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EXPLORE

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GDK Designs

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Manifestation of Fluid Architecture

Design Combine

Architecture BRIO

A & B

PRACTICES OF CONSEQUENCE

Research Design Office

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Flying Elephant Studio

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M:OFA

NEW DELHI

M:OFA abbrev. mofa [məʊfə], emphasis on 'm' which stands for 'manifestation'. Manifestation: one of the forms in which someone or something, such as a person, a divine being, or an idea, is revealed. An appearance: in bodily form of a disembodied spirit. Materialisation: a sign of embodiment.

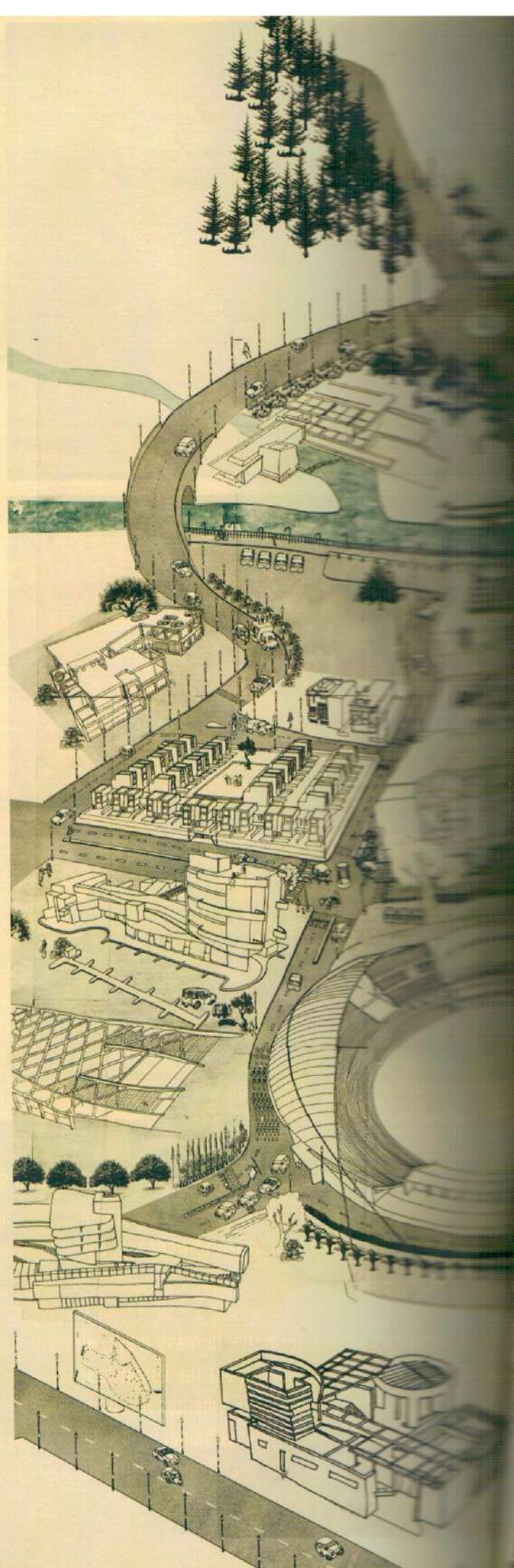
'Manifestation of Fluid Architecture' is a realisation of a design theory where architectural realms are redefined beyond the rules of regularised grids, dimensions and principles. Architecture in this context becomes a more fluid expression, continuously throbbing with vibrations of life. Here, the walls bend, column grids twist and the floors rise up and fall, responding to the ever-changing energy fields created by the life forms it houses. The architectural box melts into a fluid, leaving a void to adjust the continuous paradoxes of the modern lifestyle. At M:OFA, architecture is treated as a living organism that changes, adapts itself and responds to every change around it. The architectural organism is a storehouse of energy where the energy resources are conserved and recycled to sustain it. Our biggest influence is life itself, the complexity, simplicity, paradox, restrictions and fluidity that life itself has is exceedingly mentally stimulating to apply, interpret and iterate. Every design has a soul, which comes out of our reflections of ideologies, patterns and forms that we see in life at that point of time. We take this soul further empower and nourish it with our experience, analysis and workability. We try and iterate this soul in various layers, levels and mediums. What gets built is what effortlessly and fluidly pours itself from the idea to occupy the real space.

