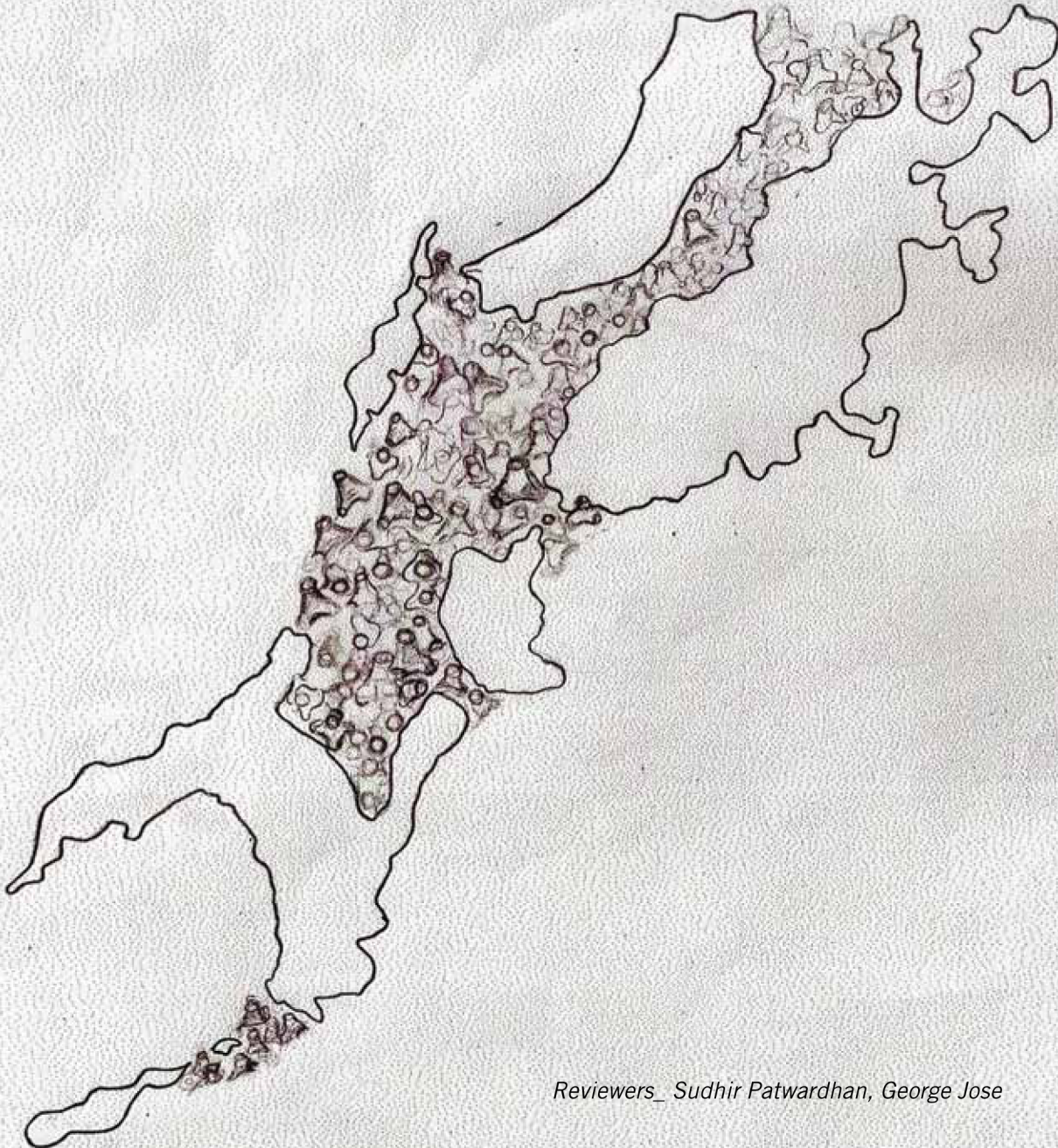# Mapping
Philanthropic Religious Trusts

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What is a trust?

