

## **APPLICANT CREDENTIALS**

### **Gauri Bharat**

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, Ahmedabad India

Educational background:

B. Architecture (CEPT University) 2004

M.A. in Architecture (National University of Singapore) 2007

Ph.D. (University of East Anglia) (2011-2014, ongoing)

Teaching:

I have been teaching design studios, humanities and research at CEPT University since 2008. My particular interests are in engaging with people's perceptions of built environments as a basis for better understanding architecture and design. In design studios, this has taken shape in terms of emphasising users' requirements and experiences in the design process and for evaluation. For instance, in a recently completed design studio on housing design (Spring semester, AY 2013-14), I (along with a teaching team of three colleagues) encouraged students to design houses as settings for various domestic activities rather than as forms. In terms of studio methodology, students extensively explored collages and storyboards to explore activities and places in the course of design development. The final designs were developed, represented and described almost entirely in terms of places where individuals, families and communities would live.

In humanities courses, I have experimented with immersing students in the complexity of urban environments in order to understand the contexts in which architecture is produced, used and transformed. Past courses have dealt with unusual mappings of cities such as urban cattle ecologies (Fig.1), genesis of roadside shrines (Fig.2), semiotics in built environment through place names ([www.workshopsabarmati3.wordpress.com](http://www.workshopsabarmati3.wordpress.com)) and a Gujarati dictionary of medieval domestic architecture of Ahmedabad. These experiments have been presented in a number of academic forums in India and the UK. While the humanities courses are not structured as design exercises, students' subsequent academic work has often recalled these exercises as encouraging them to be more sensitive to context, architectural program and therefore the process of design itself. It is on account of this feedback loop of such courses into design studios that I have proposed one studio and a broader, people-centred methodology course for this Fellowship.

Architectural practice:

I practice as a consultant to Analog Studio (headed by Priyank Thakershy) a young practice based in Ahmedabad, India since 2009. A key feature of our design practice has been an effort to collaborate with clients, technical consultants and building contractors in the course of design development. I feel confident that our efforts are in the right direction when one of

our recent clients for a private resident noted that they were deriving 'much pleasure' in living in the house that we designed for them.

Research:

My PhD research at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom (completion in December 2014) focuses on perceptions of indigenous built environments. I have conducted fieldwork in three indigenous villages in eastern India using architectural documentation methods, ethnographic methods, oral histories and participatory processes. Through processes of dialogue with the case study communities (Fig.3), I am attempting to develop a participatory and inter-subjective architectural history. In the course of the PhD research, I have consolidated a long-standing interest in participatory and interdisciplinary frameworks for exploring people's relationships with built environments.

The courses proposed for this fellowship draw from my teaching, professional and doctoral research experiences where, in each case, I have attempted to work with communities, and place them in the centre of my enquiries. The Fellowship will provide an opportunity to test these ideas out in terms of pedagogy and content within the architecture curriculum at CEPT University.

