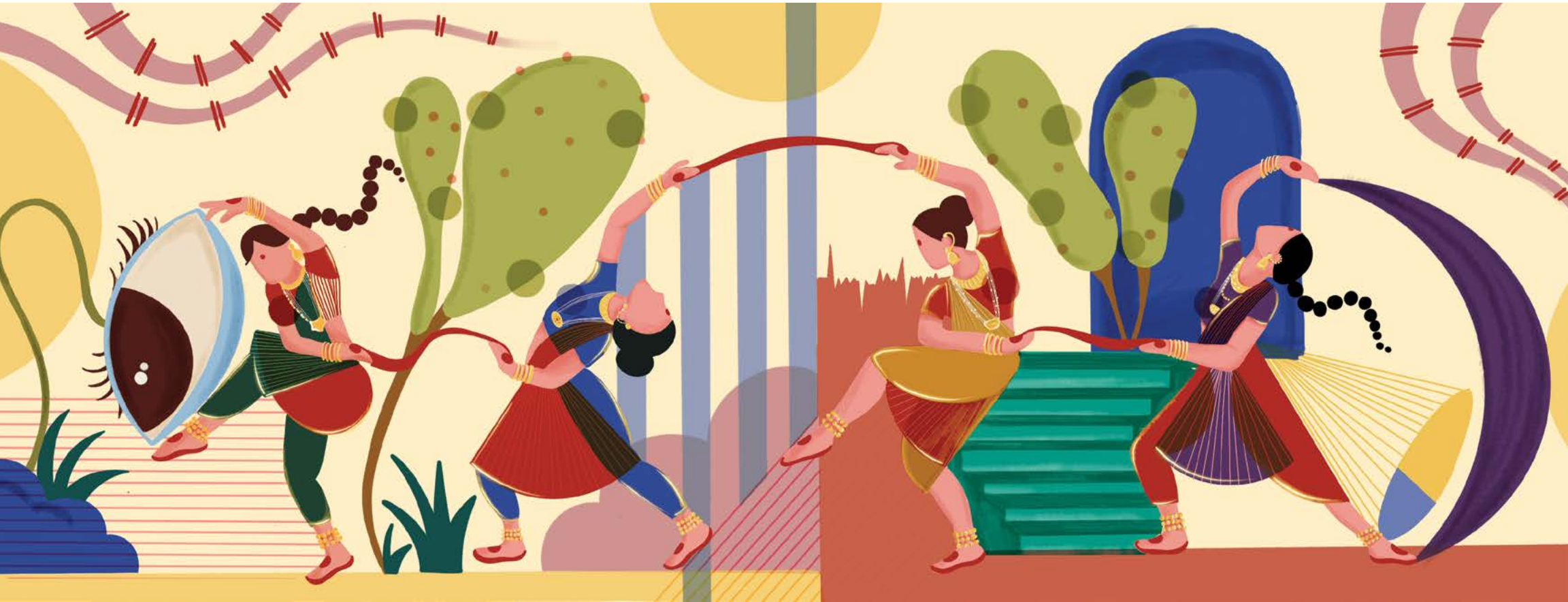


READING CORNER

HISTORY | LITERATURE | ART | ARCHITECTURE | CULTURE | HERITAGE | BIOGRAPHY | TRAVEL | WILDLIFE | ENVIRONMENT | RELIGION | SELF-HELP | FICTION | TRANSLATION | CINEMA | FOOD | CHILDREN



The Rhythmic Movement Through The Built Space

Growing up, it was school and dance, college and dance, work and dance. Dance has been the string through it all. My learning through both the art forms—architecture and bharatanatyam—largely shapes the way I think.

While designing a space, I visualise the energy it would create and then respond with a movement for that space; much like how site-specific dance productions, occurring outside of the conventional theater space, challenge choreographers to look at, listen to, feel and think about the space in which the dance is performed.

I have a pose expressing the energy for every space I've designed, whether it's an atrium or a staircase landing. This response could be in the form of movements—such as, a vertical jump or a slow twirl or arms outstretched—with direction, levels, symmetry and asymmetry at play. In healthcare architecture, for example, some spaces are meant to feel intimate and protective while others are supposed to be grand, exuding power yet calming. The connection and interplay between spaces is the dance of energies, much like the dance of life.

In the first hospital I designed, the entrance was through a vestibule, with green views on either side, which opened into a wide, double height with vertical glazings connecting to nature. It is interesting to see that one can experience a similar heightened energy level like that of a traditional temple, while entering through the narrow *gopuram* (gateway) to the more expansive and open *mandap* (prayer hall)

in a contemporary hospital building. I remember responding with very similar movements in both these spaces.

Our surroundings have a direct impact on our moods and emotions. Hospitals are often a high-stress space for its users and introducing calming elements and spaces is crucial. Height can have an overwhelming impact and bring a feeling of openness and fluidity into the environment.

There are multiple factors at play—such as: the use of materials and textures, natural vs artificial lighting effects, interaction with art and sculptures, color therapy, connection between different levels and furniture layouts—all of which work together to create an experience. However, it is the basic volume and proportion of a space that make the boldest of statements.

I have a pose expressing the energy for every space I've designed, whether it's an atrium or a staircase landing.

Experiencing a space or a live performance often trigger and internalise a response from the user or audience. Like on stage, a dancer, with one hand gesture, can direct the eyes of an entire audience solely to the hand. Similarly, in one of my upcoming hospital projects, by introducing elements like a skylight in a triple height lobby, the eye of every user can be directed upwards to connect with the visual and emotional relief of the sky.

Architecture and dance are both performing arts. Classical dance is not

something to be performed at free will. Dance has a grammar, a set of basic codified movements, which can be used to form numerous phrases, and there is also the emotional quotient that forms the spiritual base. Architecture too has certain principles and by-laws defining its requirements. But that is not to say that these are the restricting factors; in fact, these are only guiding factors. Both the art forms have a certain defined vocabulary meant to be used as words for the designers' creative imagination, for which the sky is the limit.

One of my favorite parts of the architectural design process is to sketch a space on paper and create an experience that would evoke a certain feeling in the user and then to actually stand in the brick and mortar space and experience those feelings. There is no greater joy. The idea is to enjoy the process of design. The drumming of the pencil and tapping of the foot, often in 'taal' to the music playing, are indicators. They say until one can think in a language, one hasn't made it one's own. For me, I think in energies and movement, the entwining of architecture and dance.