PRACTICE

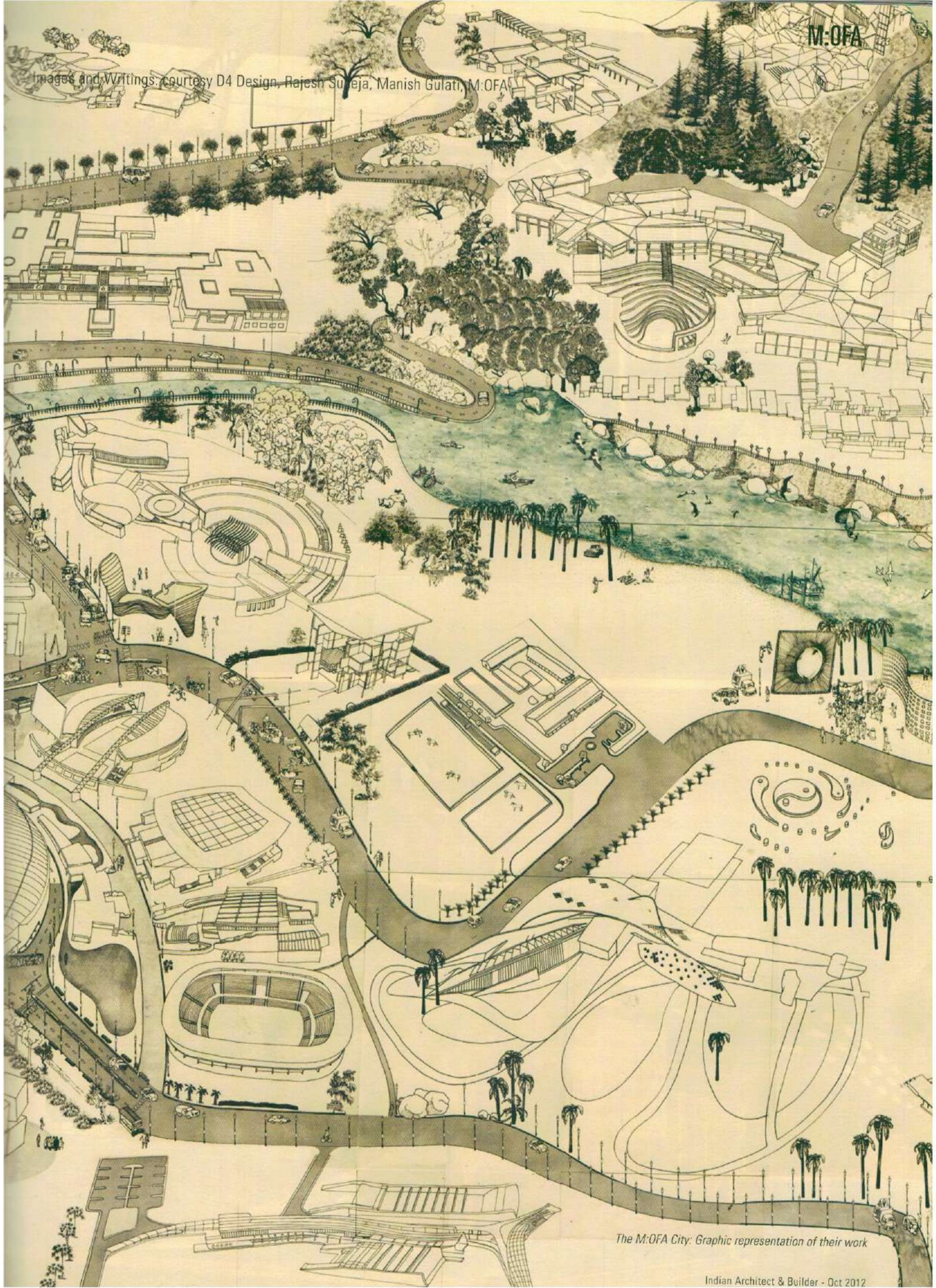
We started our practice in 2002, but it was through the practice and realisation of what we, as architects, would like to stand for and contribute towards, that Manifestation of Fluid Architecture (M:OFA Studios Pvt. Ltd.) was formalised in 2007. The firm, M:OFA Studios Pvt. Ltd., was established in 2007 as a team of highly trained and determined architects and planners registered under the Council of Architecture with a global vision in architecture design, planning and urbanism. The vision of the company is the vision of every individual in the company - to give a holistic approach to every project in the field of architecture, interiors and urbanism.

