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MUSEUM MOSAIC

India's Annual Recap



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Museum Mosaic

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Foreword

To some, a museum is a silent gallery where time settles like dust on stone sculptures and miniature paintings. For others, it is a place of noise - of schoolchildren trailing behind docents, of arguments about whose histories deserve the wall space. It may be a storehouse, a classroom, a time capsule, or even a site of protest, depending on who walks in and what they carry with them. The meaning of a museum, like memory itself, is never fixed, it shifts shape with every visitor, every gaze, every generation.

The museum sector in India is undergoing a quiet but significant transformation. As anyone closely watching the sector knows, today's museums are far from passive. They are dynamic sites of engagement, dialogue, innovation, and at times, dissent. And most importantly, they are being shaped by a new generation of cultural professionals, curators, designers, educators, and enthusiasts who are not just caretakers of history but also interpreters of and for the society.

Museum Mosaic was born from a need to document this changing landscape. We envisioned it as a platform that would spotlight the most exciting developments in India's museums, not just to celebrate accomplishments, but to foster conversations and connections. Whether you're a seasoned museum professional, a researcher, a student, or someone who simply loves wandering through galleries and peeking into showcases, *Museum Mosaic* is designed to keep you abreast of the pulse of the sector. Think of it as your annual check-in with the people, projects, and provocations shaping the museum world in India.

In this edition, we've expanded our scope to capture the many textures of museum work. From national institutions to hyper-local community museums, from illustrated reflections to resource toolkits, the magazine offers a rounded picture of where we are today, and perhaps, where we are headed.

As we publish this issue of Museum Mosaic, I am reminded of why this work matters. Museums are not just places we visit. They are reflections of who we are, what we value, and how we tell our stories. They can be sites of beauty, yes, but also of reckoning. They are spaces where we can come to terms with our past, reimagine our futures, and find our place in the larger narrative of a diverse and complex society.

To all our contributors, readers, and collaborators: thank you for being part of this journey. May this magazine inspire you to visit more museums, ask more questions, and maybe even imagine what your own museum might look like - real or metaphorical.

Welcome to Museum Mosaic 2024. There's a lot to see. Let's begin!



Anjchita B. Nair

CEO & Co-founder,
Cultre

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MOSAIC<sup>20
24</sup>**

Introducing The Constituion Museum & The Rights and Freedoms Gallery



Inaugurated on the historic 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India, the Constitution Museum & The Rights and Freedoms Academy (CMRFA) at the O. P. Jindal Global University campus in Sonapat, Haryana, is a tribute to the enduring legacy and transformative journey of this foundational document.





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The museum delves deep into the heart of the Constitution, exploring its historical context while emphasising its critical role in shaping contemporary Indian society. The three galleries are designed as learning spaces that ignite curiosities and a sense of exploration about the values enshrined in the Constitution. Through a multitude of formats and artistic expressions, the museum aims to instil a sense of pride and awe, and also, to create an informed citizenry that appreciates and advocates for democratic values. Art pieces crafted by contemporary artists are on display across the museum. Not mere embellishments, these are interpretive reflections that embody the essence of the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. The museum strives to create active engagement, and invites visitors to traverse intellectual landscapes as well as emotional ones.

KEY GALLERIES & HIGHLIGHTS

Constitution: A Kaleidoscope

Constitution: A Kaleidoscope offers an in-depth exploration of the philosophical underpinnings and key provisions of the Constitution. As the centrepiece, a striking facsimile of the Constitution is on display, that encapsulates the collective aspirations of a diverse populace dedicated to principles of liberty, equality, justice, and fraternity. The gallery unfolds into various sections that illuminate fundamental provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution's design ensures it can reflect the diverse, multifaceted nature of a nation while upholding core values of liberty and equality. Each segment encourages visitors to engage with concepts that define Indian democracy, illustrating how these principles serve as a blueprint for the governance of a complex and pluralistic nation.



The Maker's Gallery

The Constitution of India was born from a unique confluence of ideas, experiences, and struggles, both local and global, historical and contemporary. Its shaping was influenced by centuries of social evolution, the bitter lessons of colonial rule, and a newfound, deeply felt desire for Swaraj or self-governance. The Maker's Gallery explores the nuances and intricacies of the Constitution drafting process, shedding light on the journey towards its adoption.

Understanding the making of the Constitution is not just an academic exercise; it is a journey into India's collective conscience. Every clause, every word in the Constitution was forged in the fires of intense discourse. Through archival treasures—Constituent Assembly Debates, speeches, newspaper articles, and even rare audio and video recordings—visitors will be able to witness these discussions in their raw form, each session as a step towards building a democratic India. The exhibits give us a glimpse of the hopes, anxieties, and convictions of the Constitution's framers.

At the core of this process was the Constituent Assembly, an assembly truly "for the people, by the people, and of the people." The Assembly, consisting of individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds—freedom fighters, social reformers, legal scholars, and political leaders—brought together their perspectives, ideals, and concerns to the drafting process. The gallery honours these luminaries and celebrates their enduring legacy.

Freedom's Journey

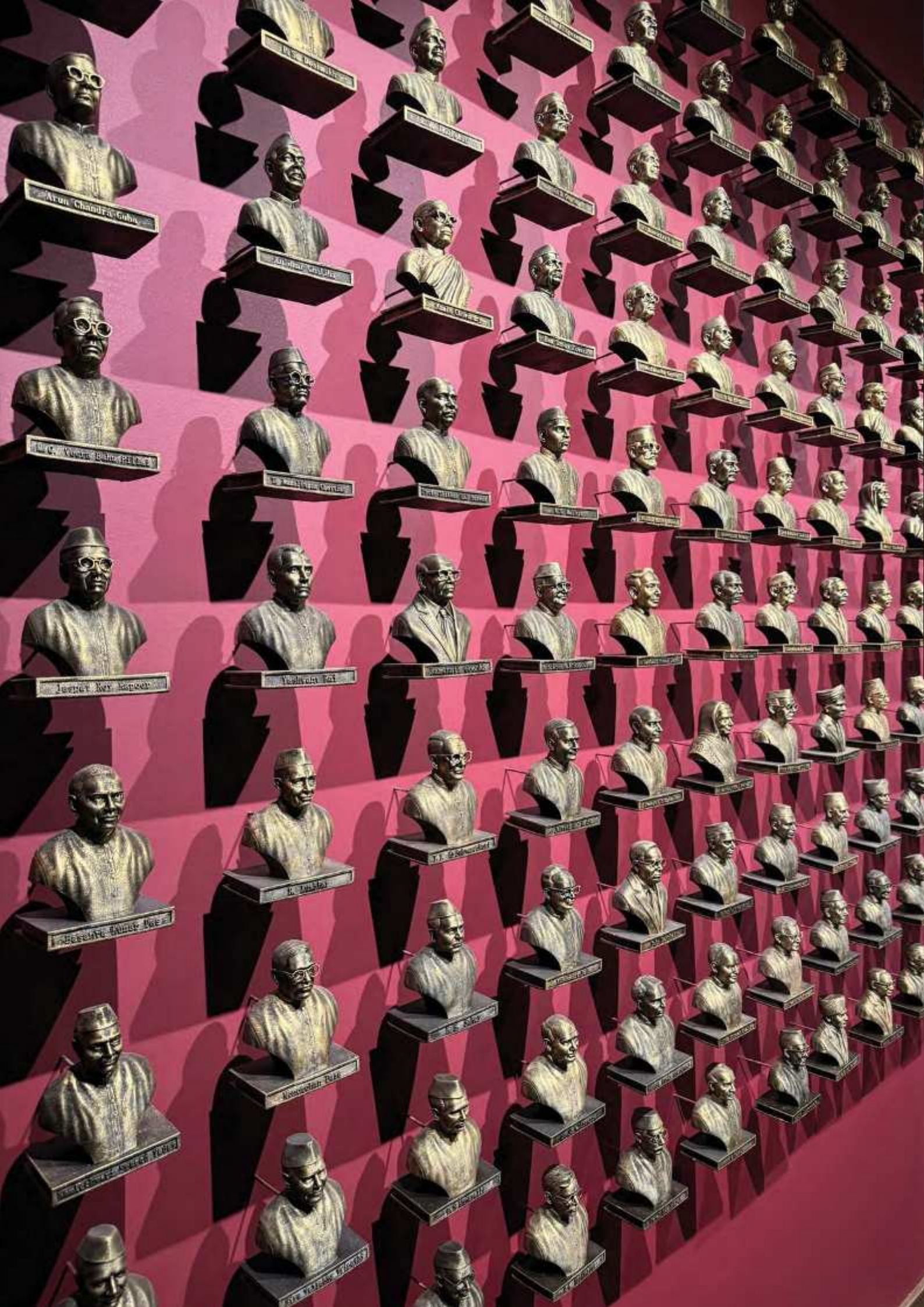
The Constitution of India, forged through the accord of distinguished leaders, has guided the lives of generations of Indians, upholding their rights and defining their responsibilities as citizens, cementing a sense of belonging with their nation. But what truly changed with the adoption of a constitution? What did it mean to be a citizen of a sovereign republic? What rights and liberties did it bring to the people of India? Freedom's Journey explores the lived experiences surrounding this transition, and offers a glimpse into how Indians understood and embraced the new order marked by the Constitution.

The Constitution explicitly granted all Indians basic but precious rights as citizens of this great country. This gallery seeks to instil rights consciousness by capturing the essence of these Fundamental Rights and follows their evolution through the years. The six core rights—Right to Equality; Right to Freedom; Right against Exploitation; Right to Freedom of Religion; Cultural and Educational Rights; and Right to Constitutional Remedies—are showcased not just as legal guarantees, but as lived experiences that have continually reshaped Indian society.

Through milestone cases, landmark judgments, and expert commentaries showcased here, this space invites contemplation on the intricate relationship between the state and the people it serves. Here, visitors can witness how the Constitution is not a static relic, but a living testament to the aspirations of a diverse and evolving nation.

As visitors look back on India's extraordinary journey since the adoption of its Constitution, they will see a story of resilience, marked by both triumphs and challenges. Freedom's Journey speaks to the enduring spirit of the nation, reminding visitors to reflect and renew their collective commitment to the ongoing quest for true freedom and justice.











Interactive and Immersive Experiences

The museum offers interactive and immersive experiences that go beyond traditional displays. Visitors can embark on a 360-degree visual journey through the making of the Constitution and watch documentaries inspired by constitutional ideals at the Samvidhaan Theatre. Adding to the engagement, the Aaj Ke Samachar vintage radio installation lets guests tune into pivotal moments from India's constitutional history, bringing the past to life in a hands-on and memorable way.



Fostering Rights Consciousness

The museum also educates visitors about the six Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution, which protect citizens against discrimination and empower them to uphold equality, freedom, and justice. Through multimedia storytelling featuring landmark cases and real-life examples, the museum highlights how these rights—right to equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and right to constitutional remedies—continue to shape society and safeguard individual dignity. Additionally, a special exhibit honours Naveen Jindal's campaign for the right to hoist the national flag, symbolising national pride and unity.

Learn from Legal Luminaries

Talks and interviews with constitutional scholars, judges, and advocates provide deeper insights into the ongoing relevance of the Constitution. The museum also explores the portrayal of constitutional themes in print media and literature, offering a broader cultural and philosophical context.

A New Landmark for Civic Learning

With its blend of history, art, technology, and interactive engagement, the Constitution Museum & The Rights and Freedoms Academy has emerged as a vital new institution. It not only preserves the legacy of India's supreme legal document but also inspires every visitor to become an informed, active participant in the nation's democratic journey.



Museum Watch — 2024

This special section brings readers up to speed with the most significant museum developments across India in the past year. From major exhibitions and curatorial innovations to institutional milestones and policy updates, this roundup highlights how museums are evolving as dynamic spaces of learning, memory, and engagement. Whether it's a new wing opening or a landmark acquisition, Museum Watch 2024 offers a concise yet comprehensive snapshot of the country's vibrant museum landscape.

JANUARY



Yajna Varaha, the incarnation of Vishnu as a boar, sandstone, 900–1099 CE. Found in the river at Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh, India. Vidisha District Archaeological Museum, State Department of Archaeology Archives and Museums.

Mumbai Hosts a Divine Dialogue of Ancient Civilisations

The J. Paul Getty Museum, the British Museum, the Berlin State Museums and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya collaborated to host a transcultural exhibition on Ancient Sculptures: India Egypt Assyria Greece Rome, in Mumbai. The transcontinental exhibition featured art from the ancient world, curated from an Indian perspective, building on a continued tradition representing 3000 years of Indian art. Some of the central themes explored here included the role of nature in human lives, the divine form, and ideas and paradigms of beauty.



The first Apollo to land in India, first century CE, has been lent to the show by the Berlin State Museums.

Hyderabad's Salar Jung Museum Shines Brighter with New Additions

Five new galleries were inaugurated by Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, G. Kishan Reddy at the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad. These galleries span across diverse themes, showcasing a range of artefacts, including Indian sculptures, Bidriware, lamps and chandeliers from around the globe, as well as European bronze statues and marble sculptures. Some notable artefacts on display include a 2nd Century B.C.E. Bharhut fragment with a lotus medallion, an 'Anantsayana Vishnu' from the Kakatiya period, and 300 unique Bidriware objects.



Preserving Karnataka's Legacy: U.S. Funds Restoration of Mysuru's Folklore Museum

The U.S. Mission in India and its implementing partner University of Mysore officially announced the U.S.-funded conservation efforts for the Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion Folklore Museum in Mysuru, Karnataka. The project, which is funded through the U.S. government's Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), supports the conservation of the West Wing of the Museum and more than 6,500 artefacts from Karnataka. This conservation endeavour will be a joint effort between conservation specialists, museum experts, architects, designers, and skilled artisans.



Vadya Celebrates India's Forgotten Musical Treasures

The MATI Art Foundation and Crafts Museum collaborated with the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy in New Delhi to showcase Vadya, an exhibition on rare musical instruments of India. With a range of folk, tribal and classical musical instruments on display, the exhibition aimed to document, preserve and exhibit instruments, many of which are either extinct, or on the verge of extinction. Some instruments on display included the Tuhila, Kinnari, Panchmukhi Baja, Buang, Decca and Ghasiya Baja, and a book on musical instruments featuring over 200 pages of photographs and essays by scholars and writers provided a deeper understanding of the history and cultural contexts of these treasures.



National Crafts Museum holds Exhibition on Ikat Weaving

The "Patta Bandha" exhibition, held at the National Crafts Museum in New Delhi, dived into the rich history and artistry of Indian ikat weaving. Curated by Mayank Mansingh Kaul, the exhibition highlighted the Patta Bandha style of ikat, which is renowned for its intricate dyeing and weaving techniques. The display explored the historical roots of this ancient craft, in tracing its evolution and focusing on the cultural significance of textile weaving in India. Through vivid displays of textiles, the exhibition not only celebrated traditional craftsmanship but also emphasized the contemporary relevance of ikat in the global fashion and textile industries.



Bengaluru's Bold Fusion of Science and Art

Science Gallery Bengaluru was opened to the public on 19 January 2024, creating a new space for engaging young adults at the interface of the human and natural sciences, engineering, and art. Established with the mission of bringing science back into culture, Science Gallery Bengaluru's opening was marked by an interdisciplinary exhibition titled CARBON, which focused on the wonders of the element, using interactive exhibits designed by Indian and international artists and scholars in a manner that blurred the lines between science and art.



FEB RU ARY

Chennai's National Art Gallery Reopens After A Hiatus

Following a fifteen-year restoration that was undertaken, the 115-year-old National Art Gallery in the Government Museum Complex in Egmore, Chennai was opened to the public. The gallery has been restored as a representation of Indo-Saracenic architecture and houses a diverse collection of objects including paintings by artists such as Raja Ravi Varma, Mysore and Tanjore paintings, and artworks from the Mughal era.



The renovated facade of the National Art Gallery

Raghu Rai Exhibits at Kiran Nadar Museum

The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art showcased 'Raghu Rai: A Thousand Lives—Photographs from 1965-2005', an exhibition that provided a glimpse into the life, travels, and work of critically acclaimed photographer Raghu Rai. Focused on the pre-digital phase of Rai's career when he used analog or film photography, the exhibition was curated using his vast archives. Concentrating on his black and white photographs, the exhibition presented his long-term interest in photographing political and spiritual leaders, and also traced his practice that evolved at the interstices of his years as a photojournalist.



Tyre Shop, Old Delhi, 1976 Photograph courtesy Raghu Rai & PHOTOINK Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art



Series: Confessions of a Wall (1973-1977) Photograph Courtesy Raghu Rai & PHOTOINK Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art



Mobile Museum Revolution: CSMVS' Museum on Wheels Engages Communities Across North India

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya's (CSMVS) Museum on Wheels programme expanded its catering to the masses in remote areas in the North Indian states of Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan. Set up by the CSMVS in 2015 as part of their outreach for communities in Maharashtra, Museum on Wheels is a travelling initiative that spreads awareness about culture, science, heritage and history, using theme-based exhibits and interactive displays, specially designed for younger audiences. The initiative is also running in the states of Goa, Karnataka and Gujarat.



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya's Museum On Wheels bus.

Mukhya Mantri Sangrahalaya Museum Announced in Assam

Plans were announced and formalised to establish the ‘Mukhya Mantri Sangrahalaya’ Museum in Assam, a visionary project that looks to celebrate the state’s democratic history. The museum plans to narrate the challenges, triumphs and leadership of each chief minister of the state. In addition to inspiring a sense of pride in Assam’s democratic journey, the museum will also serve as an educational hub for its visitors.

RIWATCH Museum Inaugurated in Arunachal Pradesh

The Northeast and International Museum wings of the Research Institute of World’s Ancient Traditions Cultures and Heritage (RIWATCH) at Roing in Arunachal Pradesh were inaugurated. The museum showcases a vast and varied collection of artefacts, traditional crafts and historical documents that narrate the story of the vibrant cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh.

India’s First Digital Epigraphy Museum Announced

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya’s (CSMVS) Museum on Wheels programme expanded its catering to the masses in remote areas in the North Indian states of Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan. Set up by the CSMVS in 2015 as part of their outreach for communities in Maharashtra, Museum on Wheels is a travelling initiative that spreads awareness about culture, science, heritage and history, using theme-based exhibits and interactive displays, specially designed for younger audiences. The initiative is also running in the states of Goa, Karnataka and Gujarat.



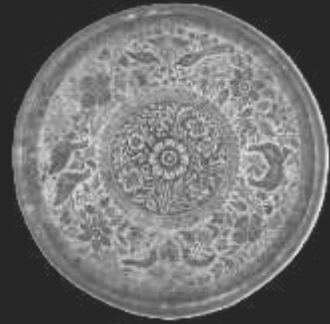
Spread across 2,200 sq.ft, the museum showcases over 120 reproductions of jewellery pieces that once belonged to India but are now in international institutions like the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum



A 'meenakari' artisan at work

Jaipur Unveils Landmark Museum Dedicated to Meenakari Craft

The Museum of Meenakari Heritage opened to the public in Jaipur, a first-of-its kind initiative highlighting the ancient enamelling technique of meenakari. The self-funded museum, set up by Sunita Shekhawat and designed by Siddhartha Das Studio, showcases a rich collection of vibrant meenakari jewellery, with over 120 reproductions of jewellery pieces, dating as far back as the 15th century. Along with these pieces, the museum also houses photographs that narrate the history of the enamelling tradition, which travelled to the Indian subcontinent from Persia and went on to flourish in Jaipur.



A 'meenakari' wall plate, created in the Sunita Shekhawat atelier

MMA

Celebrating Sikh Identity: Turban Museum to Open in Punjab

The Punjab State Government announced its plans and allocated funds to establish a Turban Museum in Anandpur Sahib, located in the Rupnagar district. This museum will be thoughtfully curated and designed to showcase the diverse styles of turbans, celebrating them as a vital cultural symbol for Sikhs in Punjab and underscoring their significance within India's rich cultural heritage.



A Sikh with a darbara Singh dumala



A Sikh Nihang with a Dastar Bunga, 1860

RECH

Jharkhand to Get Tribal Culture & Heritage Museum in Padampur

On March 16, 2024, Union Tribal Affairs Minister virtually laid the foundation stone for a project to establish the 'Centre for Preservation and Promotion of Tribal Culture & Heritage' Museum in Padampur in the Kharsawan district of Jharkhand. This centre aims to showcase Jharkhand's tribal culture, history, and heritage, serving as a knowledge hub and tourist attraction. The museum would also feature a live centre for artisans to produce and showcase their work.

Soviet-Era TU142 Aircraft Transformed into Museum in Andhra Pradesh

A decommissioned Soviet-era TU142 aircraft was inaugurated as a museum in Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. This addition enriches India's collection of naval aviation museums, offering visitors insights into the aircraft's instrumental role in maritime and anti-submarine warfare, as well as its use for surveillance operations during the Kargil War of 1999. The museum will serve as a space of interest to aviation enthusiasts and those wanting to explore India's military history.

NGMA Mumbai Hosts 'Varna Mythri' Retrospective of Rumale Chennabasaviah

The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in Mumbai hosted the exhibition Varna Mythri, a retrospective of master artist Rumale Chennabasaviah. The exhibition showcased the iconic works of Chennabasaviah, focusing on his exploration of colour and form. Known for his contributions to modern Indian art, the artist's pieces showcased an in-depth look at his innovative use of colour as a tool for conveying emotion and narrative, highlighting his enduring impact on the Indian art scene.



Artist Rumale Chennabasaviah

Bombay Talkies' Cinematic Legacy Showcased at Josef Wirsching Archive Exhibition

The Josef Wirsching Archive: Bombay Talkies – Cinematic History of India exhibition was held at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) in Mumbai in April 2024. The exhibition focused on the rich history of Indian cinema, particularly the iconic Bombay Talkies studio, through the lens of Josef Wirsching's photographic archive. Wirsching, a German-born photographer, captured pivotal moments from the studio's golden era, providing a rare visual documentation of Bollywood's formative years. The exhibition offered visitors an opportunity to explore the cinematic legacy of one of India's film studios, showcasing photographs, documents, and other archival materials.



Devika Rani/ Jeevan Naiya, 1936, Bombay Talkies, d. Franz Osten, Devika Rani in a posed studio still on set in the Bombay Talkies studio



Installation view: A Cinematic Imagination: Josef Wirsching and the Bombay Talkies



Nirmala, 1938, Bombay Talkies, d. Franz Osten, set-up for a tracking shot taken in the BT compound. The camera is mounted on a sturdy trolley as assistants operate the camera and pull focus during the take. A microphone can be seen suspended on a boom directly over the camera and just out of frame.



Vachan, 1938, Bombay Talkies, d. Franz Osten, Debutante actress, Meera and Bombay Talkies veteran, Mumtaz Ali rehearse a scene from the film, a historical fantasy set in 'no particular time' or locale.



Nirmala, 1938, Bombay Talkies, d. Franz Osten, Saroj Borkar and the child artiste Gulbadan sing a lullaby in the opening sequence of Nirmala, a story about a young woman's deep desire to become a mother

REPORTAGE

Kozhikode IT Professional Turns Home into Mini Election Museum

A resident's house in Kozhikode was transformed into a mini election museum, offering a glimpse into India's electoral history. The museum, created by K Vikas, an IT professional based in Kozhikode, showcased a collection of vintage election memorabilia, including ballot boxes, posters, voting machines, and photographs from past elections. This personal initiative aimed to highlight the evolution of the electoral process in India, providing a look at the country's democratic journey. The museum has been receiving attention for its innovative approach to preserving election history and offering visitors an educational and engaging experience on the democratic process.

Mumbai Exhibition Explores Ecological Bond Between Arrey Colony and City

The exhibition Exploring the Ecological Bond Between Arrey Colony and the City was held in Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sanghralaya (CSMVS) Mumbai. The exhibition delved into the relationship between the Arrey Colony, a lush green area located in the heart of Mumbai, and the city's urban landscape. It highlighted the ecological significance of the colony, which has become a sanctuary for flora and fauna amidst the fast-developing city. Through various displays, photographs and artworks, the exhibition raised awareness about the environmental importance of preserving green spaces in urban areas. It also emphasised the challenges posed by urbanisation to such spaces, urging for their protection.





