ABSOLUTE NOSTALGIA: THE TRAIN STATION
SPACEFICTION STUDIO

LEARNING UNDER THE TREE
BIOME ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS

ASTROSPATIAL ARCHITECTURE: BUILDINGS MEET SATELLITES
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RESTORING THE LOST GLORY OF GANGA

Text: Team Design Detail

The Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj is in full swing. It is the largest human congregation in the world, where hordes of pilgrims come in to bathe in the holy waters of Ganga every 12 years to achieve atonement for their sins. The river Ganga has historically been deeply rooted in Hindu beliefs. The ideal human lifecycle is to be born, to live and die on the banks of the river, then ultimately to be one with it. Thereby, obtaining retribution or Moksha for the sins committed in this life. Cities like Rishikesh and Varanasi thrive on the banks of Ganga where many funeral pyres have been burning for the past 3000 years. The river supports close to 10 per cent of the world’s population and a variety of flora and fauna. Due to its heightened importance, the court has even ordered the river to be treated as a living entity. Jeopardizing the purity and life of the river is considered equal to violating human life. The importance of river Ganga in the lives and hearts of Indians cannot be understated.
MORPHOGENESIS

Morphogenesis is one of India’s leading award-winning Architecture and Urban Design practice founded by Manit Rastogi and Sonali Rastogi. They have won over 75 international and national awards, and been published in over 500 international and national publications. Morphogenesis is globally recognized for its diverse work that encompasses a range of typologies across Architecture, Interiors and Landscape Urbanism.
But over time, the very reverence of the river has become a threat to its life. The many rituals and practices that are carried out unscientifically and exploitatively has resulted in the current state of pollution. There are no proper systems in place to regulate the practices to make it more efficient and sustainable.

Morphogenesis has proposed an intervention that would help to reduce the degradation of river in a culturally sensitive manner by giving small scale well connected interventions, with the whole picture in mind. Rituals of celebration should be segregated from rituals relating to death and mourning. Stabilising the river edge is another important aspect. While traditionally a ghat is used as an interface for all the rituals and activities, a modern interpretation of the ghat would help in a controlled usage of water. They will also
provide more shade, facilities for drinking water, access internet etc through the use of smart columns. These columns will also be equipped with photo cells to generate electricity.

A large number of dead bodies are cremated on the banks of Ganga demanding burning of a large amount of wood. The shortage of wood and space to cremate so many corpses would lead to many incompletely cremated bodies to be released into the river. Further the cost to cremate bodies is also very high, making this inaccessible for people of lower income. A crematoria and pyre is to be established which will allow 30 per cent reduction in the amount of wood used which will also help in reducing cost.

The talks are ensuing with the officials to bring these interventions into life and preserve the holy river Ganga for the future in all its glory.