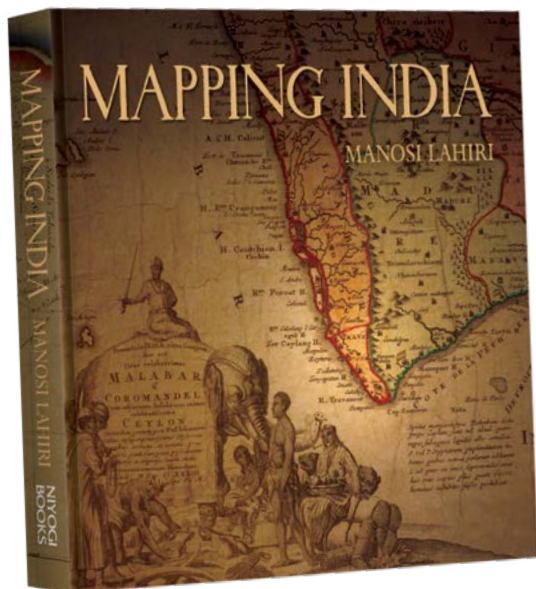


Senior Architect
Director - Design,
Planners Group Pvt. Ltd.

Flip through to explore the art and science of architecture...

ARCHITECTURE: AN ART & A SCIENCE

Cartography serves as both the witness and architect of urban development. These two books explore this intricate relationship through different lenses, revealing how cartographic representations not only document our cities but actively influence their evolution.



◀ MAPPING INDIA



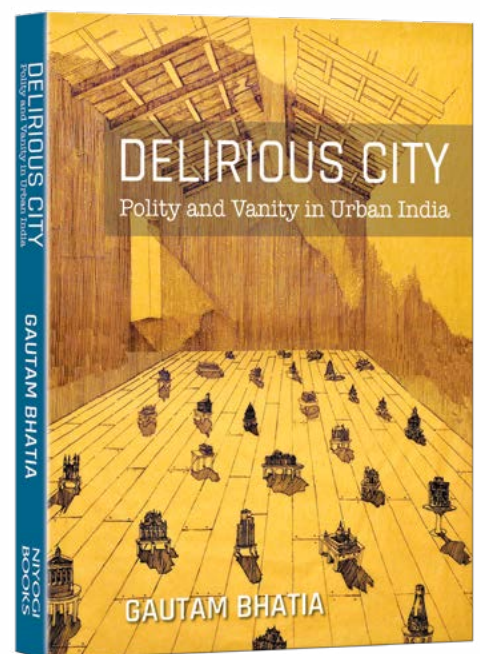
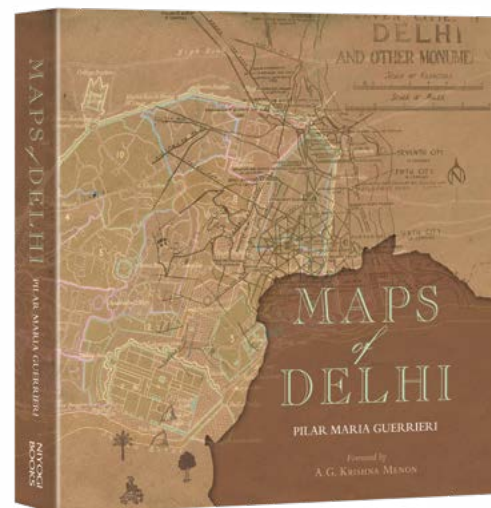
Mapping India presents cartographic records—from changing river courses and army routes to new settlement patterns, famine locations, mountain discoveries and Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha march—that reflect India's changing social and political landscape through history.



75 Years Salt Satyagraha, a series of four stamps issued by India Post, 2005. Souvenir sheet featuring the path of the march: Courtesy Dan's Topical Stamps.

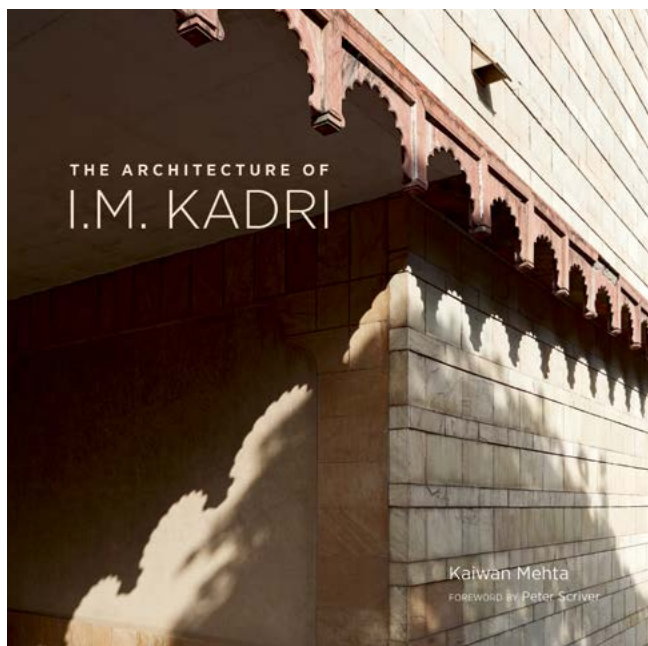
▼ MAPS OF DELHI

This exquisite chronological collection of Delhi's maps from the early 19th century through the 2021 master plan—with maps ranging from magnificent ancient hand-drawings to modern digital renderings—showcases Delhi as 'a city of cities,' where political, social, and historical progressions are mirrored in evolving urban planning and architecture.



▲ DELIRIOUS CITY

Born from the 'grainy combination of despair and delight' experienced by Indian city dwellers, this provocative work blends various mediums—writing, drawing, painting, sculpture, and architecture—to make sense of the urban Indian experience. The book examines daily life, notable places, and diverse personalities—from houses and builders to parks, malls, bureaucrats, politicians, and people across the socioeconomic spectrum. Moving from current urban conditions to hopeful future visions, this sometimes architectural, sometimes cultural, and frequently facetious work imitates life in the Indian city.