Payana Vintage Car Museum Opens Near Mysuru

The Payana Vintage Car Museum located near Mysuru, Karnataka, opened its doors to the public. Established by Dr D. Veerendra Heggade, the museum showcases a curated collection of 69 vintage and classic vehicles, including models from 1925 to the recent models. The exhibits feature a diverse range of automobiles, such as the 1925 Fiat 501, World War II jeeps, and a 1949 Daimler DE 36 that once belonged to the Maharaja of Mysore. The museum's architecture is distinctive, with a building designed to resemble a car tire, reflecting its theme. Located along the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, the museum is a significant destination for automobile enthusiasts and tourists alike.



MAY

The Past and Future of Travel at Birla Museum's New Transport Gallery

The Birla Industrial and Technological Museum in Kolkata inaugurated its Transport Gallery, which traces the historical evolution of ancient to modern transportation, featuring a wide array of exhibits, including 18th century boats to vintage cars and ancient chariots. Using state-of-the-art technology, the newly added gallery aims to educate both history and technology enthusiasts about the innovations and advancements that have taken place in the world of road transport, water transport, railways, aerospace, and also highlights Kolkata's newly developed underwater metro system.



Transport Gallery inaugurated at Birla Industrial and Technological Museum in Kolkata

Madhya Pradesh to Open its First City Museum in Bhopal



The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board announced that it will build the state's inaugural City Museum in Bhopal, to be housed in the left wing of the Moti Mahal. The proposed museum will comprise 11 galleries, encompassing the historical and geographical context of Madhya Pradesh and the city of Bhopal. The museum will showcase prehistoric rock paintings, stone tools, archaeological finds, stamps, attire of kings and queens from Bhopal, ancient sculptures and art from the Bhopal Nawab period. The right-wing of the Moti Mahal will be dedicated to accommodate the Mahapratapi Raja Bhoj Sangrahalaya which will house special exhibits on Parmar King Raja Bhoj.

International Museum Expo 2024 in Kolkata Explores Art, Science & Technology

The second edition of the International Museum Expo took place at Science City in Kolkata, centered around the theme 'Museums: A Confluence of Art, Science & Technology.' The event featured diverse galleries and exhibitions showcasing digitised storytelling, the evolution of science and technology, and the contributions of women in science. Enriching the experience were panel discussions, workshops, seminars, and speeches by international experts, all designed to foster engagement and awareness of museums. Bringing together museum professionals and enthusiasts, the expo served as a platform for idea exchange and in-depth discussions.

Nayanar Academy Museum Inaugurated in Kannur



The Nayanar Academy Museum in Kannur was inaugurated, offering a glimpse into the life and legacy of Kerala's former Chief Minister, E.K. Nayanar. The museum showcased interactive exhibits, including a holographic representation of Nayanar, allowing visitors to engage in conversations about his life and political career. The displays also include a recreated reading room with his personal belongings, as well as wax figures of other key political figures. This initiative stands as a tribute to Nayanar's contributions to Kerala's political history, while offering a technology-driven educational experience to the public.



Shimla's Chadwick House Transformed into Audit Heritage Museum

The historic Chadwick House in Shimla, well-known for hosting Mahatma Gandhi during his visit for the Cabinet Mission, was transformed into a unique museum titled 'Chadwick House: Navigating Audit Heritage' Museum. Inaugurated by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the museum is housed in a building that once served as a training school for the Indian Audit and Accounts Service from 1950 before falling into disrepair. Now revitalised, the museum showcases a range of interesting artefacts, including Remington typewriters, British-era franking machines, antique clocks, and trophies from the field offices of the Comptroller and Auditor General.





Smritivan Memorial Museum Named Among World's Most Beautiful, Wins UNESCO Prix Versailles Honour

The Smritivan Memorial Museum in Bhuj secured the third position in the UNESCO World Selection for the Prix Versailles Museum 2024, which honours the seven most beautiful museums globally. Inaugurated in 2022, the museum spans 470 acres and stands as a tribute to the 13,000 lives lost in the devastating 2001 Bhuj earthquake in Gujarat. The state-of-the-art Smritivan Earthquake Museum is thoughtfully divided into seven thematic blocks – Rebirth, Rediscover, Restore, Rebuild, Rethink, Relive, and Renew – each offering visitors a unique perspective on resilience and recovery. Its recognition in this prestigious category highlights its exceptional architectural design and layout, bringing global attention to the museum's significance.



National Museum Showcases Rare 4th Century BCE Taxila Gold Ornaments

The National Museum in New Delhi hosted a rare exhibition Hiranmaya: Gold Ornaments from Taksasila, featuring exquisite jewellery pieces from the 4th century BCE to the 1st century CE, discovered in the ancient city of Taxila in present-day northwestern Pakistan. These artefacts were excavated by archaeologist John Marshall during his tenure from the archaeological mounds of Bhir and Sirkap. The collection, consisting of 25 exceptional pieces, included a gold bead necklace, a hairpin, and earrings, all of which are part of the National Museum's reserve collection.

World Music Day Marks New Beginning for Gwalior's Iconic Moti Mahal

On World Music Day, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board unveiled plans to establish a Museum of Music at Gwalior's historic Moti Mahal, backed by a grant from the Union Ministry of Culture. The museum will feature a collection of antique musical instruments, offering a rich experience for music and art enthusiasts. This initiative aims to celebrate Gwalior's deep-rooted musical heritage, reinforcing its recognition as a UNESCO Creative City of Music.

Oxford University to Return 500-Year-Old Stolen Bronze Idol to India

In an effort to repatriate stolen objects, Oxford University decided to return a 500-year-old bronze idol to India. The 60-centimeter-tall idol, depicting Saint Tirumankai Alvar, was reportedly stolen from Tamil Nadu and later acquired by the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University through a Sotheby's auction in 1967. This decision aligns with the broader movement toward cultural restitution and reflects a growing awareness and sensitivity to the issue.

Greenpeace India's 'Museum of Memories' Exhibition Highlights Heatwave Crisis

Greenpeace India hosted an exhibition titled Museum of Memories at Triveni Kala Sangam in New Delhi, urging the government to take immediate action on the heatwave crisis in India. The exhibition highlighted personal narratives of individuals affected by extreme heat, featuring objects and installations that conveyed stories of loss, grief, and resilience in the face of climate change. Designed to emphasise the urgent need for policy intervention, the exhibition aimed to push authorities to officially recognise heatwaves as a national disaster.



JULY

Mumbai's Museum of Solutions Named Among TIME's World's Greatest Places of 2024

Mumbai's Museum of Solutions (MuSo) earned a spot on TIME Magazine's 2024 list of the World's Greatest Places. Designed as an experiential and educational experience for children, MuSo encourages children to go beyond traditional textbook learning, inspiring young minds to explore a world of possibilities. Through interactive exhibits and programmes, the museum empowers children to think critically and design solutions for the future they will inherit. MuSo's exhibits explore various topics, including climate change, poverty, and inequality, through hands-on, immersive, and playful learning methods.



Step Underground into History: India's First Sunken Museum Opens at Humayun's Tomb

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India, has inaugurated India's first sunken museum within the Humayun's Tomb complex in New Delhi. Located six meters underground, the museum showcases around 700 artefacts—including rare manuscripts, books, helmets, astrolabes, and paintings—many on display for the first time. Blending Mughal craftsmanship with modern design, the structure features elevated galleries beneath a roof inspired by a Mughal garden. Alongside Emperor Humayun's legacy, the museum also highlights the historical and cultural significance of the nearby Nizamuddin Dargah and its role in Delhi's Mughal heritage.

India and USA Sign Cultural Property Agreement to Combat Antiquities Trafficking

The Government of India and the Government of the United States of America signed the Cultural Property Agreement on 26 July, 2024 to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities from India to the USA. The agreement was signed by Shri Govind Mohan, Secretary, Ministry of Culture and H.E. Eric Garcetti, Ambassador of the United States of America to India. As of December 2024, a total of 358 retrieved antiquities have been repatriated, while 297 more are in the process of being repatriated from the USA to India.

Dantewada to Inspire Young Minds with Digital Planetarium

The district administration of Dantewada, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and National Council of Science Museums, announced plans to open up the first digital planetarium in the district. A part of the Ministry of Culture's Science and Culture Promotion Scheme, 2021, the planetarium aims to provide tribal children with access to immersive experiences in astronomy and science, thereby promoting cultural and educational development and scientific awareness.

AUGUST



India and Vietnam Collaborate on National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between India and Vietnam to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal, Gujarat. The move is significant since it aims to preserve and celebrate the shared maritime history of trade and exchange between the two countries. The two countries also agreed to exchange archival materials, artefacts, replicas and paintings and technical expertise related to their maritime histories.

Lucknow's New Monetary Museum to Showcase India's Numismatic Heritage

The Monetary Museum was inaugurated in Lucknow by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. The museum features an extensive collection of coins that chronicle the evolution of India's monetary history. Established under the expert guidance of renowned numismatist Prem Poes Kumar, the museum provides visitors with insights into the economic and political context surrounding Indian coinage.



State Conclave held for the upcoming Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum in Delhi

On August 1, 2024, Union Minister of Culture, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated a three-day State Conclave on the Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The event aimed to enhance collaboration between state museums and the central government in developing the Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum, envisioned as the world's largest museum, covering 154,000 square meters. The conclave offered a platform for state museums to share insights into their collections, fostering a deeper understanding of India's vast artefact wealth. It also featured capacity-building workshops on collections management, archiving, and museum administration, equipping museum professionals with essential skills. Additionally, the event highlighted funding opportunities for state-level museum development.





Aatma Manthan Museum Unveiled in Nathdwara

The Aatma Manthan Museum opened its doors in Nathdwara, Rajasthan, offering visitors a unique space dedicated to introspection and self-discovery. The museum is divided into a series of cavernous and fluid-like rooms, each of which provides a unique experience through the immersive depiction of natural elements. Designed to foster a quiet and consciously present physical experience, the museum serves as a tranquil space for personal reflection.



SEPTE

National Museum Lends Bronze Masterpieces to Rijksmuseum's 'Asian Bronze: 4,000 Years of Beauty' Exhibition

The National Museum, New Delhi, joined six leading Asian institutions in loaning bronze sculptures and artefacts to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam for the exhibition Asian Bronze: 4,000 Years of Beauty. The show featured over 75 works from countries including China, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Pakistan, Nepal and Korea, ranging from statues of deities to ritual and everyday objects, many of which were being displayed in the Netherlands for the first time.



Guhyasamaya Aksobhya, Tibet, 15th century. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The United States of America Returns 297 Smuggled Antiquities to India Following Cultural Property Agreement

The United States returned 297 antiquities to India as part of a new Cultural Property Agreement signed in July 2024. In a symbolic ceremony held in Delaware during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, President Joe Biden officially handed over the artefacts, which date from 2000 BCE to 1900 CE. The collection, largely comprising terracotta pieces from eastern India as well as stone and copper sculptures and vases, marked a significant step in ongoing efforts to reclaim India's cultural heritage.



U.S. President Joe Biden in a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delaware.

EMBER

RECEIVED OCTOBER



Kasturbhai Lalbhai Museum Presents Rare Company Paintings of Indian Birds

An exhibition titled *Birds of India: Company Paintings c. 1800 to 1835* curated by Delhi Art Gallery (DAG) was held in Gujarat's Kasturbhai Lalbhai Museum. Featuring 125 portraits of Indian birds from the early 19th century, the exhibition highlighted Company Paintings created by Indian artists for British patrons, with works drawn from key albums including a rare set of 99 bird paintings by undocumented painters from East Bengal, offering a vivid glimpse into India's natural history and artistic heritage.



Right to Information Museum to be Established in Beawar, Rajasthan

Beawar in Rajasthan, the birthplace of the first Right to Information (RTI) movement, was declared as the site of a new museum on the People's Right to Information Museum. The museum will be set up by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, and will house a diverse collection of audio, visual, and print material relating to the RTI movement. It will also function as an archive and a resource centre for citizens, engaging the public through workshops, training and courses on rights-based movements.

Paradox Museum Makes its Debut in India

The Paradox Museum, founded by Miltos Kambourides and Sakis Tanimanidis, opened its first Indian location in Mumbai, tailored specifically for the local audiences. Featuring 55 unique exhibits across 15 immersive rooms, the museum blends art, science, and psychology to create interactive illusions that challenge visitors' perceptions and spark imagination. The museum is part of a global chain that has branches in cities such as Oslo and London.

Bihar Museum Exhibition Opens in Kazakhstan

The Indian Embassy in Kazakhstan hosted the Triptych on humanity, monuments and nature exhibition, showcasing over 50 artefacts from Bihar Museum, including a replica of the Didarganj Yakshi sculpture. The event, held at the Kazakh Presidential Center, highlighted the shared heritage of humanity and nature. A memorandum of cooperation was also signed between the Bihar Museum and the Kazakh Presidential Center to strengthen bilateral cultural relations.

Leading Indian Museums Host Landmark Exhibition on Manik Bagh

Three leading Indian museums—the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Museum of Art and Photography, and Bhau Daji Lad City Museum—collaborated to host the touring exhibition “Eckart Muthesius and Manik Bagh – Pioneering Modernism in India.” Curated by Raffael Dedo Gadebusch of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, the exhibition explored the influential role of Eckart Muthesius and the Manik Bagh palace in shaping Indian modernism, featuring rare photographs, drawings, and design studies.

Delhi's Partition Museum Unveils New Gallery to Honour Sindhi Refugee Journeys

The Partition Museum in Delhi inaugurated the Lost Homeland of Sindh gallery, a permanent space dedicated to the experiences and resilience of Sindhi refugees during and after the 1947 Partition. The gallery weaves together oral histories, archival materials, memorabilia, and contemporary art, offering a poignant narrative of displacement, adaptation, and the enduring cultural identity of the Sindhi community.

Gandhi Vatika Museum Launched in Jaipur, Honouring Mahatma Gandhi's Legacy

The Gandhi Vatika Museum was inaugurated on Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary. Spread across three floors, the museum offers an interactive journey through Mahatma Gandhi's life, featuring sculptures, installations, digital panels, and 3D models. Curated under the guidance of Gandhian scholars, the space brings Gandhi's ideals of peace, non-violence, and self-reliance to life.

Janal Digital Archive Launched at Kerala Museum

The Kerala Museum in Eddapally launched the Janal Digital Archive, aimed at making the museum more accessible and inclusive. The digital archive aimed to preserve and showcase the state's rich cultural heritage in a virtual space, allowing people to explore historical artefacts, art, and cultural narratives. The initiative highlights Kerala's commitment to modernising its museums while maintaining a strong connection to its traditions.

Science and Technology Museum Sets Up Interactive Computing Gallery in Thiruvanthapuram

The Kerala State Science and Technology Museum in Thiruvananthapuram launched a new gallery tracing the evolution of computing, from early medieval mechanical calculators to modern digital devices. The gallery features historic computers, interactive displays, and models, offering visitors an immersive look at milestones in computing technology. Developed with inputs from experts and educational institutions, the gallery aims to inspire and educate future generations about the transformative role of technology in shaping the world.

Museum Dedicated to Vaikom Muhammad Basheer Opens in Kerala

Kerala's first museum dedicated to legendary writer Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, the Mathilukal Basheer Museum, was inaugurated in Chathamangalam. The museum brings his rich literary legacy to life, showcasing an extensive collection of personal artefacts, manuscripts – including rare and unpublished works – and photographs, offering visitors an intimate look into his life. Interactive displays and multimedia exhibits further highlight Basheer's profound impact on Malayalam literature and his enduring impact.

India's First Constitution Museum Inaugurated at O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat

India's first Constitution Museum was inaugurated at O.P. Jindal Global University in Sonipat to mark the 75th anniversary of the Constitution's adoption. Curated by Cultre, the museum features rare documents, a photolithographic reproduction of the Constitution, interactive exhibits, and a hologram of Dr B.R. Ambedkar. Through multimedia displays, digital quizzes, and immersive experiences, the museum aims to democratise access to constitutional history and inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation for India's democratic values and legal heritage.

Indian Museum Hosts 'From Fields to Folk' Exhibition as Part of AMI Arts Festival

The Kolkata Centre for Creativity along with the Indian Museum unveiled From Fields to Folk: A Journey Through Rural Heritage as part of the 5th edition of the AMI Arts Festival 2024 in the Indian Museum. The exhibition featured a host of artefacts of Bengal's rural archive and heritage including archival records, proto-historic artefacts, utensils made from sugarcane, Areca leaves and Sholapith. The exhibition presented its artefacts in a fresh narrative, rooted in a rural perspective, collected from 25 museums across Bengal.

NOVEL

India's Legal Legacy Showcased at the National Judicial Museum and Archive Inaugurated at Supreme Court of India

The National Judicial Museum and Archive (NJMA) at the Supreme Court was inaugurated, marking a significant step in preserving and preserving the nation's judicial heritage. Housed in the space formerly occupied by the Old Judges Library, the NJMA spans three floors and serves as a comprehensive repository chronicling the evolution of India's judicial institutions from ancient times through the medieval, colonial, and post-colonial eras. Special attention has been given to accessibility, with Braille guides and sign language interpreters available throughout the museum to ensure an inclusive experience for all visitors.

India's First Solar Dome Museum Opens in Kolkata

Kolkata inaugurated the Solar Dome Museum, India's first museum dedicated to renewable energy, at Eco Park in New Town. This architectural marvel features a 27-meter-high, 45-meter-wide dome powered by over 2,000 solar panels, generating enough electricity to illuminate both the museum's interiors and the surrounding streetlights. The museum aims to provide an immersive and educational journey into the world of sustainable energy.

MBER

DAG's fourth edition of 'City as a Museum' Festival Turns Kolkata into a Living Heritage Space

The Delhi Art Gallery (DAG) held its fourth edition of the travelling festival of City as a Museum which reimagined the city of Kolkata as a living museum by choosing specific spots as representatives of the city's culture and heritage. The festival focused on the Tebhaga peasant movement, exploring narratives of women's involvement in the resistance, cartographical practices and spatial evolution of the city in the context of rehabilitation and migration. The 10-day travelling festival was also accompanied by live performances, heritage walks, art installations and talks at historic sites.

Badal Bhoi Adivasi Rajya Sangrahalaya Reopens in Madhya Pradesh

The Badal Bhoi Adivasi Rajya Sangrahalaya, Madhya Pradesh's first tribal museum in Chhindwara, has reopened after a ₹33 crore renovation by the Tribal Research Institute (TRI), Bhopal. The revamped museum features four galleries that celebrate the rich culture of tribal communities like the Baiga, Gond, and Bharia. Exhibits include traditional bamboo crafts, ironwork, clay artifacts, and vibrant tribal paintings, highlighting indigenous art and lifestyles. Designed with sensitivity to tribal aesthetics, the museum offers an immersive experience that educates visitors about tribal traditions and contributions.

Museum on Language and Literature Opens in Kerala

The Museum of Letters or the Aksharam Museum set up by the Sahithya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society was inaugurated in Kottayam, Kerala. It has been touted as the first-of-its kind language-literary and cultural museum in the world tracing the diversity of the subcontinent's languages, scripts and literature, proposing a counterpoint to a single language imposition. The museum features four galleries highlighting the evolution of communication, Indian scripts, Malayalam literature, printing techniques and the vibrancy of Kerala's literacy movement.

Abhay Prabhavana Museum Inaugurated in Pune, Showcasing Jain Philosophy Through Immersive Technology

The Abhay Prabhavana Museum focusing on Jain spirituality and philosophy was inaugurated in Pune on the banks of the Indrayanu River. The museum leverages cutting-edge technology, with advanced audio-visual displays, virtual reality, interactive installations, and commissioned artworks to make Jain teachings accessible and engaging for visitors of all backgrounds.

Indian Museum and Australian Consulate Present 'Walking Through a Songline' Exhibition

The Australian Consulate collaborated with the Indian Museum to host a special immersive digital art exhibition at the Indian Museum in Kolkata. Titled Walking Through a Songline, the exhibition documented a reflective history of the Australian continent as told by its indigenous artists and custodians, taking visitors on an ancestral journey of the continent's desertscape.

DECEMBER

Indian Museum in Kolkata Hosts 'Ningyo: Art and Beauty of Japanese Dolls' Exhibition



The Japanese Consulate and Japan Foundation partnered with the Indian Museum in Kolkata to present the exhibition "Ningyo: Art and Beauty of Japanese Dolls." Showcasing around 67 vibrant dolls, the display offers a captivating journey through Japan's rich doll-making heritage, highlighting their cultural significance in rituals, storytelling, and craftsmanship. The exhibition explores the evolution of Japanese dolls from ancient protective figures like Katashiro and Amagatsu to intricately crafted court dolls such as Gosho Ningyo, as well as folk and contemporary dolls reflecting regional traditions and popular culture.



India and France Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Develop Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum in Delhi

India and France signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly develop the Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum, which will replace the existing National Museum within the historic North and South Blocks in New Delhi as part of the Central Vista Redevelopment Project. Spanning approximately 155,000 square meters, the museum aims to celebrate India's continuous civilisational history through a world-class cultural institution. The MoU will facilitate technical and curatorial cooperation between the two countries, drawing on France's expertise in museum development and adaptive reuse.



Director General of the National Museum BR Mani, front left, and others during the signing ceremony between National Museum and France Museums Development for the upcoming 'Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum', at the National Museum, in New Delhi, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024. Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat are also seen.

Heritage Transport Museum Celebrates 11th Anniversary with Two New Exhibitions

The Heritage Transport Museum at Taoru-Gurgaon marked its 11th anniversary by opening two galleries, 'Light Years Ahead' and 'Prints of the Divine', showcasing futuristic sculptural installations by Vishal K. Dar and an exploration of India's artistry through a rare collection of oleographs, lithographic plates, and postcards created by Raja Ravi Varma and M.V. Dhurandhar. The galleries were curated to offer visitors a simultaneous journey to the past as well as the future.



Assam's First Museum Festival Inaugurated in Guwahati

The Directorate of Museums inaugurated its first edition of Aitiya (Aitijya), a ten day festival in the Assam State Museum. The museum festival celebrated Assam's rich cultural and historical heritage, bringing together exhibitions, discussions, and performances to highlight the unique traditions of the region. Several documentary screenings, discussions on traditional art forms like Mukha Bhaona and Sukonani Ojapali, and special exhibitions on Assam's history and culture were a part of the festival.

Geo-Science Museum Opens at Gwalior's Victoria Market Building

The Geological Survey of India's Geo-Science Museum was inaugurated at the Victoria Market Building in Madhya Pradesh. The museum hosts two galleries focused on the geological features, natural phenomena of the earth and the evolution of life on earth. Through interactive displays, models, and multimedia installations, visitors can explore the phenomena of natural formations, fossils, and minerals. The museum aims to promote public understanding of earth sciences, making geology accessible to students, researchers, and the general public alike.

Shaktan Thampuran Palace and Museum Reopens in Kerala

The Shaktan Thampuran Palace and Museum in Kerala was revamped and inaugurated in Kerala. The renovation aimed to enhance the visitor experience and provide a deeper insight into the region's rich history. Located in Thrissur, the palace, once the residence of the Maharaja of Kochi, was transformed into a museum showcasing artefacts, royal and historical exhibits. The upgrades included modern amenities while preserving the palace's historical essence, making it a significant cultural and tourist destination in the region.

New Museums, Spotlighted

2024 has been a significant year for the museum landscape in India, with a number of new institutions opening their doors to the public. These museums, varied in scale, focus, and geography, signal a growing investment in cultural infrastructure and a renewed interest in how histories are told, preserved, and experienced. New Museums, Spotlighted brings attention to some of the recent additions, each contributing in its own way to expanding the scope of public engagement with art, heritage, and storytelling.

