28.080

Anuradha Mathur: These are shown as unstable leaky and contestable technology in the ultimate sense of not having a fixed function or destiny, making them both a medium and stage for artistic activity.

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00:36:29.100 --> 00:36:40.140

Anuradha Mathur: Camps artworks have been exhibited worldwide in museums, film festivals and the analysis. They are recipients of the 2020 Nam June Pike's enterprise for contemporary art.

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00:36:40.650 --> 00:36:45.420

Anuradha Mathur: And recently completed a five year project with anthropologists on roads across South Asia.

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00:36:46.380 --> 00:36:54.240

Anuradha Mathur: So for this particular project they have worked collaboratively with R and R which is a library and experimental social space at Camp,

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00:36:54.720 --> 00:37:08.130

Anuradha Mathur: which has been running in the compound, which is where the project is based in Mumbai since 2016. And with that I will hand it over to Ashok to take it away.

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00:37:12.660 --> 00:37:13.500

Ashok Sukumaran (s a): Thanks, guys.

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00:37:16.560 --> 00:37:19.080

s a: There's a lot of people here. Thanks for having us.

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00:37:22.080 --> 00:37:40.620

s a: Very quick set of statements about four of them in relation to the ideas around this project. And what we have to show you which is actually a set of scenes video 10 minutes long, which will be part of this presentation. So about five minutes to lay out some of the ground.

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00:37:48.750 --> 00:38:01.470

s a: We've been working with Nikhil for many years. Also around an earlier projector on water, but when we were invited into this conversation we were coming quite immediately from quite

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00:38:02.460 --> 00:38:16.470

s a: A wet place we've been making a film and a book project around the Western Indian Ocean roughly between Bombay and Mogadishu and Basra, and Kiss Mio or Eritrea.

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00:38:23.610 --> 00:38:49.620

s a: On one side and water, on the other, as a kind of long do a film project since about 2008. And when we came to, to, to this set of provocations around wetness, there were many sorts of ideas and images and practices that that seemed resonant; but also that were a challenge, I think

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00:38:51.060 --> 00:39:07.020

s a: That I hope to provoke and also move forward with in relation to wetland and what happens at sea, right. So, since these are not always the same kinds of things. So, for example, just to throw out a couple of ideas, the question which we found very strongly present in relation to both Bombay's habitation and maritime life, was that there was this essential historical labor of keeping goods and places dry.

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00:39:35.100 --> 00:39:43.110

s a: There was the skill and creativity and desperation of being able to isolate yourself, to be able to float on occasion. To insulate yourself from the wetness that was ever present and omnipresent in the material lives of the skills and the crafts official of Greece, and of

rum, and of the pumps, and of the de-barnacling of ships over thousands of years that we cannot dismiss in a way as a kind of industrial modernity problem, right? That we cannot just

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00:40:15.810 --> 00:40:21.750

s a: Kind of bracket it in that framework because I think it's something much more primordial. Even as it is artificial. Right.

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00:40:22.710 --> 00:40:32.940

s a: You can say it's part of a several millennia old effort to not take the London world as you're given a sort of destiny in which you must live. So in this world dryness was precious and hard fought, but there was also the question of the separations of various kinds of materials and liquids in the thinness of the very hard-fought boundaries within the walls of the wooden barrels or the recycled chemical tanks, which today carry drinking water. It's the boundary between life and death. So at sea, "water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink," has been true for a very long time.

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00:41:06.990 --> 00:41:24.690

s a: So which lines to keep to think about and which lines to blur away is a question for wetness and this project. So this leads to the idea of the monsoon in that kind of world, which was this wet, continent-sized wind that carried for thousands of years, at least the last 2000 years that we know about, ideas and religions and seeds and humans and animals and plants from say Zanzibar to Bombay in the month of May and June. So this is this kind of non local, let's say ancestral monsoon, that is in the backdrop of that we must keep in a way in the backdrop of the monsoon that lands into Bombay, and then is placed into different kinds of systems and this route, you might say, urbanized and domesticated in some way or the attempt is transformed into Bollywood film songs and giant biscuits, but also overflows these cultural attempts to capture it in floods and electric shocks and things.

334

00:42:24.570 --> 00:42:39.810

s a: So some of this is there or already alluded to in the video. So today, we're looking at this from the point of view of the Lallubhai compound, which is a space, but we used to be part of the Creek on the Eastern Edge of the steel Bombay, not officially part of the more well known reclamation sites, but then in the 60s, 70s and industrial side and then in the early 2000s, a compound where about 70 buildings came up to house about 60,000 people, who in early 2000s were being moved from other parts of the city into 220 square meter housing units as part of resettlement and rehabilitation program. A lot of it around Mumbai urban taskwork projects like double lining the harbor line, for example. So, these are people who are the children or nephews of people who had come in maybe the 30s or 50s from Tamil Nadu, from Maharashtra or from Nepal, who then have been moved at different times and they have landed since 2000 early 2000s in this place.

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00:43:38.220 --> 00:43:52.170

s a: So just to say that in 2016 we sort of were able to build a new building on the edge of this compound which we called R&R, which now functions as a library. And I think, from the point of view of the people who've made this video and that space, the idea of the project is really to

not see Lallubhai as a final resting spot, right; to not take this concrete geometry and those 220 square feet as the,

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00:44:16.350 --> 00:44:17.430

s a: As the sort of given, you know, end of the resettlement process, but to be able to invent other spaces to build other things, and not only physically transform that environment, which is very hard to physically work with, but also to be able to analyze it and to reflect on it. So in this film, you see a number of images, most of it has been shot by children between eight and 14 years old, who come to the library. In the very end, there is a sequence in which there is a tracing of a “Nala” or a drain, which is next to the Lallubhai component backwards to one of its

347

00:44:56.280 --> 00:45:04.590

s a: Surprising origins, which is not natural origin or even a font of virtue, or mythical site in that sense, but rather something quite else.

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00:45:12.390 --> 00:45:17.370

s a: And I think in an earlier screening of this film, I think someone said that, of course, the nala is not the only thing that is wet, and we of course, are interested in the whole landscape as wet. And yet, there's something which was in this experience of filming this, and the group traveling up to now, which is in the nature of a detective story about how we might understand recent development in relation to urban water. It's how to deal with it and ultimately a question of what we may want to keep and what we may want to discard in a future which is willing to be recycled from the present moment and have built from, from an age of everything, and all the existing sort of lines on the ground.

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00:46:12.990 --> 00:46:23.640

s a: So with that I'll stop here and then hopefully, the link is in the film. It's only 10 minutes long. It's quite fun. You should see it and then we'll come back here to take questions, or maybe we'll do that after this presentation, Nikhil, you can you can tell us.

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00:46:31.380 --> 00:46:38.730

s a: So I'm going to go off the screen and you can start 1234 about now.

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00:46:39.780 --> 00:46:41.910

s a: And see you in 10 minutes. Thanks.

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00:46:50.640 --> 00:46:54.330

s a: The link is in the chat. For those who haven't found it yet, the chat interface.

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00:46:56.430 --> 00:46:58.140

s a: So we're sort of watching this together.

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00:59:25.980 --> 00:59:31.230

Nikhil Anand: So I think folks will begin to return. And if you're here already. Welcome back.

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00:59:33.390 --> 00:59:37.530

Nikhil Anand: And as we wait for others to return. I just posted a comment in the chat. We will actually take the presentations together and have a discussion following the presentations.

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00:59:48.120 --> 00:59:58.800

Nikhil Anand: But while the questions and thoughts are still in your mind following Camp and R&R's film, we invite you to post questions or comments for discussion that moderators and the presenters can then take up in a conversation that will follow. So post your questions here for now.