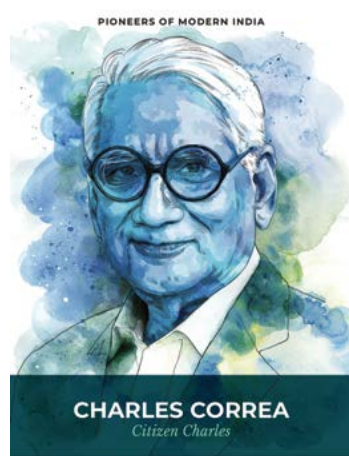
◀ THE ARCHITECTURE OF I.M. KADRI

As an architect who shaped his practice largely in the early decades after India's independence, Iftikhar M. Kadri's journey is also the journey of Mumbai as the emerging commercial capital of India—a city whose tryst with architecture is very different from other sites of important Modern architecture in India. Seminal

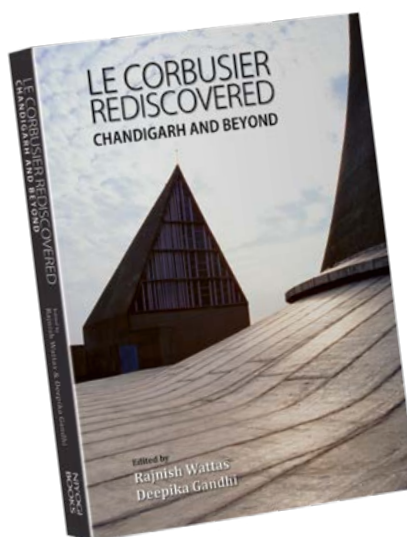
structures like the Nehru Centre, Happy Home and School for the Blind, Shivsagar Estate, Brighton, Islam Gymkhana, Otters Club etc. dotting the urban landscape of Mumbai are a testament to that journey.

▼ CHARLES CORREA

This is the first-ever biography to explore the life of Charles Correa, who exemplified Indian modernism by adapting contemporary international technologies to India's climate and customs. From his childhood in Art Deco Bombay through his education among International Modernism's giants to his passionate advocacy for urban equity and decent housing for all citizens, this book traces Correa's journey as one of the pillars of modern Indian architecture.

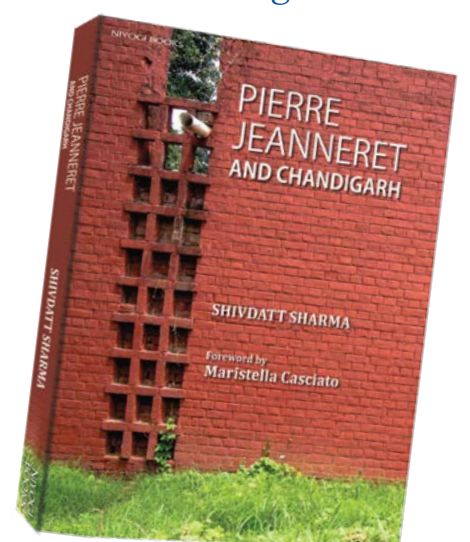


India's architectural landscape was shaped by visionaries who blended modernism with distinctly local sensibilities. Like the seven wonders that defined ancient civilizations, these architects created structures reflecting India's soul.



▲ LE CORBUSIER REDISCOVERED

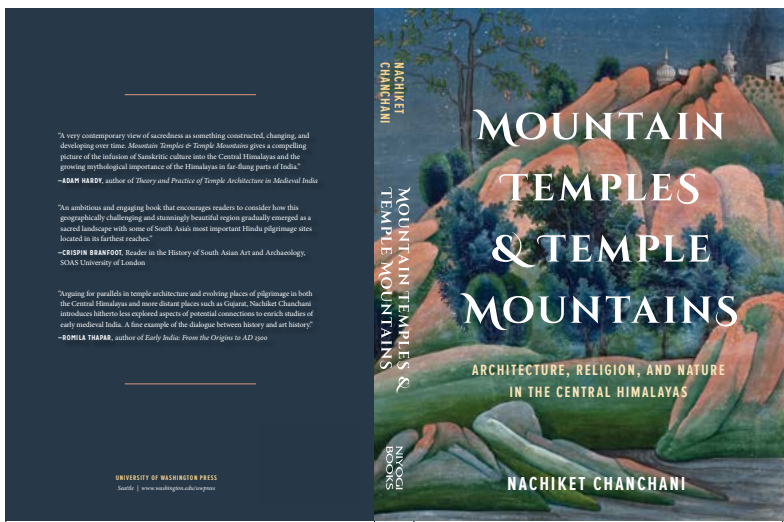
Following UNESCO's recognition of Chandigarh's Capitol Complex as a World Heritage Site, this anthology illuminates the contributions of Le Corbusier, widely considered the 20th century's greatest architect-planner. Featuring essays by global experts, the richly illustrated volume examines Corbusier's influence not only in Chandigarh but throughout India and beyond.



▲ PIERRE JEANNERET AND CHANDIGARH

While Le Corbusier often receives the spotlight for Chandigarh, this book rectifies a historical oversight by highlighting the crucial contributions of his cousin, Pierre Jeanneret. The author positions Le Corbusier as 'the dreamer' and Jeanneret as 'the implementer' in creating the 'City Beautiful.'

▼ MOUNTAIN TEMPLES & TEMPLE MOUNTAINS



Buddhist monasteries or wooden ‘pagoda-like’ shrines of Tibet, Nepal, and the western Himalayas are what comes readily to mind when we think of architecture in the Himalayas. We rarely think of the older stone temples that populate the central Himalayas despite this region’s immense religious significance. Discussing sites like the Almora temple, Kasar Devi temple, Khera temple, and the Damayanti Tal among many others, Nachiket Chanchani shows how temple architecture evolved with evolving places of pilgrimage in the Central Himalayas.

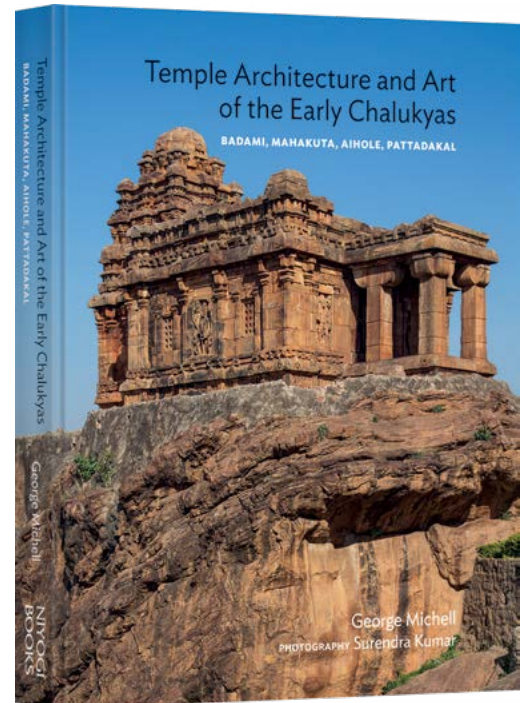


Incomplete monolithic rock-cut temple, ca. 700-725, Masrur, Himachal Pradesh. Photo courtesy: *Mountain Temples & Temple Mountains*.

