

Desert Instruments Resonating Landscapes

“There is no such thing as dry land. Wetness is everywhere to some degree. It is in the seas, clouds, rains, dew, air, soils, minerals, plants, animals. The sea is very wet; the desert less so...”

MATHUR / DA CUNHA
<https://www.mathurdacunha.com/ocean-of-wetness/>

Country / City USA / Philadelphia
University / School University of Pennsylvania, School of Design
Academic year 2017-2018
Title of the project Desert Instruments, Barmer, India
Authors Prakul Reddy Pottapu





PERFORMATIVE NATURE

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SCHOOL PRIZE

X International Landscape Architecture Biennial

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge -DUOT - UPC
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TECHNICAL DOSSIER

Title of the project Desert Instruments, Barmer, India
Authors Prakul Reddy Pottapu
Title of the course Studio 702: Imprints / Crossings - Landscapes behind the scene
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Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

Although deserts are commonly perceived as empty or places of scarcity, the Thar desert region in India is a culturally vibrant place. Here imprints of its rich traditional practices of habitation – salt production, pottery, music, block printing and dyeing – are visible in the landscape to the discerning eye. Investigating these practices through the idea of imprints, time based cyanotype prints of a performance by the famous Langa musicians were created. This led to a vocabulary of exposure and intensity that allowed one to look at this landscape through a new lens.

The Sindhi Saarangi, a string instruments used specifically by the Langa musicians, consists of three strings that are played with a bow and 19 sympathetic strings that resonate to produce a richer sound. A similar instrument-like sensitivity is brought to the design of a crossing across the Luni riverbed near a town called Tilwara known for its Mallinath Mela – a horse and cattle fair, a sandy plane where many practices once gathered.

The existing crossing across the river bed is a road that is constructed every year after the monsoon washes the old one away. The design proposes to anchor the two ends of the crossing with “instruments” which when played by the monsoon resonate throughout the year, gathering cultural practices and events. Tanks to hold monsoon rain, gravel channels to redirect overflow and cleanse waste water, water troughs to be appropriated by dyers, overflow bridges and material wedges to hold water for cultivation come together to form one of the two anchoring instruments designed for the site.

