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ON THE COVER: ITC Green Centre, Kolkata / India

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The Story Project, Kolkata

Location: Kolkata

Year of completion: 2024

Area: 1000 sq. ft.

Photography: Niveditaa Gupta

Design Firm: groupDCA

Design Team: Amit, Sandeep, Sagarika, Simran

Client Name: Primarc

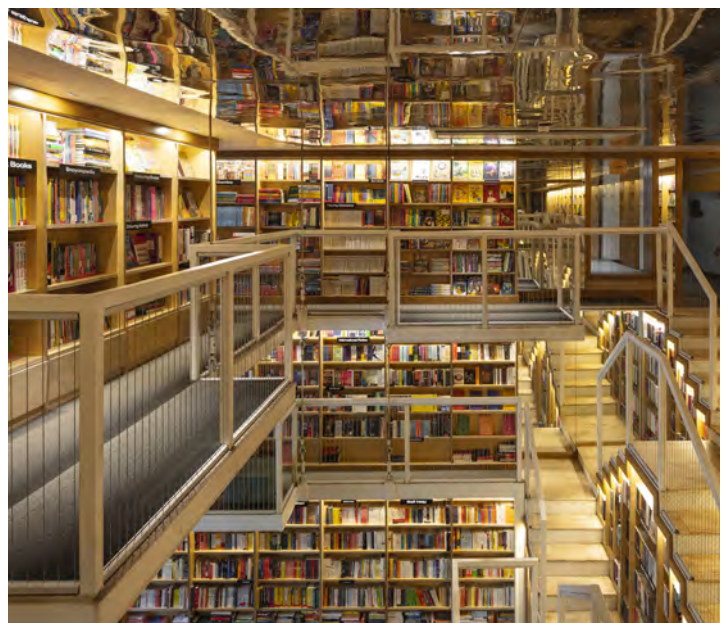
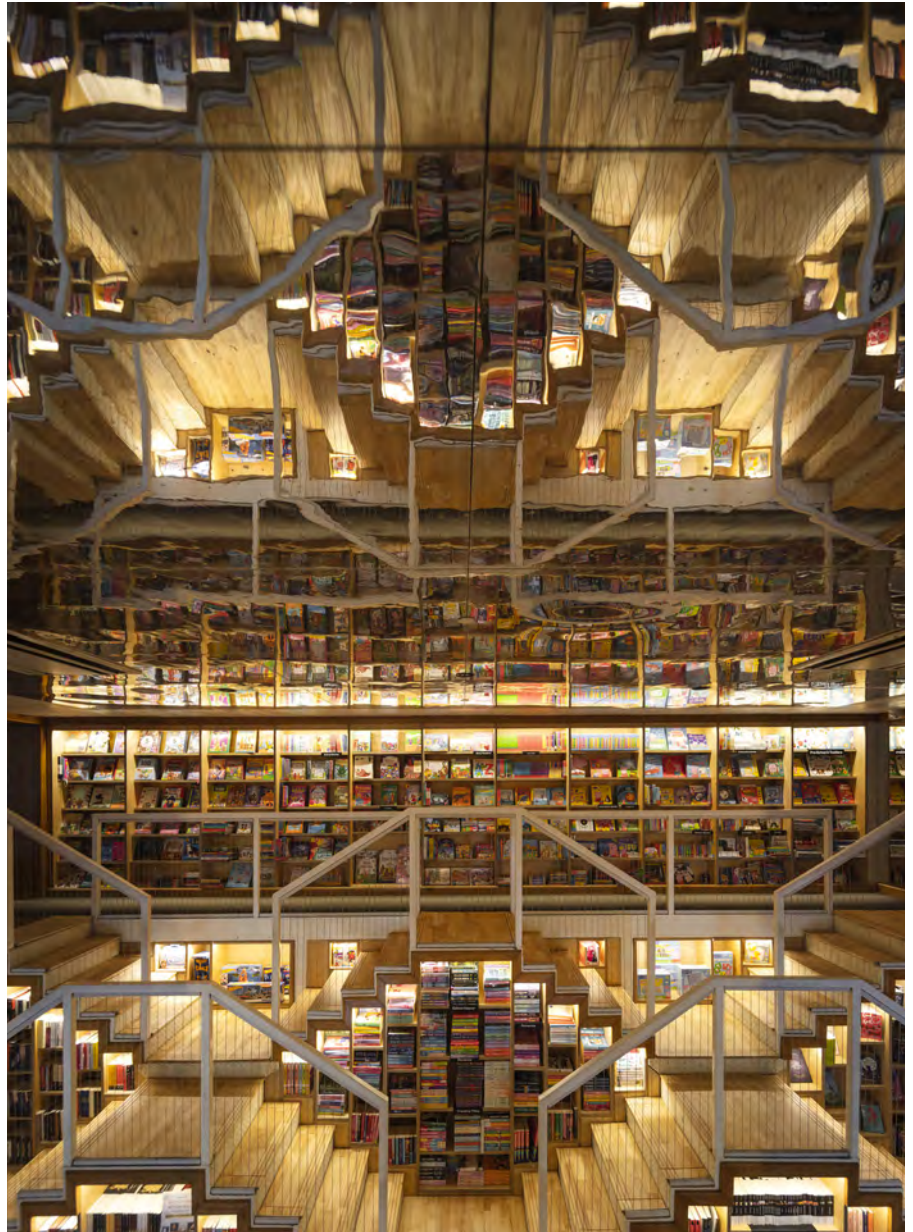
A realm of infinite possibilities where every step invites you to wander, linger, and discover—that is the magic of a bookstore. Embodying this essence, Primarc Bookshop—The Story Project transforms a compact 1,000 sq. ft. space into a one-stop place dedicated to a vast collection of books, games, toys, and stationery. Despite its compact footprint, the bookshop maintains an inviting and functional layout. Leveraging its 7-metre height and drawing inspiration from classic libraries and the architectural legacy of Indian stepwells, The Story Project creates a multi-layered spatial setting that inspires imagination at every turn.

