

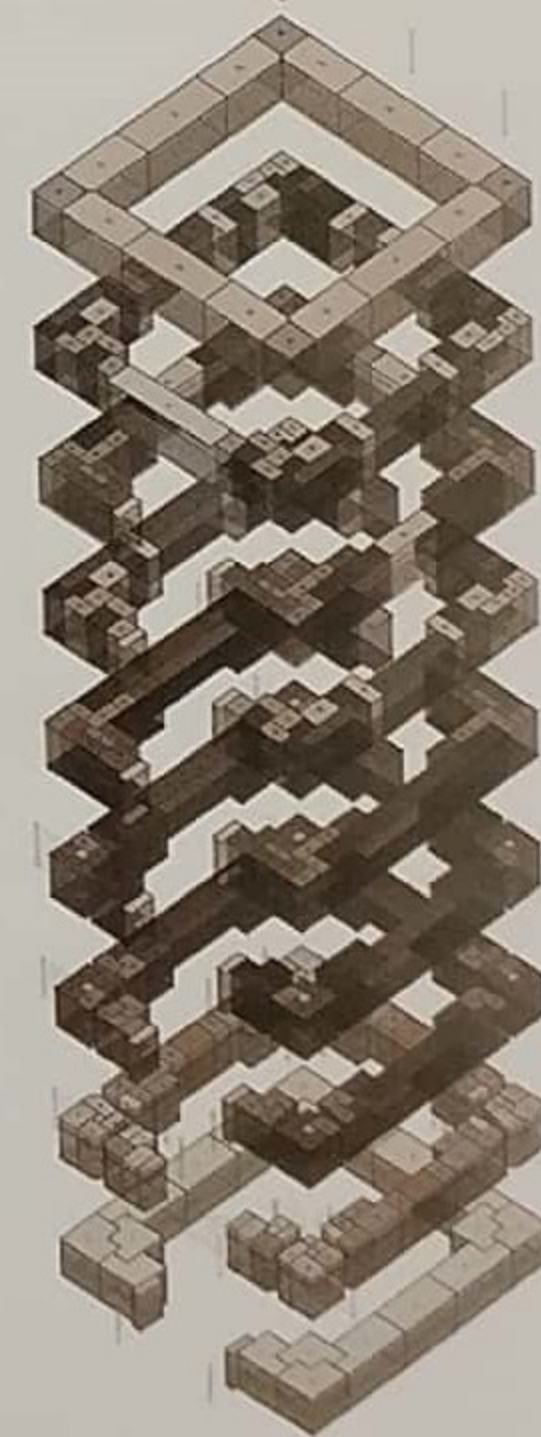


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The shikhara of the Shiva Temple in Barmer is built using interlocking stone joinery which lets light in during the day and lets light out during the night. Photograph: Akash Kumar Das.