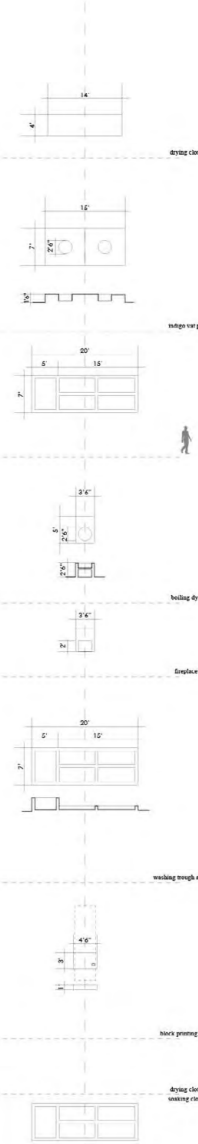
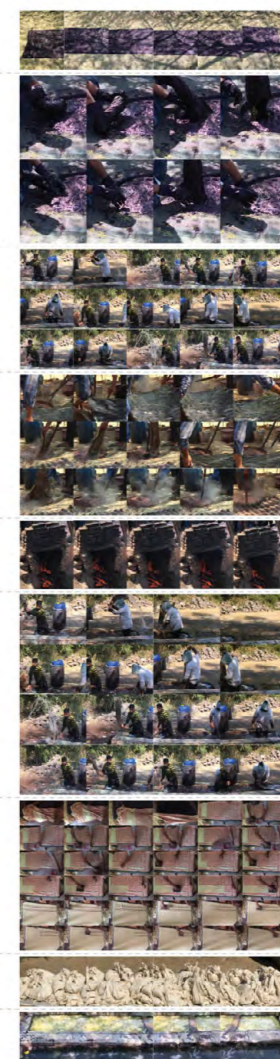
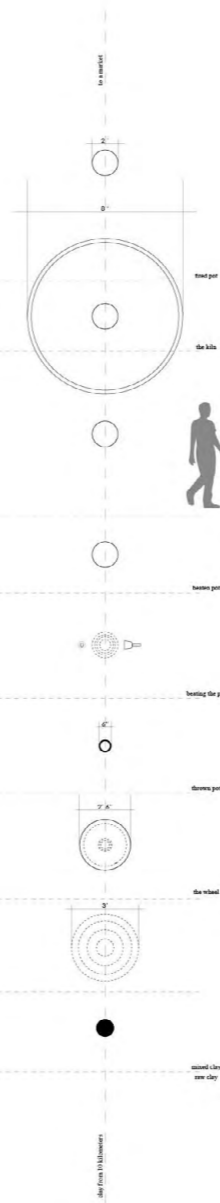
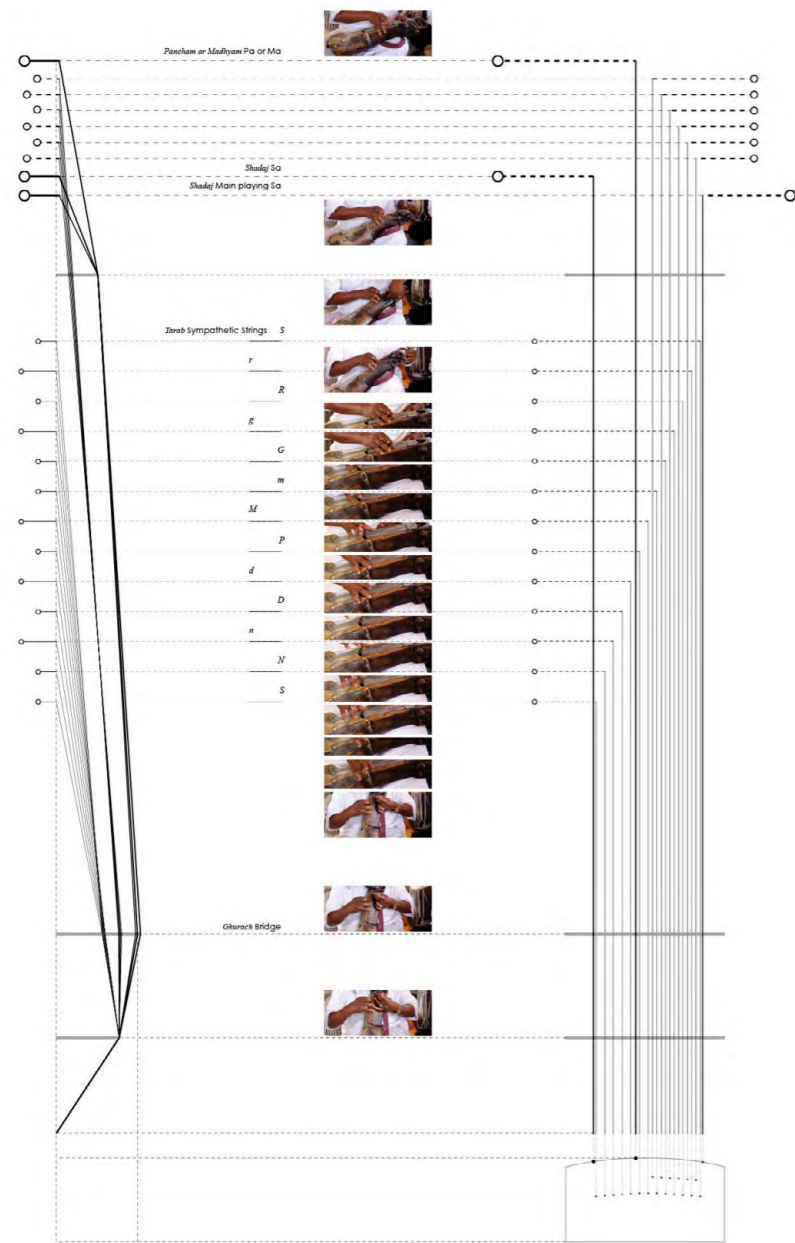
For further information

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Consult the web page <http://landscape.coac.net/>