‘Every science touches art at some points—every art has its scientific side,’ the great French physician, Armand Trousseau, had noted during one of his seminal lectures. And nowhere is it truer than the practice of architecture.

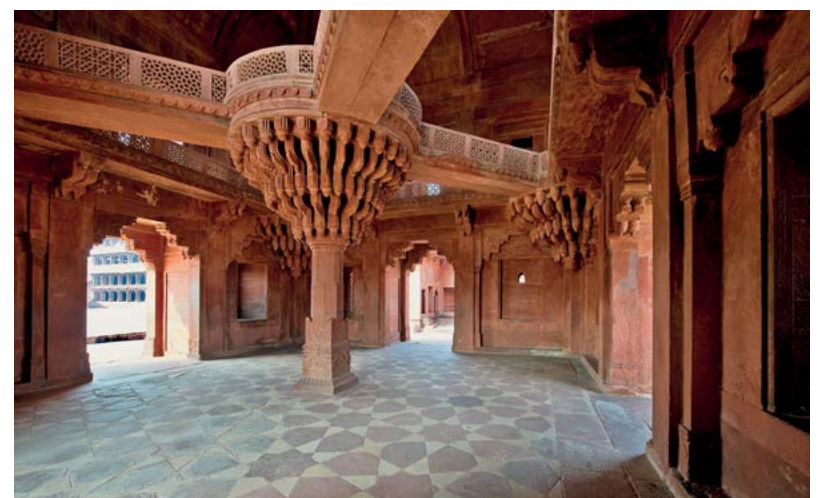
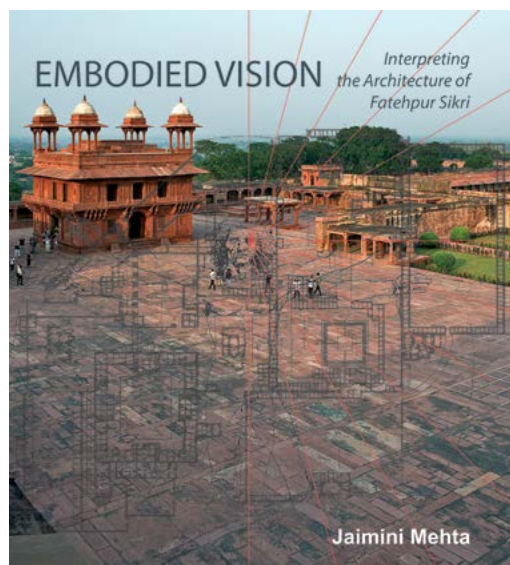
▼ TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE AND ART OF THE EARLY CHALUKYAS

The 6th-8th century temples of the Early Chalukyas are unrivalled in all of India for their comparatively early date and unusually complete condition, the remarkable juxtaposition of their different constructional techniques and building styles, and for the sheer beauty of their figural and decorative carvings. This volume by George Michell is the first to fully describe and illustrate these temples in central Karnataka, like Badami Cave Temples, Jain Cave Temple, Mahakuteshvara Temple, Aihole Durga Temple, Virupaksha Temple and many others.



▼ RETHINKING MODERNITY

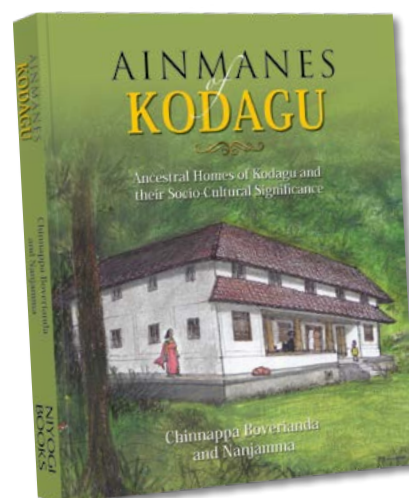
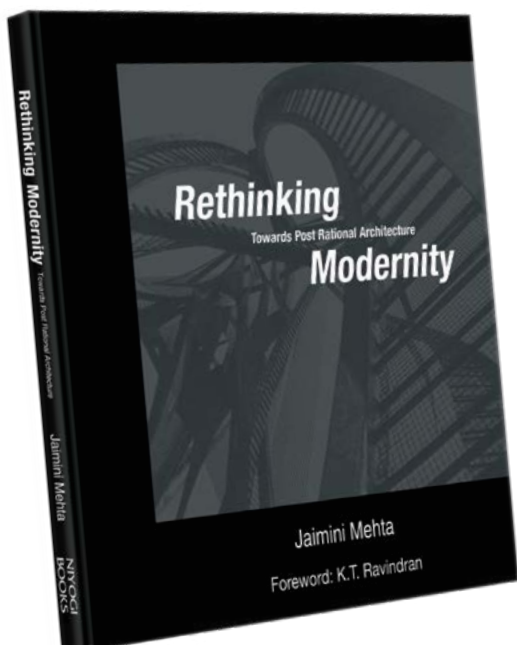
Has the project to usher in Modernity run its full course and is now ready to be replaced by something called Postmodern? Re-examining the very idea of modernity in architecture, and drawing from a number of diverse sources such as philosophy, social science, art and technology, Prof. Jaimini Mehta argues that the normal historical progression of architectural thought and production suffered an epistemological break in mid-18th century. Why? Read on...



Ekstamba—the central column within Diwan-i-khas. Photo courtesy: *Embodied Vision: Interpreting the Architecture of Fatehpur Sikri*.

▲ EMBODIED VISION

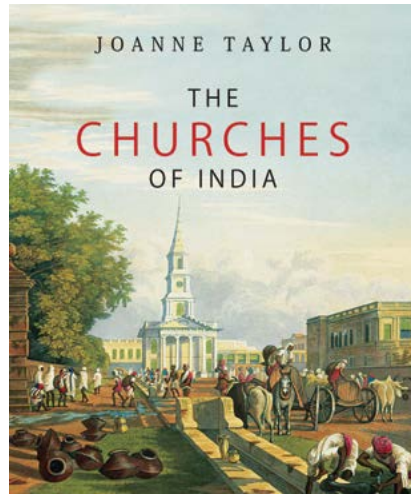
Professor Mehta delves into a series of representations Fatehpur Sikri has been subjected to and counters the preconceived notion that Fatehpur Sikri does not have a plan and is built in a haphazard manner. An unconventional interpretation of the Mughal city, this book explores how the space is revealed through perception more than geometry, noting that mere representational drawings fail to fully illustrate the existential lived experience of inhabitation of architecture.



