The Indian Institute of Architects, Nagpur Centre (Maharashtra Chapter)

10th Prof. S A DESHPANDE STUDIO DESIGN COMPETITION

The Djinns of Bhootpoor
An Atmospheric Project in 7 ATMOSPHERIC Drawings deploying *The Thematic Odyssey of The Uncanny*
The Project.......

The genesis for all dispositions emanating from the idea of THE UNCANNY is the Haunted House....that is not to say that you shall do one.....far from it......There are innumerable instances in literature, films, the oral traditions of story telling & popular writing wherein terror, horror, dislocations, spooky situations, eerie & weird atmospheres are best explained in the physical construct of architecture.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE UNCANNY IS THE ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCT.
SOME NOTES,
SOME POINTERS,
SOME DIRECTIONS,
SOME SITUATIONS,
SOME CIRCUMSTANCES,
SOME POSSIBILITIES.
The specters of cataclysmic architecture acquire a convincing malignity possessed by the macabreness of the weird tale. The weird tale or the wicked tale marauds through spaces of horror and terror gathering alongside fragments of carefully cultivated architectural montages to place the very horror in them. **Horror is best placed in the gothic tradition.** The grotesque is after all a friendly neighbor. Every **architecture carries the grotesque in its bowels.** Let beauty be damned. The grotesque is never regressed. **Its cataclysmic countenance is a perfect place for it to embed the terror it so wishes to flaunt.** No architecture is supposedly meant to terrorize. But when terror prepares to inhabit it; **it makes amends.** It locate itself in its essential ambivalence; and revels in this new found condition.
The Architectural Uncanny/
The Fall of the House of Usher/
The Haunted House/
Familiar yet Alien/
uncanny
ʌnˈkani/

adjective
• strange or mysterious, especially in an unsettling way.
  "an uncanny feeling that she was being watched"

Etymology
Canny is from the Anglo-Saxon root ken: "knowledge, understanding, or cognizance; mental perception: an idea beyond one's ken. Thus the uncanny is something outside one's familiar knowledge or perceptions.

The Architectural UnCanny
The uncanny is the psychological experience of something as strangely familiar, rather than simply mysterious. It may describe incidents, for example, where an everyday object or act is experienced in an unsettling, alienating, or taboo context. This experience is accompanied by a discomforting effect and often leads to an outright rejection of the object, as in the uncanny valley effect.

The concept of the uncanny was perhaps first fixed by Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay *Das Unheimliche*. For Freud, the uncanny's mixture of the familiar and the eerie confronts the subject with unconscious, repressed impulses. Expanding on the idea, psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan wrote that the uncanny places us "in the field where we do not know how to distinguish bad and good, pleasure from displeasure," resulting in an irreducible anxiety gesturing to the Real. The concept has since been taken up by a variety of subsequent thinkers and theorists such as Roboticist Masahiro Mori's "uncanny valley" hypothesis and Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection.
Uncanniness was first explored psychologically by Ernst Jentsch in a 1906 essay, *On the Psychology of the Uncanny*. Jentsch defines the *Uncanny* as: being a product of "...intellectual uncertainty; so that the uncanny would always, as it were, be something one does not know one's way about in. The better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it. He expands upon its use in fiction:

In telling a story one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton and to do it in such a way that his attention is not focused directly upon his uncertainty, so that he may not be led to go into the matter and clear it up immediately. Jentsch identifies German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann as a writer who uses uncanny effects in his work, focusing specifically on Hoffmann's story "The Sandman" ("Der Sandmann"), which features a lifelike doll, Olympia.
There's another sense of architecture as "haunted", in terms of something like what Jacques Derrida calls the "architecture of architecture", a historical concatenation of thinkers and buildings and social norms that together constitute an a priori set of rules and configurations for what we think when we think about architecture, even if those thoughts are oppositional. And then, on an additional level, we come into a world already built and absolutely saturated with the physical and immaterial traces of those who came before us.