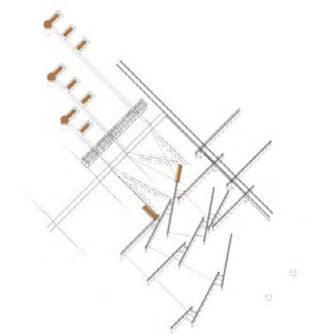
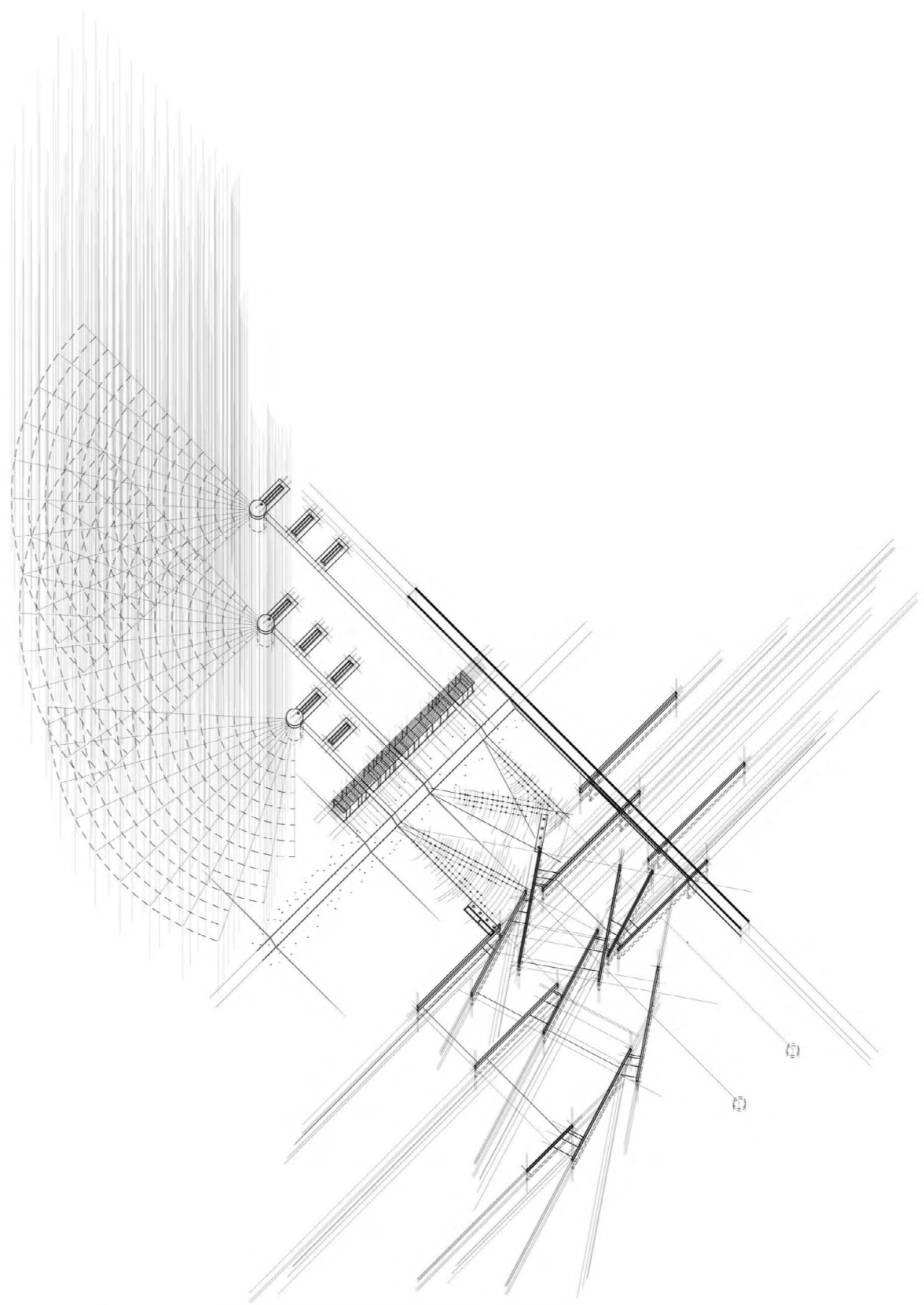
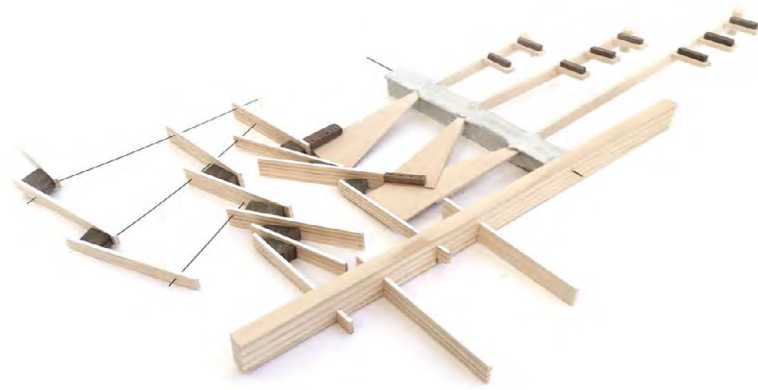