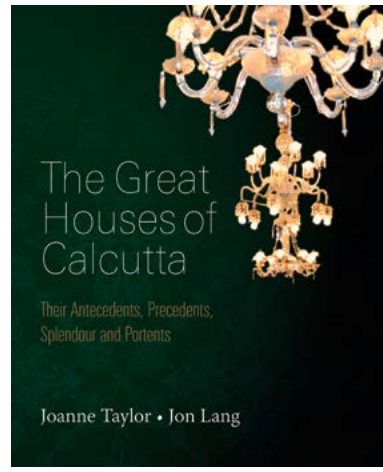
▲ AINMANES OF KODAGU

Ainmanes, ancestral homes of the native communities in Coorg, are architectural symbols bearing testimony to the strength and vitality of the *okkas* (patrilineal clans) of Kodagu and expressions of their heritage and culture. The focus of this book is the traditional ainmanes of Kodagu that are functional and their socio-cultural significance.

From the Church of St Francis, the oldest European church in Fort Kochi, which once housed the tomb of Vasco da Gama, to the Muslim connection of Goa's The Chapel of Saint Catherine, to the one-armed statue of Mother Mary at The Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount in Mumbai's Bandra – Joanne Taylor's book explores the history and architecture of the Christian churches of India, a country whose manifold religious buildings are a testament to its identity as a nation of diverse people with their own cultures.



▲ **THE CHURCHES OF INDIA**



▲ **THE GREAT HOUSES OF CALCUTTA**

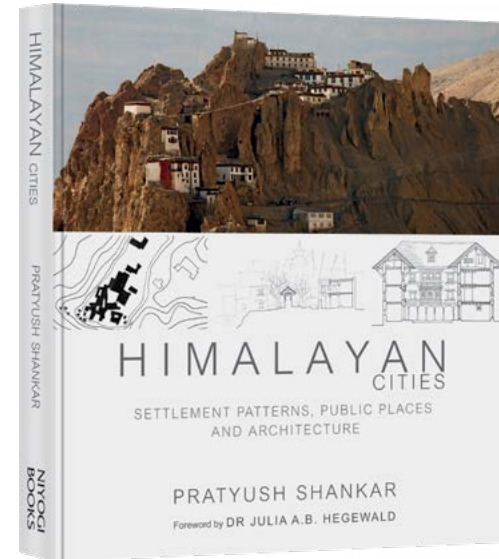
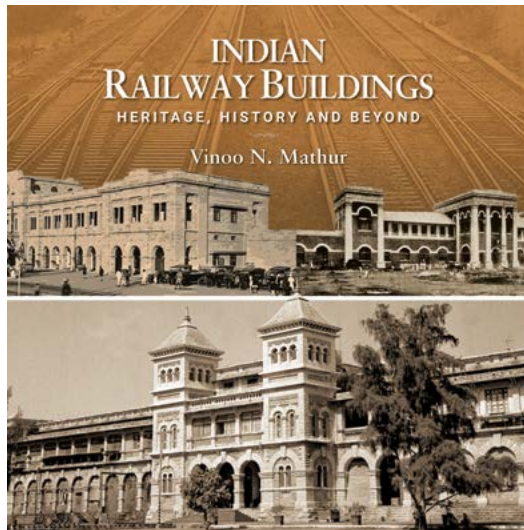
Shobhabazar Rajbari, Ghariwalla Mullickbari, Jorasanko Thakurbari or Thanthania Dattabari – these colonial era mansions of North Kolkata represent the aspirations and aesthetic values of the indigenous elite—wealthy Indian landowners, bankers, and traders—who flourished during the 18th and 19th centuries. In this book, Joanne Taylor and Jon Lang examine these architectural landmarks of the 'City of Palaces.'



Victoria Terminus in its early days. The train station is to the left and elements of gothic revival architecture are clearly visible. Photo courtesy: Central Railway, Mumbai.

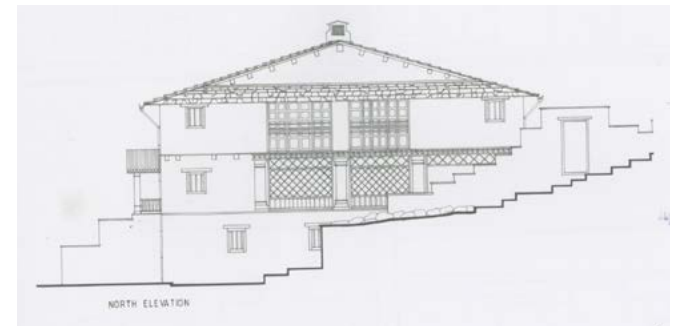
▼ **INDIAN RAILWAY BUILDINGS**

From Bengal Nagpur Railway House, reportedly once home to the exiled Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, to the spectacular Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus— Vinoo N. Mathur takes readers through iconic railway structures built during the British Raj, from grand city terminuses to charming small-town stations. Packed with historical facts and rare photographs, the book explores the architectural features and historical significance of railway buildings constructed from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries.

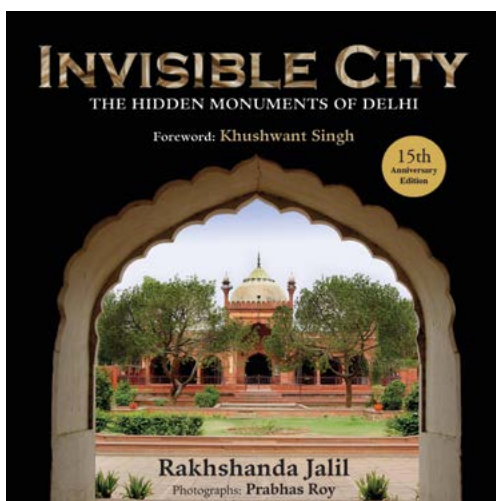


▲ **HIMALAYAN CITIES**

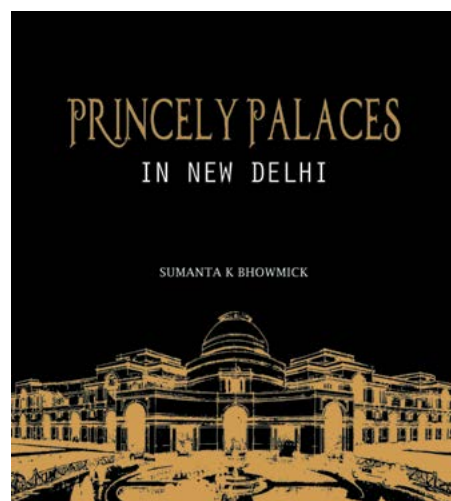
From Ladakh's Likir monastery to the Mandi Palace to Nepal's Patan Durbar Square—this volume explores settlements across the Himalayan region. Through identifying key principles and models typical of the area's settlement patterns, public spaces, and architecture, Pratyush Shankar examines the relationship between natural systems and human ingenuity as manifested in built traditions.