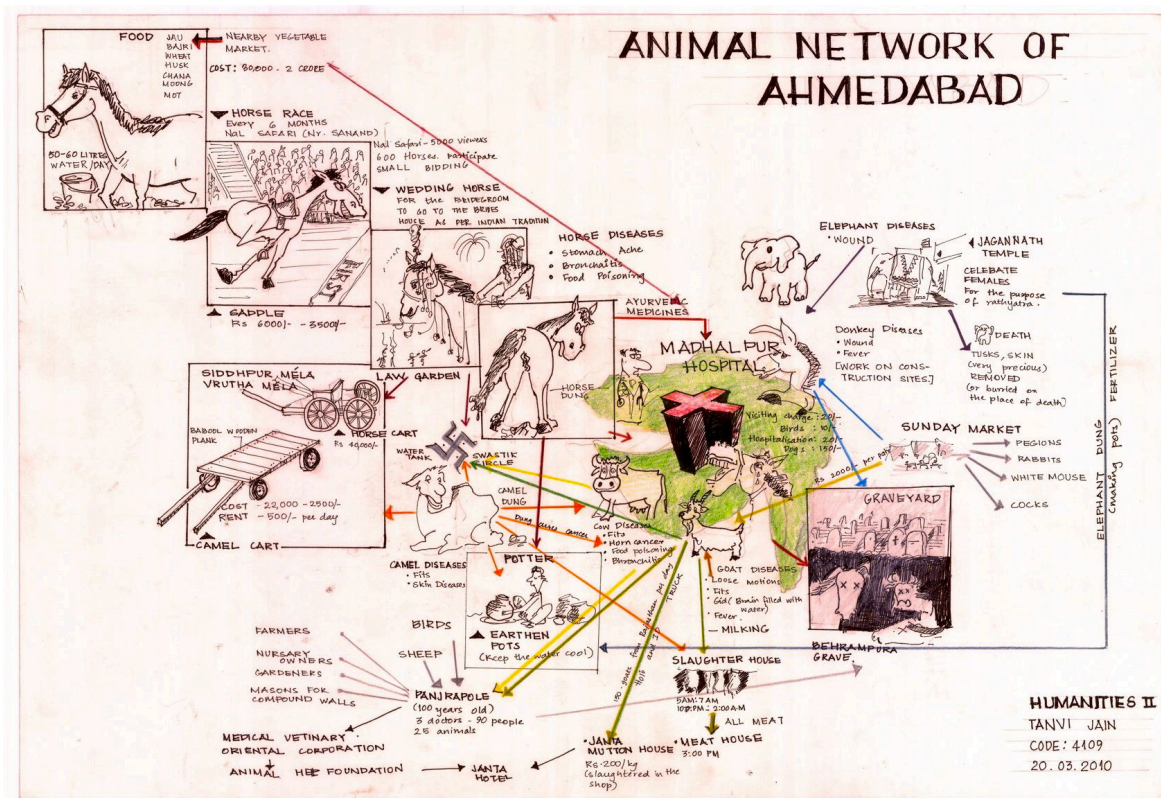


Fig.1: Animal network of Ahmedabad – student's work for Humanities 2 in AY 2009-10