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01:00:11.130 --> 01:00:13.800

Nikhil Anand: And we will move on to SEAS presentations, and then have a discussion that follows.

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01:00:22.110 --> 01:00:31.170

Nikhil Anand: The next presentation is "Wetness and Exfoliation in the Weave of Life," and it's done by three colleagues at SEAS: Rohit Mujumdar, Vastavikta Bhagat and Shreya Kothawale.

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01:00:38.640 --> 01:00:49.200

Nikhil Anand: Rohit and Vastavikta will be presenting the work that they've done together. Rohit Mujumdar is an architect and planner and teaches at the School of Environment and Architecture in Mumbai.

376

01:00:49.710 --> 01:00:58.530

Nikhil Anand: His current research focuses on understanding coastal cities by attending to housing experiences, responses and innovations to the monsoons everyday wetness and extreme events. He's also engaged in articulating new housing questions that emerge from the emerging context of organizations in cities of South India. And his early research focused on the spatial and cultural politics of collaborative action in establishing special economic zones in Maharashtra.

379

01:01:22.140 --> 01:01:26.880

Nikhil Anand: Vastavikta Bhagat is an architect focusing on the spatial and environmental politics surrounding post-intensive mining landscapes and climate change in Indian cities. She is currently researching a wide range of household experiences and responses to wetness in suburban Mumbai. Drawing on a year long Research Associateship at SEA (2018), she is concurrently developing a graphic novel and journal article manuscript on the contestations surrounding the futures of Goa's mining landscapes. She was a Field Stations 2019 Fellow under the Wright Ingraham Institute in Colombia and has worked earlier with Anupama Kundoo Architects, Ratan Batliboi Consultants, and KR VIA-Design Cell and Ranjit Sinh Architects in Mumbai.

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01:02:03.390 --> 01:02:18.330

Nikhil Anand: So they will also take 15 minutes, following which we will have our discussions and share their feedback. So Rohit, Vastavikta, on to you!

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01:02:43.020 --> 01:02:52.470

Rohit Mujumdar: Thanks, thanks for the introduction Nikhil. The last two years have seen a flurry of news reports about Mumbai in the backdrop of changing weather and rising seas.

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01:02:53.040 --> 01:03:01.290

Rohit Mujumdar: The protagonists in these reports dwell on invoking the rule of law for increasing infrastructure capacities or preserving environmental features that hold monsoons

wetlands. There have even been calls for planning in mass resettlement to a higher topography ground.

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01:03:12.720 --> 01:03:29.640

Rohit Mujumdar: And you see in these news reports, one after the other, that this kind of discussion is taking place. Some well meaning architects have also begun to speculate tongue in cheek post 2050 apocalyptic scenarios for a submerged city.

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01:03:30.750 --> 01:03:46.710

Rohit Mujumdar: Take for instance the Instagram, @thebusride left an image which notes, “The Oval Maidan Water Kingdom. The seasonal community water park was launched after other sports took a year long sabbatical owing to the incessant flooding of South Bombay. In addition, the bottom of the Maidans were connected to massive underground rainwater storage chambers to start harvesting the torrential rains in the submerged city.

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01:03:56.670 --> 01:04:09.570

Rohit Mujumdar: These conversations attempt to future-proof the city for a post past the tipping point. But in the process we can even dislocate the claims of a wide range of households in the present.

394

01:04:10.620 --> 01:04:24.360

Rohit Mujumdar: It comes as no surprise that scholars have begun to call upon Mumbai residents and these leaders alike to demand for a climate action plan that is not only ambitious and imaginative, but also just.

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01:04:25.380 --> 01:04:36.120

Rohit Mujumdar: But in the meantime, how do a majority of households experience respond to and innovate in the process of inhabiting monsoons wetness in Mumbai?

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01:04:37.200 --> 01:04:40.440

Rohit Mujumdar: This is the question that we considered in this research and we consider this question in this changing landscape of Mumbai’s lesser spoken about Poisar River along which we can see a glimpse of hidden and partly lost forests, wetlands and marshes in a blue sea of roofs that have emerged over houses, apartments and roofs.

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01:05:15.570 --> 01:05:21.360

Rohit Mujumdar: Houses that have emerged in old agrarian settings and the chores that we speak about in this context.

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01:05:24.390 --> 01:05:33.030

Rohit Mujumdar: Popularly are called slums locally referred to as “chaals” because they are organized as chaals we refer to them as chaals.

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01:05:33.690 --> 01:05:42.570

Rohit Mujumdar: In listening to the oral histories of 15 households living in these diverse berry farms.

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01:05:43.020 --> 01:05:56.550

Rohit Mujumdar: We attempt to unravel fragments of intersection between the social and natural landscapes of four localities in suburban Mumbai. You'll see these localities marked on the map Daulatnagar, Ambawadi, Hanuman Nagar and Govind Nagar.

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01:05:58.470 --> 01:06:06.540

Rohit Mujumdar: My colleague Vastavikta will now open up one such fragment, by taking you to the story of one household.

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01:06:10.560 --> 01:06:19.860

Vastavikta Bhagat: On the eve of independence, the land in Ambe Pada, now known as Ambawadi was settled by members of a North Indian community who reared cows in cattle sheds along the Dahisar River.

407

01:06:25.350 --> 01:06:38.790

Vastavikta Bhagat: During the early 1970s, cattle sheds along the river edge at Ambawadi began to transform as their own self financial opportunity to construct and rent single room tenements to low income migrants in search for housing.

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01:06:39.540 --> 01:06:47.430

Vastavikta Bhagat: A dense incrementally transformed settlement emerged over the last 50 years being organized as chaals around streets leading to the river.

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01:06:50.220 --> 01:07:02.850

Vastavikta Bhagat: Following a paralytic attack, a shopkeeper from Mumbai's eastern suburbs, purchased one such tenement from the cattle shed owner and came to live with his young son as he found social networks amongst his linguistic Gujarati-speaking community.

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01:07:03.930 --> 01:07:12.810

Vastavikta Bhagat: He had retired from this utensil selling business due to the paralytic attack and sold his older house and shortly purchased this tenement while keeping money aside to live his life.

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01:07:13.830 --> 01:07:22.680

Vastavikta Bhagat: A small kitchenette was retrofitted with the wall facing the street where everyday routines of washing and socializing unfolded, amongst other households.

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01:07:25.350 --> 01:07:34.680

Vastavikta Bhagat: In the mid 2000s a house comprising a young married couple and their son from the same linguistic community rented the next door tenement from the cattle shed owner who has now become a small developer of many chaals. The woman worked in a beauty parlor while developing her own network of independent clientele while her husband worked as an OLA cab driver.

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01:07:47.340 --> 01:07:54.090

Vastavikta Bhagat: By this time the retired shopkeeper had retrofitted a mezzanine loft and tiled the internal walls of the house up to the loft level.

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01:07:54.990 --> 01:08:03.270

Vastavikta Bhagat: A small channel to drain the wastewater from washing clothes and utensils was constructed when the corporators funds were invested into the paving of the street.

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01:08:06.210 --> 01:08:11.940

Vastavikta Bhagat: Within a decade, the same shopkeeper had retrofitted a toilet and bath in his house while the beauticians' household had retrofitted a bath in their house. These retrofits were made soon after the municipal sewage connection was extended to the public toilet through the corporators funds.

418

01:08:22.740 --> 01:08:31.230

Vastavikta Bhagat: Meanwhile, the grown up son of the retired shopkeeper does not work while the beauticians' son works part time in a hotel while completing a bachelor's degree of commerce.

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01:08:33.750 --> 01:08:41.250

Vastavikta Bhagat: The chaal settlement has transformed over the last 50 years from being inhabited largely by single male migrant labor, to one that is inhabited by nuclear or joint family households living in a tenement either owned or rented. Retrofits within the house not only reflect the wing of household choices based on the ownership status and tender configurations vis a vis their house, but also the changing rhythms and temporalities of the neighborhood in terms of linear time.