The layout incorporates three levels of interconnected walkways, eliminating the need for ground-level structural supports and ensuring an open circulation plan. These walkways are linked by a series of steps that guide movement and double as spaces for displaying curated collections. This structural ingenuity expands the usable floor space, striking a balance between connectivity and privacy. Departing from the traditional spiral staircases often found in libraries, the stepwell-inspired staircase connects

the levels, invites exploration, and adds an interactive dimension to the space.

Every detail of the bookstore is thoughtfully curated to enhance utility and experience. Suspended from the top are walkways constructed from checkered sheets with a slim 25mm thickness—balancing structural integrity with minimal material use while ensuring a simple, elegant, and highly experiential design. The spaces beneath the staircases are cleverly utilised as display areas, creating layers of curated collections that reflect a mindful design approach. This ingenious and efficient use of space allows the bookstore to house a more expansive collection compared to its previous 5,000 sq. ft. location.

The Story Project thoughtfully addresses the diverse needs of its various visitors. Quiet reading nooks are strategically placed, offering peaceful retreats within the bustling environment. Drawing inspiration from traditional libraries with narrow walkways, the design features a dynamic arrangement that encourages both ascending and descending movements, making the space engaging and accessible for visitors of all ages. The steps themselves are cleverly integrated, doubling as reading spots where visitors can enjoy a book while being part of the space's flow. With bookshelves lining the pathways, an interactive, layered environment is encouraged. This interplay of compact, functional spaces with strategic pause points elevates the bookstore from a simple retail space to a







unique and immersive journey.

The interiors complement the architectural innovation with a warm, earthy material palette dominated by rubberwood and oakwood. These materials were selected for aesthetic appeal and sustainability, reflecting a commitment to ethical sourcing. The ambiance is further enhanced by a carefully considered lighting placement that highlights the natural texture of the materials. Minimalistic lights ensure simplicity, while focused lighting at the tops of the book racks draws attention to the curated collection, enhancing the visual appeal. The strategic use of mirrors on the ceiling further amplifies the sense of space, making the store feel visually expansive.

The Story Project is a celebration of space, lineage, and creativity. By reimagining the possibilities of a small footprint, the design transcends its spatial limitations, offering a rich tapestry of sensory design. The name is closely linked to its design, with each element of the space telling a unique story that unfolds through its spatial layout, materials, and atmosphere. Rooted in the rich legacy of Kolkata and its intellectual pursuit and literary history, this design honours the tradition of a town that nurtures thinkers, writers, and scholars.