Abhay Prabhavana Museum November 2024

Aksharam Museum November 2024

Banjara Virasat Museum October 2024

Humayun's Tomb Museum July 2024

Museum of Meenakari
Heritage March 2024

Payana Car Museum April 2024

Pramod Pati Museum March 2024



ABHAY PRABHAVANA MUSEUM

The ethos of Abhay Prabhavana Museum is to preserve the rich civilisational wisdom of India's heritage, becoming a lot more than just a space for viewing objects. Nestled near the ancient Pale Caves, this sprawling 50-acre knowledge centre offers a deeply immersive cultural experience. But it doesn't present itself as a conventional museum. Conceived by Shri Abhay Firodia and brought to life by the Amar Prerana Trust, Abhay Prabhavana is widely referred to as a 'Museum of Ideas' because what it truly preserves are not objects, but enduring values.

With 30 galleries spread over 3.5 lakh square feet, it takes visitors on a narrative-led journey through Indian thought, tradition, and wisdom. The themes range from self-effort, letting go, balanced living, non-violence and interdependence – many of them drawn from the broader Shraman tradition. Using layered dioramas, AV experiences, motion graphics, and ambient soundscapes, the experience feels more like walking through a living philosophy, than learning from static displays.

But perhaps what sets this museum apart is the way it reimagines architecture and space to evoke inner reflection. The Plaza of Equanimity, for instance, draws you in with its symmetrical layout and its central white marble Sarvatobhadra statue – facing all four directions, inviting balance in thought. The 100-foot Manastambh rises as a monument of power, extending as an ode to humility and spiritual ascent. And the 43-foot Rishabhdev statue, crafted in a contemporary Art Deco style, is flanked by stories of Bharat and Bahubali reminding us of the civilisational foundations laid not only through conquest or empire, but through values, family and community.

The Outdoor Heritage Walk is equally powerful. Carefully recreated architectural models of important Indian landmarks like the Jal Mandir at Pavapuri, Gwalior Caves, Kere Basadi, and even the ancient cityscape of Dholavira trace the evolution of Indian identity as something rooted, layered, and still living. It's less about nostalgia and more about continuity. A walk through this trail is a reminder that Indian heritage isn't something you step back into. Instead, it's something you carry forward.

In an age defined by overstimulation, this museum's strength lies in its ability to create space for thoughtful engagement. Through its galleries, art, and immersive curation, Abhay Prabhavana instills introspection.



Abhay Prabhavana Museum

Pune, Maharashtra





Abhay Prabhavana Museum

Pune, Maharashtra





AKSHARAM MUSEUM

In the heart of Kerala's literary capital, Kottayam, a pioneering institution has opened its doors – Aksharam, India's first museum dedicated exclusively to the story of language, literature, and culture. Inaugurated on November 26, 2024, Aksharam celebrates the enduring power of words and India's linguistic diversity.

Conceived and managed by Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society (SPCS) – Asia's first writers' cooperative, founded in 1945 – the museum reflects Kerala's literary tradition and commitment to preserving the mosaic of languages that define the nation. Supported by the Government of Kerala, it was established under the Department of Co-operation to protect intangible heritage.

Spanning 15,000 sq. ft., Aksharam guides visitors through the evolution of communication and the development of Malayalam. The galleries trace the origins of language from the earliest oral traditions and cave paintings to the development of scripts, the dawn of printing, and the flourishing of literary culture in Kerala and beyond.

The first gallery, titled *From Orality to Drawings*, provides an immersive view of the world of petroglyphs, cave art, and ancient pictographic scripts, connecting Kerala's archaeological treasures with global milestones in early human expression. Samples of cave paintings found in Bhimbetka, as well as in Marayoor, Edakkal and Ettukudukka are shown here.

The second gallery, *From Drawings to Writings*, chronicles the development of the Indian script system, highlighting Brahmi – considered the primary ancient script – and others like Kharosthi and old Kerala scripts such as Vattezhuthu and Kolezhuthu. The gallery features historic inscriptions including the Ashokan Edict and the Shahbazgarhi Rock Edict, along with models of important inscriptions and traditional writing tools and surfaces. Alongside these, there are informative animated videos, providing visitors with an engaging understanding of the development and diversity of Indian writing systems throughout history.

The third gallery, *From Writing to Printing*, examines the transformative impact of print. It highlights Malayalam's spread via early presses and literature, both in India and abroad. The first evidence of Malayalam printing outside India was seen in the *Hortus Malabaricus* printed in Amsterdam and later in the *Samkhepavedartham* printed in Rome. Models of these are displayed here. A sample of the first book printed in Kerala, *Doctrina Christam en Lingua Malabar Tamul*, and a sample of the first book printed in Malayalam in Kerala, *Cherupaithangalkka Upakharaartham Imkleesil Ninna Paribashapeduthiya Kathakal*, are also displayed here. The gallery also celebrates Kerala's remarkable literacy movement and its vibrant dialects and tribal languages.





BANJARA VIRASAT

A MUSEUM ON THE NOMADIC BANJARAS

The Banjara Virasat Museum, located on a twelve-acre site in Pohardevi, Washim, Maharashtra, is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the heritage of the Banjara community. The Banjaras, known for their diversity and spread across India – particularly in the Deccan states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh – are united by a vibrant language and shared cultural traditions. They are also referred to as Gor, Baladiya, Bamaniya, Ladeniya, Labana, and Lambani in different regions.

The museum's striking five-storey building, inspired by the traditional *Nangaara* drum, serves as both an architectural landmark and a cultural symbol. Designed by Design Habit, a firm specialising in experiential and narrative-driven museums, the Banjara Virasat Museum features thirteen immersive galleries. These galleries guide visitors through the history and culture of the Banjaras, highlighting their unique role in the broader story of the Indian subcontinent.

As visitors move through the museum, they encounter thoughtfully curated displays that document the various clans, *gotras*, and occupational groups within the Banjara community. Exhibits include traditional costumes, jewellery, and rare artefacts such as handwoven sacks and ropes once used to secure goods to bull caravans, reflecting the community's rich trading history. A standout feature is the detailed recreation of a Banjara *tanda* (caravan), complete with authentic clothing, animals, and period props, offering a glimpse into the nomadic lifestyle that defined the Banjaras for generations.

The museum also brings together information from diverse sources – Mughal, British, and French records, as well as oral histories and mythology of the Banjaras – to create a coherent and accessible narrative of Banjara history. This comprehensive approach makes the museum a key resource for anyone seeking to understand the community's past. The galleries also showcase the Banjaras' renowned craftsmanship in embroidery, beadwork, and textile arts, while interactive installations, including virtual reality and 3D holographic projections, immerse visitors in the community's music, dance, and storytelling traditions. Oral traditions, a cornerstone of Banjara identity, resonate throughout the museum via multilingual audio guides narrating tales of heroism, rituals, and everyday life.

In the evenings, the museum's *Nangaara*-shaped façade becomes the backdrop for a vibrant sound and light show – a 20-minute presentation featuring LED displays, music, and special effects that bring Banjara legends to life. More than a mere repository of artefacts, the Banjara Virasat Museum is a living, breathing homage uniting fragmented histories and safeguarding the legacy of a community whose influence stretches across the Indian subcontinent and beyond.







Banjara Virasat Museum

Washim, Maharashtra



मक़बरे की संर

Understand
the Mausole

स्थल-चयन
Location

मक़बरे की संर



HUMAYUN'S TOMB SITE MUSEUM

The Humayun's Tomb Site Museum is the first museum of its kind within a World Heritage Site in India. Nestled at the entrance of the Humayun's Tomb complex, the museum marks the culmination of over 25 years of conservation and cultural revitalisation by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India, South Delhi Municipal Corporation, and supported by public and private stakeholders. The museum stands as a contemporary space that narrates the layered history of this 300-acre heritage zone—encompassing Humayun's Tomb, Sunder Nursery, and Nizamuddin Basti—while honouring the living cultural traditions of the area.

Home to over 500 artefacts, the museum's galleries are thoughtfully curated across thematic sections. Highlights of the collection include artefacts such as the 6 metre tall original gold finial from the Humayun's Tomb, throne of last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, exquisite Mughal miniature paintings and more. Models and multimedia installations narrate the story of Humayun's Tomb as the first garden tomb on the Indian subcontinent, and its influence on later Mughal architecture including the Taj Mahal. The museum also delves into the craft traditions, construction techniques, and conservation efforts that have defined the site's revival in the 21st century. A temporary exhibition space also exists in the museum which hosts a variety of special shows from time to time.

A dedicated section explores the Nizamuddin Basti, a vibrant 700-year-old urban village home to the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, where cultural continuity, Sufi traditions, and community-led development are key aspects of the AKTC's broader work. Visitors also gain insight into the making of Sunder Nursery, now a celebrated 90-acre heritage park that brings together ecology, heritage, and recreation.

The museum's architecture, designed to be both contemporary and respectful of its historical context, uses traditional materials and craftsmanship, creating a seamless dialogue with the surrounding monuments. The building is also sensitive to sustainability, with an emphasis on passive cooling and landscape integration.

With its focus on inclusive storytelling, community engagement, and conservation-driven development, the Humayun's Tomb Site Museum offers a compelling new model for heritage interpretation in India.



ईरान सन् 1543-44 ईस्वी

Iran
CE 1543-44





New Museums

2024



Humayun's Tomb Site Museum New Delhi, Delhi

Humayun's Tomb Site Museum New Delhi, Delhi





शेखांवत हवेली

SUNITA
SHEEKHWAT
JALPORE

THE MUSEUM OF MEENAKARI HERITAGE

The House of Sunita Shekhawat's Museum Of Meenakari Heritage (MOMH) is a state-of-the-art permanent gallery that preserves and celebrates the rich tapestry of *Meenakari*. A long nurtured dream of founder Sunita Shekhawat, this unique space reflects her vision and love for the art of enamelling. Curated by the noted art historian Usha R Balakrishnan and designed by Siddhartha Das Studio, the museum pays tribute to the mastery and skill of countless artisans who have carried forward the ancient craft of enamelling through the centuries.

Sprawled over 3000 sq.ft near Jaipur's historic walled city, the gallery showcases over 300 images sourced from over 15 premier museums, private collections, art galleries and auction houses worldwide, charting the nuanced history of enamelling from Renaissance Europe to its arrival in India. These include the British Museum, V&A Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Al-Thani Collection, Aga Khan Museum, The Hermitage and Sotheby's to name a few. The House of Shekhawat produced over 120 reproductions which serve as a priceless repository of archival motifs, styles and oral histories related to the craft. The myriad forms of enamelling like *cloisonné*, *champlevé*, *plique-à-jour*, and *basse-taille* are further explored in the 60 original pieces by Sunita Shekhawat, epitomising a confluence of traditional craft and modern vibrancy the maison is known for.

A palette of ivory, maroon, and brown punctuated by teak wood, red sandstone and antique brass sets the tone of the space. Painstakingly hand painted ceilings and latticed *jharokhas* capture old world Jaipur. Locally sourced materials and heritage inspired design embody the spirit of *Made in India*. Bringing Jaipur to the world, the gallery lays bare an intimate bridge connecting the past, present and future of *Meenakari*.

The gallery is an ensemble of pieces that shed light on various regions and epochs. This experience is only heightened by the artisan's virtuosity that takes centre stage, highlighting the skill, patience and vision that goes into enamelling. Sunita Shekhawat is one of the last remaining jewellery houses that champion authentic Indian craftsmanship. Age-old techniques, once pioneered by Jaipur's mediaeval elites and garnered global fame, continue to form the backbone of the atelier. Indeed, revival is at the heart of each piece.

Preserving both the process and spirit of *Meenakari*, MOMH will continue to grow through organic collaborations and creative innovation.

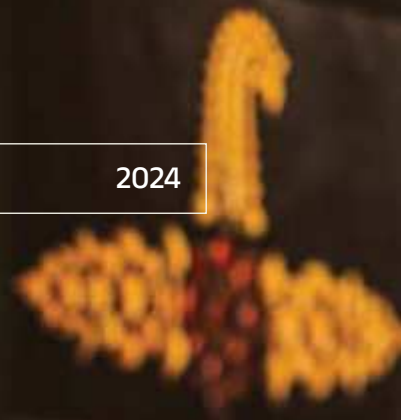
To know more about MOMH's activities, visit <https://www.momhindia.org/>



The Museum of Meenakari Heritage

Jaipur, Rajasthan





The Museum of Meenakari Heritage

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Floral Rhapsody: Enamelling in Bloom

For centuries, Indian artists have drawn inspiration from flora. Architectural reliefs, sculptures, Indian and jewellery all adorned with blossoms. During the seventeenth century, under the patronage of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, flowers became a stylistic emblem, and a cohort of artists were developed to encapsulate the dynamic spirit of plants and animals.

Upon entering a mosaic of flowers in various, Jahangir wrote:
There were delicate accounts and fresh details,
The wind fanned the petals of the flowers,
The viewer looked not away,
The birds had a serene in the heart.

Jahangir's court artist, Ustad Mansur was commissioned to create beautiful flower studies, and the artist ascribed by Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest son in law, 1633, is filled with flower paintings. Dara Shikoh found flowers appealing because the blossoms in these painted flowers, adorned the bodies of empires, and were painted, woven, and not considered as fossils, and in such objects, engraved in ornaments and added in people also on the Taj Mahal.

Chromatized and painted enamel jewelry often showcased single flowering plants and floral scenes set against vibrant backgrounds. Flowers were depicted in various poses, natural and stylized, and were used in various ways. The most prominent flowers of the designs. The most prominent flowers of the designs. The most prominent flowers of the designs.





PAYANA CAR MUSEUM

Situated on the historic Bangalore-Mysore Highway in Srirangapatna, the Payana Car Museum is one of India's most exciting new museums of 2024. More than just a collection of vintage cars, Payana is a vibrant celebration of Karnataka's rich automotive and cultural heritage, offering visitors a unique journey through time and technology.

The museum is the brainchild of Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, the revered philanthropist and hereditary administrator of the Dharmasthala Temple. Dr. Heggade's lifelong passion for preserving heritage began with the Manjusha Car Museum in Dharmasthala, where his collection grew from just two cars to over 250 vintage automobiles. With Payana, his dream of sharing this remarkable treasure trove with a wider audience has found a grand, accessible, and beautifully designed new home.

Payana's architectural design, crafted by Ar. Manjukirthan is as dynamic as the vehicles it houses. The museum's striking façade, inspired by the tread patterns of a car tire, is both a visual landmark and a symbolic invitation to embark on a journey through the evolution of transportation. The building blends classical stone masonry with contemporary glass, creating a visual link between the past and present and instilling a sense of timelessness and respect for history. Elevated on a podium, the museum commands attention and welcomes visitors into a world where history and innovation meet.

Inside, the museum is fully accessible, ensuring everyone can comfortably explore its wonders. The thoughtful layout and clear circulation paths make it easy for families, students, and car enthusiasts alike to enjoy the exhibits at their own pace. Payana's collection features over 55 vintage cars and more than 31 classic motorbikes, alongside unique attractions like a road roller, farm steam engine, and historic trucks. Each vehicle tells a story—not just of engineering, but of the people and eras they represent.

Payana is more than a car museum – it is a window into Karnataka's cultural history. Alongside the automobiles, The museum extends its storytelling through displays of household artifacts, vintage phones, cameras, typewriters, manuscripts, and armories, painting a broader picture of daily life and technological progress across decades. Interactive exhibits, live models, and easy-to-read panels make learning engaging, while plans for pictorial timelines, engine diagrams, and video screens promise to make each visit fresh and enriching.

True to its name—which means “journey” in Kannada—Payana Car Museum invites every visitor to travel through the wheels of time, discovering the stories, innovations, and spirit that have shaped India's automotive heritage.



Payana Car Museum

Brahmapura, Karnataka



New Museums, Spotlited

2024





Payana Car Museum



Brahmapura, Karnataka





THE PRAMOD PATI CINEMA ART & TECHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Amidst the sprawling, leafy expanse of Kolkata's 40-acre Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) lies a hidden enclave where time itself seems to flicker between frames. The Pramod Pati Cinema Art and Technological Museum, situated within the academic heart of SRFTI, stands as a tribute to the evolving artistry and technology of cinema. Beyond the modest façade of an academic block, visitors are transported into a world that captures the sights, sounds, and spirit of filmmaking before the digital age irrevocably reshaped its craft. The museum is built with a vision to foster a deep historical consciousness of cinema's journey as an art form. Here, the celluloid era is not a relic of the past but a vital, breathing influence on the filmmakers and innovators of tomorrow.

At the heart of this institution is the spirit of Pramod Pati — a pioneering force in Indian experimental cinema whose work in the 1960s and 1970s redefined the boundaries of storytelling. Pati brought a unique synthesis of Indian reality and avant-garde animation to the screen. As Head of Animation at the Films Division of India, he, alongside contemporaries like S. Sukhdev and S.N.S. Sastry, imbued the documentary form with daring aesthetic and thematic innovations. Though his career was tragically cut short in 1975, Pati's enduring influence resonates in the museum as a fitting homage to a visionary who so vividly captured the spirit of a nation in transition.

Stepping into the selectively lit interiors of the museum, one is immediately enveloped by the romance of analogue cinema in an atmosphere at once nostalgic and instructive. Exhibits are thoughtfully arranged in a tactile journey to narrate the chronology of technological advancement. Among the treasures on display are venerable Arriflex cameras, including models such as the ARRI IIC 35mm and SR II 16mm, alongside the revered Steenbeck and Moviola editing tables — machines that once laboured under the hands of legends like Satyajit Ray himself. Accessories such as vintage light meters, splicers, magazines, and synchronisers offer visitors a close-up view of the meticulous craft that editing and cinematography once demanded.

The Pramod Pati Cinema Art & Technological Museum Kolkata, West Bengal



Museum Matters:

In Their Words

Museum Matters: In Their Words spotlights the voices shaping India's museum landscape today. In candid articles and first-hand accounts, museum professionals, curators, educators, and innovators share the ideas and experiences driving change across the country's cultural institutions.

From inventive approaches to education and outreach, to fresh thinking in design, technology, and curatorial practice, our contributors offer a window into the evolving world of Indian museums. Discover how museums are redefining their roles, reaching new audiences, and reimagining the preservation and presentation of heritage for the 21st century. Together, these voices chart the dynamic transformation of museums as spaces of learning, engagement, and innovation – guided by those at the forefront of the field.



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A Transformative Agenda for Managing University Museums

A. Damodaran

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To the community of avid museum-goers, University Museums are distant outliers. They do not dazzle visitors the way standalone museums do. Statistics suggest that prominent university museums lag behind renowned standalone (or mainstream) museums in footfall numbers. In terms of search engine visibility, the website of the 17th century Ashmolean Museum (affiliated to the Oxford University) does not compare favourably to that of the British Museum. Nor is the Ashmolean Museum easy to find on the Oxford University website. A visitor must navigate a string of sub-menus before hitting the museum link under the University's GLAM Department.

Top universities in the world advertise their greatness by showcasing their faculty resources, sprawling infrastructure and formidable research prowess. In-house museums are tucked away as appendages of 'campus life'. Had University Museums valued their art collections and projected their image quotient well enough, their profile would have considerably gone up in the university scheme of things. Unfortunately, this has not happened so far.

Most studies on University Museums delve on the typology of collections, curatorial approaches and representation styles. There have been very few studies that have explored the management dimensions of these museums.

Post- COVID 19, eminent museums of the world (including leading University Museums), have been experimenting with unique VR/AR imaging applications that seek to provide immersive experience to both on-premise and digital visitors. These efforts aim to transcend the physicality of museum buildings through alternate spatio-temporal systems. There have been an equal number of creative, non-tech projects initiated by University Museums that have elicited unusual visitor interest.

Unlike mainstream museums, University Museums have the natural ability to draw in a talent pool of researchers, academics, teachers and students to work on innovative and impactful inter-disciplinary projects of the kinds mentioned. The 'South Asian Archives Research and Digital Access Project' of the Ashmolean Museum, the 'Isotopic Silk Road Project' of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (attached to Harvard University) and the 'Banarasi Kimkhwab Exhibition Project' of Bharat Kala Bhavan (attached to the Banaras Hindu University) are stellar examples of novel inter-disciplinary projects taken up by University Museums.

Normalising Collections

Renowned University Museums of the colonial period owe their foundation collections either to bequeaths or gifts, or to the incorporation of established museums in its ranks. The 'Ashmolean', attached to the Oxford University has its origins in bequests while India's Bharat Kala Bhavan, attached to the Banaras Hindu University, came into the University's fold through incorporation.

A few well-known University Museums such as the Tokyo University Museum have sprouted from within the university ecosystem.

The problem with bequeath/gift-based University Museums is that their collections tend to be skewed towards a particular art form or a specific genre of art, to the exclusion of arts emanating from diverse social groups. Ideally speaking, a University Museum should expose its stakeholders (students, teachers and the outside community) to art forms of differing origins and styles. It is desirable that skewed foundation collections of University Museums are normalised through subsequent acquisitions that overcome the imbalances in legacy collections.

Successive waves of thoughtful acquisitions and bequests explain why the Bharat Kala Bhavan could complement its classical art collections with folk and tribal artefacts (including rare hand moulded terracotta pieces). Similarly, later phase contributors to Ashmolean Museum collections like Francis Douce were instrumental in filling gaps in the original Ashmole collection, particularly in the realm of decorative arts.

New waves of bequests are however not easy to come by, unless the museum concerned demonstrates innovative research, high quality preservation practices and success in reputation (or brand) building.

Provenance Issues & Ethical Collection

The world's oldest University Museum, the Ashmolean, which opened at the Oxford University in 1683, was founded on a bequest/donation by Elias Ashmole, an influential antiquarian. However, the authenticity of Ashmole's bequest/gift was challenged on the grounds that legal ownership of the collection originally vested with Tradescant Jr. Ashmole disagreed with his critics and claimed that Tradescant Jr had gifted him the collections before his death, through a properly executed deed. This claim was aggressively challenged by Tradescant's widow, Hester. According to scholars, following Hester's death, Ashmole went ahead and executed his bequest. Ashmole's success was mainly enabled by the limitations of the legal norms on provenance that prevailed at the time.

The connotation of 'provenance' has vastly changed since the 17th century. Thanks to the ethical arts collection movement in the 20th century, the scope of the term 'provenance' today, goes beyond authentication and legal ownership to include information on the means by which these works were acquired by its owners. Given these facts, it is doubtful if Ashmole's deal with Oxford University would have gone through today. Indeed with present day scholars like Robert Lomas still keeping the story alive, the Ashmole bequest controversy refuses to die down. With Generative AI tools, advanced tool mark analysis and AI enhanced object registries, provenance research has advanced by leaps and bounds in the preceding five years. It will not be surprising if the Ashmolean Museum (with the assistance of Oxford University) comes out with its final word on the controversial bequest that led to the formation of the museum.

At a more fundamental level, the ethical arts collection movement has a major influence in the way museums value their collections. Artworks with troubled history, lodged in ethically responsible museums, have been de-accessioned and repatriated to their rightful owners. Indeed museums which comply with ethical collection protocols earn enormous goodwill from their stakeholders. An illustration of this point is the groundswell of plaudits that the Smithsonian Institution earned after returning the looted Benin Bronzes to Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments in 2022 .

However, for such goodwill to be translated to brand power, museums need to undertake brand valuation exercises. University Museums are best positioned to undertake this as they can draw upon the expertise of university faculty and researchers.

Had a University Museum like the Ashmolean undertaken brand valuation, its standing and online visibility would have drastically changed for the better. In the process, the 330-year-old museum could have also emerged as a trailblazer of modern museum management practices.





MUSEUM MOSAIC

2024

भारतीय डाक विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF POSTS
INDIA

Address Not Found: The Museums at the Margins of Indian Postage

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Visual Researcher &
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Culture

विवरणिका
BROCHURE

If museums are archives of a nation's soul, postage stamps are its curated whispers to the world. These unassuming, adhesive-backed squares move across borders, bearing not just correspondence but calibrated visions of identity. In India, where the past is both a resource and a battleground, stamps have faithfully celebrated freedom fighters, ancient monuments, and festive traditions. Yet museums—the very institutions tasked with preserving and interpreting this heritage—are conspicuously absent. In more than seventy-five years of independent India's philatelic production, only a dozen stamps feature museums. In a nation so invested in the politics of memory, such an omission is less an oversight and more a quiet editorial choice. The question, then, is not merely what is shown, but what is systematically left out—and why.