422

01:09:07.860 --> 01:09:15.660

Vastavikta Bhagat: With the walls permeable to monsoons and everyday dampness the tenements are affected much beyond into the winter.

423

01:09:16.320 --> 01:09:24.300

Vastavikta Bhagat: It leads to fungal moss, mold, bedbug and termite attacks during the monsoon, along with the stench of dampness, a cycle which repeats year after year.

424

01:09:25.290 --> 01:09:33.960

Vastavikta Bhagat: The walls remain damp throughout the whole year. Dampness leads to allergies and respiratory diseases, especially in young children.

425

01:09:34.650 --> 01:09:47.070

Vastavikta Bhagat: Each household ends up spending approximately 5000 to 8000 rupees for cleaning the residues that cause illness, painting the walls and repairing and mending things that might have become brittle due to the monsoons everyday wetness.

426

01:09:49.170 --> 01:09:57.870

Vastavikta Bhagat: The shopkeeper remembers instances of flooding in the settlement in 1998, 2005, 2008 and 2017.

427

01:09:58.560 --> 01:10:09.540

Vastavikta Bhagat: In an event of a flood, water enters tenements with a force that not only can affect the structure, but also carries with it like debris and other biotic and abiotic substances that accumulate in the tenement.

428

01:10:10.320 --> 01:10:27.060

Vastavikta Bhagat: In such instances inhabitants of this tenement shift to the mezzanine and find refuge on the terraces of public places. In such events are particularly severe, as in the case of the 2005 slide missionary schools end up opening their halls for the tenement residents to live while religious institutions come to provide food and clothing. When houses have to apply labor for cleaning, repair and mending of the tenements, the cost can rise up to 20,000 rupees, which is a significant financial implication.

430

01:10:42.210 --> 01:10:44.580

Vastavikta Bhagat: This fear of occurrence for such events also had different gender implications. Working women in the tenements such as the beautician have to stay back at home and miss work in order to keep a watch on children belongings and valuables from being washed away. Men usually perform this role at night where rotating duties are assigned to male members in the community to monitor the rise of the water in the storm water drain that works as an information system for the sign of flooding.

433

01:11:11.070 --> 01:11:19.710

Vastavikta Bhagat: The possibilities for retrofitting of a mezzanine or loft have allowed these tenements to function to the cyclical time of the monsoon.

434

01:11:20.460 --> 01:11:28.740

Vastavikta Bhagat: Mezzanine lofts reduce the heat transfer to the lower level during summer for the storage and the use of the storage of values and goods and also for living.

435

01:11:30.990 --> 01:11:43.980

Vastavikta Bhagat: When in fact observed four instances of cyclical change in the early activities to this case of tenement for the changing seasons; a possibility afforded much more by this type as against others we encountered during a study.

436

01:11:46.530 --> 01:11:53.760

Vastavikta Bhagat: Material practices have just come to transform the tenement bill from in many ways that address the intersections of our linear time and cyclical time.

437

01:11:56.910 --> 01:12:10.020

Vastavikta Bhagat: Later. These include the retrofitting of mezzanine lofts, raising of roofs, the tiling of walls and a new affinity to wrought iron plastic and furniture of cement concrete.

438

01:12:10.980 --> 01:12:17.760

Vastavikta Bhagat: These are not only household practices of living with the monsoon in the tenement but also a marker of the household's social status in the chaal.

439

01:12:19.980 --> 01:12:34.980

Vastavikta Bhagat: Each stage of this transformation of the chaal of the best form of these tenements could be read through formal processes such as layering, folding, shedding, fission and fusion, which we have comfort zones in borrowing from geological and biological metaphors as the architectures of exfoliation.

440

01:12:38.880 --> 01:12:43.560

Rohit Mujumdar: In unraveling the fragments of intersection between the social and natural histories of place, we see the wetness of built form as its capacity or porosity to soak or not soak, the flux of settling, lifespaces, aqueous flows and material practices. In reducing the wetness of builtform, exfoliation emerges as a metaphor to not only understand the conceptual architecture and the transformation of built form but can also allow spatial practitioners the possibilities of generating a creative engagement with it at scale, ranging from small to the large. In all the other households that we studied, we observed similar processes of spatial transformation. I will take you through one slide of each of them further on.

446

01:13:37.650 --> 01:13:53.340

Rohit Mujumdar: In this house over the last 50 years with the changes in the household configuration and the transformation of a nuclear family into a joint family and then back into a nuclear family. You see many of these processes kind of unfolding, layering and folding.

448

01:14:02.160 --> 01:14:11.940

Rohit Mujumdar: The adding of a skin on top of the terrace to make a roof garden to reduce dampness.

449

01:14:13.800 --> 01:14:22.890

Rohit Mujumdar: So the whole house goes through this process of exfoliation through several layers of retrofits.

450

01:14:26.400 --> 01:14:30.450

Rohit Mujumdar: A similar process is observed in the case of a bungalow, where in this case the bungalow during the 1950s was occupied or enacted by a refugee household coming from Singh and it worked both as a house, as well as a factory which over a period of time transformed as the factory shut down into three independent households. And then the house undergoes a process of fission, a process of division and the households come together to put together a roof over the terrace to lessen the monsoons dampness.

455

01:15:13.830 --> 01:15:23.790

Rohit Mujumdar: But also within the house one sees several other kinds of things like the layering of walls with wall tiles to lesson one monsoons dampness but also from wooden furniture earlier one sees plastic furniture, as well as stone furniture coming into the house, as well as lofts being created in the house to store valuable items. The terrace in fact, in the event of a flood might act as a place to go and a place of living after storing valuable items. This includes the washing machine. The fridge so on and so forth.

459

01:16:12.750 --> 01:16:21.960

Rohit Mujumdar: This is a house in an apartment next to the river and which experiences flooding.

460

01:16:23.310 --> 01:16:28.770

Rohit Mujumdar: And over the last 15 years this place has experienced flooding, at least eight to nine times and the water rises at least Higher than the ceiling level of the house. That's above the

windows. What this House has been able to do in response to flooding is that it has attempted to cover the exterior walls of the house with metal grills, so that the brittle walls, which are wet through the whole year don't fall apart. The only other intervention within the house that the house makes in the case of an apartment is the addition of a loft along with tiles inside the house.

466

01:17:18.600 --> 01:17:19.560

Rohit Mujumdar: And as a result one sees in these localities, a move towards transforming low rise structures into high rise apartments. This could be bungalows transforming or even chaals transforming into redeveloped buildings through the slum redevelopments.

469

01:17:40.140 --> 01:17:59.550

Rohit Mujumdar: So we advance the argument of exfoliation in the face of emerging aspirations of urban renewal, while redevelopment using the policy tool of incentive floor space index in the Inhabited sea of Dahisar River. In fact, the watershed event of Mumbai's 2005 flood and floods thereafter has combined with the everyday dilapidation of monsoon's wetness and led to the redevelopment of a spree of new single or double storey high rise apartment buildings in this estuarine landscape. Our protagonists' households tell us that they aspire to a new free house on an elevated in situ ground and are willing to play a wait and watch game in the incentivize policies and floor space policy market to achieve this aspiration.

473

01:18:33.480 --> 01:18:38.670

Rohit Mujumdar: However, not everyone is able to get access to a redeveloped house on an elevated ground.

474

01:18:39.570 --> 01:18:56.850

Rohit Mujumdar: As such opportunities are compounded by court cases over property rights long bureaucratic processes to acquire property and house titles demonetization. The limitations imposed by development control regulations and allied policies.