An arrangement whereby a person(a trustee) holds or uses
property for the benefit of one or more others,
An organisation or company managed by trustees

- Definition from Compact Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus & Wordpower Guide,
Indian edition

In the period between 1800 and 1915, the city of Mumbai experienced
a lot of community driven activities which were harnessed by its citizens
privately, and were outside the framework/interest of then ruling government.
Upkeep of religious activities fell to the communities as the government
was not sensitive to the needs of the individual communities.

In a span of over hundred years, the trust movement in Mumbai redrew the map
of the city, re-ordered the human and animal multiplicities that flowed through
various spaces of this region, and established a community driven set of enclaves
harbouring unique typologies of space, personal histories and lived conditions.

A Trust functions as an arbitrator of benevolence (as a way of life). Being
of a specific commune, its citizens operate around religion and its rites &
rituals. They organise themselves around these spaces and inhabit them in
order to survive and flourish. The way these communities have come together
is based on their modes of operation; which remain virtually unchanged.

Trust buildings are local building clusters, or separate independent entities that are
managed by semi private/ private institutional Trusts. The trusts mostly lie nestled within
last vestiges of the old fabric of the city. Some of these are undisturbed by time wherein
stepping within the quadrangle might transport the viewer into a realm of a place once
inhabited. Most of these trusts formed a formidable, insular and often inaccessible
zone. The buildings were designed almost as a protective typology looking inwards.

The workings of these trusts and the perpetual shroud of secrecy surrounding the people
running the trust seems to be almost reflected in the architecture. Lot of the programs
that are running internally within these spaces are steeped in old traditions and habits,
rites and rituals which make them fascinating, and an important segment of society to
study and learn about. Trust buildings are ecosystems unto themselves, and they offer
a virtual window into the past and the running of self-governance at the locality level.

This might have existed in the context of a time when these specific acts of philanthropy,
arbitrated and executed by these trusts were a way of life in a city which was burgeoning
and learning to survive its colonial influences while retaining its particular, unique character.

Context_

The Bombay Public Trusts Act of 1950
An act to regulate and to make better provision for the administration of religious
and charitable trusts in the state of Bombay. WHEREAS it is expedient to regulate
and to make better provisions for the administration of public religious and
charitable trusts in the state of Bombay: It is hereby enacted as follows:-
Chapter 1: Preliminary
  1. Short title, extent, operation and application
      1. This Act may be called the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950
      2. It shall extend to the whole of the [State of Maharashtra]
      3. This Act shall come into force at once; but the provisions thereof
          shall apply to a public trust or any class of public trusts on the
          dates specified in the notification under sub-section
      4. The State Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, specify the date
          on which the provisions of this Act shall apply to any public trust or an [class of
          public trusts; and different dates may be specified for such trusts in different areas]
Since The Bombay Public Trusts Act of 1950, all the trusts have been registered at
the charity commissioner's Office, past as well as present, active as well as defunct.

Directory of Public Trusts (from the office of the Charity Commissioner)
According to the Directory of Public Trusts, its explicit intended use is for those
individuals and institutions, who desire to take advantage of the benefits provided
by public trusts and also those who are interested in honest and efficient working
of such trusts. For the latter, it may well be the starting point for a detailed
study of individual public trusts or a type of Public Trust. It also mentions that
a directory of this nature can only aim at giving basic information like objects,
principles, assets income and expenditure and institutions run by the trusts.

The first edition of the Directory of Public Trusts of the then Bombay State was published
in 1955 when the charity organisation was in its infant state. After the creation of
Maharashtra State in 1960, the list was revised and a second edition was published 1976.

The compiled information is classified into three volumes-
  1. Religious trusts,
  2. Cosmopolitan trusts, and
  3. Public trusts registered under the Societies registration Act, 1860.