Artefacts Without Address

The first museum to make its philatelic debut was the Mathura Museum, back in 1974. The stamp features a Kushana-era sculpture of a Yakshi—majestic, stoic, and thoroughly decontextualised. You wouldn't know from the stamp that this museum sits at the confluence of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, or that it houses artefacts that shaped religious art across India. The image isolates the sculptures and presents it as a timeless icon, stripped of its context.

This pattern repeats itself across India's postal archive. Rather than showcasing museum buildings, exhibitions, or the people who animate these spaces, stamps have overwhelmingly spotlighted objects—sculptures, coins, weapons—often presented with little to no context. The museum is reduced to a vault: a silent storehouse rather than a vibrant site of dialogue, debate, and discovery.

This visual strategy mirrors what cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai describes as the “social life of things.” Objects, he argues, are not inert relics; they travel through histories and hands, acquiring layers of meaning along the way. Yet on these stamps, the object is stripped of its journey. Frozen in aesthetic isolation, it becomes a carefully cropped relic—an artefact cut loose from the living heritage it once embodied.



The 1978 Quartet: Stamps as Syllabus

In 1978, India Post launched its most ambitious museum-themed series: four stamps under the banner “Museums of India.” This set included the Indian Museum in Kolkata, the National Museum in Delhi, the Kachchh Museum in Bhuj, and the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad.

Each stamp spotlighted a marquee object from its respective museum. The Indian Museum presented the Kalpadruma—a wish-fulfilling tree carved in the 2nd century BCE, sacred and symbolically rich. The National Museum opted for a gleaming gold coin of Emperor Kanishka, fusing imperial authority with divine iconography. The Salar Jung Museum chose an ornate pair of Mughal arms, reputedly linked to Jahangir and Nur Jahan—though their provenance remains more myth than fact. Meanwhile, the Kachchh Museum featured the Airavat, an elaborately carved wooden elephant—an object acquired as recently as 1975, yet swiftly elevated to represent a century-old institution.

Taken together, these stamps feel less like tributes to museums and more like pages from a civilisational textbook. They rehearse a familiar script: India as timeless, refined, and spiritually exalted. The focus falls squarely on classical artefacts, sidelining folk traditions, regional diversities, and the institutions that house and interpret these collections.

But museums are not just cabinets of curiosities. They are arenas where meaning is made and contested—spaces that ask not only what we remember, but who gets to do the remembering. And this is where the stamps falter. They give us the object, exquisitely rendered, but they leave the institution—and its politics—out of the frame.

Framing the Object, Forgetting the Institution



One of the most striking omissions in India's museum-themed stamps is the museums themselves. Out of the dozen or so issued, only three—featuring the National Rail Museum (1996), the Government Museum, Chennai (2003), and the Indian Museum (2014)—offer any glimpse of the buildings that house these collections. The rest frame only the object, surgically removed from its institutional home. What remains is a relic, floating in visual limbo, untethered to context.

This isn't a minor design oversight—it's a conceptual blind spot. Museums are not just storerooms of objects; they are architectural and intellectual environments. The way a museum is designed, the path it leads you through, the labels it places beside artefacts—all of it shapes the visitor's understanding. A sculpture viewed in a hushed white gallery reads differently than when placed in a bustling open-air courtyard.

Take the Crafts Museum in Delhi, for instance—with its courtyards, living craft demonstrations, and immersive spatial design—or the Partition Museum in Amritsar, which layers personal testimonies into the architecture of memory. None of that complexity, that spatial storytelling, finds its way into philately.



Art historian Carol Duncan famously described museum-going as a “civilizing ritual”—a structured performance where the visitor learns not just about objects, but about what a society values. On stamps, however, that ritual collapses into a freeze-frame. There are no curators, no interpretive clues, no architecture—just the object, untethered and mute. The museum, in these miniatures, becomes less a civic space and more a disembodied shrine.

The Politics of What Gets Remembered

Why have so few museums found a place on Indian stamps? Part of the answer lies in what Pierre Bourdieu called “symbolic power” — the state’s quiet but profound ability to define what counts as legitimate culture. Museums that foreground regional, folk, or subaltern histories often don’t fit easily into the grand, orderly narrative of ancient splendour and civilisational continuity. Their collections are layered, contested, and at times, politically inconvenient.



Consider the Crafts Museum. Its 2010 stamp highlighted a terracotta horse from Tamil Nadu—a beloved symbol of rural creativity. Yet the stamp tells us nothing of the museum’s pioneering efforts to champion living artisans, break the glass wall between maker and viewer, or rethink what a museum could be. The object is celebrated; the institution’s radical spirit is left invisible.



Take the case of the Lucknow State Museum. In 1989, a stamp showcased a 5th-century terracotta plaque of Durga — a striking and elegant artefact, no doubt. But it captures only a narrow slice of the museum’s much broader tapestry, which also includes Awadhi miniatures, Buddhist relics, and vibrant folk traditions. Once again, the postage stamp edits out complexity in favour of a familiar, classical image.

One rare and revealing exception is the 1996 stamp for the National Rail Museum. Unlike most museum stamps, it depicts not just prized objects — the iconic ‘Fairy Queen’ and ‘Ramgotty’ locomotives — but also the museum building itself. There’s a refreshing sense of context, of movement, even a touch of playfulness. Ironically, a museum dedicated to machines manages to feel more human and accessible than those showcasing centuries of art and artefacts. Perhaps it’s because trains, with their aura of practicality, nostalgia, and mass appeal, are easier to celebrate — less tangled in political meaning, more comfortably woven into national pride.

Yet even here, the narrative is carefully curated. The colonial history of Indian railways — their deep entanglement with extraction, surveillance, and imperial control — is quietly erased. The stamp recasts a fraught legacy as a benign monument to progress. It is a charming image, no doubt. But its omissions speak volumes.

Ink, Absence, and the Politics of Heritage

The neglect of museums on Indian postage stamps is not a trivial omission—it is a symptom of deeper ideological choices. When the state curates memory through postage, it does not merely depict the past; it

disciplines it. The stamps that do exist reveal more in their silences than in their imagery. By privileging classical artefacts over curatorial contexts, decontextualised icons over institutional narratives, India's postal imagery reduces museums to reliquaries of aesthetic capital. It strips them of their role as spaces of inquiry, confrontation, and multiplicity.

This philatelic marginalisation of museums mirrors a broader discomfort with institutions that challenge singular, state-approved narratives of culture. Museums—especially those that house dissenting voices, regional histories, or the material remnants of colonial violence—complicate the polished, civilisational image that postage stamps are designed to broadcast. They are difficult to frame within the visual grammar of national unity. And so, they are often left out of the frame altogether.

In a nation where the politics of memory is increasingly contested—where monuments are weaponised and textbooks rewritten—the humble postage stamp becomes an unlikely but telling battleground. Its exclusions are not accidental. They are deliberate strokes in a larger canvas of cultural control.

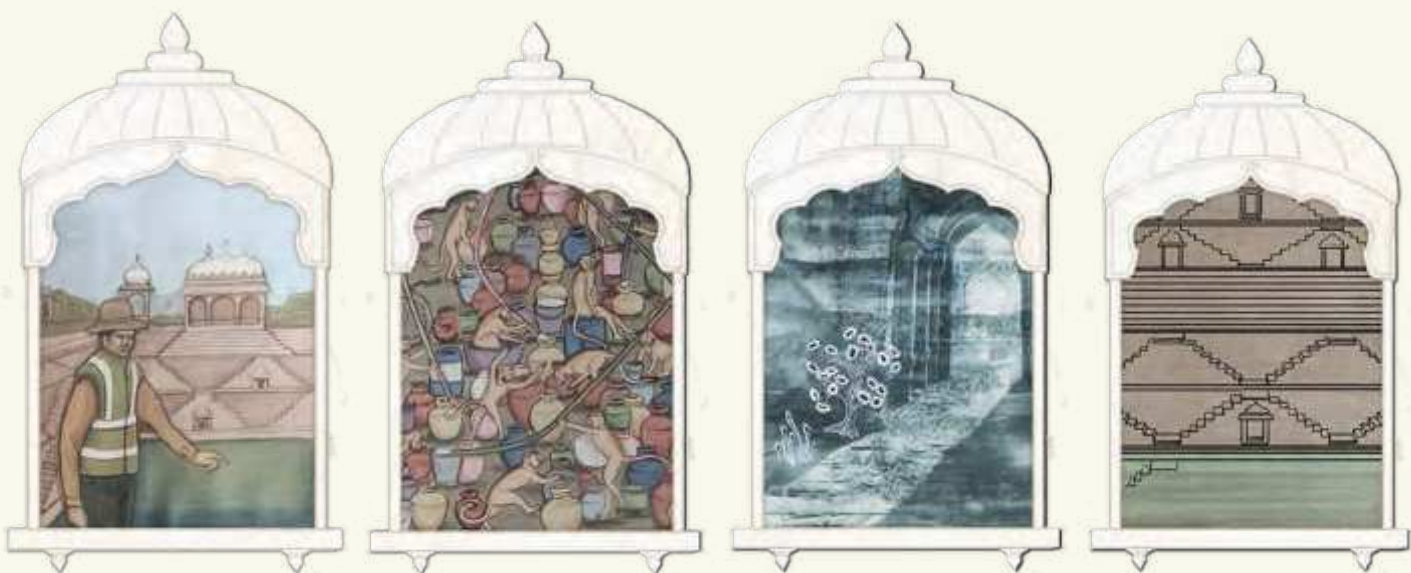
So the next time you affix a stamp, look closely. What you see is important. But what you don't see—what's been left out—is where the real story begins.

Archiving the Past, Inspiring the Present, and Insuring the Future: **THE LIVING WATERS MUSEUM**

Sara Ahmed



Founder & Lead Curator
The Living Waters Museum



Conventional museums have long served as windows into our past, meticulously preserving artifacts that weave stories of culture, community, and human achievement. However, for many of us, museums conjure up images of dusty spaces, stuffed with old relics, poorly curated exhibitions and often, limited funds for maintenance. Today, in an age when water security and climate risks loom larger than ever and marginalized communities often find themselves relegated to the periphery, the role of the museum is evolving. Launched in 2017 as a digital repository archiving our water heritage (built, intangible and natural) the Living Waters Museum (LWM), is now a hybrid museum engaging with local communities through place-based approaches rooted in the arts, storytelling, multi-media strategies and transdisciplinary knowledge production. We are a member of the Global Network of Water Museums, launched in Venice in 2017 and endorsed a year later, by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrology Programme as a special initiative towards SDG 6 on access to clean water and sanitation.

Museum experts increasingly talk about the “soft power” of museums: their ability to engage the audience as co-creators and re-invent or re-imagine our lived reality to create new opportunities or address complex societal problems, for example, fostering new water values through active citizenship (Ahmed 2025). The use of digital technologies to rediscover our fluid heritage through sensory experiences can not only tell a powerful story but engage citizens in new narratives that challenge our perceptions of museums (Kenderline, 2014). Additionally, academics and water professionals are looking at the creative arts as a means of offering “playful” solutions which can provide a powerful mechanism for social change, bringing science to people while acknowledging their water wisdom and agency (Moench, 2015).



LWM was initially based at the Centre for Heritage Management (CHM), Ahmedabad University (AU), where it engaged with graduate students on the city's rich water heritage from stepwells to the Sabarmati River front development and water utensils at the Vishalla Museum-cum restaurant, which have shaped our relationship with water through the lens of gender and work/labour (Ahmed 2025). As an Adjunct Professor, Sara Ahmed, the founder of LWM, was involved in the development of the multi-disciplinary Water Studio, one of four studios under the unique Foundation Programme at AU. This direct link to curriculum development and teaching enabled LWM to talk about water values and ethics, providing a moral compass for young students, compelling them to re-think their water use and questioning water practices embedded in social relations of power and inequality.

The Covid lockdowns from early 2020, made us realise the importance of being a digital museum – and trying to 'do good' by engaging with struggling citizens, especially our youth, online through a variety of approaches including, music (Paani ki Kahani) and the Water Seekers Fellowships with the Social and Political Research Foundation, New Delhi. The power of Zoom-based webinars helped us connect globally sharing ideas about rivers and waterways in distress, or meaningfully entertaining those stuck at home through Jal Kathas with the East India Dastangos, and music on climate activism across geographical boundaries with popular artists. But, most importantly, the pandemic compelled us to focus on public health issues, especially the ideas of hygiene and handwashing for people that had limited access to water and were stuck in cramped spaces or were walking across the country to reach home before being locked-in. Thus began our series of urban chapters, linking the history of water development to livelihoods, culture, climate risks and our living blue heritage through the arts.

Launched in 2021, to commemorate one year of the lockdown, Confluence was our first digital exhibition, bringing together more than 30 professionals in Mumbai – architects, students, artists, social scientists and academics – to explore the city's water from its amazing marine life to the dry fish recipes of the Koli community, through the eyes of Koli artist, Parag Tandel who is building a community archive, the Tandel Fund of Archives.

educators in re-imagining their water from a systems approach drawing on principles of equity and sustainability to talk about privilege, discrimination, water pollution and climate change.

Our work with the Mehrangarh Museum Trust, Jodhpur, helped us bring alive the museum's rich archive of water history and miniature art through the power of storytelling and music. Jal Jharokha provided a window into the city's diverse, but fading, water heritage and efforts to maintain it through public-private partnerships and individual tenacity. Similarly, Kolkata's water legacy from its colonial past to the East Kolkata wetlands and the ghats along the Hooghly riverfront were central to Jol Jyanto Kolkata. Kolkata's digital exhibition helped us expand our partnership efforts in the city with the annual River Festival from which now has emerged a multi-partner initiative – River Ambassadors - to support the training of local people who earn a livelihood along the ghats, be they tea-shop owners, cycle repairmen or priests. As cultural ambassadors, this growing group of men and some women, are trained in life-saving skills as well as the local urban water heritage.

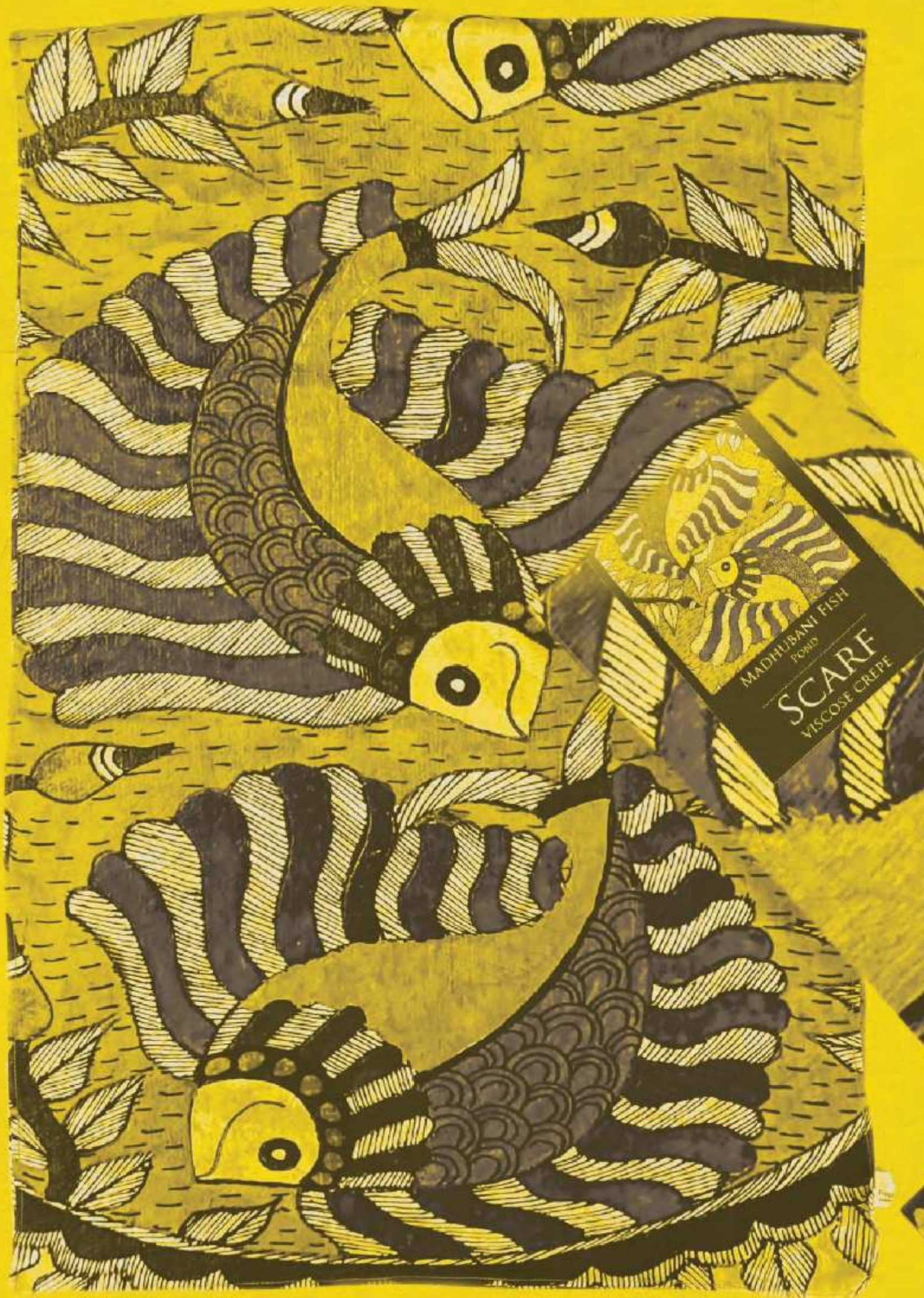
From Kolkata, our outreach efforts have expanded to the Sundarbans: initially a project on climate awareness and resilience building, supported by the US Consulate, Kolkata including a pilot on community-driven mangrove cultivation in Gosaba block and climate advocacy through the arts with school children in Kolkata (Project Climate Wall). And currently, we are co-leading a global project, Aquamuse for short, on decolonising museum making practices through the arts, digital media and education with multiple partners in three river basins: the Blue Nile, flowing through Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, the Volta River in Burkina Faso and the Ganges / Sundarbans in Bengal.

While the idea of decolonising museums has grown in momentum, for us it is not an end in itself, but a multifaceted process, building more inclusive, diverse and empowering narratives within and beyond museum spaces. Our latest digital chapter on Goa's Water Stories, dives deep into ecological and indigenous knowledge systems, rivers, water bodies and rituals, the interface of land and water in the khazans, and much more, engaging with local communities and livelihoods through participatory research and the arts.

Although development practice is beginning to recognize the importance of “new” ways of encountering and experiencing “development” (Lewis, Rodgers & Woolcock, 2022) beyond academic papers and evidence-based policy briefs, art alone cannot change the world. As we initiate new chapters in diverse agro-ecologies, we are designing small fellowship grants with local institutional partners to mentor youth, especially those from marginalized communities, to document and visualize their own water stories within the larger framework of water, social equity and sustainability. We recognize that stories can be retold in many formats including music, songs, performance and art, and we respect the many inter-generational, multi-lingual and cultural traditions of storytelling we share. Moving forward, we envisage the Living Waters Museum as a “hub” around which we can develop a network of contextual and locally embedded water museums, physical or digital chapters, which will use the power of knowledge generation and communication to advocate for water justice through education, public outreach and new creative learning alliances across geographic borders and disciplinary boundaries (Ahmed 2025).

Acknowledgements: This article would not have been possible without the help and support of many people who have worked with the Living Waters Museum over the years. I would like to especially thank Uttara Valluri, Sukrit Sen, Chhavi Mathur, Wency Mendes, Bhargav Padhiyar and Ipshita Karmakar for all their contributions.





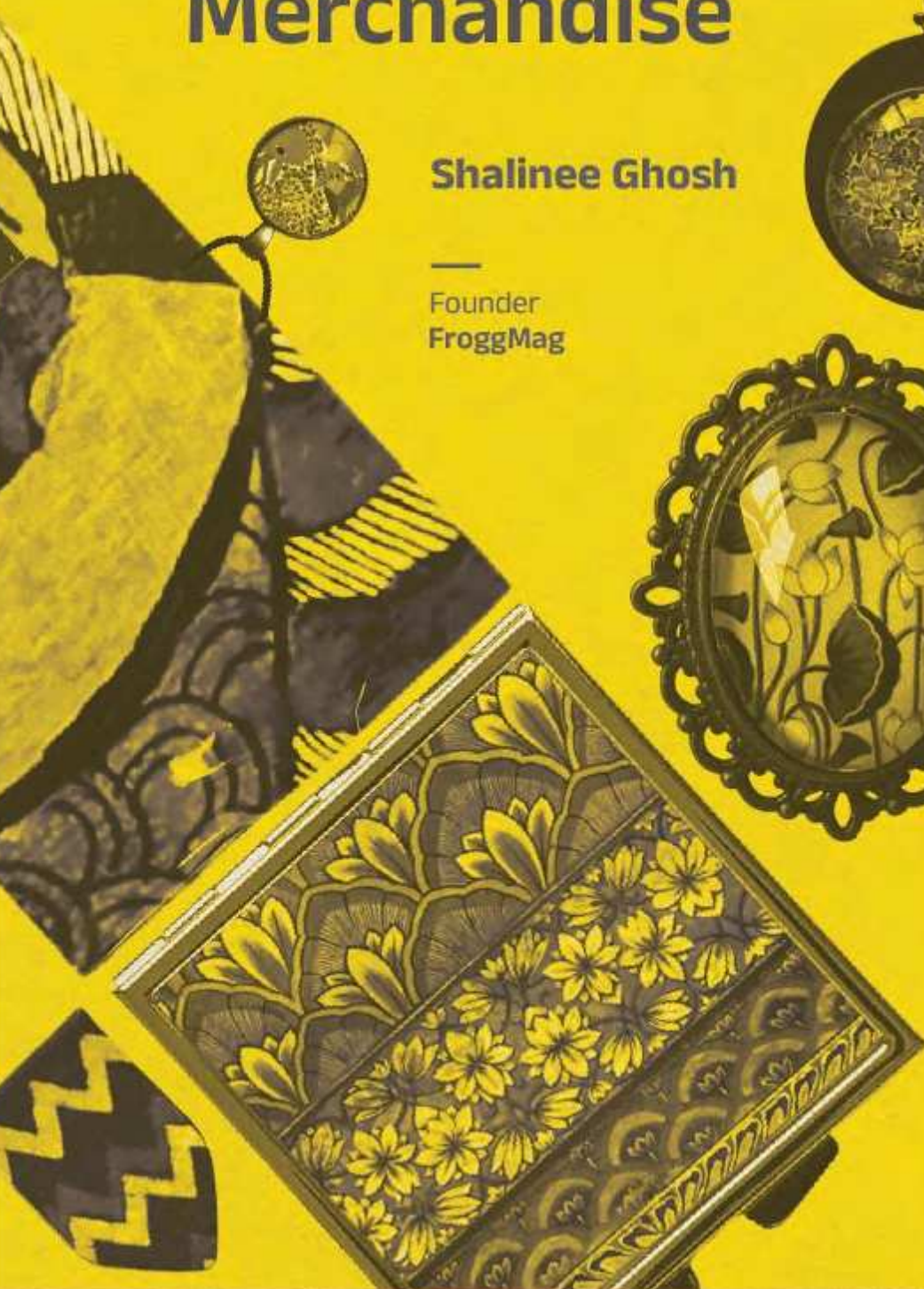
MADHUBANI FISH
POIS

SCARF
VISCOSE CREPE

Beyond Galleries —the Quiet Magic of Bespoke Museum Merchandise

Shalinee Ghosh

—
Founder
FroggMag



A museum is more than just a wondrous place to view artefacts and exhibitions. It's a space where stories, history, and culture come alive. A well-stocked museum shop adds to this experience. It becomes a place where visitors can take home a piece of what they saw and felt inside the museum.