476

01:19:05.850 --> 01:19:14.220

Rohit Mujumdar: In the meantime, multiple practices of repair and retrofit have emerged in their own ways to make housing typologies resilient to extreme wetness and its extreme living. Our focus on the intersection of the social and natural series look at these, thus helping us to complement the metaphors in the forest in the sponge as infrastructures of wetness, that the very

seminal work of those such as Hyderabad Urban Labs have proposed to draw our attention towards with that of exfoliation.

479

01:19:33.750 --> 01:19:51.810

Rohit Mujumdar: How could the metaphor of exfoliation be drawn into a creative encounter with the sponge and forest to develop strategies of living with the monsoon in the inhabited sea at multiple scales ranging small from small to the large. This is the question that we posed to design this.

481

01:19:58.440 --> 01:20:08.400

Rohit Mujumdar: This is an ongoing project at the School of Environment and Architecture. And in this stage of the project, we focused on oral histories of 15 households, but this study has raised several questions for us, which we intend to pursue in the future. For instance, this estuarine landscape is made up of different intensities of wetness in diverse territories.

484

01:20:30.330 --> 01:20:39.030

Rohit Mujumdar: The estuarial system of Dahisar River consists of neighborhoods with very territorial settings such as urban villages.

485

01:20:39.450 --> 01:20:49.170

Rohit Mujumdar: That's the agricultural village and the fishing village, town planning schemes, privately plotted subdivisions and layouts and even unplotted groups on agricultural land.

486

01:20:49.590 --> 01:21:00.630

Rohit Mujumdar: Or aqueous and environmental commons on the one hand and housing typology such as chaals and bungalows on the other hand.

487

01:21:01.980 --> 01:21:09.690

Rohit Mujumdar: The differing intensities of wetness in these territorial settings encounter practices of institutional, legal, and political communalism to absorb the settling of life spaces of varied income groups. If maps do perform the creative role of framing imaginaries of new identity and physical worlds then why not ask, how can practitioners from the design think through the logic of mapping and representing these encounters by the way of thickening or thinning of the map to expand the borders capacities of territories to not only whole aqueous but also social flows of these diverse groups of people.

493

01:21:52.230 --> 01:22:04.530

Rohit Mujumdar: In all of these houses that we studied, what we've come to realize that the wetness we view in the life spaces of household and see with varied and changing rhythms and temporality of linear and cyclical time and that produces its problems, but also creates opportunities for different kinds of groups. Households in fact are engaged in anticipated practices of calculating their opportunities and risks to negotiate the realities of wetness to improve their life chances. Thank you.

497

01:22:41.790 --> 01:22:49.470

Nikhil Anand: Thank you so much Rohit and Vastavikta for the provocative engagements.

498

01:22:50.010 --> 01:22:51.540

Rohit Mujumdar: I want to make just one comment; So we showed one story, but if you all want to kind of hover over the drawings you can see many of them on the website.

500

01:23:08.010 --> 01:23:13.950

Nikhil Anand: Thanks. Yes. And all these materials are on the website for you to dig and soak yourself into.

501

01:23:15.630 --> 01:23:21.840

Nikhil Anand: So yes, I would like to now invite Dr. Anant Mariganti, Director of Hyderabad Urban Lab to respond to the two presentations that we had today.

507

01:23:39.750 --> 01:23:43.650

Anant Mariganti: Thank you. Thank you so much for both the presentations and for asking me to respond to these presentations. They are visually stunning and very, very rich and inspiring.

511

01:23:57.330 --> 01:24:01.920

Anant Mariganti: To be able to respond to these two presentations on their own terms the only way I can imagine is actually to tell stories from elsewhere.

513

01:24:10.260 --> 01:24:28.950

Anant Maringanti: But that would not do complete justice to the job that I have to do now, which is trying to see what kinds of things can we learn from this to take into other domains, other than telling stories. So I'm going to do a mix of both. I'm going to tell the story of wetness and Hyderabad over a period of 100 years in less than three minutes, hopefully. And from there I'm going to respond to that. So it's also an attempt on my part to situate myself firmly in a certain kind of mud and clay and wetness, to be able to respond to what I'm what I what I just witnessed.

516

01:24:56.850 --> 01:25:07.800

Anant Maringanti: Some of you will probably know if you're familiar with Hyderabad's history at all that in the year 1908 Hyderabad City experienced its worst flood in this tiny seasonal river called the Musi. One of the most fascinating documents of that flood is actually written by an engineer named Sir Visvesvaraya who used to work in the British Presidency in Bombay, who was at that point of time actually traveling in Italy, very close to his retirement, and he receives a telegram requesting him to come back to India and give a plan for preventing flooding in Hyderabad city, and also to give a drainage plan for the city because the city is expanding and was going to have a lot of sewage in the coming years.

520

01:25:51.240 --> 01:26:03.450

Anant Maringanti: Now in the document. He says something very interesting, which is that in an area of about 800 square kilometers in every square kilometer. There is a water body in Hyderabad.

521

01:26:04.560 --> 01:26:20.760

Anant Maringanti: And these water bodies are arranged at different levels and excess water from the water bodies in the higher contours comes down into water bodies in the lower court and then it comes down further in a sort of a cascading water tanks to finally land in the Musi River. Now, what basically happened in that flood event was that in a very short period of time they had very heavy rainfall so the tanks at the top level breached and that then resulted in the lower level tanks preaching and then further lower; therefore you had a massive flood.

524

01:26:45.390 --> 01:26:54.450

Anant Maringanti: Now that flood has left a very, very deep impression on the city's psyche, so much so that for several generations people remembered the month of September, when this flood happened.

526

01:27:16.110 --> 01:27:26.400

Anant Maringanti: For about 100 years the plan and the engineering work that was done by Sir Visvesvaraya and other engineers at that time kind of more or less worked for the city.

527

01:27:27.510 --> 01:27:37.830

Anant Maringanti: From the year 2009 onwards, we begin to have my again floods and these floods are very, very different, or they appear to be very different. But in principle, they're essentially still the same.

528

01:27:38.400 --> 01:27:48.450

Anant Maringanti: That is, tanks at the higher contour breach and the water comes down cascading into the lower levels and then there is really no pathway for them that was originally created connecting agricultural lands and residential areas to finally lead into the river. So what you have now in the city is every monsoon, you have a completely unpredictable new pattern of flooding.

530

01:28:06.060 --> 01:28:11.640

Anant Maringanti: This year it is going to be one particular area which is flooded, and the next year, it is going to be a different area to be flooded because we find a local solution for the flood this year, so then basically the problem would be shifted to some other area. Now the reason why I was reminded of this while watching the two presentations was this; immediately after the floods, we looked at the amount of visual material that is coming up on the social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook WhatsApp groups all of that) and we started scraping them and we found that ultimately we after all the duplication, we had about 15,000 videos and photographs. Some of them with descriptions and text attached to it, some of them not.

535

01:28:58.800 --> 01:29:12.480

Anant Maringanti: Essentially, you had a very large number of people in many different locations somehow becoming spectators to this disaster that was striking them and the images were about men getting swept away by the waters, washing machines and air conditioners floating away shit of all kinds, coming into the house. People were standing there and making pictures and shooting the images of this because that was all they could do.

537

01:29:25.080 --> 01:29:39.000

Anant Maringanti: So number one, you actually had a very strange situation where being a spectator of some sorts was all that was allowed to you as an inhabitant of the city. That's number one. The second thing that happened soon after the floods, was that we kept hearing from different locations that there was water stagnating in certain locations nearly 1000 houses in one location and nearly 800 houses in another location were underwater almost up to the ceilings. And this water could be drained out, but it has not been drained out and nobody really knows why.

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01:30:03.690 --> 01:30:09.270

Anant Maringanti: So we started visiting these places. And over a period of time, we discovered something very interesting.