Every project, throughout its lifecycle, undergoes multiple layers of planning, design and realisation. We, at M:OFA, take every project through these processes, backwards and forward, through various simulations, case studies, exhaustive research, discussions and application. We see various faculties of architecture, planning, engineering, management and finance as not individual components but as various expertise/sciences needed to manifest a project. The influx of these sciences is fluid at multiple levels, stages, times and sequence. We explore programme, design concepts, technology, and engineering issues, project cycle, sustainable and green architecture, deliverance and supervision. We are constantly trying to surpass our own benchmarks and standards.

- Manish Gulati + Tanushree Gulati + Abhinav Chaudhary



Images and Writings: courtesy D4 Design, Rajesh Suleja, Manish Gulati, M:OFA



The M:OFA City: Graphic representation of their work



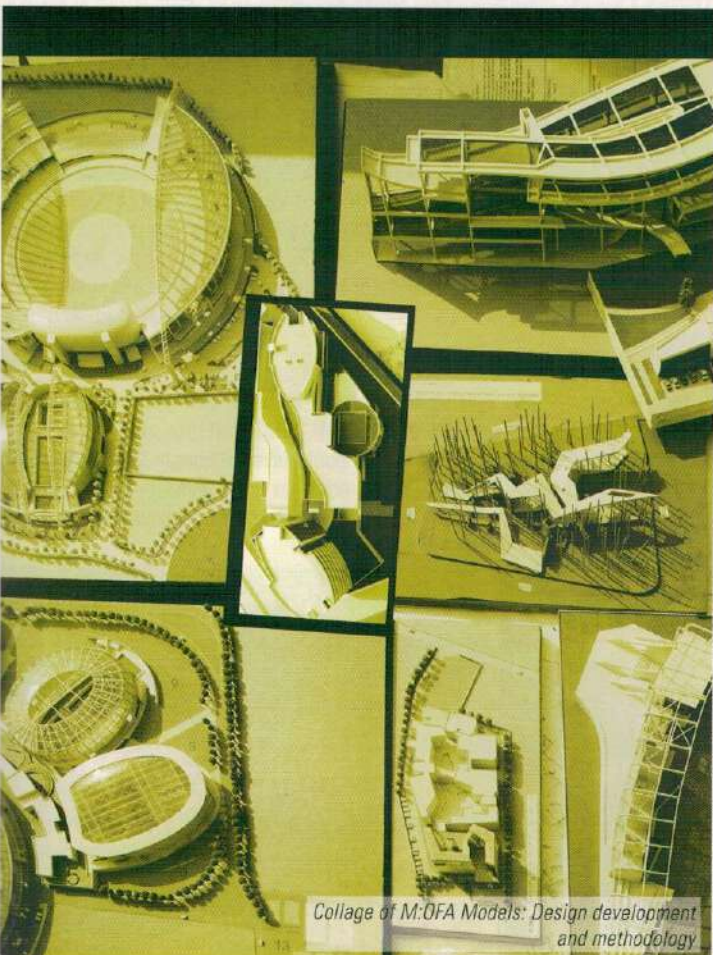
Omaxe Forest Club- Restaurant across the rivulet



