India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale
An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology

P5 Presentation
Mallika Arora (4247213)
ExploreLab, TU Delft
June 2014
The Sequence...
The Sequence

The presentation will be organized in three parts,

Part 1/6. The Framework
Which will introduce the Design Project
Along with its larger theoretical context
And talk about the architectural and design theory explored
This will establish the issues that the design will then attempt to address
Part 2/6. The Site
Which will talk about the reasons for the selection of the particular site
Part 3/6. The Concepts
This will talk about how the building mass situates itself in the context
And how the building is organized to generate specific atmospheres
And in what manner it unfolds and reveals the Ornament
Part 4/6. The Moments
This talks about the scale of articulation
The choice and figuration and abstraction
The relation between the articulate and the pure, and their transition
The tension between the straight line and the curved
And their resolution.
Part 5/6. The Construction
The special contextual choice of materials
And methods of construction
Part 6/6. The Models
Scaled physical models
The Framework...
The aim is to propose a design for India’s entry at the Venice Biennale. There are national pavilions for many countries and although talks were being conducted between its Ministry of culture and the Biennale officials, it hasn’t been realised yet. What is interesting is the context of this project, in terms of the theme of the coming Exhibition. Rem Koolhas, who is in charge of the architecture section says the following, “Fundamentals will be a Biennale about architecture, not architects. After several Biennales dedicated to the celebration of the contemporary, Fundamentals will focus on histories – on the inevitable elements of all architecture used by any architect, anywhere, anytime (the door, the floor, the ceiling etc.) and on the evolution of national architectures (...) this retrospective will generate a fresh understanding of the richness of architecture’s fundamental repertoire, apparently so exhausted today. In 1914, it made sense to talk about a “Chinese” architecture, a “Swiss” architecture, an “Indian” architecture. One hundred years later, under various influences (...) architectures that were once specific and local have become interchangeable and global. National identity has seemingly been sacrificed to modernity.”

But what this project proposes is that the modernity hasn’t just swallowed National, or in better words, Cultural Identity, but Emotional identity as well. It has resulted in what may be called the Architectural Void.
The Void

Does clearly expressed structure and function alone create architecture? The modernists most aggressively argued that it does, and that those who disagree need to be educated. However, the theoretical foundations of postmodernism, even if not its practical articulations, proved otherwise. One discovered that,! that which was found wanting was the emotive and communicative element of architecture.
The Ornamental

The relevance of this research may initially seem unclear. For postmodernism already battled, to whatever degree of success, with this existing void. Architectural semiotics thus emerged, raising concern for context, meaning and signification. But something was lost in translation from Peirce and Saussure, to Derrida, Eisenmann and Venturi. Most efforts to communicate meaning remained obsessed with exterior global forms. They produced colossal isolated sculptures, often fit for distant observation, and seldom for habitation. For if form was to be articulated to communicate at a scale that corresponds with the skeletal, it would become ornamental. And ornament was, or perhaps is, a cliché. The project then proposes to reduce the scale of symbolic articulation from global to local within a building. It argues against disfiguration of structural forms and envelopes, and for a figurative architecture that reintroduces ornament to communicate sensation.
The Ornamental and the Pure

The project however seeks to explore not just a theory of ornament, but of how that ornament may unfold in space and reveal itself. Thus, the space and the ornament become integrated, in how they complement each other in generating a complete atmosphere. The spaces follow a route architecturale, unfolding one after another. They have ornament at their disposal. However, like silence is needed to perceive music, the pure is needed to perceive ornament. Austere planes and minimalist forms often distill extraordinarily poetic spaces. The ornate and the pure cast each other forth, interchangeably, as background and foreground.
The Site...
The Site
The Site
The Site
The Site
The Site

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Site
The Site
The Site
The Site
The Concept...
The Periphery
The Approach

The Framework   The Site   The Concept   The Space   The Ornament   The Method   The Construction and Materialization

India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Ornament

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Entrance
The Space
The Form
The Space...

The First Moment
The Second Moment
The First Moment
The Programme
Ground Floor Plan
The First Moment...
Elevations and Sections

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  **The Space**  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Second Moment...
Elevations and Sections
The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization
The Third Moment...
Elevations and Sections

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization
The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Ornament...

The Theoretical basis
The Translation
Vibhava, The Spectacular

The figurative, Bharatnatayam dance pose, communicates through analogy and through code. The figure flows into and becomes a part of the column’s shaft and the wall. Negotiating her curves and bulges, with its edges and flatness, Forging one seamless mass.
Frozen Movement, The inclusion of time

The Framework   The Site   The Concept   The Space   The Ornament   The Method   The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
Anubhava, The Sensation

Moving upwards from the slow-paced, seductive eye movement of the figurative component, here the eye is directed into a wild frenzy. The mind is suddenly occupied by the trying to decode, to count the three-dimensional fractal crystals.