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01:30:09.810 --> 01:30:27.690

Anant Maringanti: In both places. There were some sort of citizen sleuths, detectives who were trying to find out exactly what went wrong. Where is the water coming from, where did it go, where was it actually supposed to go? Who built what and where? There was a very interesting curiosity in groups of people to try and figure out what happened, not because they thought that they will be able to do anything about it, but because knowing and understanding and being surprised by something that they did not know was in itself something to be practiced as a way of living in the city, or as a way of dwelling in the city.

544

01:30:52.170 --> 01:31:12.690

Anant Maringanti: So, this practice of trying to figure out what happened to them and to their houses in locations where they had been living for some time, where they took it for granted that they knew what normally would be happening, but they were surprised.

545

01:31:13.950 --> 01:31:23.850

Anant Maringanti: Through the pain, through the shock, through all of the confusion they were trying to figure out some way of putting together stories of what was going on.

546

01:31:25.050 --> 01:31:26.100

Anant Maringanti: Now the third bit of a story that I found very interesting is this. About a month after the flood, I visited one of the relief organizations which actually has been accumulating a lot of scrap material, which is given to them as charity by a number of Muslim households in the city. About 30,000 households donate to them scrap material from their houses

at least twice a year. Now all of this material is taken to land, which is about two acres in size and segregated. Sitting there in that scrap yard, looking at how objects are evaluated, how they are repurposed and when something cannot be repurposed the pain that it causes; the pride that people take in trying to figure out how to make a piece of material object to travel in the city.

555

01:32:33.120 --> 01:32:45.240

Anant Maringanti: Figuring out those networks. The excitement when somebody buys something from you, following them through the city to try and see where exactly do they go, what do they do with it so that you can understand the pathways through which materials actually move in the city. This was something that I was noticing as a very significant thing in these scrapyards. Now putting all of these three things together and coming back to the two presentations, I'm actually curious about a few things and I really want to hear what Rohit Vastavikta and Shreya have to say about it.

559

01:33:16.440 --> 01:33:35.790

Anant Maringanti: Number one looks like there is a certain kind of estrangement with the city and at the same time an attempt to re-familiarize, acquaint ourselves somehow getting into a better connection with the city that is happening in many of these places. And these attempts sometimes have a very tiny limit, sometimes they have a larger limit, and sometimes our entry into those places as researchers seems to be expanding those spaces. And I'm really curious about what this means; this estrangement with the city that I'm sensing is not a complete refusal to engage in the politics of the city, but, at some level, being able to say that, look, we can't really expect big structural changes, and we can't really expect fairness or equity from the city. We will have to try and figure out how to make things work.

564

01:34:28.140 --> 01:34:40.920

Anant Maringanti: This making things work for ourselves is what I'm also seeing in these stories of repair of retrofitting and of making things somehow come together. So that's number one. Is this something that I'm sensing here in Hyderabad a broader urban condition in Bombay and in other cities? If so, then what do we make of it and how do we connect this to other processes that are happening in the city. And by the other processes what I also mean in that even as these different kinds of curiosities about figuring out what happened to the water, what happened to the stream, and all of this goes on, there is also a certain kind of resentment, a certain kind of saying that, why is the local politician refusing to engage with us? Why is the system not responding to us? These kind of questions are there at all times and also happening.

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01:35:29.130 --> 01:35:33.270

Anant Maringanti: How do we make sense of these kinds of apparently political energies which need to find new languages, new expressions, new idioms, to be able to move forward. And then finally, the thing that I would be really, really interested in hearing from both of you, and I'm asking this question very pointedly because I hear in both the presentations the push towards saying that we need to invent new hybrid methodologies.

574

01:36:11.550 --> 01:36:29.160

Anant Maringanti: And sensing, at some level, and I can see this in our own work, and I'm not quite sure what to make of it, are we seeing a moment that is actually pushing back against theory as we have known it all along? In the sense that there seems to be a certain kind of comfort and sense of feeling that it's good to think through the poetics of this life with all of its pain, rather than to try and think of theory as something that allows us to predict, allows us to model and so on. And I'm asking this because I'm not yet sure in all of the material that I have seen whether I'm seeing typologies, whether I am seeing attention hierarchies, whether I am seeing critical key categories that allow us to open up stuff that that normally theory is expected to do. Are we even attempting to build that kind of theory at all, or are we saying that maybe this is a moment for us to sort of work in this way. The way in which I always think of it is that you have to build catalogs.

580

01:37:35.280 --> 01:37:49.620

Anant Maringanti: And when you're building these catalogs from all of these multiple traces, that we are left with, we don't quite know how we're going to build it. It's only after you build the catalog that you know what it is going to allow us to do.

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01:37:50.790 --> 01:37:51.390

Anant Maringanti: So, those are the three big questions that I'm really curious to hear from you and I'll just conclude that it's an amazing mind blowing presentation. Thank you very much.

583

01:38:09.870 --> 01:38:14.640

Nikhil Anand: Thank you very much for those very provocative questions and responses. We will next have Professor Anne Spirn to share her responses as well.

585

01:38:22.440 --> 01:38:30.960

Anne Whiston Spirn: Hi, can you all hear me. Good. I should say at the outset in case my architecture colleagues are watching that I am actually a professor of both the architecture department and the Urban Studies and Planning department at MIT. Well, first of all, I want to take a step back and take a meta look at this larger project, which is so exciting. It's really an epic undertaking involving folks from different disciplines all looking at Mumbai and living in water.

589

01:39:05.880 --> 01:39:17.340

Anne Whiston Spirn: And I have to say, I have to take the historic view here and say I've known Anuradha Mathur since she arrived as a graduate student in Philadelphia in 1989 and I see a thread in this project from her master's thesis in 1991 through her landmark book, *Mississippi Floods* in 2001 and then of course, *Deccan Traverses* and *Soak: Mumbai Living in an Estuary* and her partner Dilip da Cunha.

593

01:39:59.280 --> 01:40:21.390

Anne Whiston Spirn: There's such a wonderful thread of building this theory and to respond to the previous respondent, this notion of theory being grounded and theory coming out of work on the ground is very much present in the in the work of the folks we heard from today as well as in the organizers own work.

594

01:40:22.830 --> 01:40:32.940

Anne Whiston Spirn: So, I'm really looking forward to the subsequent seminars and also to follow in the work on the website and I want to second what both presenters said, which is go to the website and look at the work there. You can see the video multiple times and you can also dive into these extraordinary drawings of the households and the analysis of change over time in these various locations.

597

01:40:52.920 --> 01:40:59.760

Anne Whiston Spirn: I want to say that today's presentations were really a tour de force; they worked so well together. The videos on the one hand, showed the material reality of the place and the place of water and it gave context to the drawings of the folks from the School of environmental architecture.

600

01:41:22.740 --> 01:41:31.020

Anne Whiston Spirn: And for me, not ever having been to India for not being familiar in an experiential way, the two really played off one another and it helped me understand the

environment depicted in the film, and on the other hand, when I looked at the analytical drawings I much better feeling for what these folks were adapting to.

602

01:41:51.750 --> 01:42:04.350

Anne Whiston Spirn: I was really impressed with the video, to hear that the video was made, including the camera work, by kids who are eight to 14 years old.

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01:42:06.180 --> 01:42:09.810

Anne Whiston Spirn: And this is a point I want to emphasize that as Anuradha mentioned in her introduction I've had an action research project in West Philadelphia called The West Philadelphia Landscape Project since 1987. In the mid 90s I started working with students in a middle school, which in the US is kids between the age of 10 and 13, something like that. And I found that these students were extraordinary; they were in a low income neighborhood. One of the at the time, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Philadelphia and in one of the lowest ranked middle schools in the entire city in terms of their performance on standardized tests.