A happy piece from a day well spent.

A tangible memory.

A story one can take home.

A story one can share.

Museum shops and their merchandise give a museum a certain standing – they show that the museum cares about how visitors remember their visit.

People love keepsakes. A beautifully designed bookmark, a notebook with a famous painting on its cover, or a miniature painting on a magnet, allows visitors to take back a memento. Visitors are happy to spend on quality souvenirs that hold meaning and have a story to tell. This makes museum shops earn extra revenue for the museum.

Good merchandise isn't just for tourists. It makes excellent gifts as well. When someone gifts a scarf inspired by an ancient textile from a museum collection, a jigsaw puzzle of a painting, or jewellery - it becomes a conversation starter. A wonderful promotional material that quietly spreads information about the museum and the stories within its walls.

A museum shop can become a city's gift shop and a go-to place for the "local". For there's a special kind of pride in discovering the treasures tucked within your own city. Stories etched in stone, painted on scrolls, whispered through monuments you've passed a hundred times. And when those stories find their way onto a coaster, a clock, a keyring, or a bag, they become more than souvenirs. They become little ambassadors of your city's soul. You want to use them, gift them, travel with them and share a piece of your home with the world.

No matter how big or small a museum is, a shop filled with thoughtful, well-made merchandise makes it special. A single

collection of products inspired by a particular artefact or painting can create a new focus and interest. It gives visitors a reason to come back and see what's new.

The real charm lies in bespoke merchandise that tells a story. A handcrafted piece inspired by a legendary exhibit doesn't just sell a product; it sells a story. It invites people to be part of a narrative, to own a small piece of history. Story-driven products spark curiosity, make lasting impressions, and turn casual visitors into loyal supporters.

A well-crafted product has a way of turning a missed detail into a newfound fascination. It doesn't just remind you of what you saw — it reveals what you missed. Often, it's a product in the shop that renews curiosity, making people revisit a museum or scampering off to find a missed detail in a monument.

We at FroggMag have spent over a decade partnering with museums and public spaces. One of our earliest and most memorable projects was at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. It was the first time we brought a gift shop to life there, and it was deeply gratifying to watch visitors light up as they discovered stationery, accessories, games, and puzzles adorned with motifs from the very building they had just explored.

FroggMag was invited by the Rajasthan Government to design merchandise and a kiosk for the Hawa Mahal in Jaipur. We designed a self sustained Mobile Souvenir Cart. The cart was fabricated in our workshop and literally rolled into the heritage building. Not a nail was needed to have the little gift shop carrying - all things Hawa Mahal - up and running. The fact that it was a kiosk designed to look like the story teller's Kavaad made it even more popular.

While testing out the kiosk, we felt that special kind of joy visitors experience when they hold a keepsake that captures the spirit of the place they've just explored. The excitement and enthusiasm of our customers at the cart was truly infectious, filling the space with warmth and cheer. Every little detail we fell in love with in that complex found its way onto products thoughtfully created to suit every pocket and carry a memory home.

We believe museum merchandise need not be confined to ornamental keepsakes. Everyday art objects — thoughtful, beautiful things like stationery, bags, coin purses, scarves, mirrors, and home and lifestyle pieces such as trays, cushion covers, runners, and games a family can gather around — hold the power to make the experience linger. These aren't just souvenirs; they're thoughtful, functional keepsakes that connect people to museums and moments in a lasting, meaningful way and quietly carry culture into people's daily lives.

A simple, well-written note accompanying a merchandise transforms it from an object to a meaningful story. That small write-up makes people pause, connect, and appreciate the history and art behind what they're holding. It bridges generations, drawing in children, tourists, and scholars alike, inviting them to learn a little more, take a little home, and carry a story forward. It turns memory into something you can use, share, and live with.

At its heart, FroggMag's work has always been about preserving narratives, celebrating heritage, and creating tangible memories for people to hold, gift, and treasure. That, we believe, is the true value of bespoke museum merchandise.



We believe that the heartbeat of a museum lies not just in its galleries, but in its gift shop—a space where history, culture, and personal memory meet. It's where visitors find something to carry home, turning fleeting moments into keepsakes that linger. That, to us, is the true value of bespoke museum merchandise: not just souvenirs, but objects that hold meaning, memory, and a quiet echo of the past woven into the everyday.

Coming Out of the Skin

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As an unhyphenated IndoAustralian I have started spending half the year in India, the country where I was born, brought up and educated. I have had four decades of museum and heritage experience in different parts of the world, often through 'fingers in the dirt' project work such as upskilling communities to build their own cultural spaces. Projects often centred on the 'first voice' approach, enabling communities to reclaim their identities and sense of self-esteem through the processes of decolonisation and recontextualisation. This article will focus on some of my concerns coming back to India.

What I encountered are debates that are yet to interrogate the binary discourses of 'us' and 'them', especially with regard to indigenous people (Tribal/Adivasi). They are parallel tracks that never seem to meet. This conundrum is not new in the world. Both in Australia and Canada such a situation was encountered not all that long ago. Cultures of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia and the First Nations in Canada were represented by others through museums and material culture until about the 1980s. However, both the countries witnessed decolonising processes - recognising, respecting and honouring creativity and Indigeneity in their museums and galleries.

Two major Indigenous exhibitions were brought to the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi from Australia in the past couple of decades. They showcased the incredible transformations of the Australian creative landscapes. Contemporary Indigenous Art at its best. Both were curated by Indigenous People. They came from the National Gallery of Australia. On the host side, the consumption was among elite art circles. It did not include Indigenous people of India. An Indian situation. No connection was made with the creativity of contemporary Indigenous India. A missed opportunity for cultural exchange. However, the Australian curators were very conscious and respectful of Indigenous art of India. It was up to the hosts to facilitate the engagement.

I still recall almost forty years ago, Judy Watson, a brilliant artist from Australia spent time in Western India. She made connections with the similarities between the Indigenous art of the Warli communities and the Papunya Tula art of Central Australia. The former is still managed and represented by non-Indigenous people and dubbed as folk art. The latter is owned by Aboriginal people and is at the leading edge of contemporary art not just in Australia but also the world. This disparity between India and Australia was a challenge for me to fathom.

As a migrant to Australia in the mid-1980s, I had the privilege of working under the guidance of the National Aboriginal Educational Committee and funded initially by the then Council of the National Museum of Australia and Commonwealth Department of Education. As the Coordinator/ Director of the National Affirmative Action Programme for museums, based at the University of Canberra, I ensured that the curricula and pedagogy were informed through Indigenous First Voices of Australia. Visionary Indigenous educators gave their total and unflinching support. It was within the frame of the Australian Commonwealth Government's Report by one of the most well-known Indigenous educationalists, Mick Miller. Popularly known as the Miller report, it mainstreamed Indigenous education.

Miller Report grounded indigenous voices in a post-colonial context. I relied on both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous expertise to make the programme successful. Most of the first Indigenous curators and even National Park Rangers across Australia came out of the programme. Political good will, a decolonising moment, an inclusive cultural and educational leadership and an aspirational agenda for reconciliation across the spectrum of culturally and linguistically diverse Australia, helped. India and Australia have different histories. Former with millennia of inroads from various people and the latter with about 245 years of rapid colonisation and recent transformative and corrective engagement. Population sizes are also considerably different. Indigenous is a contentious term in India with the preferred colonial 'Tribal or Adivasi'. But India has one of the first Constitutional mandates in the world for the fundamental rights addressing 'Tribal' people. It dates back to the 1950s. Australia recognised Indigenous people as citizens only in 1967. Then, why is India lagging to address Indigenous participation in creativity and culture?

Prior to emigrating to Australia in the mid-70's, I was fortunate to be involved at Bhimbetka, now a World Heritage site, in the first ever excavations there, led by Late Professor V. N. Misra, Deccan College, Pune. We were assisted by the Dorai Gonds, a significant Indigenous community of Central India. It was during this time that we learnt about the exciting development of a new National Museum of India for ethnography and anthropology, the Indira Gandhi Rastriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), Bhopal. It has had a series of eminent directors who brought with them a strong research ethic. It is not surprising that IGRMS is one of the leading

generators of quality museum material in India. Its focus is on understanding and celebrating the cultural diversity and living heritage of India. It bridges the gulf between past and present to create an ongoing dialogue for a deeper and comprehensive understanding of India's civilisational journey.

IGRMS recently convened national seminars on rethinking ethnographic museums and community engagement in India. It interrogated ethnographic studies and representation of the cultural diversity of India. 'Self' and the 'Other', plurality of perspectives and perceptions, were discussed in depth. How does one understand and represent the enormous cultural and linguistic diversity of India? What is the role of the first voice of Indigenous and all other communities in safeguarding the multivocality of heritage interpretation in India? Where is the 8.6% of Indian population that is Indigenous situated in this complexity.

What is 'national' in the national museums of India? There are so many institutions with that national tag! In this context, IGRMS is a national network of research, safeguarding activities and partnerships with research departments across India. It generates travelling exhibitions and significant inreach and outreach projects. It brings in people with diverse ethnicities to make their spaces on the huge cultural landscape of the IGRMS. In fact, it is a campus of a two-hundred-acre landscape museum with numerous engaging sites including an extension of the Bhimbetka network of rock art dating back to the Pleistocene or the last ice age.

IGRMS attempts to bring scholars from all disciplines, be they historians or cultural ecologists, to scope and present the living heritage of India, especially Indigenous People of India. They are NOT presented as 'noble savages in the Garden of Eden'. Most museums in India still do that, presenting as anthropological objects frozen in time. But IGRMS attempts to disrupt this colonial gaze. It introduces different ideas of aesthetics. It does exactly what a national museum should do, to help people explore their sense of place and self-esteem in the contemporary globalising world with all its complexity.

IGRMS has generated a framework entitled- IGRMS Bhopal Charter (2024) on rethinking community cultural engagement as intercultural dialogue between equally empowered stakeholders. The Charter sets the benchmark for all museums in India as to how well they decolonise their narratives. The use of AI makes museum narratives increasingly complex and museologically challenging in a

fact-fiction-futurism mélange. It also offers an avenue to use mother tongue in all forms of museum activities, especially research, interpretation and communications.

Are Indian museums ready or have the capacity to come out of their skin?

—

Connected by Culture: MAP's Tech-Driven Museum Model



Untitled (A man dancing during a wedding procession)
Suhag Sankar, Unnat, Madhya Pradesh, 1963-1984
Surreal Project
Gelatinoid negative
H. 8 1/2 in. W. 8 in.
PAC12182

Untitled
Suhag
Surreal
Gelatin
H. 8 1/2
PAC12182

The Team MAP

The Museum of Art and Photography



Black and white photograph (Portrait of two men)
 Subhas Chandra Bose, Madhya Pradesh, 1943-1944
 Sunlight Photograph
 Undeveloped negative
 H. 8 cm, W. 6 cm
 PIN 12224



Black and white photograph (Portrait of a man)
 Subhas Chandra Bose, Madhya Pradesh, 1943-1944
 Sunlight Photograph
 Undeveloped negative
 H. 8 cm, W. 6 cm
 PIN 12226

Technology is not the end goal, it is a means to facilitate deeper engagement, curiosity, and dialogue.

As we think about the future of museums in India, the challenge is not just to preserve history but to remain relevant to the audiences of today and tomorrow. At the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), we engage with a predominantly young audience, an opportunity and a responsibility. This generation navigates a rapidly changing world, shaped by digital culture, shifting identities, and urgent socio-political concerns. To remain meaningful, museums must evolve beyond static displays and authoritative narratives into dynamic, participatory spaces.

Technology is central to this transformation. At MAP, we integrate digital tools to enhance accessibility, interactivity, and engagement. From immersive installations to gamified learning experiences, technology allows audiences to connect with art and history in ways that feel personal and intuitive. While technology is not the end goal, it is a means to facilitate deeper engagement, curiosity, and dialogue.

The pandemic of 2020 saw museums and cultural institutions across the globe working hard to reimagine their programming and shift to the digital medium. We launched as a digital museum during this time and made art collections, online conversations and art history available to people from the safety of their homes. For us, making art accessible and democratic goes beyond opening a physical museum and ensuring that our collections are diverse, eclectic and original. It is inevitable that we adapt to digital mediums to make our collections and museums accessible and available to a wider audience.

At MAP, we believe strongly in the transformative potential of art and how it enriches lives, sparks curiosity and connects people. Our mission to democratise art and reach out to as many visitors as possible pushes us to continually innovate, be it in the nature of programming, education or our digital interventions. At MAP, Bengaluru we integrate technology in a multitude of ways to enhance the museum-going experience. The majority of our audiences are in the 18-25 year old demographic and find comfort in the digital medium. We offer digital interventions that help them engage with art in ways that are meaningful and encourage a deeper curiosity into South Asian art and culture. We use Bloomberg Connects, an app to help audiences navigate the museum. It is available in multiple

languages, and we feature ISL videos and image descriptions on it. It also allows us to look at artworks at home, and listen to audio guides, giving it a podcast-esque experience. The app makes it easier to find your way around the museum, making it an inclusive experience via its language and accessibility features. For those who prefer a more analogue method of content consumption and are looking for an overview of the exhibitions, our curatorial note, wall text and labels provide context and narratives into the curation, along with details of artworks. For art enthusiasts and those interested in the scholarship of art, the publications produced in conjunction with exhibitions offer further insight into the research, contexts and art history of a specific exhibition.

Technology is also used to make the museum experience more engaging. Our auditorium has a 3D screen that allows audiences to experience the magic of 3D. The Sasken Gallery, allows you to look at previous exhibitions, and specially curated stories from the collection. Immersive experiences like the 3D painting allows you to walk into an artwork from the MAP collection and interact with various elements of the painting—sparking great conversations on the art process and details of the artwork in new art enthusiasts. The Kaleidoscope room lets you use artworks from the museum's collection and your own personal images to create a kaleidoscopic video of them, which is very popular among our visitors.

Our online audience is ten times that of the visitors we get at our physical museum. To cater to our digital visitors we craft unique experiences that allow them to engage with art from anywhere in the world. Online exhibitions allow visitors to experience the essence of a physical exhibition. The curation of artworks within a particular narrative highlights lesser-known stories and historical contexts, making it a creative learning experience for any online visitor. Cumulus is a web-based art collection management system, designed and developed by our in-house technology team to manage the diverse collections, allows users to catalogue, organise, track, search and manage the metadata of the entire collection. By making our collection digitally accessible, we are supporting a new generation of learners and researchers to engage with art history in a more meaningful way, and spurring a new wave of scholarship on modern Indian art.

The video series *Museums Without Borders*, which was developed during the pandemic, reinvents the way in which ideas and artworks could travel and became a conduit through which museums could share collections, knowledge and resources. Featuring two artworks, one from each of the museum's collections, it explores artists, themes or a singular motif. The idea is to pair together and create access to artworks separated by borders and create a conversation that builds bridges across time, geographies and cultures.

For many visitors, their phone is the first point of contact with MAP—it is the way they begin their journey. Identifying and engaging with audiences, no matter where they are and providing them with an experience that appeals to them is integral to our vision. We look to our visitors and listen to what they say, so when they engage with the museum that interaction is one that brings them joy and allows them to leave having a better understanding of art than they did before they visited MAP, be it in-person or virtually.



From Concept to Constitution: The Making of a Museum

Anjchita B. Nair

CEO
Cultre



A couple of years ago, I was meeting several angel investors and venture capitalists to seek funding for the cultural startup I co-founded, 'Cultre' and showing them our projections for the future, as one does in the usual entrepreneur-VC dance called startup ecosystem. A very seasoned and wise gentleman asked me, "You have degrees from IIM and NIT and seem like a bright girl...why would you waste your time in a venture which, even in your own projections, is likely going to make you less money than if you join an Amazon or a Microsoft, today?" I smiled and mumbled something about being on a path to finding happiness or some such cliché, trying to hide the genuine fear planted by two parents who were lifelong government employees. Today, as I interact with young professionals in the sector, struggling to find decent opportunities or working tirelessly for mere "culture/museum sector" salaries, I sometimes think about what it is that motivates us to choose this unconventional career path for ourselves and then really give it our everything when it doesn't seem to be giving back much.

Now, as I sit down to reflect on the journey of building the Constitution Museum and the Rights and Freedoms Academy at the O. P. Jindal Global University in Sonapat in 170 days, from the first concept presentation made on the day I went to vote to the day of the launch of the museum on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India, it is quite overwhelming to revisit. I also realise that it's not just my story to tell but rather the story of many driven, exceptionally bright set of people who have chosen this very demanding, highly unpredictable but terribly exciting and fulfilling path for themselves. So in this "Behind-the-Scenes" narration of the creation of the Constitution Museum and the Rights and Freedoms Academy, I am accompanied by multiple voices who made the museum possible.

I was very clear from the beginning that the museum would be a space where the Constitution is presented in all its glory, not just to those in the legal community who interact with it regularly, but also to people like me, who probably haven't made enough of an effort to understand its significance in their lives- especially with respect to the rights and freedoms that they enjoy as citizens of India. Thankfully, Prof. C. Rajkumar, the Founding Vice Chancellor of the O. P. Jindal University not only agreed with this vision but also pushed us to create more and more avenues of engaging with various kinds of visitors in the limited ten thousand square feet space. Limitation of space also means making tough choices regarding content selection and the mode of presentation.

To quote Jahan Thakur, the Research Lead,

“Deciding which stories to tell and which themes to emphasise demanded thoughtful deliberation and, at times, difficult choices. We had to carefully select information that would remain relevant for years to come, ensuring the museum would resonate with audiences well into the future.”

This is actually more challenging than you'd think, especially for a bunch of nerds who happened to form my research team. As articulated by one of the researchers, Abhilash Chetia Wanniang,

“The most challenging part of the project was to navigate a path to communicate with the larger audience of the museum without compromising on the depth and nuance of the historical context. It required a delicate balance of simplifying complex legal and socio-political concepts while retaining their accuracy and significance for a broader public understanding.”

When it comes to the Constitution, its making, and its evolution over the 75 years, there is both a dearth of relevant data and an abundance of information. As Sindhuri Aparna, Senior Researcher, observed,

“The challenge was to break the monotony of the text with visuals. But good and relevant visuals are hard to find when it comes to constitutional history! We spent hours digging through archives, reaching out to institutions, and thinking laterally to visualise abstract ideas like federalism, dissent, or secularism.”

But, if the researchers were wrestling with words and meaning, the design team was battling with space and experience. As our Design Lead, Namrata Dhall eloquently puts it,

“It wasn’t just about putting information on walls; we were trying to reimagine how people could experience something as complex and text-heavy as a legal document...We didn’t want to create a space that felt dry or academic, we wanted visitors to connect with the Constitution in a way that felt personal and relevant.”

The result was 3 thematic galleries, 11 interactive installations, 29 artworks, 115 minutes of animated footage, 45 digital displays, 17 institutional collaborations and 41 artist collaborations. We made sure there was something for everyone in the museum - avenues for archival deep dive; an ever growing collection of in-depth interviews of constitutional experts; beautifully illustrated panels and animations explaining landmark cases, stories of makers of the Constitution, journey of the 75 years since the adoption of the Constitution; multimedia experiences like the AI photo booth, holographic display, projection-based immersive room, touchscreen timelines and interactive quizzes; interactive physical installations; concept based garden areas around the museum, and (my absolute favourite) artworks and installations by contemporary artists both outside and inside the museum.

In a project of this magnitude with imposing deadlines, it is imperative that you find the right partners and collaborators to execute your vision. As our Senior Project Manager, Aastha Soni notes,

“While we were able to eventually find the right partners, the journey of finding them was tumultuous, to say the least. A significant early setback was the time spent trying to align with individuals and organisations who could not keep pace with Cultre’s momentum and vision, or meet the high, uncompromising standards we had set for ourselves.”

We fumbled a bit but eventually found some incredible individuals and teams with whom the process of co-creating for the museum was not only creatively enriching but an opportunity to grow and learn as professionals. In the words of Arun Sripadam, who led one of the animation teams,

“The creative alignment, the willingness to experiment, the trust you placed in us....This kind of collaboration rarely happens, especially on a project with such tight deadlines, and I believe that it made the whole experience genuinely fun and fulfilling.”



Something Sindhuri said somewhat succinctly described my own experience of the project as well – “coordinating across disciplines - law, history, design, technology - meant I was constantly translating between people who thought and worked very differently. It was like being a multi-lingual conductor for a very ambitious orchestra.”

As the curator and conceptual lead, I had to constantly shift gears: one moment diving into dense constitutional case law, the next reviewing storyboards for animated content, then debating lighting angles for an art installation or figuring out how to make a hologram feel meaningful and not gimmicky. Each team came with its own priorities, working rhythms, and internal logic, and my job was to align them without diluting their strengths. It required a strange blend of diplomacy, deep listening, obsessive attention to detail, and occasionally, brute-force decision-making. The real challenge wasn't just managing the project, it was holding the vision steady while making sure no one felt like they had to compromise their craft to get there.

What a privilege it has been to have had the opportunity to make a museum on the foundational document of our democracy, the opportunity to visualise things and then see it come to life in a matter of months, the opportunity to lead and represent a tremendous team of creative individuals, the opportunity to present the world with a new body of art created by some of the best contemporary artists in India today, and finally the opportunity to make our constitutional heritage a little more accessible to the citizens of India, especially young Indians. And it is the possibilities of opportunities like these that makes you forget all the uncertainties that come along with a career in the domain of culture and heritage. In hope of more such opportunities....



From Himalayan Peaks to Bollywood Icons:

Inside NGMA's Exhibitions

Dr Savita Kumari

Associate Professor &
Head, Department of History of Art
Indian Institute of Heritage

Two exhibitions at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) offer a compelling lens through which to understand the institution's evolving role in shaping cultural discourse and public engagement. *Nicholas Roerich: The Eternal* and *Celluloid Sojourn: The Women of Indian Cinema* embody NGMA's renewed commitment to accessibility, relevance, and excellence in curation. While Roerich's exhibition raises awareness about nature, spirituality, and diplomatic relations in a subtle aesthetic language, *Celluloid Sojourn* engages viewers with the vibrancy and complexity of Indian cinema—an art form deeply woven into the fabric of everyday life.

Curated in-house under the guidance of Dr Sanjeev Kishore Goutam, Director General of NGMA, these exhibitions testify to the museum's commitment of bridging the gap between modern and contemporary art and the general public as per its mandate. The exhibitions narrate complex stories in a simple, lucid style. The thoughtful display brings forth the nuances of each artwork at a time when the overt use of technology and design shifts the viewers' attention from the main subject, and the narrative is lost in jargon. The two exhibitions discussed below give a glimpse of the trajectory NGMA has taken in recent times.

Nicholas Roerich: The Eternal

The timing of the exhibition, *Nicholas Roerich: The Eternal*, curated by Dr Jyoti Tokas, is apt, as her exhibition brings forth the message of peace, beauty and bliss at a time when the world is undergoing turmoil with a series of wars, economic crisis and natural disasters. As the title suggests, the contributions of Roerich, whether in art or literature, cuts across time and space. His ideals on spirituality, reverence for nature, futility of war and safeguarding of heritage is relevant today as was in the past and will continue to inspire the future generations.

