The city of Chennai or Madras or Pattinam as it has been known, has been the setting and inspiration for cinema over the many decades of Tamil film-making. Myriad perspectives of the city have been represented in the form of narratives that take place in the many spaces and places of the city thereby constructing a collective memory. In the process, we have acquired a treasure trove of research material in the form of cinematic spaces that may be used to discern the shifting topographical and architectural character of the city over time (one is reminded of the “nenjam undu nermai undu” song from ‘En Annan’ featuring M.G.R. and a carriage-ride involving sights of popular landmarks like the Central Station, Ripon building, LIC building, Besant Nagar and Anna statue, or the “Madrasa suthi parka poren” song in ‘May Maadham’), and the different forms of social engagement within the city’s spaces.

As an integral part of Tamil cinema, we see Chennai’s role in the narrative as ranging from that of a backdrop which sets the mood for the story, to that of the protagonist. In most films, the integrity of the story would lose ground if Chennai were to be taken out of the plot.

Cinematic representations of the urban space help capture the intersection of the social entities of the city with the physical in the form of urban experiences and issues which together make up an image of the city (‘Chennai 600028’ lets us experience gully cricket in Chennai, ‘angaadi theru’ gives us the behind-the-scene of Chennai’s shopping haven Ranganathan Street, ‘Marina’ which showcases the lives and livelihoods associated with the beach).

Given the popularity of the medium and its ability to connect with the audience, films become an excellent medium to investigate, explore, cherish, understand and contemplate the changing character of the urban fabric of Chennai, to see how the historical urban landscape has transformed into a contemporary cityscape, or to trace the spirit of the city through its people.

THE COMPETITION BRIEF:

This competition invites you to explore the different faces of Chennai, as perceived through the study of a particular theme revolving around place, space, time or life in the city. You could choose to explore “Everyday life in Chennai over time,” “The perceptions of the First-timer in Madras,” “Life in an apartment - Chennai,” “Madras and culture,” “To be a dog in Chennai,” “Street-life in Chennai,” “Madras baashai,” “Changing icons of Chennai city,” “The Chennai suburban rail commute” OR any of the many urban themes reflected in the diversity of film-genres set in the city. Compare, contrast and juxtapose moving images to express your understanding of the cinematic spaces of Chennai and present your analysis in the form of a Montage of Cine Clips. Background music, voice-overs and sub-titling where needed is permitted to augment the presentation. A reference list citing the list of films used as source for the presentation is mandatory. The maximum length of the presentation shall be 8 minutes.

Submission deadline: 10:00 A.M on Friday, August 30, 2013 to Ms. Rajeswari. R, Faculty, Department of Architecture, SAP Campus, Anna University
Mode: CD format (2 copies)
For clarifications: Contact Ms. Rajeswari. R at 9884492200 OR mail raaji.ravi@gmail.com