Totally. This hermeneutical spider web around architecture, this architecture of architecture, isn't a special human-scale feature of how things are. For OOO everything is like that. Everything is haunted by its very own spider web, in fact, without any spiders, and especially not human thought, needing to be involved. To be a thing is to be haunted. The only question is, to what extent are you going to allow yourself in your process to be haunted by this spider-webby quality of how things appear?

• Buildings are haunted, not just by their past, but also by their future[...] Buildings are haunted, not just by their past, but also by their future. What does the Large Hadron Collider look like 10,000 years from now? Why don't we include that kind of thought in design? Wouldn't including that kind of thing – which implies a spectral, un-pin-downable future happening at all kinds of overlapping temporal scale – be exactly an ecological architectural practice? Houses are already not just for humans, right? What happens when the squirrel needs to get from A to B on your balcony?

• For this reason, I don't actually believe in the present! I think what we have—and it's very obvious in a large, long-term structure such as a building—is a sliding of past over future without touching. The word for this sliding is nowness and it's a kind of relative motion that the concept of present and presence (and the metaphysics of presence) is trying to delete. Lots of Western philosophy is horribly kinephobic, terrified of motion. It seems to want to get rid of it, to explain it away, to make it incidental to how things are.
The house acts as one of the major sites for both the ideological articulation of “Nature” – through opposition as well as enframedment – and the physical practice of it. We desire our homes to be antiseptic, isolated, and exclusively human zones. So we filter our air, spray chemicals, set out rat poison – often inadvertently poisoning ourselves in the process, like some autoimmune disorder that we’ve decided to call dwelling. In fact, this dynamic is very much at play in haunted houses of horror fiction, where pests and ghosts rebel against the imposition of domesticity. Can you speak to this?

Wow, I love that phrase, “like some autoimmune disorder that we’ve decided to call dwelling”. I love it! That’s precisely it. In order to maintain smooth functioning (for humans), and to maintain the smooth functioning of this very myth of smooth functioning, a whole of violence is required behind the scenes on every level, social, psychic and philosophical. In every respect we’ve been trying to sever ourselves from other lifeforms—remember, you have them inside you and you couldn’t exist if you didn’t, and there’s more of them inside you than there is of you, so this is a major deal, this violence. But this is impossible. For instance, you mention how architecture has since about 1900 been based on vectors of pollution flow—gotta keep the bad air out, for instance, so you need air conditioning. But when you think about things at Earth magnitude, at that scale, where does it go? It doesn’t go “away,” it just goes somewhere else in the system. Nature, if you like, is a sort of fourth wall concept (you know theater?) by which we try to separate the human from everything else, and it functions in house design at every level. So yes horror fiction — I think also that the ennui poems of Baudelaire are fantastic on this. Feeling like you are covered in all kinds of spooky stuff as you sit in your flat...that’s real ecological awareness, that is.
Humans also exhibit symptoms of this autoimmune response on a more macro level. From the “Four Pest Campaign” of Maoist-era China to contemporary conversations about eradicating mosquitoes, modern history has many examples of attempts at “pest extermination” at a grand scale, which often had devastating effects. Chief among those, I think, would be the current and ongoing Sixth Mass Extinction event that you’ve written about quite extensively. Can you talk about this, and what it implies for the way humans understand what it means to dwell on the planetary scale?

The struggle against racism is exactly the struggle against speciesism, which is one of the ways this stage set maintenance works. Totalitarian and fascist societies can be weirdly ecological, in ways that disturb us about ecology: like eugenics, or animal rights (the Nazis were all over that), reforestation, Lenin talking about putting loads of fertilizer in the soil... Those social systems get the disgust level of ecological awareness, the Baudelaire level. But they get stuck there, and they try to peel the disgust off of themselves. That’s a way to describe the Holocaust, no? But truly, you can't peel everything off, because its being-stuck-to-you is a possibility condition for you existing. So someone like Baudelaire with his moody ennui is showing you how to tunnel down into deeper ecological awareness underneath fascism. I’m sorry but we have to go down underneath it to discover less violent ecological modes.

