

Urban Mapping & Design in a Globalizing World – India Winterim 2008 - 2010



The academic year 2007-2008 witnessed the introduction and grand success of SARUP's first-ever India Winterim program, directed by Assistant Professor Manu P. Sobti. Graduate and undergraduate students visited India over a two and a half week long period, spending time in New Delhi, Agra, Chandigarh, and Ahmedabad.

Besides extensive diagramming, logbook entries and sketching, the highlight of the program was an Urban Mapping Charrette conducted at the School of Architecture (CEPT), Ahmedabad, wherein SARUP students teamed up with local students from the well-known CEPT School of Architecture (Ahmedabad). A select group of returning students formed part of an ongoing India Urban Design Studio offered at SARUP in Spring 2008.

The most important objective of the INDIA Study-Abroad Program was to provide students with a first-hand exposure to the process of globalization and its dramatic impact on the making (and un-making) of the physical and cultural environments. India, with its rapidly expanding cities, embodies conflict, contestation, adjustment and reconciliation between the past and present, its architects continually seeking to render these battles in the forms of buildings, spaces and places. Several proclaim success, while others accept the pleasures of profit as achievement enough. A select few are pained by the difference they could have made to a culture and place where the elephant and skyscraper seamlessly co-exist or collide. It is the recognition of this multi-layered cultural phenomenon, with its complex nuances affecting architecture and cities, which was seen as most instructive for students beginning to identify a design language of their own.

Participating students were encouraged to select projects in the urban environments of New Delhi, Agra, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh, their interventions serving as critical appendages to the existing urban fabric. It was expected that these would react to a complex palimpsest of structures, several ancient and medieval – now the stuff of memory, others modern and radical – evoking Corbusier, Kahn and other lesser architects.

The next India Winterim (recently announced for Jan. 2009) plans to build on the success of the first one completed in 2008. It shall also serve as a bridge for an exciting Chandigarh Urban Design Studio offered to returning SARUP students, and co-taught to students from participating schools in Chandigarh, Ahmedabad and Italy.