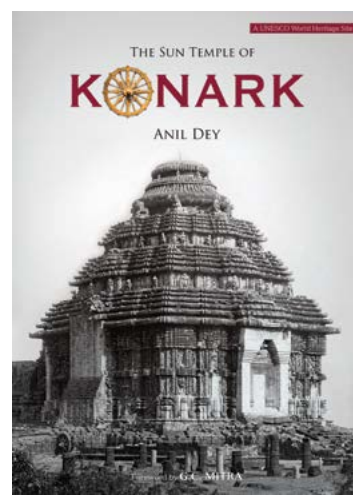
A section of the Collector's house in Almora. Photo courtesy: *Himalayan Cities*.



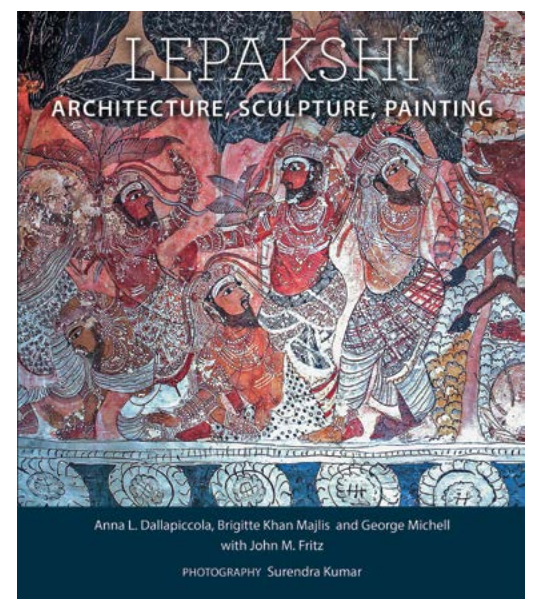
This book documents Delhi's overlooked monuments that have been marginalized—razed, built upon, or built around—in the city's rapid development.



A chronicle of the elaborate palaces built by princely states in New Delhi after the 1911 Delhi Durbar, including Hyderabad House, Baroda House, and Jaipur House.



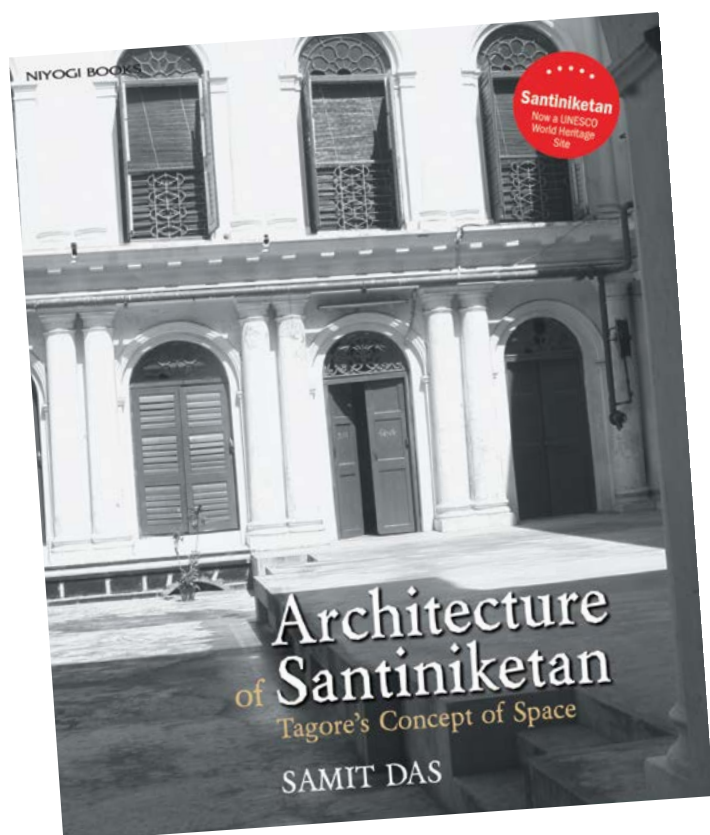
The book separates history from legend of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, considered one of India's seven wonders, using scientific methodologies.



The first comprehensive study of the miraculously intact, spectacular 16th-century Vijayanagara temple, dedicated to Virbhadrha, in the remote village of Lepakshi.



THE MAKING OF SANTINIKETAN



All of Rabindranath's writings largely comprise a single theme. This unifying tone is one of a transition from the personal to the universal, as if a picture is painted on the mental canvas—a picture which, unaware, suddenly acquires shape and life with all its colours and nuances but at the same transcends the barriers of time and space:

I sat in a corner
And talked to someone near my heart
Sitting in the doorway
I was recounting domestic tales;
Those tales you singed in fire,
Drove and drowned in tears
And made to your heart's content.
New images in a new style.

Atmaparichay, Rabindranath Tagore, Visva-Bharati, 1993 edition, p. 10

Rabindranath was a man whose diverse thoughts were expressed in diverse forms in his work at different times. Architecture was one of these forms. The importance of his ideas is considerable, coming as they do at the beginning of the Swadeshi Movement, when the British colonial rule was at its peak. At a time when indigenous architectural styles had almost been obliterated by colonial influences, Santiniketan's structural design brought the Indian model back to the mainstream. Surendranath Kar and Rathindranath Tagore were the foremost figures among those who assisted Rabindranath in building up Santiniketan. None of Rabindranath's friends, except Patrick and Arthur Geddes, were conventionally trained architects, but their work is a landmark, establishing the vital connection between pre-Independence schools of architectural thoughts and the environment.

There is an intrinsic informality in the construction of the ashram's houses. The architecture is thus an integral thread of connection between the education

imparted in Santiniketan and its day-to-day life. The system of education pioneered by Rabindranath aimed at the all round development of the students and learning that is imbibed from the surroundings. The poet's son, Rathindranath, embodied this aspiration in his achievements. Having trained himself technically in Agricultural Science in England, he performed a leading role in planning the interiors and designing the gardens of Santiniketan.