Omaxe City Club, Lucknow: 3D Visualisation



Light permeates to the basement of the club illuminating the green court



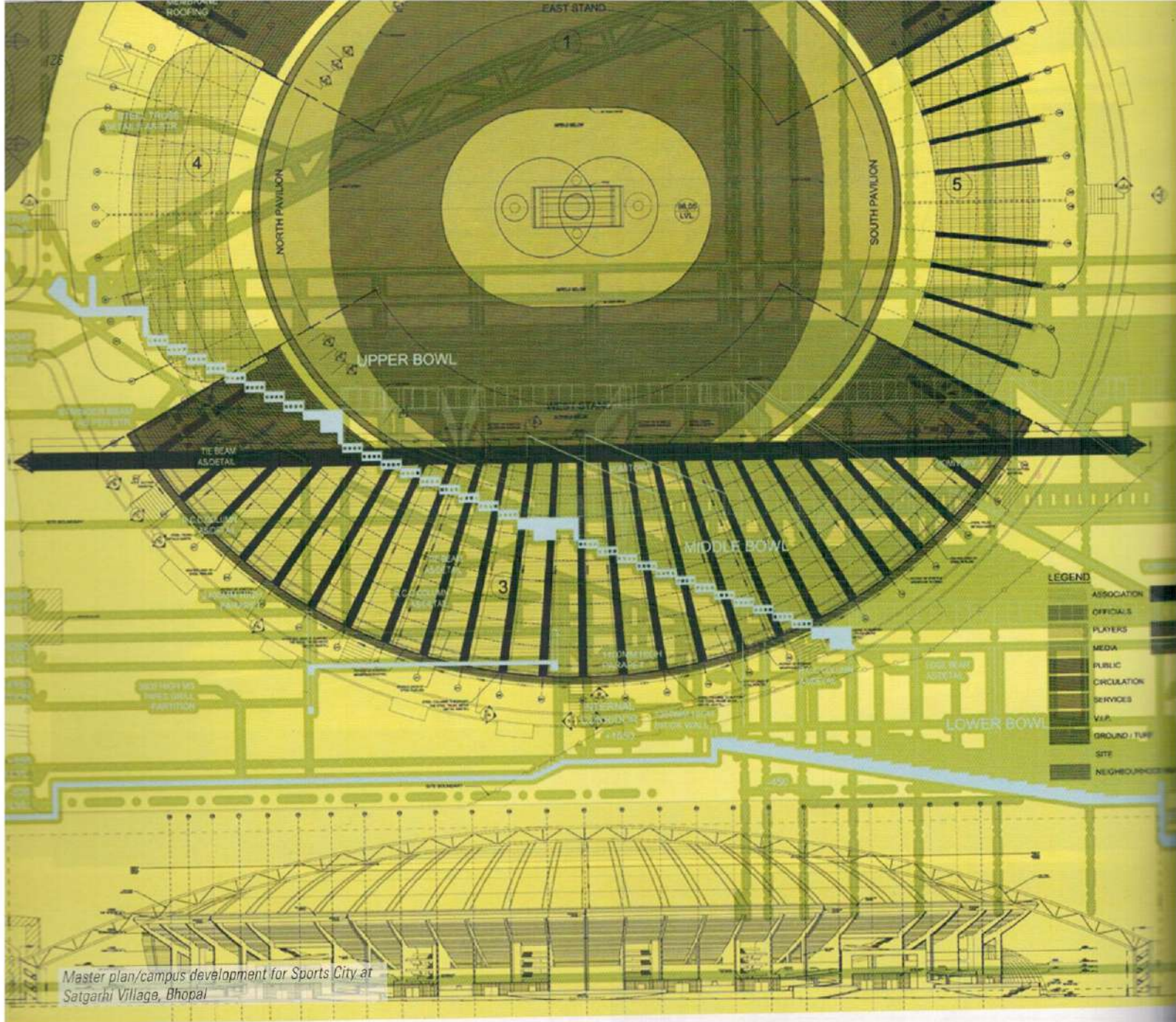
Collage of M:OFA Models: Design development and methodology

MG: Manish Gulati, **TG:** Tanushree Gulati, **AC:** Abhinav Chaudhary,
M:OFA: Manifestation of Fluid Architecture

M:OFA is a collaborative practice that operates from New Delhi. From an energetic studio space, they work on projects of multiple scales and complexities. With individual capacities to negotiate design, planning and infrastructure, M:OFA's multi-faceted team has led thinking and execution of complex programmes. Being a studio-based practice, what is the idea behind 'M:OFA'? What makes it significant?

M:OFA: The idea behind M:OFA was creating a platform for design in totality; a platform wherein multiple disciplines of design interact together to create innovations and psyches. Architecture is an environment which surrounds us majority of the time. Be it a school, colleges, offices, houses, hotels etc, we spend almost 75 to 90 per cent of the time indoors or within a designed space. It is the quality and sensitivity of this designed space which often creates subconscious learning and sensitivity. M:OFA stands for change and the power of change that any of us fortunate to be present and living during today's times can foster. We take our chance to design as a privilege and responsibility standing at the precipice of change. We are persevering to integrate the energy and mindsets of today and infuse those in the context and pertinence of tomorrow.

It's significant as it records the flux of times as a context and expression in our projects. This organic growth, issues and development taking place in India or in a larger context, the earth, is reflected in our design.