Frozen Movement

The figure must be frozen in its representative posture in order to communicate through a code, but its suggestion of movement its translated into an architectonic presence with its curves that flow into the wall, and its tactility intensely amplified by the moire strations on its surface. The effect is that of a hula hoop dancer, even when she pauses in time, the hoop continues to convey motion.

Vibhava, The Spectacular

The figurative, Bharatnatayam dance pose, communicates through analogy and through code. The figure flows into and becomes a part of the column’s shaft and the wall. Negotiating her curves and buckles, with its edges and flatness, Forging one seamless mass.
The Integration

The moire moves over the facade, integrating everything in the composition.

3. Anubhava, The Sensation
Moving upwards from the slow paced, seductive eye movement of the figurative component, here the eye is directed into a wild frenzy. The mind is suddenly occupied by the trying to decode, to count the three dimensional fractal crystals

2. Frozen Movement
The figure must be frozen in its representative posture in order to communicate through a code, but its suggestion of movement its translated into an architectonic presence with its curves that flow into the wall, and its tactility intensely amplified by the moire striations on its surface. The effect is that of a hula hoop dancer, even when she pauses in time, the hoop continues to convey motion.

1. Vibhava, The Spectacular
The figurative, Bharatnatayam dance pose, communicates through analogy and through code The figure flows into and becomes a part of the column’s shaft and the wall, Negotiating her curves and bakges, with its edges and flatness, Forging one seamless mass
The Moments and Variations...
Vibhava, The Spectacular

The Framework

The Site

The Concept

The Space

The Ornament

The Method

The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014

1. Vibhava, The Spectacular
   The figurative, Bharatnatayam dance pose, communicates through analogy and through code The figure flows into and becomes a part of the column's shaft and the wall, Negotiating her curves and barges, with its edges and flatness, Forging one seamless mass

2. Frozen Movement
   The figure must be frozen in its representative posture in order to communicate through a code, but its suggestion of movement is translated into an architectonic presence with its curves that flow into the wall, and its tactility intensely amplified by the moire striations on its surface. The effect is that of a hula hoop dancer, even when she pauses in time, the hoop continues to convey motion.

3. Anubhava, The Sensation
   Moving upwards from the slow paced, seductive eye movement of the figurative component, here the eye is directed into a wild frenzy. The mind is suddenly occupied by the trying to decode, to count the three dimensional fractal crystals
1. Vibhava, The Spectacular
The figurative, Bharatnatayam dance pose, communicates through analogy and through code. The figure flows into and becomes a part of the column’s shaft and the wall. Negotiating her curves and bulges, with its edges and flatness, Forging one seamless mass

2. Frozen Movement
The figure must be frozen in its representative posture in order to communicate through a code, but its suggestion of movement its translated into an architettic presence with its curves that flow into the wall, and its tactility intensely amplified by the moire striations on its surface. The effect is that of a hula hoop dancer, even when she pauses in time, the hoop continues to convey motion.

3. Anubhava, The Sensation
Moving upwards from the slow paced, seductive eye movement of the figurative component, here the eye is directed into a wild frenzy. The mind is suddenly occupied by the trying to decode, to count the three dimensional fractal crystals

4. Anubhava, The Sensation
The moire moves over the facade, integrating everything in the composition.

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization
India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
The Construction and Materialization...
Materiality

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

5. Brick
The outermost envelope continues in Brick, almost as a seamless extension to the context.

4. Pigmented Glass Fibre Reinforced Concrete
Smooth finished, Glass fibre reinforced, so it may bend in and reach the nooks and crannies of the mould.

3. Limestone
Stone, well suited to the rectilinear mass of the building, and part of the ornamentation. Limestone, for its rustic finish and colour, both contrasts and complements the smooth lustrous finish of Bronze.
Contextual to Italy and India
Tuscany Limestone

2. Marmarino Plaster
Smooth finished, Marmarino stucco in the same colour as Limestone.

1. Bronze
A lustrous smooth material that is does justice to the scale of articulation, casting minute shadows. A material that has visual impact, but is natural and sits well within its context, with its greenish patina.
Bronze, as a material, is highly contextual to both Venice and India.
Foundries in Venice
Construction Methods, CNC Milling Limestone

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India's Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
Construction Details, Hot Wire Cut Foam Mould for Casting Bronze

The Framework  The Site  The Concept  The Space  The Ornament  The Method  The Construction and Materialization

India’s Entry for the Venice Biennale, An exploration in Visual Semiotics and Phenomenology, Mallika Arora, June 2014
Construction Details, Lost Wax technique of Bronze Craft