As remarkable as Rathindranath was the artist Nandalal Bose, who translated Shyamali and Kalo Bari in Kala-Bhavana into a form of visual art. Nandalal played a significant role in making the plans of the houses, as did Benodebehari Mukhopadhyaya through frescoes. No less important were Ramkinkar's



Tree House, approximately 1924, dreamt of by Rabindranath (inspired From Sankeien Garden, Japan) and executed by Kimtaro Kasahara (1868-1928). Photograph: Rabindra-Bhavana, Santiniketan. Reference: *Chithipatra* 18, Visva-Bharati.

larger than life sculptures standing under the open sky. Nandalal was adept at selecting and decorating a venue for the various cultural programmes held at Santiniketan. His ideas of stage make-up were quite modern.

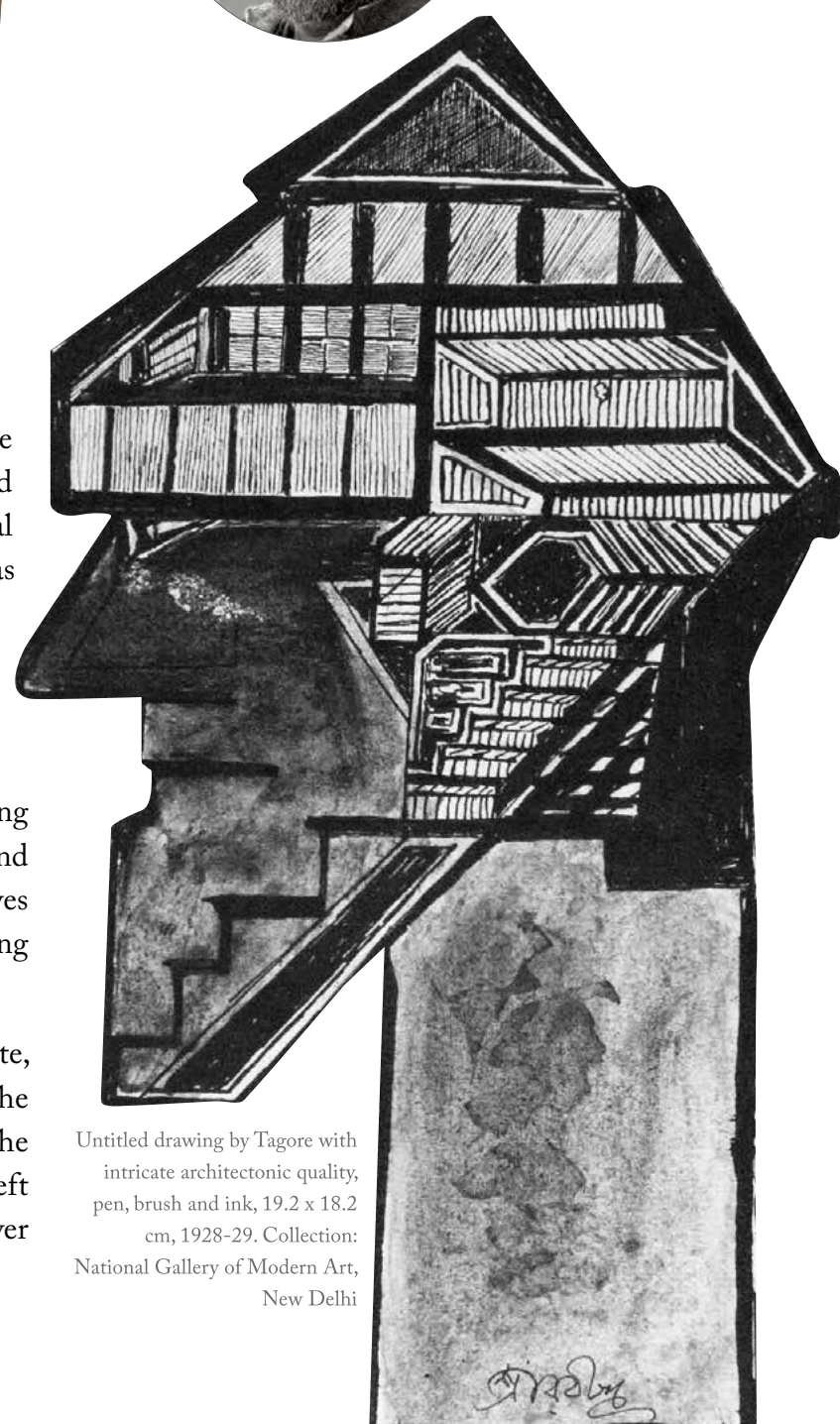
It goes without saying that the architecture of the school buildings in Santiniketan needed to be such that they would encourage the learning process. Surendranath, Rathindranath and Arthur Geddes committed themselves wholeheartedly to the task of translating Rabindranath's vision into reality.

Rabindranath did not wish to truncate, mutilate or tame nature. He did not want the openness of the place to be compromised; the view of the horizon and the sky were to be left unobstructed. Hence, buildings were never

raised high in Santiniketan. There was also a financial side to this. Because Visva-Bharati's funds were less than adequate, Surendranath Kar always had to keep monetary constraints in mind while working. He created mainly two kinds of buildings in Santiniketan—one that would house the institution itself, comprising hostels and teachers' quarters and the other where Rabindranath would personally reside. Surendranath Kar built the buildings of the first category bearing in mind that they would be used for the purpose of learning, education and research. He successfully addressed the needs of the students and teachers in harmony with nature. The structures never seemed distant from the surroundings neither did they impede any exchange of ideas. Apart from being functional, the buildings had a language of their own, which bespoke of the vital tie between nature and man.