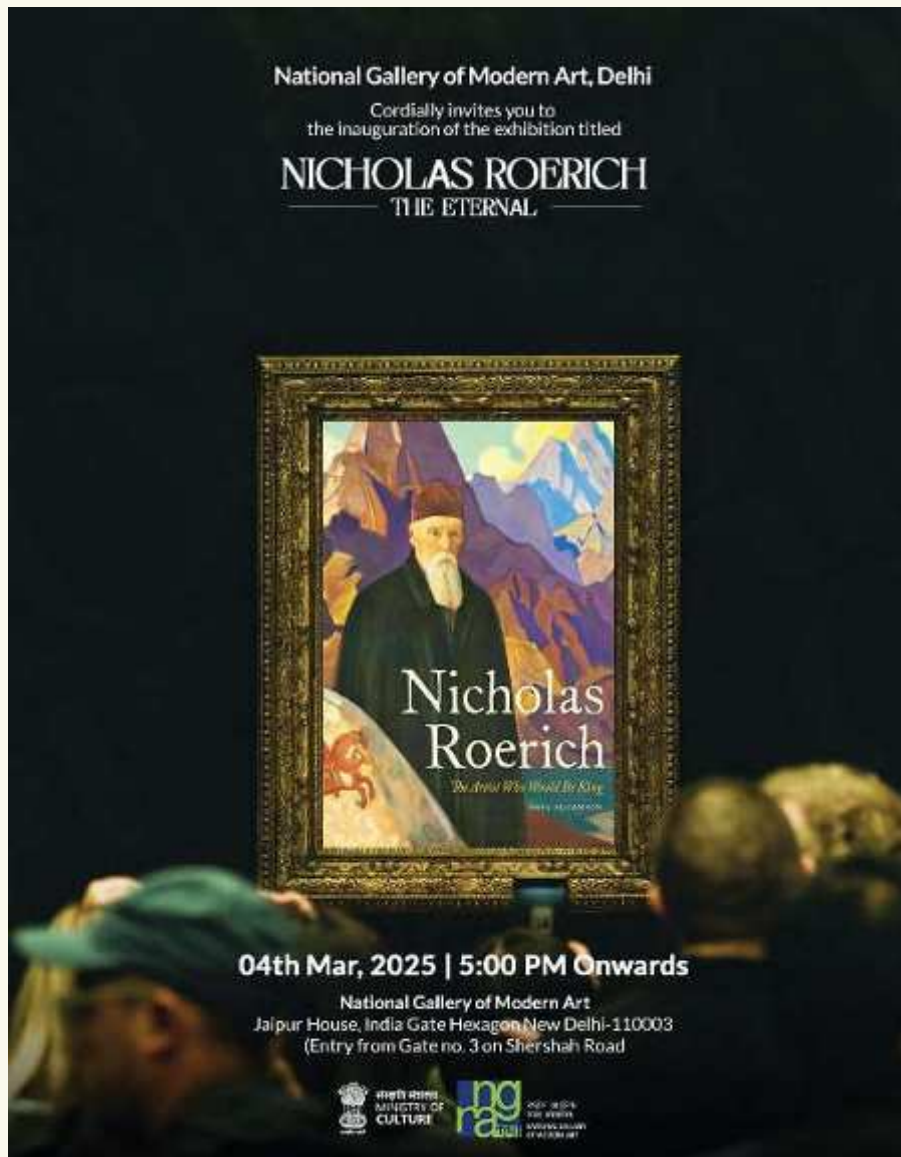
Being a legendary artist, there have been many shows on Roerich. What makes this exhibition unique is its take on Roerich's journey from his early days in Russia, where he started developing a connection with the mountains and mother nature. During this time, we notice that he is yet to be one with the eternal mountains. We see his protagonists gazing at distant landscapes where eternal bliss exists. They are shown in contemplation and are yet to embark on the spiritual journey. In his works, Roerich invites the audience as a companion to take up the spiritual journey along with his protagonists by leaving ample empty space in the composition. Probably, he found his kindred spirit in his wife Helena as her interest in Eastern religions directed Roerich to delve deep into Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and developed reverence for the majestic Himalayas which he considered as the abode of "Shabhala", the great Principle. A poem by Roerich, featured in the exhibition and excerpted from his 1947 work *Himalayas: Abode of Light*, speaks volumes for his deep admiration for Indian culture and the majestic Himalayas:

"Himalayas! Here is the Abode of Rishis. Here resounded the sacred Flute of Krishna. Here thundered the Blessed Gautama Buddha. Here originated all Vedas. Here lived

Pandavas. Here-Gessar Khan. Here-Aryavarta. Here is Shambhala. Himalayas- Jewel of India. Himalayas-Treasure of the World. Himalayas-the sacred Symbol of Ascent.

Oh, Bharata the Beautiful! let me send Thee my heartfelt admiration for all the greatness and inspiration which fill Thy ancient Wisdom, for glorious Cities and Temples, Thy Meadows, Thy Deobans, Thy sacred Rivers and Majestic Himalayas!"

In her narrative on Roerich, Dr Tokas further highlights his relevance in the world of art, culture, and philosophy, as well as in contemporary geopolitics. The exhibition draws the viewer's attention to the historic Roerich Pact signed in the halls of the White House, where nations came together and agreed to a shared allegiance for the preservation of cultural property in times of war and peace alike. By bringing together artworks from across the country, the curator provides a holistic view of Nicholas Roerich, a Russian painter and an Indian Gem.



Celluloid Soujourn: The Women of Indian Cinema

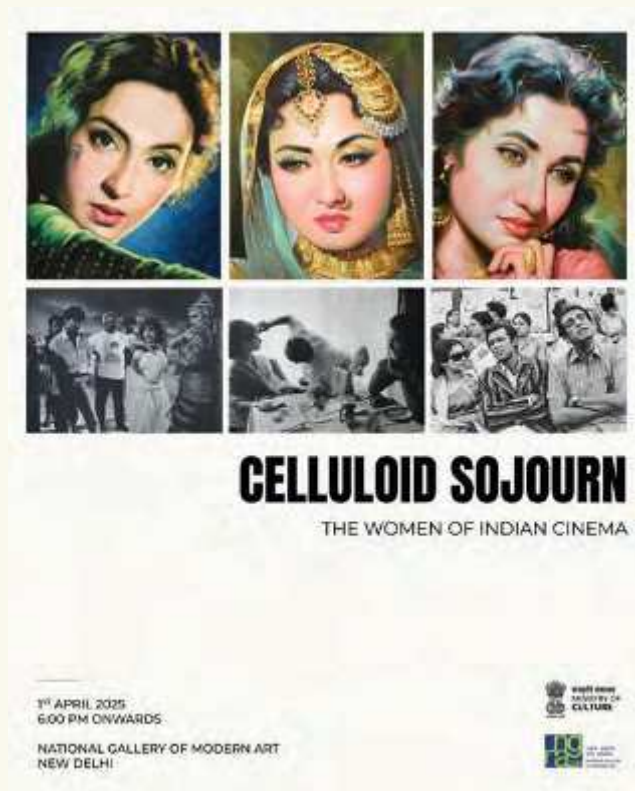
Indian cinema has been a mirror of the nation's ways of life, its values, traditions and cultural identity, and is an integral part of people from all backgrounds in India. An intriguing aspect of Indian Cinema is narrated by the curator Sushmit Sharma in the exhibition *Celluloid Soujourn*. The exhibition highlights, explicitly, the portrayal of women in Indian Cinema through 48 artworks in a variety of mediums such as miniature paintings, photographs and billboards from the collection of NGMA. It is commendable how the curator meticulously highlights the contribution of women in the film industry and their portrayal off-screen in other mediums of art. The curator dovetails subtle nuances in his storyline by placing various works in contrasting scale and through a gaze within and outside the frame, constantly challenging and captivating the viewers. The careful placement of artworks raises questions about gender, gaze, artists (both on and off screen), within socio-political and cultural contexts.

Through the display of some of the finest photographs of Nimai Ghosh, the exhibition captures the relationship of the legendary director, Satyajit Ray, with his female artists, such as Sharmila Tagore and Babita. Known for his excellent and critically acclaimed women-centric films, Ray's collaboration with women in his cinema can be discerned through the lens of Nimai Ghosh. The intense preparations that go behind the scenes are further captured by Dayanita Singh, such as the dance maestro, Saroj Khan, giving training to actors and actresses. Indian cinema, known for its enchanting dance performances, owes significantly to the legendary Saroj Khan. Many effortless-looking dance numbers resulted from the painstaking training by Saroj Khan. In Dayanita's frame, the simplicity of Saroj Khan is contrasted with the well-decked actors and actresses in elaborate costumes and makeup. Saroj Khan's body oozes rhythm and grace while artists still struggle to capture the performance's spirit. These tensions make Dayanita's photographs remarkable, as well as the angles through which she approaches her subjects. The popular notion of the women of cinema is portrayed in the hand painted works of B. L.Vaidya, in which legendary artists like Nargis, Madhubala and Meena Kumari are depicted with fair complexion, rosy lips, dreamy eyes, full blushed cheeks and rounded face to bring forth

the sensuality to attract the audience to the cinema halls and thus, raising the issue of objectification of women in Hindi cinema posters, which was in stark contrast of the great performances delivered by these legendary women artists.

An element of surprise in the exhibition *Celluloid Sojourn* is the inclusion of a miniature painting of the last nawab of Awadh at the inaugural performance of 'Inder Sabha', a seminal Urdu play by Mian Amanat in which well-trained dancers are shown with wings to appear as *Paris* (fairies). Sushmit Sharma underscores how the foundation of Hindi Cinema is very much rooted in traditional Indian theatre.

The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) has been quietly but decisively expanding its cultural footprint through such thoughtfully curated exhibitions and impactful educational initiatives. Its ancillary programmes, designed to extend the reach of its exhibitions, are already serving as a model for both public and private institutions. In this context, these two exhibitions exemplify how NGMA is strategically fostering deeper connections with both domestic and international audiences.



From Memories to Movement: THE TIBET MUSEUM'S QUARTER-CENTURY OF WITNESSING AND RESISTANCE

Tenzin Topdhen

Founder
The Tibet Museum



As I walk through our exhibition gallery in Dharamshala, watching visitors move silently between photographs and artifacts, I am reminded that this museum began with little more than faith and a handful of fading photographs. Twenty-five years ago, in April 2000, The Tibet Museum opened its modest doors in a small section under the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

What we lacked in resources, we made up for in purpose: to document, preserve, and share the unbiased narrative of Tibet and its people. The 25th anniversary of the museum offers a moment to reflect on our journey—not as a triumph, but as a testament to persistence. Like the Tibetan exile community itself, this museum has survived by adapting while remaining rooted in what matters the most: truth, memories & movement.

The foundation was anchored in a belief echoed by Pt Jawaharlal Nehru on 1st November 1950: “According to any principles they (People’s Republic of China) proclaim and the principles I uphold, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and of nobody else.” It was in this spirit that the Tibet National Commemoration and Documentation Centre (TNCDC) was established in 1998, and later the Tibet Museum was conceived—grounded in the conviction that Tibetans themselves must define how their story is told.



His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai lama addressing the audience at the inauguration of the Tibet Museum, 30th April 2000

The Seeds of Remembrance

The idea for a museum emerged in the late 1990s through the visionary efforts of a committed group of individuals within the Central Tibetan Administration and its affiliated institutions. Leaders, scholars, and advisors from departments such as the DIIR, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and international allies played a key role in shaping this vision into reality. Their collective wisdom, dedication, and collaboration laid the foundation for what would become the Tibet Museum.

At the time, there was growing concern that the generation who had physically walked out of Tibet—those who carried vivid memories of life before 1959—was growing old. Their stories of monasteries, harvest rituals, traditional governance, and resistance were at the risk of fading into silence.

While His Holiness the Dalai Lama continued to guide our people with spiritual and political leadership in exile, the DIIR recognised the pressing need to archive these living memories—not only to preserve our identity but to strengthen the foundation for our ongoing nonviolent struggle. A museum, they believed, could serve as a powerful contemporary medium to inform, inspire, and mobilise support for Tibet.

The initial collection came together through donation drives. We asked Tibetan families across settlements in India and Nepal to share photographs, documents, religious items, clothing—anything that spoke to their experience. The response was overwhelming yet deeply heartbreaking. People parted with their most precious possessions because, as one elderly gentleman from Leh settlement told me, "These things matter more as testimony than as private treasures."

Our first exhibition space measured just 2300 square feet. Display cases were handmade by local carpenters, and a few descriptive labels were handwritten. But what we presented was authentic—photographs of monasteries & villages now demolished, religious texts rescued during escapes, letters from family members who remained behind, and everyday objects that became sacred through the journey of exile.



A glimpse of the galleries in the formative years of the Tibet Museum.

Finding Our Voice

The early years taught us that a museum in exile faces unique challenges. Without a homeland to return to, for collecting artifacts, along with limited funding and the archaeological continuity that the other cultural institutions enjoy, we had to invent our own museology. We asked: How does one curate the experience of displacement? How does one document an ongoing occupation? And how do you tell the story of a resistance that is still unfolding?

We weren't preserving a past that was complete—we were building a living record of an ongoing reality. This meant learning to be more than a curator. We had to become historians and advocates, archivists and activists, often all at the same time. During these years, we also began an intensive effort to collect images, videos, and personal testimonies from the Tibetan community in exile. Many were reluctant at first, finding it painful to revisit their losses. Others worried about repercussions for family members still in Tibet. Yet over time, many came forward, understanding that their memories were irreplaceable primary sources for future generations.

By 2000, we had developed our signature exhibition, "A Long Look Homeward," which chronicled Tibet's independent past, the Chinese invasion and occupation, and the subsequent journey into exile. What distinguished this exhibition was its grounding in firsthand testimonials. Each historical section featured direct quotes from survivors and witnesses.

International visitors are equally moved. By presenting documented evidence of Tibet's independent governance, cultural achievements, and the systematic dismantling of its institutions after 1959, we offer a counter narrative to the "peaceful liberation" claims of Chinese state media. We never ask visitors to simply take our word for it—we show them correspondence between the Tibetan government and other nations, treaties, photographs, and firsthand accounts.



Our signature exhibition,
"A Long Look Homeward"

Beyond Walls

We recognized that our mission required us to reach beyond Dharamshala. Many Tibetans in more remote settlements could not travel to visit us, and international audiences needed greater access to Tibet's story. Our solution was the development of traveling exhibitions. "A Long Look Homeward" became our first mobile exhibition, designed to be transported in large trunks and set up in community halls, schools, monasteries, and temporary venues.

Over the years, with 14 different themes, we traveled to 64 locations across India reaching Tibetan communities from Ladakh in the north to Mundgod in the south. When we took the exhibition to the remote Jangthang refugee settlement in Ladakh, nearly 15,000 feet above sea level, elderly nomads who had never visited a museum before stood transfixed before photographs of pastoral landscapes similar to those they had left behind. One woman in her 80s pointed to a black-and-white image of nomad tents and said simply, "That was my home." Four words that contained worlds of meaning.

International outreach was equally important. Under the guidance of the Offices of Tibet and through partnerships with Tibetan support groups and human rights organisations, we created condensed versions of our exhibitions that traveled to 21 different cities in 10 countries.





(LEFT)
Visitors engaging with traveling exhibition themed **"A Longlook Homeward"**
at Bodh Gaya, 2001

(TOP)
The Tibet Museum Director, Tenzin Topdhen addressing the conference at
the Italian Senate's Sala Zuccari—Palazzo Giustiniani, 11 April 2024

(BOTTOM)
Dr. Richard J. Davidson inaugurating exhibition at Center for Healthy Minds at the
University of Wisconsin–Madison along with Additional Secretary,
Mr Namgyal Tsewang & The Tibet Museum Director, Tenzin Topdhen, 11 April 2024

A New Chapter

The opening of the new Tibet Museum on 9th February 2022 by President Penpa Tsering marked the beginning of our current chapter. With the support of curator Dr. Emma Martin, exhibition designers Alexandra Grandjacques and Markus Strümpel, and a team of international consultants, we finally realized a long-held dream: a 9,000-square-foot exhibition space featuring climate-controlled storage for sensitive materials and dedicated areas for temporary exhibitions— facilities that now match the scale of our vision and ambition.

The expanded space has allowed us to move beyond the narrative of victimhood that sometimes dominates discussions of Tibet. New exhibitions like “Being Tibetan” highlight the evolving story of Tibetan identity and resilience in the 21st century, offering a message of hope and continuity. “Women of Tibet” documents the strength and perseverance of contemporary Tibetan women, shedding light on their ongoing struggles while igniting aspiration in the hearts of younger generations. Perhaps most notably, the “Mapping Tibet” exhibition—developed in collaboration with renowned cartographer Tsering Wangyal Shawa—offers a rare and visually rich journey through historical maps of Tibet published in Western countries from the late 17th century onward. Together, these exhibitions reflect a profound shift: The museum has evolved from preserving what was lost to celebrating what continues to be created. This transformation recognizes that Tibetan culture is not frozen in time—it is dynamic, adaptive, and actively responding to the present.

Our education programs through temporary and traveling exhibitions, now reach both Tibetan and non-Tibetan. For young Tibetans born in India, Canada, Switzerland, or the United States, these programs provide cultural grounding that complements their formal education. For non-Tibetan students, they offer perspectives on globalization, cultural rights, and resilience that transcend geographic boundaries.



President (Sikyong) Penpa Tsering officially inaugurating the new Tibet Museum, 9th Feb 2022 | Tenzin Phende | Central Tibetan Administration

Looking Ahead: A Living Testament

As we enter the twenty-fifth year of the museum, our priorities reflect both the urgency of the present and the responsibilities of the future.

First, we are expanding our efforts to document contemporary Tibetan life—not only within traditional settlements but also across urban centers where new generations are shaping hybrid identities. The Tibetan experience in cities like New York, Toronto, Paris, and Melbourne is now undeniably part of our collective narrative.

Second, we are forging deeper educational partnerships with universities and schools. Recent collaborations with institutions across India, Europe, and North America have helped bring Tibetan history and culture into academic curriculums where they were once absent. These partnerships not only fill a historical gap but also amplify our relevance in global dialogues.

Third, we are working to improve the provenance and accessibility of our collections. Through our growing digital archive, we are creating bridges across the diaspora—particularly for elders who can contribute to crowdsourcing authentic information. This collaborative verification process enriches our holdings and deepens communal ownership of our history.

Finally, we remain deeply committed to preserving Tibet's intangible heritage. Beyond physical objects, we collect the lived experiences and oral traditions that give those objects meaning. These stories—told around kitchen fires, in monasteries, and now online—carry forward the wisdom, humor, and resilience that define Tibetan identity. They prove remarkably adaptive, even as they uphold the spiritual and cultural foundations passed down through generations.

Twenty-five years since our humble beginning, the Tibet Museum stands as a living testament to the power of cultural memory in sustaining identity through displacement. We are more than a repository of artifacts; we are a communal anchor, an educational space, and a platform for ongoing cultural expression.

When I see a grandmother showing her grandchildren black-and-white photos of places they've never seen, or when I observe a foreign visitor standing in silence before a self-immolation exhibit, visibly moved—I'm reminded that a museum in exile must do more than display the past. It must stir empathy, provoke thought, and illuminate what remains at stake.

As His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama reminded us during the inauguration of the Tibet Museum:

“Remember the suffering brought by the changing times to the people of the snow-land, the people endowed with history, courage and a sense of national responsibility. Remember their unflinching determination and let us continue to develop our own sense of national responsibility.”

As we look to the future, we commit to safeguarding the past not as a static relic but as a living resource—fuel for the imagination, conscience, and agency of future generations who will carry Tibet’s story forward in ways we cannot yet foresee.



FUTURE OF SCIENCE MUSEUMS IN INDIA

Ritika Meena

Principal Associate
Design Factory India



The role of science museums in our country is highly underrated, wherein the science centers are so much more than just a one-day school trip.

A conventional approach to a museum is that of a center of historical preservation of artefacts, displaying tools, paintings, or sculptures. In the case of science museums, they preserve relics and briefs on different scientific theories in a monotonous way of working models or writing. Unless we know the right way to exhibit our knowledge, we can never be appreciated. The lack of engagement generally makes a space dull and less exciting. The role of science museums in our country is highly underrated, wherein the science centers are so much more than just a one-day school trip. Science museums are a crux of learning. It is a place that must teach the process of evolution in human beings, the application of scientific theories, and a place that awakens the human mind about future technologies. Certainly, the newer generation is always smarter. With each generation, we are also advancing in technology. Today, we have grown so much in terms of technology and innovation that we can simply put the same things in a much more presentable way.

Creating experience by adding a seamless flow of storytelling and fostering the participation of people needs to be the new ideology for science museums. Our posterity holds the capability to change our perceptions into reality after passing the relevant knowledge to them.

“The technology we use impresses no one. The experience you create with it is everything.”- Sean Gerety. Making science and art accessible to all, the designers and scientists together on the same platform will give a whole new perspective to exhibit theoretical knowledge in the future. A designer can add essence through surprises by capturing imagination and involvement. Interactive sessions can be added to the earlier static, by the use of the right technology. The design will enhance experiences by playfully using cognitive and emotional thinking to leave a lasting impact on every visitor.

Much like a wildlife sanctuary, it will be a place for every age. Future science museums shall be designed to be a top-notch holiday activity for entertainment and awareness, and for not just a school-going child, but also the elderly. As always, to be a center for preserving resources, it will be a source of different workshops and activities to make each day different and exciting.

The pioneers of exhibition design have started their journey toward the development of an ideal future science museum. The Life, a museum in Ahmedabad, designed by Design Factory India, is connecting human and biological life for impactful learning. The designers work on the notion to entertain, engage, inform, and inspire their visitors. Currently, more science centers are in progress toward this inspiring loop. A new Exploratorium in Delhi is designed to explore new opportunities and welcome different age groups. Junagarh Science Center will be a knowledge hub of basic science and fundamentals of science but also display the facts on the architecture and history of the local areas. This thought will help visitors to connect science and surroundings. Jamnagar, a regional science center, is based on the philosophy that Jamnagar is in the ethos of the Science center. All the mining activities are due to the natural geography of this place. The same concept will be the highlight of this museum.

The goal is to make a difference in the growth of societies to respect and appreciate the resources and surroundings, generating new ideas, and building a future together. In the coming years, science museums will intend to sensitize people and contribute to evolving societies. Holistically, science museums will grow as a place of change and transformation.

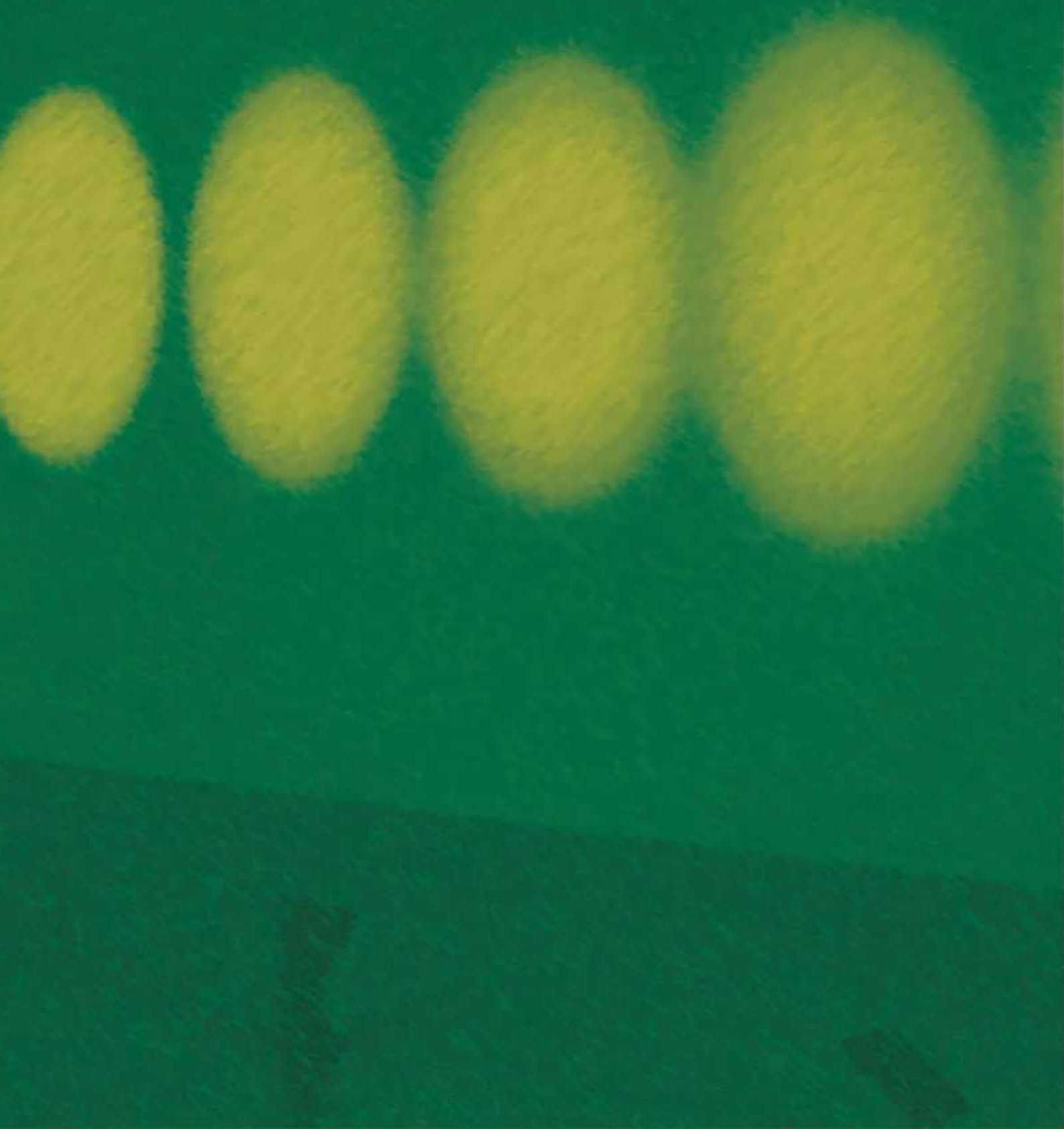
Illuminate. Exhibit. Preserve.

