A NATIONAL TRAVELING EXHIBITION ON DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE 2018
The Death of Architecture; Circa 2000 is a traveling exhibition assembled by 13 of India’s thinking and concerned design practices.

Through evocative art works, poetry and prose, the exhibition decodes and amplifies actions some which are orchestrated, others inconsiderate. Actions, that slowly tear and restructure the fabric of our cities and the architecture within and along with that impact our sense of being.

The exhibition presents evidence that will allow discussions about our present, and yet at the same time is embedded with clues and signs that can help effect meaningful dialogues about the future. In a sense, it consolidates the many critical discussions that forms the dough which leads to design such as those about the demise of our cities as we know them, or the meaning of inspirations from the past, or ideas of beauty, or duplicitous ways of achieving identity, or ways of understanding spatiality.

The exhibition is a strong mirror, that will allow cities and design communities to structure conversations that are pertinent to their immediate realm and concerns.
There has never been a time in history when architects have not pronounced the imminent demise of the profession. If that seems a bit extreme, then at the very least they have at all times said that it is under threat of existence.

It has always been a conversation waiting to rear its head.

The reasons are not too hard to fathom. A healthy skepticism about perennial good health and a complete disbelief in immortality is a level headed way of staying on course. Perhaps more importantly the imagined expiry has allowed introspection and reinvention.

While this has been the underlying narrative, its murmur has often been muffled by at varying times, by different but separate pursuits; many which have dominated the conversation amongst large numbers in the profession and simultaneously found acceptance as reasonably relevant causes amidst select sections of society.

With an almost measured staccato in time, the nation building imperative, ushered in the age of institution building and the quest for housing for all; and when that lost some sheen, matters of Indian identity with forays in the vernacular and cosmic leapt to capture imagination and just as that was beginning to loose some lustre, the economy opened up and ideas of globalisation and being part of the new world were seized with great fervour. And while this occupies large conversations, the problems of the city along with the imminent death of the planet and matters related to its sustainability have lead to the rise of the newly inducted committed lot.

But as all matters of grave confabulations or irreverent ripostes must, these too diminish in their import and when they do, the familiar but timeless angst resurfaces. It is that time again in India.
Many of its disciples do not have a clear reason why is it their trade of choosing; and the little idealism that it arms them with, when they set forth as young practitioners seems to slowly ebb. Society barely thinks of it as a relevant discipline, and most don’t even know of its existence. And increasingly it has lesser and lesser to do about making an impact on mankind and society at large. And all the accompanying distractions have undercut the basic but primal joy of beautiful spaces, as if that was an irrelevant pursuit.

When faith is at peril, monks, believers and the converted congregate, and find reasons to keep it safe, to find what ails it, but also to proclaim its promised joys.

Architecture is a balm and even an opiate; it is a perspicuous, rational and intuitive structuring system that can create spatial arrangements in ways that can have bearing on intellectual and emotional deliberations that leave indelible impressions across time.

And yet today, its death is once again being whispered.

13 firms, across the country, try and construct this narrative, find reasons, state their cases, so that we can all render selves in moments of soliloquy and find cause to reaffirm conviction.

Or to be part of the wake.

Aniket Bhagwat
December, 2017.
Death of Place: Edifice by Pramod Balakrishnan
The End of Local: The BusRide

M/s Prabhakar B.Bhagwat
Re-member. Aataba Architects

Fading Of The City Grain. Vikas Dilwani Architects

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