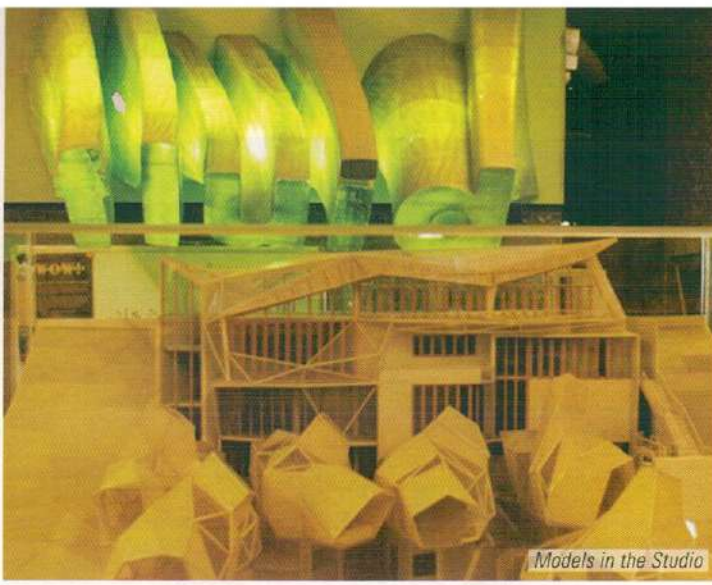


Master plan/campus development for Sports City at Satgarhi Village, Bhopal



Studio. Staircase and elements of the wall

"We see various faculties of architecture, planning, engineering, management and finance as not individual components but as various expertise/sciences needed to manifest a project."



Models in the Studio

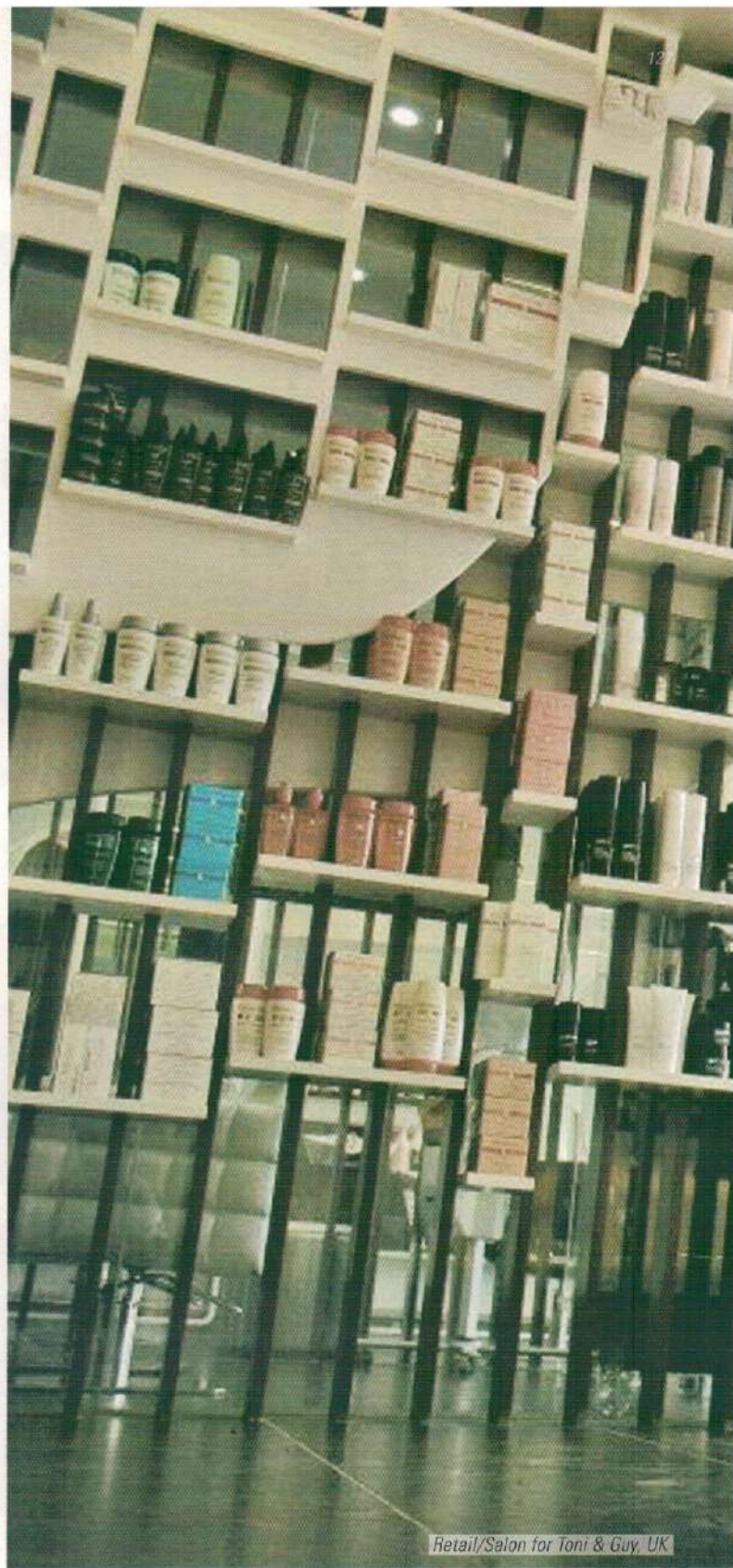
Over the last decade, they have produced energetic architecture that is experimental, programmatically complex and visually stimulating. They have evolved over a period of a decade. What, according to them, are the core concerns that pertain to M:OFA's work?