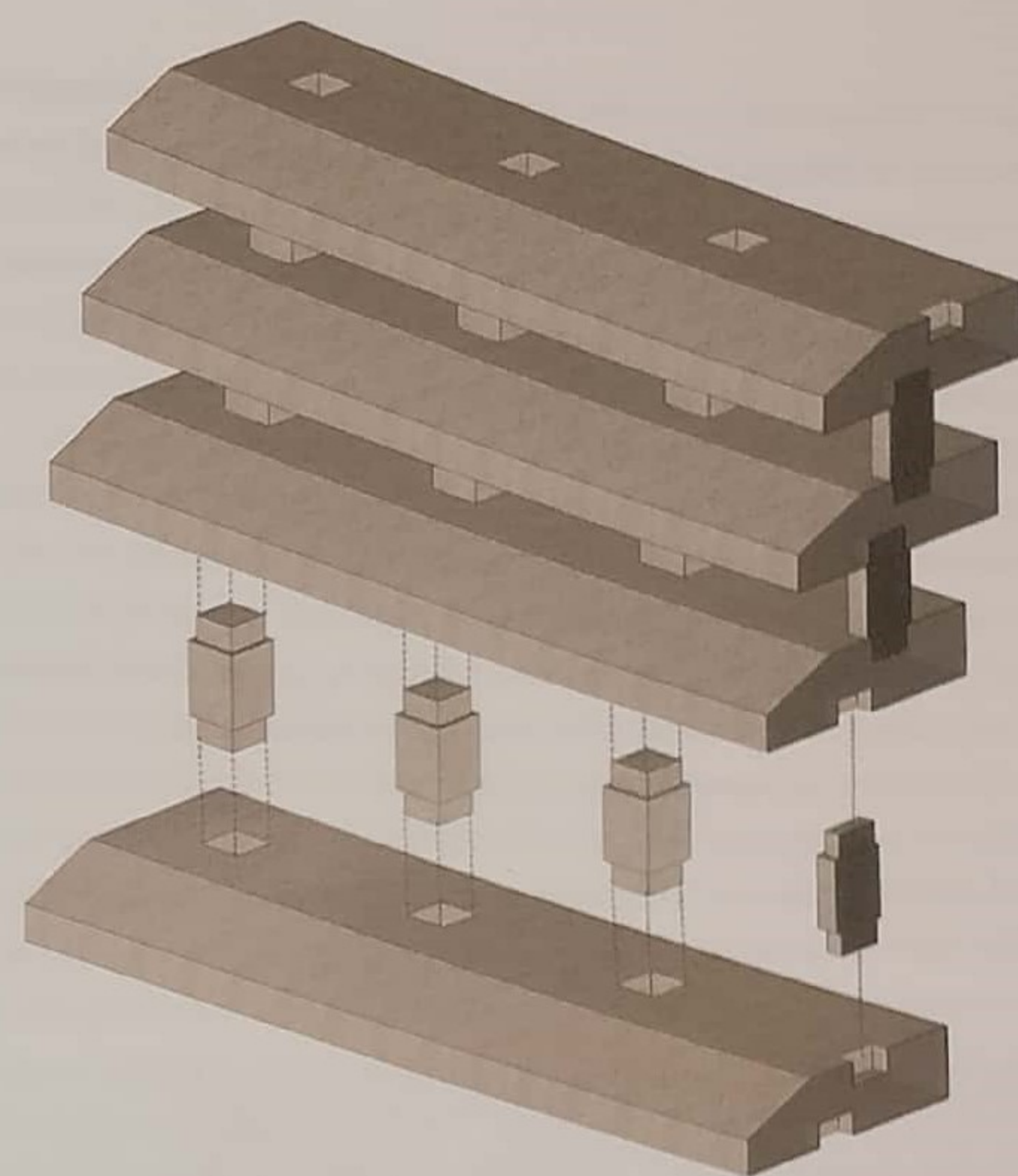
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The Shiva Temple in Barmer by SpaceMatters, built using Jaisalmer yellow stone. The design interprets traditional temple architecture but closely follows the historical forms and geometry. Photograph: Akash Kumar Das.



14 and 15

Architectural drawings for the Shiva Temple in Barmer show how stone slabs of shikhara are offset from each other using interlocking stone blocks. The stone slabs are held at their joints by steel plates and studs. Images: SpaceMatters.



and unflinchingly committed to functionalist planning.²⁸ Consequently, building the modern was an act of soul-selling and rendering buildings rootless. The desired approach was to seek Indianness in all things constructed. Rootedness became possible only through recourse to traditional architectural forms, signs and symbols. In this context, temples are seen as a refuge and their architecture as an act of resistance to the corrupt modern.²⁹ In such a polarized environment, every inventive move would be read as a failure, thus inhibiting the designers.

Mohe's Sai Temple in Bangalore is a case in point. His attempt to enliven this sacred space using light through a transformed shikhara is seen as modern and thus labelled a failure. If freed from prejudice, an alternative and favourable reading of this design strategy is possible. For instance, Lindsay Jones, using Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of the centripetal and the centrifugal, shows that one of the ways an architectural event could be productive and transformative is by juxtaposing the familiar and predictable with the element of deviation.³⁰ Using familiarity and a semblance of curving shikhara lines, Mohe draws users and viewers simultaneously to the familiar and the comfortable through deviation— asymmetrical composition and sliced shikhara forms—and guides them to new ways of experiencing the sacred. Such arguments of imitation also perpetuate what Charles Taylor would call an acultural understating of modernism. It is a false belief that "modernity comes from one single universally applicable operation that imposes a falsely uniform pattern on multiple encounters of non-Western