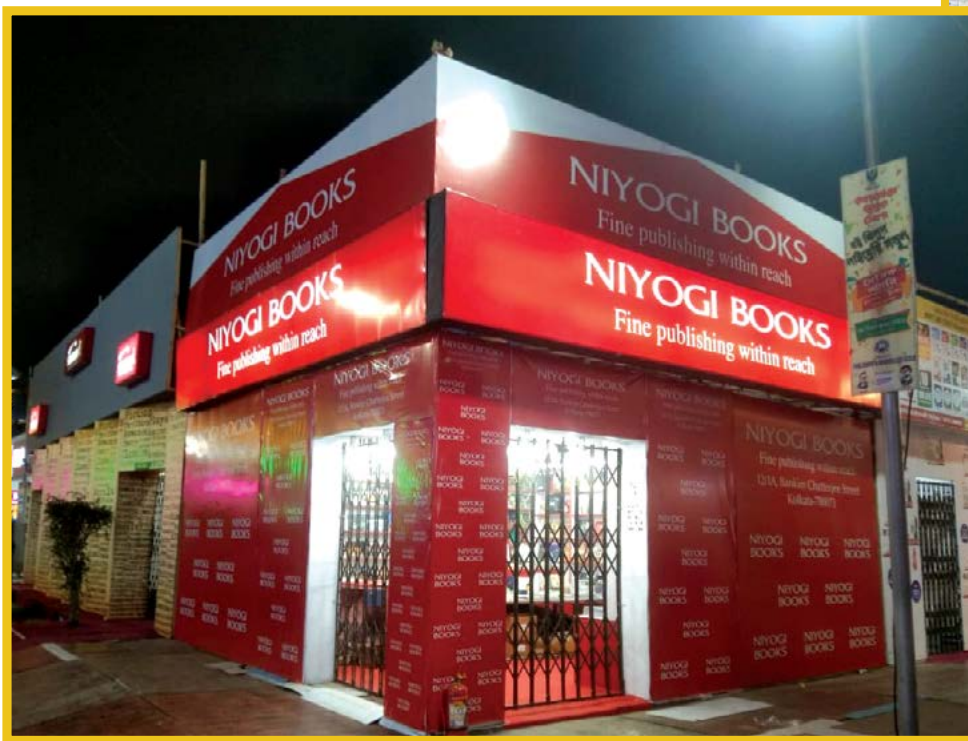
According to Rabindranath, the world is made up of three constituent parts—man, nature and Brahma—and these form the motifs of Santiniketan's architecture.

Excerpted from Architecture of Santiniketan: Tagore's Concept of Space by Samit Das (2012)



Untitled drawing by Tagore with intricate architectonic quality, pen, brush and ink, 19.2 x 18.2 cm, 1928-29. Collection: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

NIYOGI BOOKS AT THE INTERNATIONAL KOLKATA BOOK FAIR 2025



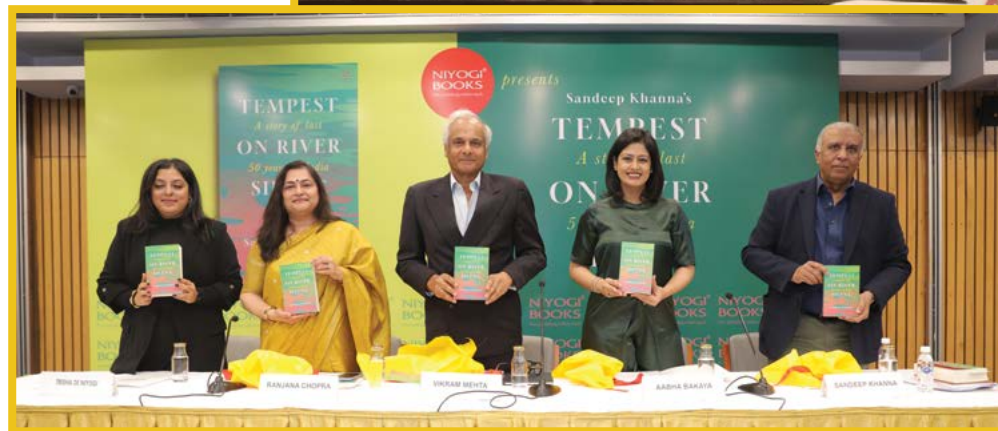
NIYOGI BOOKS AT THE NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR 2025



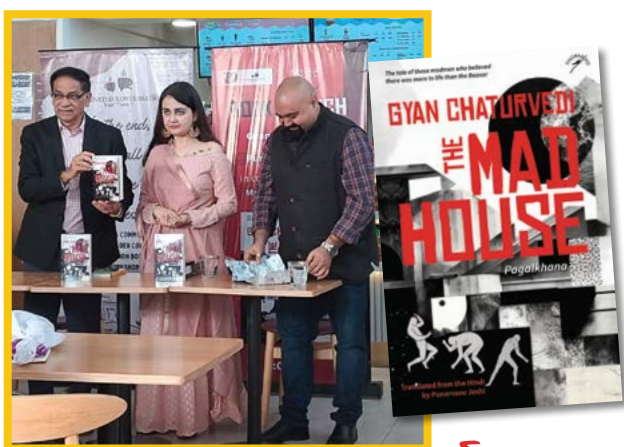
Author Jordan Quill at the launch of *Karma and the Snow Lion* at Pupilio Bookstore, Uttar Pradesh.



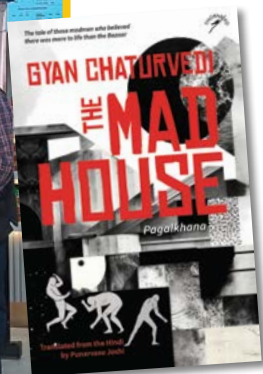
Author Sandeep Khanna unveiling the book *Tempest on River Silent* at Jaipur Literature Festival 2025.



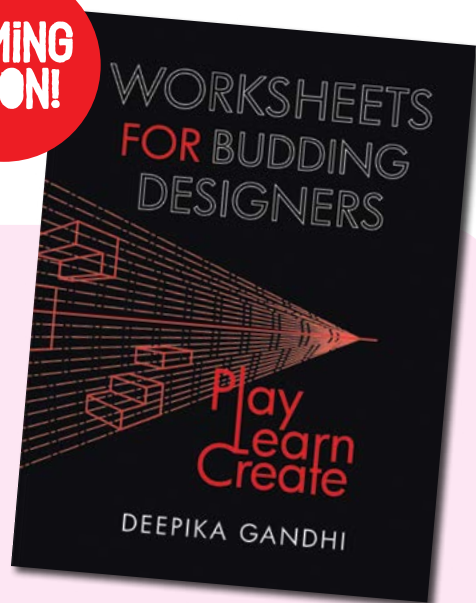
L-R: Ms Trisha De Niyogi, COO and Director, Niyogi Books; Mrs Ranjana Chopra, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture, GOI; Mr Vikram Mehta, Chairman, Centre for Social and Economic Progress; Ms Aabha Bakaya, Founder and CEO, Ladies Who Lead and television journalist; and Sandeep Khanna, author, at the launch of *Tempest on River Silent* at IIC, New Delhi.



L-R: Gyan Chaturvedi, eminent Hindi satirist and author of the book; Mrinalini Pandey, Poet and author and Punarvasu Joshi, translator of the book, at the launch of *The Madhouse* at Bahrison, Indore.



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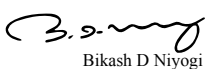
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