608

01:43:06.870 --> 01:43:16.140

Anne Whiston Spirn: I was working in classrooms taking my students in once once a week into an eighth grade, seventh, and eighth grade classroom, so 12 to 14 year old kids, and I didn't know what to expect but what I learned over the course of the four years that I did this was that these kids were capable of handling quite sophisticated concepts. They were capable of doing research and at this point, this is 1996-97 and we were teaching them how to do web authoring, HTML coding, and they were creating their own websites. Then that moved on to other things: they were then learning GIS programming and then how to go in and code and add plugins to the GIS programs, and rebuilding computers.

613

01:44:00.690 --> 01:44:05.010

Anne Whiston Spirn: So one of the important lessons to me in the video is first of all, don't underestimate children and, secondly, as an urban designer and planner, I began to realize that children is where I would start working because they have a lot of hope, they're bright and they will rise to the occasion. So I have some questions maybe other folks won't be as interested in, but about working with these kids and what kind of background the kids were from, what kinds of families and how that all worked.

617

01:44:40.890 --> 01:44:49.620

Anne Whiston Spirn: Now with the series of drawings that you just saw, the tip of the iceberg in the presentation from the folks from see it's a really sophisticated and the drawings, repay careful attention moving from one to the next to the next to the next. Within each of these households, there's a contractor household, a shopkeeper, a tuition teacher, a retired trader share broker. For each of these, there's a series of about something like maybe 10 or 12 drawings and they track.

621

01:45:24.060 --> 01:45:39.300

Anne Whiston Spirn: For me it's a it's a really great example of design at their pot, what we're now calling this movement that's been developing called this field that's developing called Design Anthropology and I noted that Gary Doherty, for example, who is a leader in that area joined the audience.

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01:45:49.770 --> 01:45:50.220

Anne Whiston Spirn: But when you bring together ethnography and design. It creates such a rich interaction. And so we move, for example, in these analytical drawings from the plan of the district or the neighborhood, and in annotation, there's quite an attention to time. So there's you know maybe 1940 and then 2000 and you see the change in cultural activities and social activities and then you see within each of these households, how they're building changes over time, and you've got a diagram on the left hand corner of the composition of the family and how it changes over time. The family, extended family living in this house, and then how they adapt the house, both for their living and how they're adapting it in terms of their response to the monsoon.

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01:46:56.670 --> 01:47:08.580

Anne Whiston Spirn: Now you build that up in each drawing and then finally you get to the end and they summarize in these beautiful drawings of what are the adaptations that have been made to monsoon.

632

01:47:12.690 --> 01:47:23.760

Anne Whiston Spirn: And it's, it's, to me, it's a great example of what we call it MIT innovation from the margins. So pay attention to what ordinary people are doing. Pay attention to local knowledge. Look at what they know and how they're adapting. There's a certain amount of ingenuity potentially in their adaptations that designers can learn from and then think of, as the participants here and the researchers did here, lessons.

638

01:48:10.380 --> 01:48:22.260

Anne Whiston Spirn: So I just want to say how beautifully done. This study is just stunning. And I love to take a look at the photo. The title photo on the web page of "Wet and Muddy Waters." You see this photograph of this house that's been adapted to and you see this tarp that's coming off the roof and pointing towards a bucket and the water is draining off and going right into the bucket. This rainwater that's being collected.

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01:48:55.560 --> 01:49:09.630

Anne Whiston Spirn: Both of these presentations are very elegant presentations from the perspective of their, their visual communication and also their conception. And I think that I should stop there, because otherwise we won't have time for questions from the audience. So, thank you. Thank you very much.

644

01:49:29.730 --> 01:49:30.660

Anuradha Mathur: Thank you Anne. I guess we could let the presenters respond briefly to some of the, you know, provocations observations that were made. Who'd like to go, first?

649

01:50:03.480 --> 01:50:04.650

s a: In response to Anne, I think those are great Questions. My sense of it was that they were relatively related and I'll try to take them in the order of unit I remember.

656

01:50:30.150 --> 01:50:33.750

s a: The problem of estrangement has been that, I think the resettlement project right as a whole as an idea has always implied estrangement, right. So in that context, in that environment. There is a resettling of people into a place where they are pushed by certain institution forces by a combination of NGO activity, as well as the World Bank and the State in that case. And so just the way that the environment has transferred implies that a lot of the relations that you had with the space, with the city are uprooted. Right, so that is clearly there.

665

01:51:35.400 --> 01:51:39.120

s a: What we're saying is that the project there was actually started off as an art project for this public art in this context was this imagination that we could build something from where you would look out on to these kinds of spaces with the with some of the people there and allow a kind of unformatted space to exist, right, because everything, even the interventions into this kind of space are formatted as temples and NGOs doing very specific activities. So this is the

idea of the program; to create a space which is filled with a sort of forest of books and from which certain activities walk into the neighborhood and are brought back and sort of digested.

674

01:52:49.680 --> 01:52:57.360

s a: So this as a cultural project, you're trying to say that the image you evoked earlier of people only being witness in some way to the goings on can be turned from something passive into something active and the various phenomena in the city can be organized and re supported as a form, not only of contemporary practice, but also as through the library and you know the archival projects as a way of being able to trace the history of how we all got here.

682

01:53:33.960 --> 01:53:35.280

s a: So that's the politics if you might say, of that kind of move of producing new kinds of practitioners and new kinds of platforms. So in that sense it's independent of some of the existing politics on the ground, but of course there are many relations with people who work there and the cooperator and I mean there are all kinds of negotiations that happen with the society and so on in our case.

687

01:54:11.460 --> 01:54:12.240

s a: So that was just a take on how we as people who make images think of them as making things and as reflecting upon things in a process that's vital to such places to be human, or to be lived in.

706

01:55:21.780 --> 01:55:25.020

Rohit Mujumdar: So, thanks for both the responses and the questions.

709

01:55:30.000 --> 01:55:42.360

Rohit Mujumdar: You know your response about industry enjoyment and re-familiarization as a city also connected to your third question of theory and to kind of think about this together. You know so much of discussion around the environment in Bombay and one wonders. When so much discussion is kind of taking place, why doesn't change occur? Why does it mean so little? In fact, why do people have postings and one can kind of, you know, enter it through discussions around bourgeois environmentalism, but what we've tried to do in our work is post the notion of meantime because planning always gets presented for the post-tipping point and in that, the environment is kind of removed outside the human realm. So the first moves that we've tried to do in this project in looking at the intersection of linear and cyclical time which we think is

important to consider to get out is that the environment then marches as visible or invisible or visible or invisible infrastructure of dynamic and unsynchronized relationships. How do we kind of move to this rather than kind of think of the environment as something outside the human realm?

720

01:57:28.770 --> 01:57:38.100

Rohit Mujumdar: But also to draw what is happening in all of these things one notices that people are not only paying attention to one another but also to objects in their environment. And that's, that's how these relationships get produced, but they also change over time. And therefore, I really liked the way you pause the idea of estrangement and refamiliarization. However I think theoretically, it is, I mean... I don't know.

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01:58:04.530 --> 01:58:17.880

Rohit Mujumdar: The other way to kind of interpret this project: at the start of the project, the idea was to make a geographical information system and environmental information system that is a GIS system. We would do it where the school was located and it would become useful.

727

01:58:41.970 --> 01:58:47.880

Rohit Mujumdar: Simultaneously, we started doing these interviews of households. And within the first two households we started realizing that there is something happening here in the way people are talking about their relationships with the monsoon's wetness and that is what we've kind of come to call "Wetness and Exfoliation in the Weave of Life." That weave of life becomes important to open out which we thought was very important at this stage in our work. So that's a short kind of response. We're building this up, but I'd love to hear more from you want to talk to you, definitely connect with you regarding this and thanks for your responses on the joints, you know, tell your story about the drawings and the photographs that you mentioned.