The Directory of Public Trust (Volume-1 i.e. Religious trusts)
has been divided into sections as follows:
  A. Hindus including Jains, Buddhists & Sikhs
  B. Muslims
  C. Parsis
  D. Christians, Jews, etc

Intent of the Project_

First Preface to the Directory of Public Trusts cautions us about the figures quoted in the directory. The Directory further states that *since these quotes are taken from the statements made by the trustees in the registration application, it is possible that they are not free from errors. They will naturally not reveal changes that have taken place subsequent to filing those registration applications.*

This study does not necessitate a detailed look at the financial transactions of the trusts and its myriad, and subtle connotations, as it would require the consultation of an economics expert in the field, and is another stand-alone project altogether. Furthermore, it is not an area of interest of the current project. In a generic manner, some financial dealings are mentioned in these religious trusts e.g. terms of will (of deceased), monies handled by settlers, charitable acts, etc.

The idea is to create an understanding of the city through the functioning of religious trusts and what they entailed and how. Independently, these trusts were representative of the city. The project attempts to catalogue a series of events that lead to specific communities undertaking this sort of work, mainly philanthropic in nature, and how the idea of largesse morphed over a period of time.

The study will attempt to analyse the first volume(religious trusts) of the Second edition of the Directory of Public Trusts on the basis of categories, the objectives (objects) stated, year of establishment, and location of trusts in the city. These locations (along with the date of establishment of the trusts) will shed light on the 'trust movement' which was in effect taking place during the city development phase of Bombay (from the construction of the Fort Wall right until the onset of the epidemics of plague and other diseases).

Images will be produced to formulate visually a parallel historical narrative to the dominant one, which will be the dissemination of the Directory of Public Trusts. This image list will serves as an aid to the trust building list, highlighting unique events and narratives that situate the role of community-driven practices being carried out via the medium of a trust.

Methodology_

Stage 1: Analysis of the Directory of Public Trusts document
Scrutiny of the objectives of the trust has allowed for identifying the following categories:
General, Upkeep of Religion, Land/Housing, Migration, Public Health/Social Hygiene, Women's Movement, Animal Welfare, Education, Disposal of the Dead, Rehabilitation

The trusts will be located within these categories. The nomenclatures of these categories are merely monikers to broadly group/classify the type of individual work being carried out as stated in the objectives of the trusts. They are by no means an established mode of naming these categories, which are still in a stage of negotiation.

A glossary of terms will be created for the religious trusts of all the represented communities. Within this same grouping will also exist salient features of the objects stated, the highlights of the purpose of these trusts in terms of their uniqueness. Lastly, a classification of the major communities into its sub-communities and sub-castes.

Analysis of the Directory will entail an exhaustive look at the trust movement in terms of
- Generation of maps
- Generating diagrams based on category inter-relation
- Category sub-classification
- Pin-code placement of these trusts according to a timeline.

Stage 2: Image Bank
The images don't seek to be known as paintings/ works of art within themselves, but rather lean towards adopting the role of archival material. They are visual aids/markers that will embody a common language to highlight the Directory listing when necessary.

The image bank will hence be part of the analysis of the list, included equally with the map making, and subsequent investigation into the prominent features of the list. The language adopted for these images will be toned down to read almost as 'data', rather than stand alone images that run the risk of being fetishised and disjoint from the overall project study.

They form a part of the literature being explored in terms of image-making to explain the need, usage and effort on the part of these collectives in working towards a particular mode of living. This list mainly focuses on modes of living with mainly religious overtones.

Juncture of the Study_

The findings of the review have been incorporated to relook at the initial mode of image production based on site visits. The Directory listing, which was initially to be used as just a reference document has infact become the main document to be disseminated via
- Analysis (cited in the Methodology) and
- Image making.(cited in Image Bank)

Images located at the interstices of the timeline, at the activities being undertaken, the political mood of the nation, it's geographical and religious mood, are imagined.

The attempt will be to make images that will endure and effectively encapsulate a certain section of work that was undertaken above and beyond what the idea of philanthropy has turned into at the present day.