

Philip Jodidio

HOMES FOR OUR TIME

Contemporary Houses
around the World

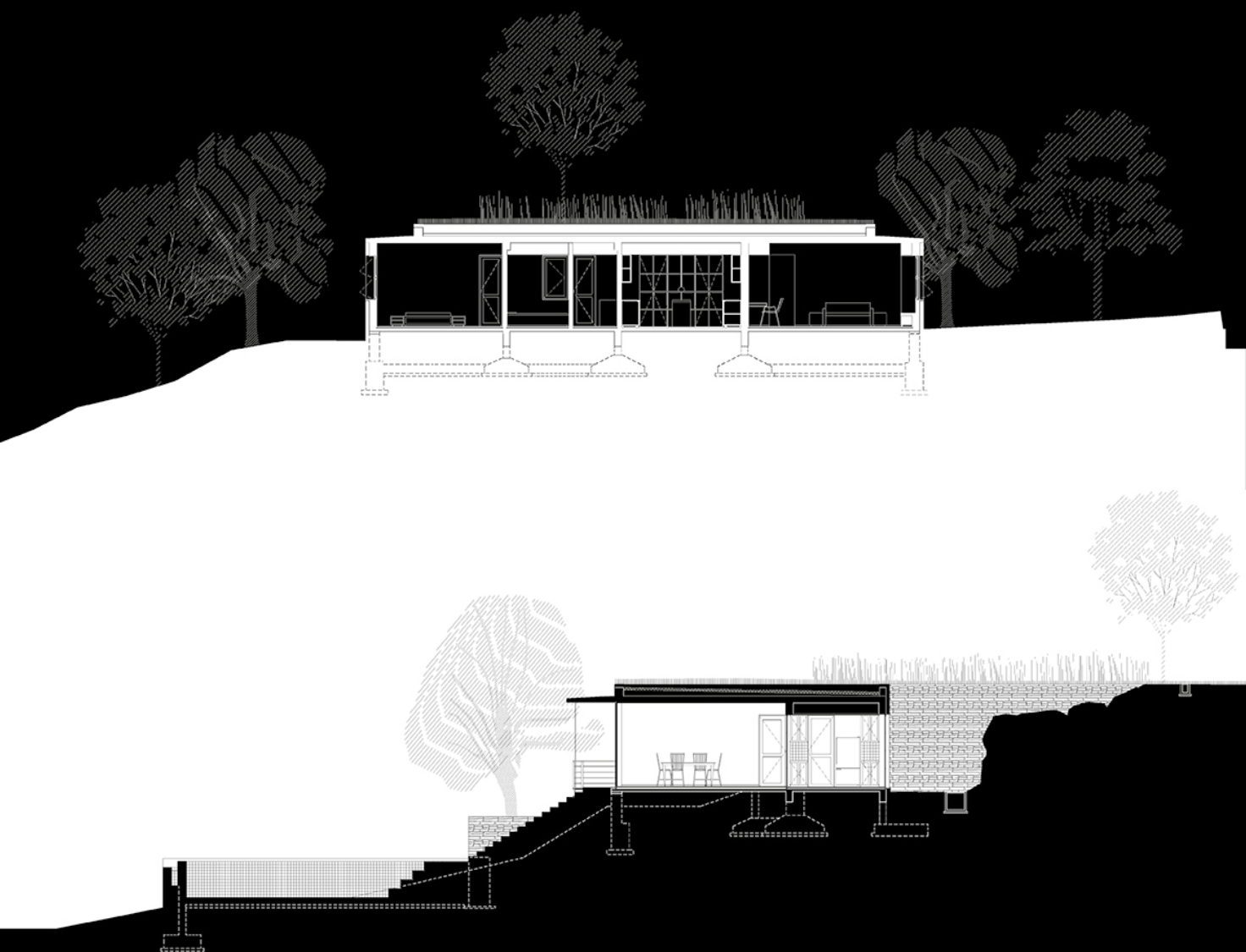
TASCHEN

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ARCHITECTURE BRIO

Riparian House
Karjat, Maharashtra, India, 2014–16
Area: 170 m²
Collaboration: Sahil Deshpande, Shuba Shekar,
Girish Wadhwa (Structural Engineer)







SHEFALI BALWANI received her Architecture degree from the School of Architecture of CEPT University in Ahmedabad and participated in an exchange program at the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands. Before starting her own practice, she worked with Rahul Mehrotra Associates in Mumbai and the office of Channa Daswatte in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In 2006 she cofounded Architecture BRIO in her hometown together with Robert Verrijt. ROBERT VERRIJT received his M.Arch from the TUDelft. After working briefly in the Netherlands, he moved to Sri Lanka, where he joined the office of Channa Daswatte where he had an opportunity to get an insider's perspective on the work of Geoffrey Bawa. In 2006 he moved to Mumbai to start Architecture BRIO. The team set up a dedicated studio called Bb-Studio to work with billionBricks, an NGO committed to the eradication of homelessness. They are also participants in the Bandra Collective, a "collaborative of architects and designers interested in public space design" in Bandra (West Mubai) and beyond. Their work includes Casa Brio, a renovated residence (Mumbai, 2015); the Riparian House (Karjat, Maharashtra, 2016; published here); PowerHYDE, a model for environmentally friendly housing for rural homeless populations in India (2017); and the Tala Treesort, an "eco-resort" in Forest Hills (Madhya Pradesh, 2017), all in India.

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Architecture BRIO starts their description of this house, located in the Western Ghats near Mumbai, with a definition of the little-used word riparian: “inhabiting or situated on the bank of a river.” The RIPARIAN HOUSE is located just below the top of a rise in the foothills of the Ghats on a steeply sloped site. The green roof of the house merges with the top of the hill, hiding the house from the approach on the east side. Landscaped steps at the center of the house lead to a pool deck, while a second set of steps connects to the main level. Boulders found during the process of excavation blend with the house. The centrally located kitchen and courtyard are flanked by bedrooms. These spaces are embedded in the earth with windows bringing in light from above and from the river side. The master bedroom, bathroom, dining and living areas are arrayed along the front of the house. A row of bamboo poles is placed at regular intervals in front of the house to “create a layer of privacy without obstructing the spectacular view of the river and the mountains beyond.” The house is designed to allow for shade and breeze during the summer and a dry indoor environment during the monsoon season. Walls are made of Indian limestone with a coursed pattern, while a suspended timber deck verandah surrounds the house on three sides. Covered verandahs allow for ventilated and shaded semi-indoor spaces. Inside, the timber floor continues as a border around different patterned natural-stone floors. In front of the living room, the deck extends to form a large outdoor terrace with a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape.

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