M:OFA: What is the relevance of the vernacular language of forts, palaces, villages, step wells, temples, mosques etc. built in the past, today in an India dealing with growth and development of a very different time, scale, magnitude and pertinence? What is the connection between Modernism as a movement in the West versus what happens in India then and now? The core concern of our work would be to abstract these time periods, movements and styles to quality of space, spirit and thought. Like Bhagwad Gita teaches, 'atman' or the soul remains eternal, the body keeps changing. Hence, what we relate to is a larger context of the cosmos or the environment, rather than stylisations which are Indian or regional/vernacular alone. In spirit, our spaces reflect the scales and feel that is vernacular and equally cosmological, without literally using the elements and materials that are vernacular.

Till date, M:OFA has developed a diverse portfolio with projects ranging from product designs to master plans. On an interactive map on their website, one can see a diverse, rich city-scape that composes the range of their involvement. What is their most important work? Why?

MG: Without sounding even a little bit politically correct, each project in the studio is very dear to me. Every project in its time and space took us a step ahead in our pursuit. We chose a path and each project was an encounter to manifest creativity in brick and concrete. Each project and almost each client enriched us with the experience. Even though, like all architects, we too have many un-built works which couldn't get executed for various reasons, yet contributed towards the development of the practice, but it's the built work which finally gave us an identity.

TG: It's impossible to name one. They are all special for various reasons; completed and ongoing. There is 100 per cent synergy with where we want to move towards with both DPCC Head Office Building and VAT Building (competition). It stands for everything that we have strived towards in the last 10 years and will keep doing so in the future. NIFT Kangra at the moment is a project which we have worked very hard over.



Retail/Salon for Toni & Guy, UK



Institution for ITM Universe Amphitheatre

Through technology and design, the studio has invested substantially in developing their understanding of energy-efficient architectural and planning systems. Their buildings have a global outlook and local response. What and who are the people, things and places that inform or influence their work?

MG: Architectural learning happened to me in 3 phases. It started with a formal training at the School of Architecture, CEPT under great mentors like architects and professor Anant Raje, BV Doshi, Kurla Varkey, Leo Pereira and Neelkanth Chhaya through their teachings of Modernism, their passion and appreciation for Masters like Corbusier, Wright and Kahn that got absorbed like a sponge in my mind then.

That formal learning at CEPT in its 2nd phase found its physical manifestation during my short stint at ETH University, Zurich, from where I travelled all across Europe, soaking in the spirit of great architecture and urban spaces both in time and space. My exposure to various disciplines of art forms and understanding the parallels and connections has taught me to create architecture that is bold and larger than life. In my 3rd phase of learning, it is my client with their age-old wisdom, cross disciplines and experience that combine to teach me and help me realise my bold ideas into reality, helping the project to be a perfect balance of fresh ideas with a strong backbone of sustainability.