Practices & Instruments, Intensity & Exposure

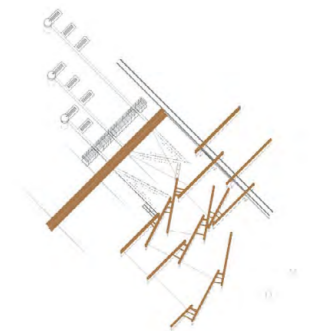
top left to right **photoworks saarang, pottery & dyeing** documenting and studying the *Sindhi Saarang*- an instrument specific to the *Langa* musicians of the region and the various instruments of the pottery and dyeing practices of *Barmer*

left **cyanotype imprint exposure and intensity** an experiment in capturing the imprint of a performance of the *Langa* musicians using cyanotype- a time based sun exposure print technique

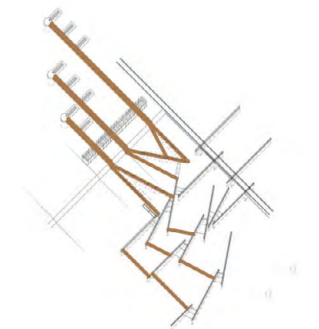
THE INSTRUMENTS
site plan
0 250 500ft



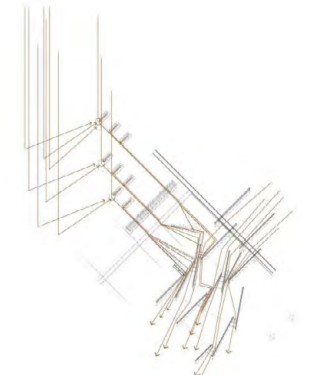
tuning tanks & troughs



holding bridges



gravel strings



monsoon vibrations



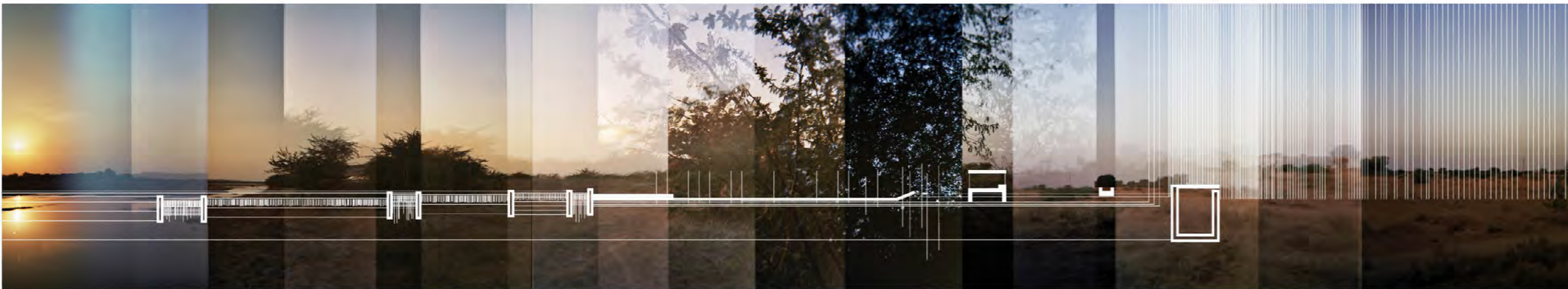