The struggle to have solidarity with lifeforms is the struggle to include specters and spectrality. We make beings extermination-ready by designating them as uncanny, disturbingly not-unlike-us-enough beings inhabiting the uncanny valley [...] R2D2 and Hitler’s dog Blondi are “over there” on the peak opposite us, the good fascist “healthy human beings”. We try to forget the abject valley that enables this nice me-versus-nature, human-versus-nonhuman, subject-versus-object setup to work. But as you think about biology and so on, you realize that these peaks are illusions, and there is no uncanny valley, because everything is uncanny, because we can’t say for sure whether it’s alive or not alive, sentient or not sentient, conscious or not conscious, and so on. Everything becomes spectral, undead, in all kinds of unique and different ways.

So the struggle to have solidarity with lifeforms is the struggle to include specters and spectrality, strangely enough. Without this, ecological philosophy falls into a gravity well where it becomes part of the autoimmunity machination you just described. I so don’t want to live in that kind of ecological society...
During the spring of 2016, David Lowery began to write the screenplay for the film. He was scheduled for production after completing post-production on *Pete's Dragon*, his Disney live action film. Prior to this Lowery had wanted to "for a while" make a film featuring a man in a simple rudimentary ghost costume, telling Comingsoon.net, "I just loved that image. I love taking something that is understood to be funny or charming or sweet or naive and instilling it with some degree of gravity." Finally, the chance to use such a plot device came when he and his wife got in an argument about moving back to Texas. Lowery began to write down the argument "thinking about my own attachment to physical spaces." Combining both ideas he came up with the basic concept for the movie fairly quickly. Lowery also used the film to work through what he termed "An existential crisis" brought on by reading an article about the possibility of a catastrophic earthquake, says Lowery "I was not feeling optimistic about the future of mankind. I felt the world was on its way to ending. The film became my way of dealing with those issues."
The project was officially announced in November 2016, confirming Mara and Affleck had been cast in the film. It was later revealed Kesha would appear in the film.

Affleck's costume was more difficult to deal with than Lowery was prepared for, at first the team attempted to simply use a normal bed sheet, however they soon found that even a king sized sheet would not fully cover a grown adult male. The final costume required Affleck to wear additional garments in addition to the normal fabric. The team also found they had to resort to some "puppeteering" to keep the eyes in place. Beyond the practical constraints of the costume, Lowery also found the simple costume impeded on Affleck's ability to act, noting "every unique physical trait as a human being was pronounced and exaggerated by this sheet over his head." This did not give Lowery the results he wanted. Lowery eventually solved this problem by reducing the amount of movement so that "it became a matter of patience and posture and moving very specifically, slowly and rigidly." Some shots of the ghost, specifically those done during pickups or reshoots, do not use Affleck at all instead replacing him with the films art director, David Pink, who was found to have a similar build.
ATMOSPHERES OF THE UNCANNY
SCHINDLER’S LIST
CATACLYSMIC NATURE OF ARCHITECTURE
THE DYSTOPIA PROJECT
According to Russian legend, "Potemkin Villages"—entirely fake urban conurbations made to appear real—can be traced to its namesake, Field Marshall Aleksandrovich Potemkin. In 1787, this soldier faced an unusual request: Catherine the Great demanded the construction of swathes of artificial settlements along her route to the Crimea in order to disguise, or veil, the run-down face of the region.
In politics and economics, a "Potemkin village" or "Potyomkin village," derived from the Russian: is any construction (literal or figurative) built solely to deceive others into thinking that a situation is better than it really is. The term comes from stories of a fake portable village built only to impress Empress Catherine II during her journey to Crimea in 1787. While some modern historians claim accounts of this portable village are exaggerated, the original story was that Grigory Potemkin erected phony portable settlements along the banks of the Dnieper River in order to fool the Russian Empress; the structures would be disassembled after she passed, and re-assembled farther along her route to be viewed again as if new.
GIOVANNI BATTISTA PIRANESI
ATMOSPHERIC DRAWINGS
SCHEDULE OF THE COMPETITION

13.8.2018 (Monday)
Introduction of the Competition Brief.

