

**New by Christoph Merian Verlag:**

S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum | Swiss Architecture Museum  
Niklaus Graber, Andreas Ruby, Viviane Ehrensberger (eds.)

**Bengal Stream**  
**The Vibrant Architecture Scene of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh, for most of us it's synonymous with reports on flooding, environmental disasters or inhuman conditions for the workers of its textile industry. On top of all of that one can now add the effects that this country - which has the largest river delta on earth - has to suffer from on account of global climate change. But there is also another Bangladesh: rooted in a culture that reaches back over centuries this young nation is inspired by a dynamic spirit of optimism. An integral part of that spirit is its vibrant architecture scene which addresses the pressing social and environmental issues that the country is facing - and which has so far barely been noticed beyond its borders.

This is about to change. The new title *Bengal Stream. The Vibrant Architecture Scene of Bangladesh* shows for the first time an overview of this diverse and sensitive architecture. The publication was developed in close co-operation with Bengal colleagues and presents more than 60 projects by established and aspiring architects. Besides a range of deepening essays it is the especially commissioned photography by Iwan Baan that sheds new light on this fascinating world of architecture. Quite uncharacteristic for a publication on architecture it also presents everyday life, shows the densely populated and rapidly growing cities like Dhaka, the contrast with the rural areas or the problems with the country's infrastructure.

The Bengal architecture scene is actively involved in teaching and knowledge transfer and is conscious of its responsibility to society. Structures like the floating schools and hospitals, cyclone-resistant emergency shelters or flood-proof settlements are not only carried out by the architects, but also initiated by them. With the help of spatial design, well-thought-out construction details, balanced proportions and atmospheric guided lighting they even manage to provide an air of dignity and beauty to inexpensive housing. These are pragmatic and yet poetic buildings, radical and modern while firmly rooted in local tradition. The architects take care to neither exploit the resources, minorities nor the impoverished population. This engagement could indeed become a model for architectural activities throughout the world.

On the one hand *Bengal Stream* is a lasting documentation of Bangladeshi architecture, but it is also an intellectual and visual journey to a vibrant architecture movement in a country that is - like a stream - constantly flowing and changing. The title is published in concurrence with the exhibition of the same name that will be held at the S AM Swiss Architecture Museum in Basel, from December 02, 2017 to June 24, 2018.



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