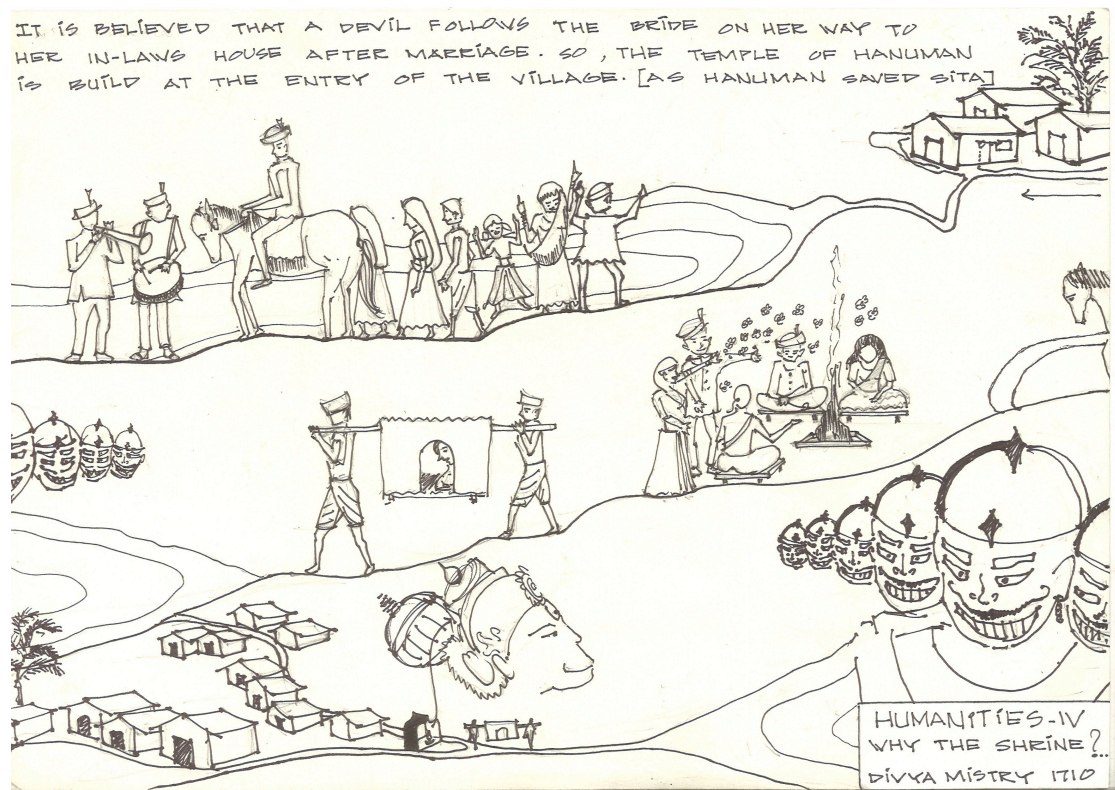


Fig.2: Genesis of roadside shrines – student's work for Humanities 4, AY 2011-12



Fig.3: Public display of architectural photographs and drawings in villages as part of PhD fieldwork in March 2013. (Photo: Gauri Bharat)

## STUDIO AND WORKSHOP COURSE SYLLABUS

### INTRODUCTION

For this fellowship, people-centric design is understood as a design methodology that critically understands and engages users in order to develop inclusive and relevant architectural designs. This position stems from a concern that in much of architectural education, terms such as 'context' and 'user' are loosely defined and casually engaged with. Often, they translate into some preliminary documentation of the physical surroundings of sites by way of contextual analysis and profiling abstract and imagined users rather than engaging with real people. This leads to working with preconceptions about users and it is not surprising then that architectural education, and indeed the profession at large, has come under criticism as facing a crisis of relevance in recent times.<sup>1</sup> It is imperative that students of architecture be encouraged to engage critically with society. They should develop the abilities to anticipate and respond to people's needs and aspirations appropriately. In other words, students must be equipped to 'understand people' in order to design 'healthful' environments i.e. places that are functionally efficient, socially inclusive, and most importantly, capable of becoming meaningful to their users.

It is with this focus that two courses are proposed for this fellowship - first, a design studio on the making of a public place through the design of an institution, and second, an elective workshop on place making in urban environments. Both these courses aim to develop methods by which people's engagements with built environments may be studied and become a basis for design response. The design studio focuses on documenting and representing users as primary basis for designing healthful environments. The elective workshop on place making, on the other hand, takes a broader methodological and theoretical view of how and why places become meaningful to people in order to design a participatory urban intervention. The courses will explore methods of participant observation, behaviour mapping and activity mapping together with discussions with people – library users in case of the design studio and worshippers and caretakers of roadside shrines in case of the elective course. In both cases, the emphasis is on initial engagement with users in the sites of design/ study, appropriate visual representation, and on final evaluation of the output by users. The intention is underscore the importance of dialogue with users and thereby, the centrality of people in the design and study of built environments.

### SYLLABUS FACT FILE

| Proposed course   | Design studio   | Elective workshop   |
|---|---|---|
| Time and duration (the academic year at CEPT U. comprises two semesters and each studio/ course spans across one semester only) | Monsoon semester (July – November 2014)   | Spring semester (January – April 2015)                                  |
| Credits   | 6 credits   | 2 credits   |
| Academic load   | 15 hours per week<br>(9 teaching hours + 6 hours of self-study per week)  | 6 hours per week<br>(4 teaching hours + 2 hours of self study per week) |
| Numbers and level of students expected to enrol   | 20 students from year 2 and 3 of the UG program<br>(80 students of Years 2 and 3 may choose from 4 studios each semester, and hence 20 students are expected to enrol for the course) | 40 students (open to undergraduate students only)                       |

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<sup>1</sup> Tatjana Schneider, "Strategies for a social production of space: A European perspective," Lecture given as part of *Faculty of Architecture Alumni Association Lecture Series* (Ahmedabad: CEPT Ahmedabad, 2014).