732

01:59:38.310 --> 01:59:51.810

Rohit Mujumdar: We've decided that, you know, we will do this deep oral history and kind of from November 2019 to March 2020 we did these interviews, long conversations with these households.

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01:59:59.640 --> 02:00:12.870

Rohit Mujumdar: Literally, we didn't bother to take photographs and we didn't, we didn't know the pandemic would strike us. We don't have much photographs as of yet. Okay. So, it's literally what we have been able to scrounge up in terms of photographs.

735

02:00:13.890 --> 02:00:21.120

Rohit Mujumdar: The drawings actually emerged in that context. The drawings were very kind of quick sketches that we did as we did the interviews, not really meant to do the drawings, but also the things that were told to us in the rich discussions. So the drawings have emerged out of that context. And what we try to do with the drawings was actually use the drawings to analyze the material that emerged and ask questions of it. So it was a process of kind of analysis that emerged through the drawings.

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02:00:52.770 --> 02:00:54.150

Nikhil Anand: Vaskavitka, do you have anything to add?

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02:00:57.660 --> 02:01:01.080

Vastavikta Bhagat: I think Rohit has covered it!

740

02:01:01.920 --> 02:01:08.760

Nikhil Anand: Okay, great. Looking at the time I'd like to collect questions from the audience at once and then we can give a chance for each of you to respond in conclusion. So for any of you that have a question, you feel free to raise your hand, using the raise hand function, or ask the question in the chat. We can call on you to ask the question. I guess the first question comes from Dilip da Cunha.

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02:01:39.630 --> 02:01:41.850

Dilip Da Cunha: Thank you. Thanks Nikhil. I really enjoyed the presentations, very much. And I just wanted to make a comment more than raise a question. I mean it could provoke a question obviously, but first of all, I mean, I want to put it in terms of what I take away from both the presentations.

748

02:02:05.610 --> 02:02:15.240

Dilip Da Cunha: Yeah, the first is about the film. You know what is interesting about that, about the film is that I never saw water; I saw wetness. I saw thick, thick wetness and I saw thin wetness. You know, I saw, I saw wetness moving, you know wetness oozing you know and that sensibility I think calls upon different understanding of infrastructure and perhaps a different understanding of even place.

751

02:02:41.370 --> 02:02:48.270

Dilip Da Cunha: So, when I think of places in terms of cities, when I think in terms of housing blocks, when I see pipes, I'm seeing infrastructure flows and water flows. What is fantastic about looking at the children's documentation, is that even though they use the word water is that the wetness that they're engaging with, the infrastructure is not doing what it is supposed to be doing.

754

02:03:06.090 --> 02:03:18.120

Dilip Da Cunha: It's calling for designers to draw upon an infrastructure that oozes, that thickens that thins and, you know, I mean, in that sense of infrastructure it's a different place. So I would even get out of the language of the city, you know, language of the housing block and I'm driven now to think of other modes of habitation. You know, I think in the introduction, when you spoke of our assumption of land I think it really gets to that, you know, I mean, in wetness you don't see and engage land at all. You don't engage the city.

758

02:03:50.790 --> 02:04:10.860

Dilip Da Cunha: Secondly, I thought the language of exfoliation is fantastic as a way of understanding and, you know, I should say, as a language of design and a language of wetness that I can carry forth into understanding practices into understanding place.

759

02:04:12.030 --> 02:04:24.840

Dilip Da Cunha: But what I feel is that there's not, it's not to be scaled, you know, exfoliation is happening. It's happening in a multiplicity but I would like to think of it as "scaleless" and I would like to know a little more actually about the dynamics, by which it is occurring. I mean, you gave us a sense through layering through you know to folding to think, but I think that there is something more. I mean, I would love actually when you go back to photograph once things are over and you know, I mean, that'd be really engaging.

764

02:04:56.070 --> 02:05:07.200

Dilip Da Cunha: Some of those dynamics as a language that I would love to work with in Bombay, you know, I would love to work with the language of exfoliation rather than the language of flowing water. The language of, flowing traffic, the language of flowing this and flowing that, it would be great, actually, to see exfoliating as a way of moving forward and presenting to the city or officials you know, a kind of dynamic by which they might change the way of actually looking at their place, you know, not as they've done so far, but in a completely new way. I saw something fantastically new in the way I might approach Mumbai as a designer.

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02:05:48.900 --> 02:05:53.010

Nikhil Anand: Franz, if you're still here. Would you like to ask your question or comment?

771

02:05:59.100 --> 02:06:07.470

Franz Krause: Yeah, thank you very much for these very thought provoking presentations. I really enjoyed both. And I was just wondering, in the way they speak to each other about the different configurations of wetness and one being the rising and falling of the water level that I thought was very well captured in the drawings by Vastavikta and Rohit that we saw earlier.

773

02:06:23.550 --> 02:06:37.770

Franz Krause: But then I'm also wondering about this dampness that is so clearly an issue in the monsoon in Lallubhai movie. And I wonder whether or what the ways would look like of representing that; I mean if you can't just put a mezzanine in and then you have sort of tackled that issue. But are there other ways of drawing or making that visible and approachable. Thank you very much.

776

02:07:05.550 --> 02:07:08.040

Nikhil Anand: Thanks, Franz, I think we also had a question from [someone about the SEA project]. How different incrementalities and living with the wetness of individual households intersect with each other? For example if one household increases its dimensions what are the effects of such processes? Thinking about households and how they are connected to each other.

784

02:08:03.780 --> 02:08:05.310

Nikhil Anand: Do we have any other questions?

785

02:08:10.110 --> 02:08:19.410

Nikhil Anand: There was a question from Mukherjee, but he left so maybe we can respond here, but also on the website. Okay we can start responding to these questions and to some of the earlier ones as well. Shyna would you like to go first in responding to these questions and to some of the earlier ones as well then we can turn it over to Ashok?

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02:08:20.850 --> 02:08:24.150

s a: No, I think my response was more just a kind of analogy I wanted to give Anant, because I could sense I could sense a sort of drive in him, or a need to to want to push us all, be us artists, urbanists, academics as well as on the ground activists.

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02:08:47.700 --> 02:09:08.100

s a: He said that we're all invested in a kind of politics, but maybe we turn away from actually working towards structural change. And I mean, of course, there is the fact that for one Bombay City just like Hyderabad, we've researched Bombay quite a bit, has a deep history of housing struggles and actually has, despite the abysmal state of housing in the city, has had quite many victories, unlike, say Delhi where you have a PIL, you know, [...] erased off the ground.

793

02:09:32.640 --> 02:09:39.240

s a: But when you have such a brutal turn of liberalisation in mid 90s projects like the MUTP2, Lallubhai was one of the largest r&r housing colonies in the world at that point, perhaps, perhaps, it still is. So there is massive and brutal upheaval. I think what I was just trying to say was as I turn away from the right space discourse, the only analogy I could have was when the city fails you, and the state fails you and there's escalating impunity of the states, and you do not have rights, what are we fighting for, you know? Like, my phone's full of PUCL seminar.... I mean, we will fight for these things but we know our reality be it Kashmir or other. So how do we cope?

798

02:10:15.510 --> 02:10:23.580

s a: And I'm not sure it's through estrangement, but both in terms of everyday living, whether it's people Lallubhai or the broad spectrum of people in the city of Mumbai or us in our so called fields of expertise. How do you cope at this point, you know, with various things on us right.

800

02:10:37.560 --> 02:10:40.560

s a: Total. I mean, there is no thing such as rights in a sense anymore, right. Look how we're living. So I think how we cope is where we are as artists right now, where do you find the other senses. Where is intimacy and familiarity in times that are so fearful and alien. Where do I buy my beef in Lallubhai is a question right.