NIFT Campus at Kangra: Girls' hostel block



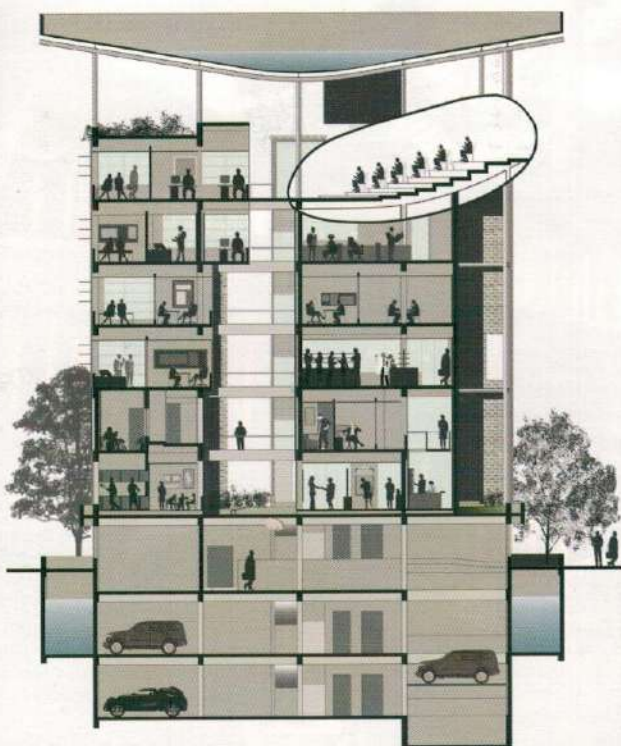
Schematic sketch



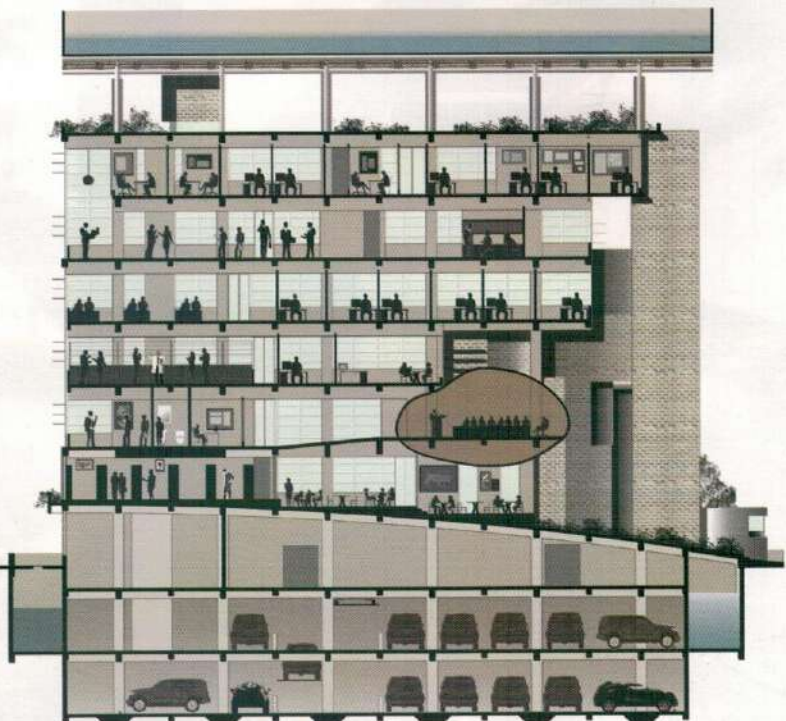
NIFT: The central staircase



NIFT: The hostel corridor



Section aa'



Section bb'