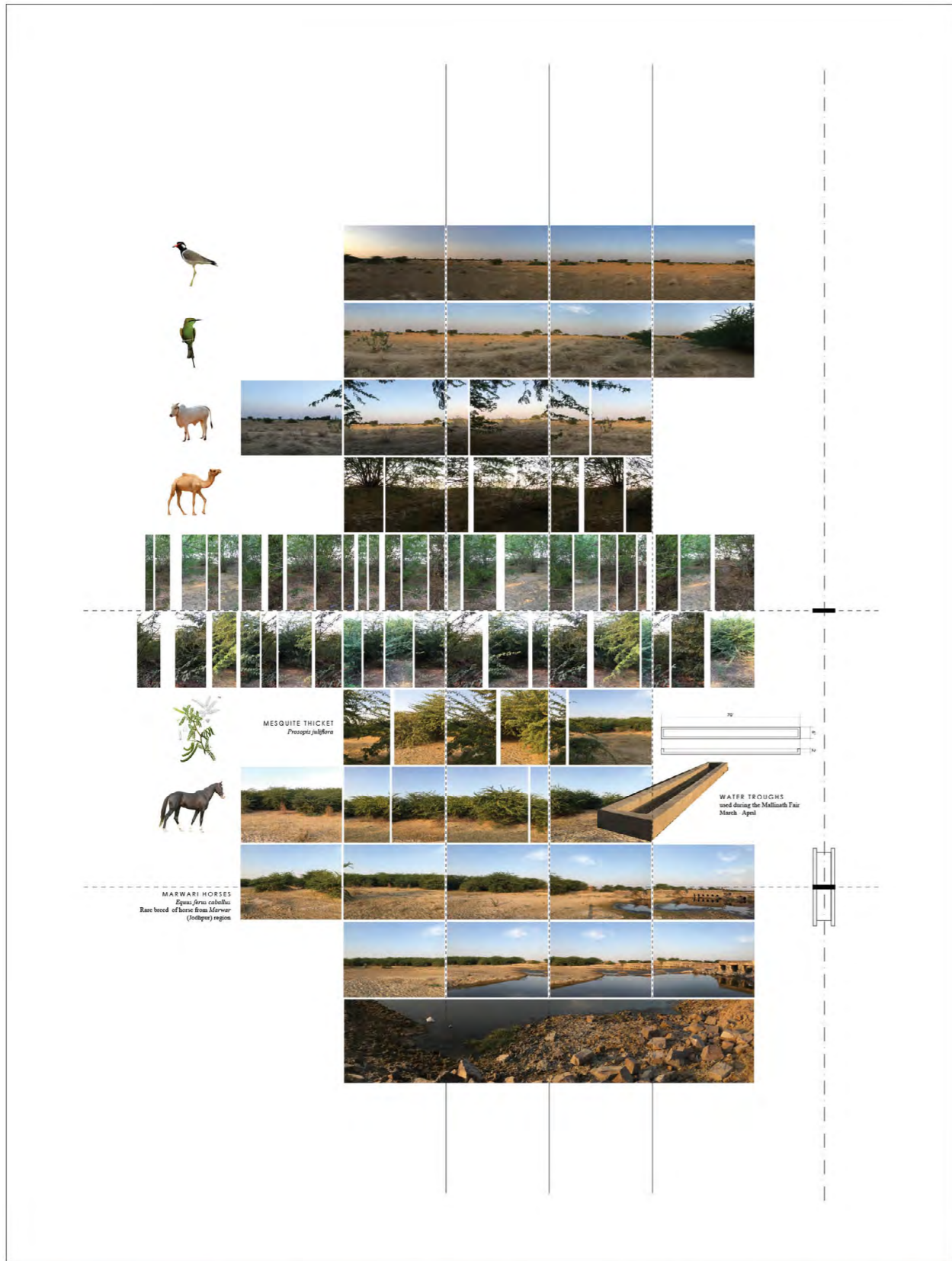
Calibration

top left **instrument 1 site plan**
a site plan showing the instrument set into the site

above **instrument 1**
an axonometric projection drawing showing the relationships between the components of the instrument and the movements within it

left **site diagram and model**
an overall site plan showing the two proposed instrument locations and their relationship to one another





Resonances

top left **photowork site 1**
preparing the site of intervention through
systematic site photography

above **photomontage site 1**
perspective montages of the instrument and
the various resonances

left **section site 1**
a section of the instrument set into the land,
collecting and moving monsoon rain