R. B. Thiruvengadam



Lighting Architect and Designer
& Founding Partner

URI Design Studio



“Light creates ambiance and feel of a place, as well as the expression of a structure.”

— Le Corbusier

In the hushed stillness of a museum, light is both an artist and a guardian. It reveals the subtleties of a master’s brushstroke, the contours of ancient sculpture, the fragile fibres of an heirloom textile—yet if left unchecked, it can also be the agent of their slow demise. The art of museum lighting, then, is a dance between exposure and restraint, perception and protection.

The 2011 Mandala guide on museum lighting provides a thoughtful, technically sound framework for designing lighting systems that both celebrate and conserve our cultural heritage. It emphasises the necessity of approaching light not just as a tool of visibility, but as a curatorial decision with far-reaching consequences. This provides a guideline that allows us to consider many factors to provide an efficient and comprehensive means to design. It also brings forth the dual mandate key to designing: Preserve and Exhibit.

At the heart of museum lighting lies a central paradox: the very light needed to display artefacts can also cause their deterioration. This is due to light’s energy, which initiates photochemical reactions and thermodynamic damage, especially in light-sensitive materials. The guide categorises artefacts into four sensitivity levels—from insensitive materials like stone and metal to highly vulnerable items such as silk, newsprint, and watercolour. For example, delicate materials in the high-sensitivity category must be exposed to no more than 50 lux, with strict annual exposure limits to prevent irreversible fading or yellowing.

Light, after all, is more than just illumination. It is radiation, including ultraviolet (UV) and infrared (IR) rays, which can bleach colours, dry out organic materials, and weaken centuries-old bindings and pigments. The design of any museum lighting system must start with a deep understanding of the physical and chemical limits of the items it seeks to reveal. A lack of understanding can cause an effect that is exactly the opposite of what is intended; rather than highlighting the beauty, it can cause severe destruction. In a way, lighting can make or break museums and displays. Thus, we must design with clear understanding.

Effective museum lighting is never incidental. It is a carefully planned orchestration of source types, intensities, beam angles, and control mechanisms. It encapsulates a range of lighting strategies, each tailored to different display types and architectural contexts. A few examples of them are:

Track-Mounted Spot Lighting: Highly flexible and ideal for emphasising key artefacts. Beam angles are finely tuned—from narrow spots ($<10^\circ$) to wide floods ($>45^\circ$)—to sculpt the perception of space and form.

Wall Wash Lighting: Used for uniform illumination across large surfaces or clustered displays, offering visual coherence without casting distracting shadows.

Showcase Lighting: Especially important for small, sensitive objects. These use top-mounted, controlled fixtures to avoid glare and highlight texture and detail without overwhelming the item.

Indirect Lighting: Deployed in high-ceiling spaces for a diffuse, ambient glow. Though aesthetically soft and glare-free, it requires high ceiling reflectance and careful energy management.

Colour rendering is another critical component. A high Colour Rendering Index (CRI), ideally approaching 100 (the quality of daylight), ensures that viewers see the artwork in its truest tones. This is particularly important in galleries featuring fine arts and textiles, where colour perception is integral to appreciation. This brings us to a key component of today's day and age technology and its integration.

Technology plays an ever-expanding role in mitigating the risks of light damage. Filters are used to strip out UV and IR components, reducing heat and radiation exposure. Fiber optics, LED systems, and advanced dimmers now offer precise control with minimal heat output. Tools like skin tone filters, daylight conversion lenses, and anti-dazzle screens further refine the light experience for both the object and the observer. Energy efficiency is also at the forefront of museum lighting design. By using smart controls and selectively illuminating only what needs to be seen, designers reduce power consumption while enhancing visual impact. Vertical illumination, for instance, has been shown to create a stronger perception of brightness using less energy than horizontal lighting strategies.

Given all of the above, there is a key component in bringing the entire puzzle together – The human factor.

At the end of the day, lighting is about storytelling. It is the invisible thread that connects viewer to object, emotion to context. Museums are not merely spaces for viewing—they are environments for experiencing, and light is the medium that shapes that experience. When lighting is done right, it disappears. What remains is awe, wonder, and connection.

As Le Corbusier so aptly put it, “Light creates ambiance and feel of a place.” In a museum, this ambiance must whisper reverence for the past while guiding the eyes of the present. The next time you walk through a gallery and marvel at a centuries-old manuscript or a timeless sculpture, take a moment to appreciate not just what you see—but how you see it. Behind every beam of light is a quiet act of curation, a hidden promise to both illuminate and protect.





Palace to Palace Museum: **THE CASE OF MSMS II MUSEUM**

Vaibhav Chauhan



Director
MSMS II Museum



The Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum housed in the historic City Palace of Jaipur, presents an exemplary case of adaptive reuse in India and reinterpretation of a lived palace as a living museum.

Reimagining Royal Spaces: A Global and Local Phenomenon

The transformation of royal residences into public museums marks a critical juncture in the democratisation of heritage. It offers not just spatial access but a reframing of memory, legacy, and identity. Across the world, such conversions—from Versailles in France and the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, to Mysore Palace in Karnataka and the City Palace of Jaipur in Rajasthan, India—signal a broader change in the landscape: the relocation of power from private to public, from lineage to legacy.

In this light, the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum (MSMS II Museum), housed in the historic City Palace of Jaipur, presents an exemplary case of adaptive reuse in India and reinterpretation of a lived palace as a living museum. Today, more than a passive repository of artefacts, it is an evolving cultural institution that reflects both historical continuity and curatorial innovation.

Curating the Court: A Seat of Power Transformed

Established between 1729 and 1732 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, the City Palace was envisioned as the epicentre of the newly founded city of Jaipur, grounded in cosmological principles, urban design, and political acumen. The palace complex is a synthesis of Rajput, Mughal, and later European influences, a layered architectural palimpsest that housed the Kachhwaha rulers for generations.

Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Trust was established in 1959 to steward and share the tangible and intangible heritage of Jaipur with current and future generations. The collections of the museum connect local and regional history with that of national and global, due to Jaipur's position as a key node in the network that linked South Asia to the world for exchange of knowledge, goods, art, and culture over several centuries.

Receiving over 1.5 million visitors per year is a testament to the iconic status of MSMS II Museum as one of India's earliest such institutions dedicated to preserving and conserving the heritage of India. The Trust has embarked on an ambitious transformation programme, in time for the 300th anniversary of Jaipur's foundation in 2027.

Today, the MSMS II Museum presents an expansive narrative of Jaipur's royal past, material culture, and artistic excellence through the following galleries:

Mubarak Mahal

(Textile Gallery)

Built in the 1800s for royal guests, this gallery showcases not only the opulence of royal attire but also the technical brilliance of Indian textile traditions—*zari*, *gota*, *bandhani*, and *chikan* embroidery. It positions textiles as carriers of both identity and diplomacy.

Sileh Khana

(Arms and Armour)

Rather than glorifying warfare, this gallery highlights metallurgy, innovation, and symbolic aesthetics. The exhibit displays finely crafted daggers, swords, and firearms with jewelled hilts and inscribed blades, demonstrating how martial artefacts were also aesthetic objects, often customised to reflect status and personality.

Sabha Niwas

(Hall of Audience)

Once the nerve centre of governance and diplomacy, this durbar hall—now home to portraits, courtly regalia, and ceremonial objects—retains an air of solemnity. The painted ceilings and chandeliers, along with rare manuscripts and insignias, narrate an aesthetic of authority.

Sarvato Bhadra

(*Diwan-e-Khas*)

Architecturally significant as a space open from all four sides, this pavilion once hosted private audiences. It now holds remarkable artefacts like the famed *Gangajalis*—two silver urns recognised by the Guinness Book of Records for their size—symbolising sacred continuity, as they once carried Ganga water on an overseas voyage.

Painting & Photography Gallery

This section offers a compelling juxtaposition of miniature painting traditions with early photographic documentation, showing how the court adapted to new technologies while preserving old styles. It creates a continuum between image-making as tradition and documentation. The gallery has taken a significant step towards greater accessibility and audience engagement by now allowing mobile photography.



From Object-Centric to Community-Engaged

What distinguishes MSMS II Museum in the current museum landscape is its shift from static display to dynamic storytelling. Like leading global institutions such as the Rijksmuseum's thematic reinterpretations or the Victoria & Albert Museum's craft revival initiatives, the MSMS II Museum is embracing customer centricity, thoughtful curation, contemporary collaborations, and versatile sensory experiences. It acts as a cultural node, frequently hosting:

- Workshops on miniature painting, block printing, and textile conservation, thereby sustaining endangered craft knowledge.
- Lecture-demonstrations and residencies with artisans, turning the museum into a site of knowledge production rather than just presentation.
- Contemporary exhibitions through national and global collaborations that draw parallels between past and present.
- Public festivals like *Gangaur*, *Teej*, or *Holi*, celebrated within the palace premises that reanimate spaces through living heritage. In doing so, the museum becomes more than a repository, it becomes a stage where heritage is performed, experienced, and continually renewed, blurring the lines between conservation and community engagement.

This layered programming reflects an important museological shift—from museums as repositories of art to forums of cultural dialogue. Moreover, the museum actively negotiates the line between tourism and education. While the Palace remains a prime attraction on the Jaipur heritage circuit, efforts are made to create slow, immersive, and interpretive experiences rather than transactional visits.

Challenges and Ethical Imperatives

The conversion of royal estates into public institutions is not without its tensions. The questions of ownership, access, representation, and authenticity are crucial.

*Who gets to tell the story?
How is the past curated without
glorification or erasure?*

At MSMS II Museum, these challenges are met with thoughtful engagement. The Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Trust ensures that heritage stewardship is intergenerational and interdisciplinary. Collaborations with conservationists, historians, designers, and community elders help balance curatorial authority with inclusivity.

Internationally, museums housed in former palaces, like the Palácio Nacional da Ajuda in Lisbon or Winter Palace (Hermitage) in St. Petersburg, have similarly confronted the dual task of conserving material wealth and interpreting historical power. The MSMS II Museum fits into this global conversation with a uniquely Indian sensitivity: it sees heritage not just as patrimony but as praxis—something to be activated, shared, and continually reimagined.

In contrast to museums built from scratch, palace museums must constantly mediate between the symbolic aura of the royal and the secular function of the civic. The City Palace of Jaipur achieves this balance gracefully. The continued residence of the royal family in a section of the complex adds a layer of authenticity, yet the openness of the museum program signals democratic access.

The Way Forward

As the idea of museums itself is being redefined—becoming digital, decolonial, participatory, and sustainable—the MSMS II Museum offers a compelling model of a ‘living museum.’ Not only does it preserve objects of the past, but it also curates practices, people, and performances that carry the past into the present.

In the coming years, with planned initiatives such as digitisation of its collections, expanded national and global collaborations, incubation space for professionals and organisations in the domains, and an exemplary institution navigating the Gallery, Libraries, Museums and Archives (GLAM) space, MSMS II Museum is working on a blueprint to be not just as a site of the past, but as a vision for the future.



Reinvigorating Museum Training Programs in India for Shared Growth and Learning

Dr Abira Bhattacharya



Assistant Curator
(Anthropology)

National Museum, Delhi



Opportunities for mid-career museum professionals in India remain constrained within the domestic landscape. Museum and library professionals rely on training programs offered by Western universities, museums, and art institutions which highlights a gap in the programs back home and is also a sign that we haven't overcome our colonial favouritism. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate institutional funding and a lack of systematic planning, which limits access to such facilities and exposure. As a result, these opportunities are often restricted to a small group of professionals, leaving a significant portion of the workforce underserved. Thus, as professionals working in Indian museums, we are still dependent on international workshops and training sessions conducted by the International Council of Museums (ICOM); the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) on various aspects of cultural heritage management, conservation and research and the International Training Programme (ITP) by the British Museum, among others.

Isn't it vital for everyone to have access to museum training? Such opportunities can profoundly enrich our understanding and appreciation of our vibrant cultural heritage. I believe that museum training is a valuable opportunity that should be accessible to everyone, rather than merely a prerequisite for a select few.

Museum professionals face diverse challenges, which could be addressed through effective policy making. A discourse must be initiated to focus on and resolve the leadership crisis affecting museums and cultural institutions, examining the underlying factors contributing to this situation. Additionally, it is essential to discuss the socio-economic conditions of museum professionals in India, highlighting the challenges and opportunities within the field.

Here are some key challenges I have identified, along with some proposed solutions:

Firstly, there are diverse opportunities for research, fieldwork and publication in academia. However, it is interesting to note that curators, who often hold advanced degrees and come from strong academic backgrounds, are not given the same chance to thrive. While universities offer grants for faculty to develop research skills and provide financial assistance for participation in international conferences or seminars, government schemes for capacity building do not include these provisions. It limits the opportunities for

curators to explore programs, resources, and career development at all stages. As Indian museum professionals, we remain reliant on travel grants provided by international organisations and universities, as we lack internal funding options. Offering grant writing training to museum curators can greatly enhance a curators' abilities to secure external funding for museum operations.

Secondly, the disparity in job descriptions for curatorial positions in the government and private sectors is a significant issue. Private museums and art galleries emphasise hiring curators with diverse skill sets. In contrast, government museums still adhere to outdated hiring practices, focusing on higher academic degrees without updating them to align with global trends. To achieve contemporary goals, such as enhancing visitor experience and fostering community engagement, government museums must adopt a holistic, multidisciplinary approach that brings together professionals with diverse expertise. Traditionally, subject experts from the history, archaeology, literature and anthropology background have been considered for curating successful exhibitions, keeping in mind the historical nature of the collection. However, the interpretation of objects and storytelling can also benefit from the perspective of a museum educator. Additionally, the presentation of exhibitions is a creative process that requires collaboration among skilled designers, architects, and the technical team of conservators. While existing government museums have positions available for professionals from these varied backgrounds, many of these individuals are not acquainted with current knowledge and practices, as they continue to operate based on outdated methods. Conversely, private sector museums are rapidly evolving, offering opportunities for young professionals and creating engaging experiential spaces that utilise artistic displays and digital technology, which in turn attract visitors.

Due to the changing job descriptions and institutional restructuring worldwide, museum training programs for current professionals could help bridge this gap and promote a more cohesive working environment. If we look at it from a global perspective there is an increasing demand for curators with diverse skill sets. At present, museum curators are coming from diverse academic backgrounds and possess a wide range of knowledge. They have the potential and skills to interpret and curate collections in distinct ways, but there is a need for a formal

emphasis on core values. Similarly, many museums are situated in remote areas across the country, upholding treasures of history and indigenous community memories and the respective curatorial staff are well aware of the local culture and communities, but they lack the exposure to the changing museum practices, the advanced technological and scientific methodology, and the powerful tool of social media, which could bring their collection to the centerstage. However, a national-level training program can offer invaluable opportunities to build networks, share ideas, and establish friendships with colleagues from across India and even beyond. The increasing importance of peer-to-peer exchange and mentorship in this creative field can be recognised and integrated into this intensive initiative.

Lastly, Museums have traditionally served as custodians of cultural heritage and history. However, bridging the gap between scientific inquiry and historical preservation is imperative today. This can be achieved through an interdisciplinary framework within museum training programs. The advent of artificial intelligence presents a transformative potential for curatorial practices. It can facilitate advanced analyses of collections and inspire innovative exhibition concepts. Integrating scientific methodologies can significantly enhance museum management, marketing strategies, and visitor engagement metrics. Moreover, the proliferation of digital technologies—such as photogrammetry, holography, rotoscoping, interactive displays augmented by augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)—has surged, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the challenge lies in aligning these technological innovations with the narratives of the museum. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the underpinning methodologies by curators to harness these tools effectively. Intensive training programs for museum professionals are essential to ensure the mindful implementation of these technologies. This approach will empower curators with the knowledge to incorporate advanced technologies into their practices, enriching the museum experience while maintaining historical integrity. In addition, developing workshops that focus on designing and managing collaborations, fostering meaningful partnerships, handling knowledge and content, and creating effective social media strategies is essential.

At present, various institutions currently offer training and diplomas in heritage and museum management. However, the concept of a comprehensive training program for mid-career museum curators remains unaddressed. Some of the institutions are- the Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University; the Centre for Heritage

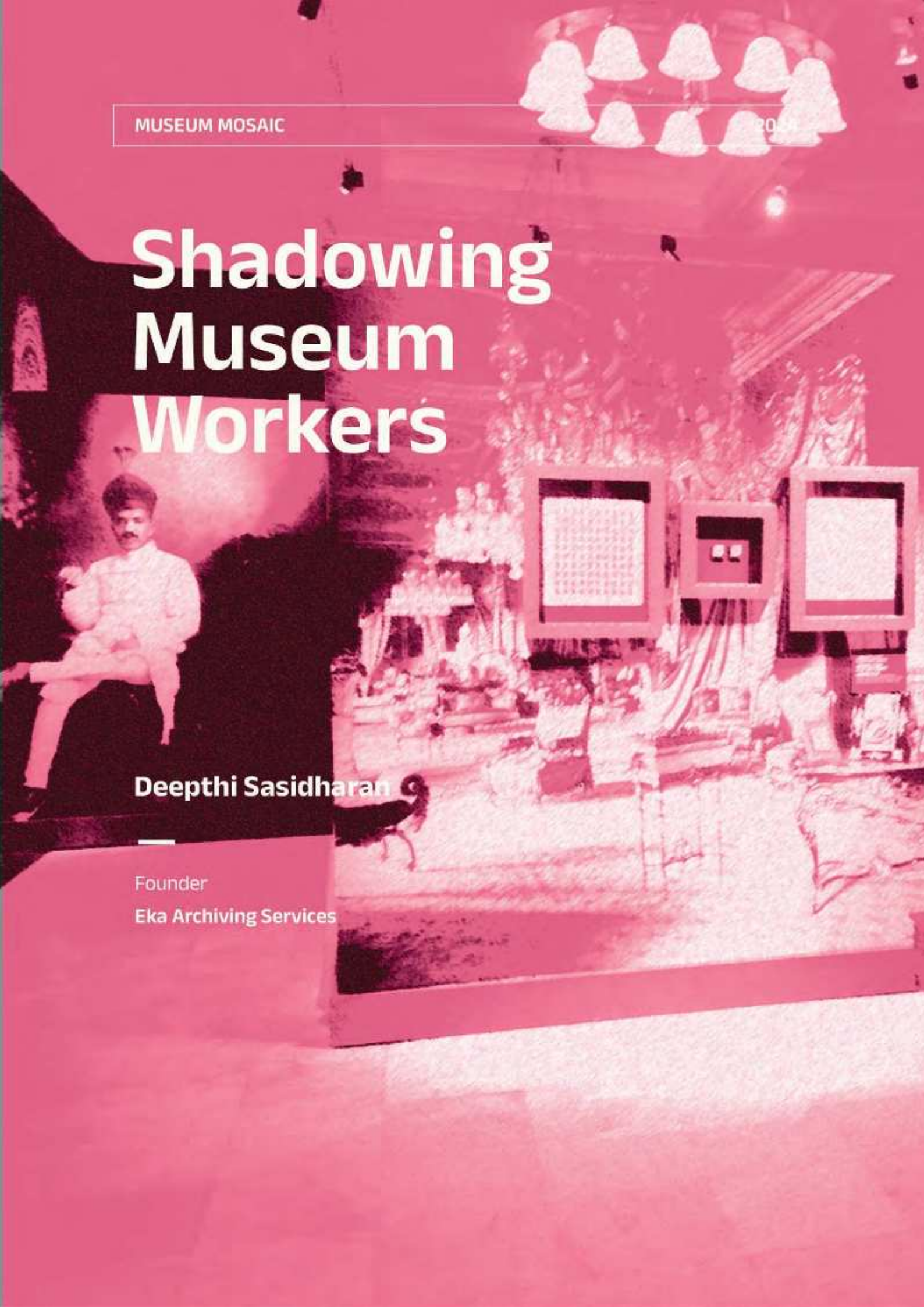
Conservation (CHC), CEPT University, Ahmedabad; the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai; the Indian Heritage Institute (IIH), Noida; the Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai; the Indira Gandhi Centre for Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi; the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Heritage Academy, New Delhi; Indian Institute of Management (IIM – Ahmedabad, Bengaluru); Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi; the Kolkata Centre for Creativity, Kolkata; the Mehrangarh Art Conservation Centre (Mehrangarh Museum Trust), Jodhpur, among others.

A solution can be achieved by joining forces and bringing these institutions together to create a national-level model. This exchange of ideas can be facilitated within India, allowing curators from different museums to travel and learn from one another through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between these institutions. Additionally, the Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) can serve as an effective means to establish connections with international museums and universities. The CEP enhances and strengthens bilateral cultural relations with various countries. To effectively implement the signed CEPs, multiple divisions of the Ministry of Culture collaborate with their counterparts in foreign nations through diplomatic channels. The primary objectives of this initiative include strengthening cultural ties with other countries, fostering bilateral cultural interactions, showcasing India's cultural identity on the global stage, and promoting inbound tourism. The same approach could be applied to develop a museum training scheme. According to a recently published Press Information Bureau (PIB) report in March 2025, the Ministry of Culture currently has valid CEPs with 88 countries, and negotiations are ongoing for CEPs with 102 countries. From 2024 to now, CEPs with 12 countries have been signed.

These valuable resources could be activated and fully utilized through collaborative efforts to develop a methodology for museum training. For example- the role and contributions of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), can be explored and incorporated in the museum training field. The ICCR has been unwavering in its dedication to promote Indian culture across the globe, utilising its missions, posts, and cultural centres abroad to share the beauty and vibrancy of our heritage with the world.

In addition, factors such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be explored and utilised to support new methodologies of learning in the museum field, focusing on capacity building and addressing employment gaps. Implementing inclusive policies addressing the needs of the hour could positively impact society. Currently, CSR initiatives support emerging, underrepresented, and neglected artistic practices within theatre, music, and dance. They also contribute to the conservation of built heritage, art, and film, emphasising the training of conservators and enhancing preservation practices. Similarly, Public-Private Partnerships have become increasingly important in the museum sector by combining the strengths of both public and private entities. Through PPPs, private organisations provide essential financial support for the operation and management of museums, heritage monuments, and sites. Furthermore, the scope of these economic activities could be expanded to create models supporting museum professionals attending conferences and seminars.