**DESIGN STUDIO: LIBRARY AND PUBLIC PLACE-MAKING IN AHMEDABAD**

Aim of the project: To design a public library in the Law Garden area of Ahmedabad as a public place with an emphasis on different user groups.

The program has a two-fold purpose: first, to consider the idea of a meaningful, inclusive public place in Ahmedabad which is otherwise dominated by public places such as shopping malls, cinema theatres on one hand and informal, roadside gathering places on the other. Second, it aims to consider the social potential of a library in reaching out to people with varying degrees of access to and interest in printed media. These two issues are particularly relevant to Ahmedabad where public places are increasingly economically and socially segregated, and, where the culture of reading and the library as a social and cultural institution is largely dormant.

| Intention and Tasks  | Site visits  | Seminars/ Lectures   | Output/ Evaluation   |
|--|--|--|--|
| What is a library? How does it function?   |  |  |  |
| Volunteering (for a day) at the CEPT University library<br>Observing staff and users in different libraries/ places of books   | CEPT University library<br>British Library<br>Gujarat Vidyapeeth Library<br>Crossword book store                     | Seminar on observing and documenting people<br>Lecture on 'How a library works' by Dr. Saket Saraf (Director, Library services, CEPT U.) | Diagramming activities in library – staff and user cycles<br>Feedback from library staff on students' documentation              |
| What are public places? What do people do in public places?  |  |  |  |
| Observing and documenting public spaces in Ahmedabad in terms of categories of activities, people's behaviour, places occupied | Manek Chowk as a street side public place<br>Shopping malls<br>Riverfront walkway and gardens<br>Public institutions | Lecture on 'The public-ness of public places' by Prof. Neelkanth Chhaya (Former dean, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT U)                   | Sketches and plans of selected public place different times of the day<br>Discussion on architectural brief for a public library |
| What can a library be?   |  |  |  |
| Developing a program for a social interface for the library based on above mentioned observations                              |  | Lecture on 'Libraries and the ordering of space' ( <i>to be confirmed</i> )  | Initial design sketches including collages and story boards about places and users in design project                             |
| Designing library as a public place  |  |  |  |
| Design development – relationships between formal and informal places, fixed and flexible space use                            |  | Student led panel discussion on 'Library as a public place' involving librarians, staff and other users                                  | Plans and sections showing multiple scenarios of use   |
| Completion of design   |  |  | Plans, sections and models<br>Storyboard/ narrative illustrating design of social interface in the library                       |

Additional faculty member: Aparna Joshi (independent architect and urban designer, Ahmedabad, India)

### **ELECTIVE WORKSHOP: Place making in urban India – a case of roadside shrines**

Aim: To develop methods of engaging with the complexity of urban environments with an emphasis on how and why places become meaningful to people.  
To design an intervention highlighting places that hold significance for local communities.

This course is premised on the idea that how we engage with and 'know' built environments becomes the basis of our architectural repertoire, and that 'knowing' is a continuous process that occurs through exchanges between ourselves, people and the world at large.<sup>2</sup> Constraints of architectural curricula mean that the various courses primarily deal with buildings rather than the processes by which built environments are shaped and transformed. This course offers students an opportunity to understand how places are appropriated and made meaningful by people, and more broadly, engage with the social, political and legislative realities that shape our urban environments.

