



# FROM THE INSIDE

ARCHITECTURE IN RELATION TO THE *Female* FORM  
IN THE TIME OF THE INDIAN MUGHAL EMPIRE

If you wander through the hot and crowded streets of Jaipur, meander through the grand palace gates, and find yourself in the very back of the palace complex, you will be confronted by a unique, five story structure of magnificent splendor. It is the Hawa Mahal, and it has 953 lattice covered windows carved out of pink stone. Designed in the shape of Lord Krishna's crown, it was built for one purpose only. To allow royal ladies to observe everyday life and festivals celebrated in the street below without being seen. To understand why a culture would go through such lengths to hide its women, we must look to history.

The northern region of India was heavily influenced by the rule of the Islamic Moghul empire between the 14th and 17th Centuries. Eventually, certain practices and ideologies from their Islamic beliefs seeped into the, until then, predominantly Hindu states, creating an amalgamation that translated into all aspects of their culture, especially into the arts and architecture. Because of this, the role that women played in society was also paradoxically divided. On one hand, women had to traditionally follow purdah, a religious and social practice of female seclusion. Thus, spaces and design elements that catered to these constraints became a staple of Indian/Mughal architecture, such as the existence of harems, zenanas and the stone carved latticed

windows, called *jharokas*, that acted as screens between these private quarters and the exterior world. On the other hand, women held power in these spaces, and molded these environments to their wills. Their quarters were organized according to the power they wielded over the men who housed them. Thus, architecture became the threshold that framed these women's worlds.

We seek to explore the way the built environment hid and showcased the upper class female form in life and death, through the lens of the "domestic" space--palaces, fort harems, and finally, tombs--and the differing architectural variations in the Mughal Empire's major cities: New Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra. Our architectural analysis will study the different methods and materials used in these constructions as a way to hierarchize the interior spaces and delineate those that were exclusive to women. A catalogue of element typologies such as the exterior *jharokas* and the interior screens will also aid us in understanding the nuances and similarities of building techniques throughout different sites. On-site documentation will be divided into initial sketches, photography and video footage that will evolve into measured drawings, watercolors, and films. Our findings will be presented in the form an artist's book, where we can show the narrative of our research.

## budget\*

Flight	1000 ea.	2,000	Monument and Museum fees	300	Drawing Supplies/Books	200
Visa and Immunization	400		Meals	700		
Accommodation	700		Transport	600	<b>Total</b>	<b>4900</b>

\*prices may vary depending on the time of year

Days 5-8 - Exploration of the city of Jaipur with focus on Moghul architecture, such as the HAWA MAHAL located within the Royal Palace. The original intent of the lattice design was to allow royal ladies to observe everyday life and festivals celebrated in the street below without being seen.



4 days in Jaipur

begin\*

3

days in New Delhi

\*first and last days are reserved for travel



Days 2-4 NEW DELHI Above: Tomb of Humayun, in which we will study the burial of women. Right: Red Fort. This was the emperor's main quarters in the capital city. Inside the complex is the Rang Mahal - literally meaning the palace of colours - which was the residence of the emperor's wives, mistresses and maids.



Days 9-11 Above: Entrance to harem at the Red Red Fort in Agra. The fort also served as the emperor's palace. It contained several other buildings, like the Najina Masjid, a mosque for women. We plan visit the Royal Palace, Taj Mahal and the stepwells created for women to bathe and gather water. Middle: Red Fort in Agra Interior Days 12-13 Far Right: the Buland Darwaza located in Fatehpur Sikri. We wish to study its the harem quarters, as well as two temples in the city, that have areas specifically cordoned off for women.

itinerary  
new delhi → jaipur → agra



New Delhi  
Jaipur  
Agra

5 end  
days in the Agra region