13.8.2018 to 02.09.2018 -
a) All students are expected to prepare for the competition by studying the Competition Brief and catching up with reading, watching movies and/or videos recommended by the mentor/faculty or otherwise.
b) In addition to the above, students are free to begin work on the design in their respective studios, at home, etc.

03.09.2018 (Sunday)
Declaration of other project details including site

03.09.2018 - 09.09.2018 (Monday through Sunday)
The 10th Prof. S A Deshpande Studio Design Competition. During this period, students are required to work in the studio only (24 x 7)

09.09.2018 (Sunday)
Submission of 3 shortlisted entries as mentioned under ‘INTERNAL ASSESSMENT’ between 7:30 PM and 9:00 PM at the IIA - Nagpur Centre Office, Sadar, Nagpur

Screening of entries by a panel of Assessors at IIA - Nagpur Centre Office
To be communicated at a later date

Final Open Jury
To be communicated at a later date
PRESENTATION RHETORIC
A well rehearsed explanation narrated in a systematic manner will always help. Explain the strategy of your design, the concepts explained therein in a concise manner. Emphasize in your rhetoric the idea of your project. Also talk about the learning process.

PRESENTATION ETIQUETTE
Keep an amiable, pleasant and confident appearance. Be patient with the jury. Listen to them, after all this is a peer review. Questions are inevitable. Therefore your answers are mandatory.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT
Each participating institution is eligible to submit 3 shortlisted entries per 40 participants. For example, if the intake is 120, but number of participants is 65, the number of eligible entries shall be 4.87, i.e., 5 entries (rounded off).
In other words, 1 entry per 13.33 participating students will be eligible. However, in the event the number of students on rolls/participating students are less than 13, even then 1 entry will be eligible. The shortlisted entries shall be certified by the head of the participating institution by stamping & signing the same. The entries shall be accompanied by the list of participants, duly stamped & certified by the head of the institution.
The mode of assessment shall be table jury. In the table jury, each short listed student will be given 10 minutes to explain his/her project. Only such entries deemed worthy shall make it to the final open jury. The names of the short listed entries for the final open jury will be duly conveyed.
The decision of the internal assessors shall be final and binding on all stakeholders.
RETURNING OF ENTRIES
The shortlisted entries will be retained by the Nagpur Centre and scanned. The remaining entries too shall be retained and returned to the respective institutions after the final open jury. The same scanned entries shall be presented in the final open jury, which shall be an audio visual presentation.

FINAL OPEN JURY
Wild card entry - all received entries (shortlisted for the final jury or not) will be displayed on the day of the final open jury at the venue. Before the commencement of the final open jury (10:00 AM - 11:00 AM), the external jurors shall go through the ones which are not shortlisted for the final open jury. Any non-shortlisted entry found suitable shall be treated as a wildcard entry and the same shall be eligible for the final open jury. Hence, all the participants are expected to be present at the venue at 10:00 AM.
The names of external jury for the final open jury shall be communicated at a later date
The venue of the jury and the timings shall be communicated at a later date.
The sequence of presentation will be by draw of lots.
Lunch shall be provided to the shortlisted participants of the final open jury.
At the end of the jury presentations, the jury members shall retire for determining the awards.
During this time, there shall be an open house, where all participants shall together participate in mutual discussion and questioning.
The open house shall be followed by the awards ceremony.
The decision of the jurors shall be final and binding on all stakeholders.
PRIZES -
1ST - CERTIFICATE AND CASH AWARD OF INR 7500.00
2ND - CERTIFICATE AND CASH AWARD OF INR 5000.00
3RD - CERTIFICATE AND CASH AWARD OF INR 2500.00
CONSOLATION PRIZES - TWO, WITH CERTIFICATE
COMMENDATION CERTIFICATES SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE SHORTLISTED ENTRIES
RUNNING TROPHY SHALL BE AWARDED TO THE INSTITUTION OF THE 1ST PRIZE WINNING STUDENT

AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPETITION BRIEF –
The Indian Institute of Architects, Nagpur Centre reserves the right to make amendments in the Competition Brief without assigning any reasons whatsoever.