804

02:11:09.840 --> 02:11:18.030

s a: So yeah, I mean it was just that if the analogy is put on us as to how we lead our everyday lives in this certain political climate, none of us are back on the streets with an agenda because we have to look elsewhere. And we have to stay with the trouble; I'm not saying we have to, you know, dilute our metaphorical and artistic language, but in its history and materiality. We have to find other ways and yes: much has been said about retrofitting in Bombay and how people survive, but this is really how we're all coping you know on various registers.

808

02:11:56.580 --> 02:12:05.910

s a: Yeah, I mean, I think there was a question about the children really making the film. I think it's an extension of the alienation or estrangement, and the re-familiarisation right. They were looking at their surroundings through the lens, but we pushed them one degree further which was don't speak of the problem, right, because that's the first thing that comes up and just, just try to look through the lens differently. And that's, I think, something we do as image makers.

814

02:12:41.310 --> 02:12:51.090

Nikhil Anand: Thanks! Rohit and Vastavikta, any concluding thoughts by way of responding and any concluding thoughts in response to the question, but also concluding thoughts regarding your presentation.

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02:12:55.140 --> 02:13:00.540

Rohit Mujumdar: Thanks. Thanks for the comments and responses. To Dilip, I take his point about thinking of exfoliation, not in terms of scales, but I just, I mean, I did that not really having thought through it. I just did it because I was in the world of focusing on households and I was, I was kind of, you know, bit scared, actually before starting the presentation that the question would be kind of opened up at larger scales and not at the household level. So it kind of came out of that. I take your point completely. I will think through that and I really like it the way you posed it. Thanks for that. Now we will really all be happy to work with you.

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02:13:46.590 --> 02:13:49.200

Rohit Mujumdar: So, so let us know. Yeah.

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02:14:00.390 --> 02:14:00.720

Nikhil Anand: Ashok?

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02:14:02.100 --> 02:14:05.610

s a: Yeah, maybe just a short response.

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02:14:07.830 --> 02:14:11.580

s a: So I guess this is sort of embedded in the earlier questions that I had and the parallel that one has made with the maritime world and it's strange ways of sort of coping and sustaining life.

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02:14:29.070 --> 02:14:31.680

s a: When we talk about the surfaces leaking, others in your sense of it, other surfaces that you would, are there distinctions or boundaries that you would want to retain? Right as a form of acknowledging what has happened in the past or as a form of really sort of logistically as a designer whether there are things you want to keep. For example, the sewage should probably not leak onto the street.

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02:15:07.590 --> 02:15:07.830

s a: You know,

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02:15:08.250 --> 02:15:15.900

s a: Things like that and the separation of fluids in the idea of wetness have been something that one has always thought about. And so, I mean, it's just the response rate. And most of us have of course invented a different concept tonight so that takes the problem in a different direction but to stay with the wet part,

838

02:15:35.310 --> 02:15:36.540

s a: How do we want to react to it, to organize it, if that is the goal in the design sense, then what's the, what are the things you want to keep apart for the sake of their identity even to not have the flux be the dominant way of working in the environment.

846

02:16:17.070 --> 02:16:28.770

Nikhil Anand: Yeah, I'm also thinking a little bit briefly, as we are coming to the end of our session a little bit with Anant's provocations as well.

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02:16:29.310 --> 02:16:39.510

Nikhil Anand: And perhaps because it's a crazy day in the United States today with the inauguration but I was thinking a little bit about what these projects both share is starting with stories that emerge out of beta experiences in wetness, right.

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02:16:46.440 --> 02:16:52.770

Nikhil Anand: And, you know, oftentimes our stories are relegated to a category that is not world making, but the world is being made in the everyday too, not just through material practices, but also stories, right, which is basically stories that constitutes policies, everyone knows Donald Trump and his stories, but it's also stories that produce the imagination and I really like what these projects did today, in terms of both demonstrating the power stories to evoke or stimulate a different imagination of what habituation might look like.

853

02:17:25.290 --> 02:17:39.210

Nikhil Anand: Because only when the imagination is provoked that these projects can come into being. So not just about coping but reimagining might be one way to think about these everyday stories that have been shared with us, even as we continue on and on about more programmatic political projects perhaps.

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02:17:48.900 --> 02:17:54.420

Nikhil Anand: That the story might be composable and maybe more hopefully more democratic.

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02:17:55.560 --> 02:18:00.510

Nikhil Anand: Anuradha, do you have any thoughts before I share some of the more mundane details regarding next events.

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02:18:02.730 --> 02:18:08.100

Anuradha Mathur: No I think a lot has been said, but I just have this image in my mind of the two presentations.

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02:18:08.880 --> 02:18:23.580

Anuradha Mathur: And one is that, you know, when Rohit and Vastavikta ended, they ended with these high rises becoming the sort of solution to flooding and so wetness as somebody had mentioned was about rising and falling and when we started with the Lallubhai film.

860

02:18:24.630 --> 02:18:34.920

Anuradha Mathur: It also, it starts with high rises that are covered with moss and green and black and you know it's sort of the, you know, for me, in a way, the conversation begins there. So where you end you know, we begin again. And I just think it's a conversation view I'd love to continue as to what seems to be the end solution in one area becomes the issue somewhere else.

862

02:18:46.650 --> 02:18:54.900

Anuradha Mathur: But I just, I'm so excited because you know when we all began, you know, these were vague ideas. And of course, I have a larger question about you guys; I hope you have actually given up the GPS GIS mapping, because when we first saw your proposal, we thought that these are two very different ways of working and I'd wondered what the GIS could capture and I think what you've done with your sort of intimate work is far more far reaching. And I just think it's a lot more powerful. So I think it was a natural selection. And we can talk more about the possibilities and the problems of GIS mapping in the context that you're working in.

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02:19:32.910 --> 02:19:40.620

Rohit Mujumdar: So I mean, the idea of doing the GIS was not doing it to trust it; the idea of the GIS was to do it because we didn't trust it.

870

02:19:43.620 --> 02:19:44.280

Anuradha Mathur: (laughter) Good, yeah.

871

02:19:45.840 --> 02:19:49.740

Nikhil Anand: Great. Speaking of endings and beginnings our synchronous event is ending, but our asynchronous event is beginning and we invite all of you to participate in the conversation which will be taking place, who are moderated discussion online.

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02:20:04.350 --> 02:20:17.790

Nikhil Anand: And so if you look at the event website immediately you will see a link with which you can post comments and questions and we will respond to them and see the response to them between now and the 25th of February, which will be our next event.

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02:20:19.620 --> 02:20:34.860

Nikhil Anand: We also will be posting this video together with discussion that was had on that website on that, on that page once we process it and edit it light for clarity and so on. So yes. Thank you all so much for joining us. Our next event Sea-ing the City will be on February 24th and if you registered for this event to be getting an invitation for that one as well.

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02:20:48.540 --> 02:20:57.000

Nikhil Anand: And I'd be remiss if I didn't actually thank my colleagues in Philadelphia, but also in Mumbai.

879

02:20:57.900 --> 02:21:07.980

Nikhil Anand: All of you that have done such amazing work in this pandemic and in some challenging circumstances to do what you did and showed us today. And finally, also to Courtney Daub, who's actually made this event go seamlessly from the beginning to the end. Thank you very much Courtney and thanks all and I look forward to seeing you next month.

881

02:21:21.870 --> 02:21:27.330

Anuradha Mathur: Thank you. Thank you very much to our respondents, you really added a wonderful set of richness to the discussion.

882

02:21:28.350 --> 02:21:28.740

Anant Maringanti: Thank you.