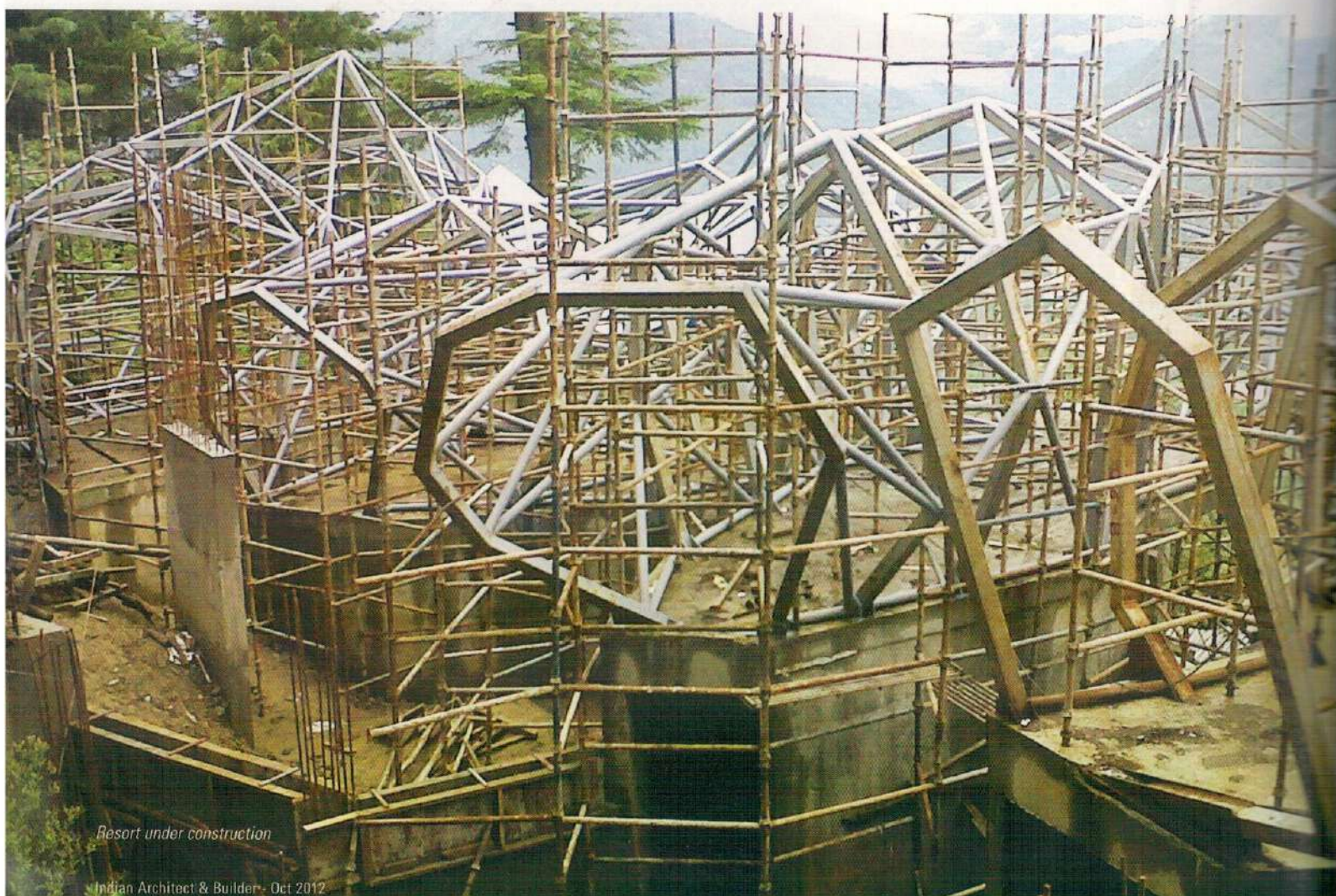
Head office for Delhi Pollution Control Committee: Sections



DPCC, 3D visualisation



Aarth Resort, Naggar



Resort under construction

Well exposed to contemporary technologies, the architecture of M:OFA finds a pragmatic common ground between experimentation and continuity. As they develop, what defines their 'vision' for the future?

MG: Vision is a huge word. I simply love to design day-in and day-out. At the same time, as a professional, I consider it a huge responsibility to contribute to the future generations to come, architectural creations that are bold, out-of-the-box, yet deep-rooted and self-sustainable. To me, that is the future of architecture. Any creation that cannot sustain itself becomes a burden on society. We, as architects, are not creating only sculptures to be admired but our creations provide meaning to the lives of millions.

TG: What excites me about architecture is smart ideas which create spaces that inspire and nurture, thoughts, ideas, feelings and its occupants. It's when humans merely stopped being functional and worked towards aspiration, was perhaps when architecture happened. Today, many people understand architecture as just façade/surface treatment or just engineering. It's when you move ahead of those, that's when the fun starts. Many people, in Indian cities especially, are yet to experience and enjoy what architecture can bring forth to their everyday lives despite spending tremendous resources. To me, architecture means quality of life and thought that uplifts and creates better opportunities. I see it as a perfect balance between art and engineering which always, and always, creates the next step that nature and civilisation can walk together on. So the vision is to keep learning and creating such architecture and leaves those same aspirational clues for the occupants to take ahead and grow.

AC: We are fortunate that our passion and work, both, lies in architecture. The excitement of exploring new possibilities has always grown with every new opportunity. It's truly astounding to know that when one is learning, it never stops being joyful and one yearns to keep exploring and learning more. Hence, there are no limits and our vision is to keep moving ahead in innovation.



Bold, experimental and progressive, the architecture of M:OFA is informed by contemporary contexts of technology, material innovations, formal tools of exploration and progressive ideas. As a practice, their work is radical, iconographic and extensively layered. M:OFA has worked on diverse projects; varied in type and content. Through critical arguments and a philosophical approach, they constantly seek unique and unchained expressions for their designs, all the while measuring their ideas against realities of use, finance and efficiency.

The studio and the process of design are driven by articulating issues and thoughts, and constantly evolving through research and exposure. Manish, Tanushree and Abhinav have individual interests, areas of focus and expertise which enables them to approach a programme from multiple perspectives. They follow a rigorous process of design – modelling – analysis – design. Their buildings have an element of non-predictability and awe. ■