In this course, students will design an intervention in the form of public exhibitions or installations on the basis of their study of roadside shrines. The intention is to collate an alternative architectural history centred on places that are significant to people rather than on built forms. Students will work together with local communities to design interventions to highlight what places are important to the resident communities and why.

| <b>Intention and Tasks</b>  | <b>Seminars/ Lectures</b>   | <b>Output/ Evaluation</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Exploring physical urban transformations</b>   |   |  |
| Identifying and documenting urban development along a particular area, i.e. the site of study<br>Identifying specific places/ communities within site | Lecture on 'Nature of urban development in Ahmedabad' by Dr. Bimal Patel (President, CEPT University/ architect and planner, HCP Design Services, Ahmedabad)        | Mapping urban development of selected area.  |
| <b>Identifying places of significance</b>   |   |  |
| Identifying and documenting shrines and their stories (myth, associated miracles, transformation of context)  | Lecture on 'Concepts of place' by Gauri Bharat<br>Lecture on 'Semiotics in urban environment studies' by Dr. Seema Khanwalkar (visiting faculty, CEPT U, Ahmedabad) | Developing visual narratives about shrines and their context.<br>Discussion with local communities on representation of stories.                     |
| <b>Intervention and returning to communities</b>  |   |  |
| Design an intervention to represent the shrine and its significance to the local community.   | Lecture on 'Politics of urban development in Ahmedabd' by Dr. Renu Desai, Director, Centre for Urban Equity, CEPT U., Ahmedabad)                                    | Public roadside display.<br>Evaluations based on people's reactions to display   |
| <b>An alternative architectural/ urban history</b>  |   |  |
| Combine individual efforts into a single document   |   | Juxtaposing maps of urban development (from stage 1 of exercise) with intervention and people's responses to create a multi-layered urban narrative. |

<sup>2</sup> Trevor H.J. Marchand, "Making knowledge: explorations of the dissoluble relation between minds, bodies, and environment," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16 (2012): S1-S21.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, CEPT UNIVERSITY, AHMEDABAD, INDIA  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-15

**MONSOON SEMESTER (JULY 2014 – NOVEMBER 2014)**

PROPOSED COURSE: DESIGN STUDIO – Library and public-place making in Ahmedabad

General studio schedule:

Class days: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Sites visits and lectures: with prior arrangement during class hours

| Dates  | Key events/ activities  | Reviews                      |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| WEEK 1: 21 July 2014<br>(teaching commences) | Introduction to studio project  |                              |
| WEEKS 1-6                                    | Preliminary site investigation<br>Documentation of users<br>Program development<br>Initial design development<br>Interim lectures | Interim review in Week 4     |
| WEEK 7                                       | Preliminary design  | Mid-semester reviews         |
| WEEKS 8-15                                   | Design development<br>Consultation with users/ library staff<br>Student led panel discussion<br>Interim lectures                  | Interim review in Week 12/13 |
| WEEK 16                                      | Final design preparations   | Final review                 |

*Please note: This is a calendar for a typical 16-week teaching semester. There will be a festival holiday between weeks 8 and 15 mentioned above, but that is additional and not counted in the teaching weeks listed above.*

**SPRING SEMESTER (DECEMBER 2014 – APRIL 2015)**

PROPOSED COURSE: ELECTIVE WORKSHOP – Place making in urban India

General workshop schedule:

Class days: 4 hours on 1 day per week (exact dates to be decided later)

Site visits and lectures: during class hours on alternate weeks with prior arrangement

| Dates   | Key events/ activities   | Reviews   |
|---|--|---|
| WEEK 1 (teaching for spring semester commences) | Introduction to workshop<br>Identification of site<br>Formation of groups for detailed study of communities  |   |
| WEEKS 2-6                                       | Documentation of urban development, specific shrines and local histories   | Continuous assessment through interaction with students                         |
| WEEK 7  | Visual narratives of shrines and localities  | Mid-semester review by instructor and through presentation to local communities |
| WEEK 8-15 (last date on teaching in week 15)    | Design and installation of intervention<br>Working together with local communities<br>Final document/ exhibition on alternative architectural/ urban history | Final review by instructor and through responses to public exhibition           |