In summary, despite ongoing challenges due to the various communication channels, and existing policies across institutions, museums must organise regular training sessions, capacity-building initiatives, and educational programs for mid-career museum professionals. There is an urgent need to improve the human resources in Indian museums to broaden their vision and enhance their skills and leadership qualities to meet international standards. It is high time we recognise and acknowledge that museums are not simply repositories of antiquities that link the past to the present; rather, they are vital centres for culture and education that influence all aspects of human life.



MUSEUM MOSAIC

Shadowing Museum Workers

Deepthi Sasidharan

Founder
Eka Archiving Services



Step behind the scenes with the team of professionals at Eka as they share glimpses of their work in crafting exhibitions and museum experiences across India.

When you walk into the cool stillness of a museum gallery, a riveting display presents a piece of history that one has never seen before. These captivating displays are the result of hard work by a team of professionals of diverse disciplines – curators, conservators, designers, lighting specialists and more.

Museum custodians have to prioritise the display of artefacts, aiming for a maximum ‘wow’ but keeping in mind the special care of the often-ancient, fragile objects. Their storytelling has to be with a purpose and so, must overcome museum display challenges, especially problems like a dearth of specialist case designers, and lighting solution providers.

Take a peek in behind the scenes through these photos of what makes museums and exhibitions tick with the team at Eka, who work in projects across India.



Arranging jewellery requires an understanding of form and function and contributes to its display and presentation. Head ornaments arranged on a slanted surface here follow a pre-determined curatorial schema.

Hidden Treasures : Jewelry from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dubai, 2019



At the National Museum, New Delhi, light had to be cut out completely to display rare and historical textiles. Notice how pools of light gently illuminate the vibrant hues of textiles making them seem jewel-like in the darkness.

Pra-kashi :Silk, Gold & Silver from the City of Light, National Museum, New Delhi, 2019.



For Indira Gandhi's centenary celebration an exhibition was hosted. The lawns of her historic residence, now a landmark memorial, became the venue. Making use of the dappled sunlight in the Delhi winter months, an exhibition was conceptualised using the outdoors. Historic images from her life were carefully selected from the archives and digitally made ready to replicate at the appropriate sizes. Notice how the tonality of the images has been calibrated and the red gives a pop of colour to balance the black and white images.

Indira: A Life of Courage, IGMT, New Delhi 2017



At the Rezwan Razack Museum of Indian Paper Money, security was a major consideration, as was also the challenge of displaying thousands of banknotes and paper ephemera. With low lighting levels as a requirement, the designers chose display cases with inbuilt lighting whilst the wall cases were lit by ceiling lights. Patterns from the bank notes were replicated as part of the floor pattern to amplify details of otherwise smaller museum objects.

Rezwan Razack Museum of Indian Paper Money, Bengaluru, 2020



For Weftscapes, an exhibition at the multi disciplinary Serendipity Arts festival a fresh approach to the creation and making of Jamdani fabrics was explored. Designers helped audiences understand ‘jamdani’ weaving, choice of raw materials, colour, patterns, designs and the end product—a finished garment. Acrylic panels help understand the warp and weft of an important textile. The blue indicates the indigo dyed thread.

Weftscapes, Serendipity Festival for the Arts, Goa, 2019



For a museum celebrating the life of educationist and Manipuri dancer-scholar, Dr Savitaben Mehta, her original costume going back a few decades, was carefully restored and mounted on a custom built mannequin. The curatorial team worked with dance scholars in Manipur to get the perfect nuances.

Dr Savitadidi N. Mehta Museum and Vishwa Gurjari Library, Porbandar, 2022



For a museum celebrating the life of educationist and Manipuri dancer-scholar, Dr Savitaben Mehta, her original costume going back a few decades, was carefully restored and mounted on a custom built mannequin. The curatorial team worked with dance scholars in Manipur to get the perfect nuances.

Dr Savitadidi N. Mehta Museum and Vishwa Gurjari Library, Porbandar, 2022



A pair of Radha and Krishna dance costumes of the Manipuri Nat Sankirtan dance form on display at the museum. It was a challenge in bringing together this pair of dance costumes as both costumes belonged to a female artist. The peacock feathers on Krishna's cap, for example, were carefully restored to their full glory.

Dr Savitadidi N. Mehta Museum and Vishwa Gurjari Library, Porbandar, 2022



For this exhibition of costumes from Saudi Arabia, the idea was to show both scale and beauty while being sensitive to the local dictates of culture. Notice the use of rich colours and synchronous display of local costume.

Art Of Heritage, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2018



Neutral and culturally sensitive busts help to showcase jewellery

Design Crossroads: The Jewellery Of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain National Museum, Bahrain, 2019.

The Art of Crafting Experiences

“Why do most of our museums still whisper when the world is screaming with imagination?”

Arun Sripadam

Director & Producer
C.MENT Studios

RIGHT TO EQUALITY



Work & Examples

...and the fact that the
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..



P. GUNDEL and M. J. JAC



Granville Austin

[illegible]

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are undernourished has declined from 760 million to 600 million. The number of people who are malnourished has declined from 1.1 billion to 800 million. The number of people who are obese has increased from 100 million to 300 million. The number of people who are overweight has increased from 100 million to 300 million. The number of people who are obese and overweight has increased from 100 million to 300 million. The number of people who are obese and overweight has increased from 100 million to 300 million.

Keywords: child sexual abuse; disclosure; disclosure strategies



Abstract

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the use of a computerized program on the learning of the spelling of 100 words in Spanish. The sample consisted of 100 children of 10 years of age, who were divided into two groups: control and experimental. The control group received the traditional method of learning to spell, and the experimental group received the computerized program. The results showed that the experimental group had a significantly higher percentage of correct spelling than the control group.



2016.11.19

Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Plant Industry
Washington, D. C.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

[illegible]

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT



Water Control

the most important
feature of the system
is the fact that it is
the only one of its
kind in the world.
It is the only one
of its kind in the
world.



FOR

Every time I walk through the old museums in cities, the silence is familiar, almost sacred. But I keep wondering—what if, along with the silent spaces, there were storytelling spaces as well?

What if the bronze statue I passed by, leaned in and told me about the day it was forged? What if the murals unfurled like animated scrolls, telling me the epic in motion? What if, instead of tiptoeing through the past, “Do Not Touch” signs, I could interact, empathise, and maybe even challenge what I saw?

For me, if there's a single word that truly defines what a museum should offer, it's 'experience'. Gone are the days when museums were just silent halls of glass cases and faded placards. In today's digital world, most people don't just want to see - they want to feel, live, and even interact. From immersive storytelling to virtual walk-throughs, the idea of a 'museum experience' is being redefined - designed to engage all senses and transport visitors to different times, places, or perspectives.

Conversations about digital experiences often begin and end with technology, overshadowing the vital role of artistic vision and storytelling in creating truly meaningful content. This tech-first approach is not new. The digital art and animation industry in India has long struggled with the same issue. For decades, the country has excelled in outsourced VFX and animation services, creating a vast workforce skilled in software, rendering, and production pipelines. However, original Indian storytelling has lagged. The focus on production over artistry meant that experimentation, creative risk-taking, and original thought - hallmarks of truly great content - were often sacrificed.

Creative success doesn't stem solely from knowing the tools. You can own the best brush and canvas, but that won't make you a painter. Likewise, access to cutting-edge technology doesn't guarantee engaging museum experiences. What truly matters is how these tools come together to support a cohesive creative vision, where every visual, sound, and interaction is intentionally crafted to bring stories, ideas or concepts to life in a way that connects and lasts. What we need are filmmakers, writers, artists, motion designers, musicians - creative minds across disciplines who can collaborate with technologists to shape content that is as emotionally powerful as it is visually stunning.

India's rich heritage - its mythology, classical arts, traditional crafts, music, textiles, and languages - offer a treasure trove of inspiration.

But creating immersive experiences from these traditions requires deep cultural sensitivity, aesthetic discernment, and creative excellence. Otherwise, it risks becoming a shallow imitation that misses the essence of the original.

Great digital experiences always begin with a thoughtful visual design. Every visual choice - design elements, colour palettes, textures, and motion design - must be intentional. Every frame should be treated like a painting, carefully composed to guide emotion and attention.

Creative use of audio design is another secret ingredient of immersion. A haunting voiceover, the echo of footsteps, a melody that rises with the narrative - these aren't just background elements, they're emotional cues. Soundscapes can make or break the mood. With the right visual and audio design, even a static digital story can breathe, ache, or thrill.

Also creativity should extend beyond storytelling into the very medium of presentation. How can we surprise, delight, and challenge visitors through unexpected interactions or spatial designs? The future of museums isn't just about what we tell - it's how we craft the very space in which the story lives. To blend technology with soul. To surprise, delight, and awaken wonder where it's least expected.



When used purposefully, blending art and technology can transform museums from static halls into cinematic journeys of sight, sound, and emotion. Some of the most promising trends in museum tech include:

AR and VR Experiences: Virtual reality can reconstruct lost monuments or recreate historical events, allowing visitors to “step into” the past. It can also be effectively used to transport visitors into imaginative or futuristic spaces.

Projection Mapping: Transforms walls, ceilings, and even floors into dynamic storytelling canvases.

Interactive Storytelling: Touchscreens, gesture-based displays, or mobile-guided tours personalize the experience.

Immersive Rooms: Multi-sensory environments that fully envelop the viewer.

Gamified Experiences: Turning learning into play through quizzes, challenges, or narrative missions. **Holographic Displays:** Offering lifelike 3D projections of figures or artifacts.

AI Integration: Tailoring content based on visitor interest or behavior in real-time.

This isn't just about making museums modern - it's about rethinking what museums stand for. Digital content offers the advantage of being easily updated, keeping experiences fresh and encouraging repeat visits by giving audiences something new to discover each time. Museums can evolve into dynamic ecosystems that empower creativity, ignite curiosity, and foster connections across generations.

We must trust our curators, our technologists, and our artists to reimagine these spaces as incubators for new ideas, platforms for diverse stories, community spaces where the past meets the future and symbols of cultural reinvention. With a bold vision, India has the potential to become a global leader in cultural storytelling, setting new benchmarks for immersive and engaging museum experiences.



What Being in Education Taught Me:

A Museum Educator
Looks Back

Shubhasree Purkayastha



Manager-Education
Museum of Art & Photography

How can museums in India become spaces of collective and critical reflection, and help plug the gaps of today's school education?

This question has, knowingly or unknowingly, shaped and guided my career in museum education in India.

Setting out to reinvent the education system of a country/culture is not an easy task. Nor is it something to show quick results. The education system tends to move slowly, shaped by politics and policy, and there often isn't much room or willingness towards new approaches. This is where museums step in and become spaces of experimentation and play – a kind of classroom-lab hybrid where creative and radical teaching ideas can be explored.

I joined the Education and Outreach team at the National Museum (NM), Delhi, as a starry-eyed fresher in 2014. Here, I was privileged to have worked with a passionate and driven Director General, Dr Venu Vasudevan, and be part of an equally passionate and a driven, all-women's team. Spending time at the NM, first as a student and then as staff, opened up a world of possibilities for me, especially those that lie at the intersections of curation, production and learning. I was excited then, as I am now, by the power of objects to tell stories - about ourselves and about the world that we inhabit.

Over time and some more work experience, I found myself moving to Bangalore to join an exciting new institution - the Museum Of Art & Photography, or MAP. Being part of the founding-team of a new organisation like MAP has been the most opportune moment in my professional life. MAP provided me with the space and support to experiment, introspect, learn and grow with the organisation. As the world shut down during the 2020 pandemic, the team had to reorient and reprioritise in developing alternate strategies and approaches to continue the work, especially under Education. With the museum's public opening in 2023, there was another moment of reflection and reorientation - to focus our energies on physical interventions, to develop community partnerships and to make the museum building as welcoming as possible.

MAP hopes to change the way museums are perceived in India—I am reminded of this line from our PR deck, as I complete close to six years of being part of the Education team here. I find myself wondering—have I played my part towards pushing this agenda? Am I doing what it takes to foster change and help reimagine museum learning in India?

The Education department at MAP has been operational since 2016, bringing young people into a space full of art that encourages critical and creative thinking. We have worked with several schools, NGOs and other organisations in the city over the years, leading to a relationship of trust, care and collaboration. Today, these organisations resonate with our values and have become regular engagers with our offerings. This, to me, is the first step towards something bigger - a hope that museums begin to be seen as valued spaces of learning, thereby affecting changes in systems, policies and practice.

One of the oldest running programmes at MAP, and one that I have been involved with since I joined the organisation, is Schools@MAP - which means, quite simply, that schools come to MAP. As various exhibitions open at the museum, the Education team designs interactive engagements for young learners that encourage them to look closely, think critically and share opinions. It has been heartening to see the kind of dialogue that such engagements have facilitated, with learners opening up about personal experiences and thoughts around stereotypes, sexuality and even death. I take pride in the fact that our work with and around museum objects has provided the kind of space and agency to young people, where they feel safe and comfortable enough to share unabashed opinions, experiences and emotions.

Reflecting on moments like this give one joy. And hope. To think back and realise that one may not entirely be there, but one is on the way.

As another year of doing and creating begins, what grounds and orients me is not just the work, but the relationships that I have built along the way. Whether in the historic corridors of the National Museum or in a dusty under-construction new museum, I have experienced friendship, support and the feeling of a genuine connection being formed — all through a shared passion for museum learning. These instances of solidarity, however small, feel like the quiet beginnings of something far greater.

In moments of overwhelm, dullness or even disappointment (of which there are many in our sector!) one is reminded of this connection, and of the people who are trying their best, despite the overwhelm and the disappointment. And one is certain that the work must go on.

MUSE...um?



Who's Still Going to Museums and Why That's Not the Right Question Anymore

Nivedita Poddar



Founder
Art Fervour

A few weeks ago, I walked through a gallery in Kolkata where three people were glued to their phones - two scrolling Instagram, one texting - right in front of a 19th-century painting. The irony wasn't lost on anyone. But it did make me wonder:

Are we doing enough to meet audiences where they are today, or are we resisting the change we're supposed to respond to?

'Engagement' Today

The question isn't whether people still 'GO' to museums, because they do. The real question is: How do we get their attention (or engage them) once they're through the gates?

Traditionally, museums were measured by footfall. If you walked in, took a selfie, bought a mug, and left, you were counted as engaged. But that measuring system doesn't hold true anymore. Today, we scroll past more artworks in a day on our phones, than we might have in person in a year. The bar for attention is higher, and the tools we need to hold it have to be different too.

At Art Fervour, we see this shift play out daily. Audiences are more interested in how museums talk to them, be it on social media, through programming or through their choice of exhibitions. The notion of art only belonging on walls is now outdated.

Globally too, the definition of engagement is changing. Institutions like the Smithsonian in the US now actively crowdsource stories from the public for their archives, moving from being custodians of history to co-creators of it.

Can we talk about ‘brain rot’ and short attention spans?

To be honest: we’re all dealing with a bit of brain rot. Between endless Reels, meme chains, and algorithmic overstimulation, the idea of standing still in front of a sculpture for more than 30 seconds feels... ambitious. Our brains are wired for speed and museums that rely on silence and wall text alone are losing the room, even when it’s full.

Museums like CSMVS in Mumbai have recognised this shift and have been active in making the change. Starting with ‘Museum on Wheels,’ where you don’t ‘go’ to a museum - the museum comes to you. Launched in 2015, it travelled across Maharashtra and Gujarat, reaching schools, public spaces, and areas where museums are inaccessible. One of their early fossil exhibitions was a huge hit with children and educators alike. Since then, they’ve kept expanding; right now, they’re running exhibitions on Origami and Ancient Sculptures, taking everything from paper folds to temple fragments into playgrounds and town squares.

Similarly, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) often pairs their exhibitions with guided walkthroughs, comic-book tie-ups, artist talks, and workshops, creating multi-access points for different kinds of attention spans. Shows like ‘Of Worlds Within Worlds’ (Gulammohammed Sheikh retrospective) brought together artworks with large digital screens, reviving the narrative elements in a new format. You could sit and watch different parts of a single work come alive, in a sense therapeutic, it slowed you down.

Internationally, the V&A in London made headlines with their ‘Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt’ exhibition, treating gaming as a serious cultural form and drawing in a whole generation of non-traditional museum-goers. They showed behind-the-scenes sketches, early design notes, and storyboards from famous console games like ‘The Last of Us’ and ‘Journey’. The exhibition later travelled to V&A Dundee, where it helped pull in over 800,000 visitors in the first year alone.

We’ve seen through all these efforts so far that while content does matter, the format matters just as much. New ways of engagement, with zines, memes, and QR codes that link to playlists, games, memory walls, stay longer with viewers than big blocks of information that overwhelms them.

Museums as idea labs and hands-on experiences, not ‘Muse’ temples

One of the most outdated ideas is that museums are temples: silent, sacred, and untouchable. But the ones doing meaningful work right now are treating their spaces less like shrines and more like labs. You walk in, and instead of being told to observe quietly, you're asked to take part.

MAP in Bengaluru had already started experimenting before their physical space opened in 2023. Through Museum From Home, they ran live talks, online exhibitions, and video walkthroughs. Their AI-powered archive Interwoven, built with Microsoft, lets you search South Asian textile collections by motif, technique, or region. Inside the building today, you can browse a painting show or sit at a touchscreen for an hour tracing the outline of a sari through different eras. It's not about tech for the sake of tech. It's about giving visitors more than one way in.

The PM Museum in Delhi does this in a completely different context. Built on the Teen Murti estate, it doesn't rely on display cases and panels. You can take a selfie with any Prime Minister, watch a robot recreate handwritten notes that can be taken home as memorabilia, or leave your own message for 'India in 2047' as part of Shatabdi Sankalp. It's not asking you to admire leadership. It's asking you to reflect on what leadership should look like now.

Vadnagar's Archaeological Experiential Museum, which opened earlier this year, takes you even further back. Built next to a live excavation site, the museum walks you through 2,500 years of settlement. You step across glass floors that reveal ruins below your feet. Inside, there's a 270-degree immersive screen, VR reconstructions of city life, and digital maps you can move through. Outside, the dig site itself has a viewing walkway, so you're watching archaeology in progress. It's half museum, half field lab. And it makes you stay longer than you meant to.

Tate Modern's Tate Collective flips the model entirely. It hands over part of the museum's programming to people aged 16 to 25. They design events, make posters, run late nights. Over 150,000 young

people have signed up. It's not about ticking a youth outreach box. It's about letting them decide what kind of museum they want to be part of.

And it's not just smaller or newer spaces doing this. In 2024, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris broke attendance records with their Van Gogh exhibition 'Van Gogh in Auvers-sur-Oise: The Final Months'. The exhibition focused on the final months of his life in Auvers-sur-Oise but went well beyond traditional wall labels. The show included a VR walkthrough of his paintings and an AI-based 'conversation' with Van Gogh trained on his letters. More than 790,000 people came through in just four months. The format clearly struck a chord. Quietly immersive, personal, and nothing like a textbook.

From museum fatigue to micro-engagement

Not everyone wants to spend two hours in a gallery. At Art Fervour, we've been working across formats to keep viewers engaged without losing attention.

For the 'Light Into Space' exhibition, currently on view at NMACC, we put together a crossword. Clues came from the works on display: textures, colours, bits of text and artists themselves. You had to walk through the show to find the clues. These interactive gamifications of the exhibition have helped in interactions, engagements and outreach to the viewers.

We've used games, prompts, and formats like these across exhibitions and festivals. The response has been steady. People use them, mention them to others, and sometimes come back with friends.

So, what comes next?

Museums can't only be about preserving the past. They also need to participate now. That could mean adapting to shorter attention spans without losing depth. Or designing for emotion as much as information. Or just asking a different kind of question.

It doesn't always need to involve tech or budgets, it can be structural, tone or a different format.

When Beyoncé and Jay-Z filmed 'Apeshit' at the Louvre in Paris, under-30 attendance went up by 50% the next year. They used simple visibility without branding or advertising.

Over the years, maybe decades, we have heard about all the rules in a museum, don't take photos, stay quiet, don't touch anything, and those restrictions haven't helped the institutions, maybe it's time to change and find more ways in.





Why Museums Must Embrace Technology to Recapture the Hearts of Gen Z

Shubham Saurabh

—

Founder

Atthah Info Media



Have you watched a teenager mindlessly wander through a museum lately, more interested in their phone than the priceless artefacts surrounding them? This growing disconnect between cultural institutions and digital natives represents more than just a challenge for museum attendance—it's a threat to how future generations connect with their heritage and identity.

The problem is straightforward: museums haven't evolved at the pace of their audience. When I visited the National Museum with my teenage nephew, his assessment was brutally honest—"It's just...stuff in cases." For a generation that experiences the world through interactive screens and immersive digital environments, traditional static displays often feel irrelevant, regardless of their historical significance.

Today's youth doesn't just use technology — they process the world through it. Digital interfaces aren't tools; they're cognitive extensions. When we ask young people to engage with culture in purely analog ways, we're essentially asking them to communicate in a foreign language. The solution isn't fighting this reality but embracing it.

Forward-thinking museums are already seeing remarkable results with technological integration. The Cleveland Museum of Art's, 'ArtLens Gallery', uses motion sensing to let visitors create artworks inspired by the collections, increasing attendance among visitors under the age group of 25 by 39%. Singapore's National Museum employs augmented reality to bring historical scenes to life through visitors' phones. These aren't just gimmicks—they're translations of cultural content into the visual and interactive language today's youth inherently understand.

Virtual reality offers perhaps the most transformative potential. The National Museum of Finland allows visitors to step into an 1863 painting of countryside life, creating a memory that anchors far stronger than traditional displays could achieve. Rather than simply viewing history, visitors experience it. This emotional connection is precisely what makes cultural heritage meaningful and memorable.

Social media integration also represents another opportunity. Museums that create visually striking, interactive "Instagram moments", find young visitors becoming enthusiastic ambassadors, sharing experiences across their networks. The Museum of Ice Cream, for example, became a cultural phenomenon through highly shareable themed rooms. While cultural institutions needn't

become pure entertainment venues, they can incorporate elements that encourage digital sharing without compromising educational integrity.

Gamification similarly drives engagement. The Smithsonian's 'Fossil Hunters' mobile game, transforms paleontology learning into an interactive challenge where users excavate virtual fossils using proper techniques. These approaches recognise that competition, achievement, and peer interaction naturally motivate younger audiences.

Fundamentally, this technological revolution represents a shift from museums as repositories of artifacts to facilitators of experiences. We at Atthah Experiences (Museum Vertical of Atthah Info Media Pvt. Ltd.) have made this our ambition to facilitate these unique experiences using technology.

This transformation however faces real challenges: budget constraints, expertise gaps, and concerns about "dumbing down" cultural content. However, museums taking the technological leap consistently report not just increased youth attendance but deeper engagement, better information retention, and renewed cultural connection among young visitors.

The stakes extend beyond attendance figures. Cultural institutions foster national identity and community cohesion. When young people disconnect from these institutions, they lose access to the shared narratives that traditionally bind societies across generations.

By reimagining museums through technological innovation, we're ensuring cultural knowledge transmission in forms that resonate with how future generations process information. This isn't surrendering cultural education to entertainment—it's translating timeless values into contemporary language.



Museum Exhibitions We Loved

In this feature, we present a selection of some of the most compelling museum exhibitions held across India in 2024. Exploring diverse themes – from postcards and ecology to trade, textiles, sculptures, iconography, and photography – these exhibitions stood out for their creativity and insight. While many noteworthy shows took place, we have handpicked these gems to share with you, just in case you missed the chance to experience them firsthand.

A Forest in the City

Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, Mumbai, 26 April - 24 July 2024

Ancient Sculptures: India, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai,
2 December 2023 - 1 October 2024

Daughter of Providence

The Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation, Bengaluru, 29 April - 30 May, 2024

Destination India: Foreign Artists in India 1857-1947

Delhi Art Gallery (DAG), New Delhi, 13 July - 24 August, 2024

Hello & Goodbye: Postcards from the Early 20th Century

Museum of Art & Photography, Bengaluru, 6 April - 18 August 2024

Ningyo: Art and Beauty of Japanese Dolls

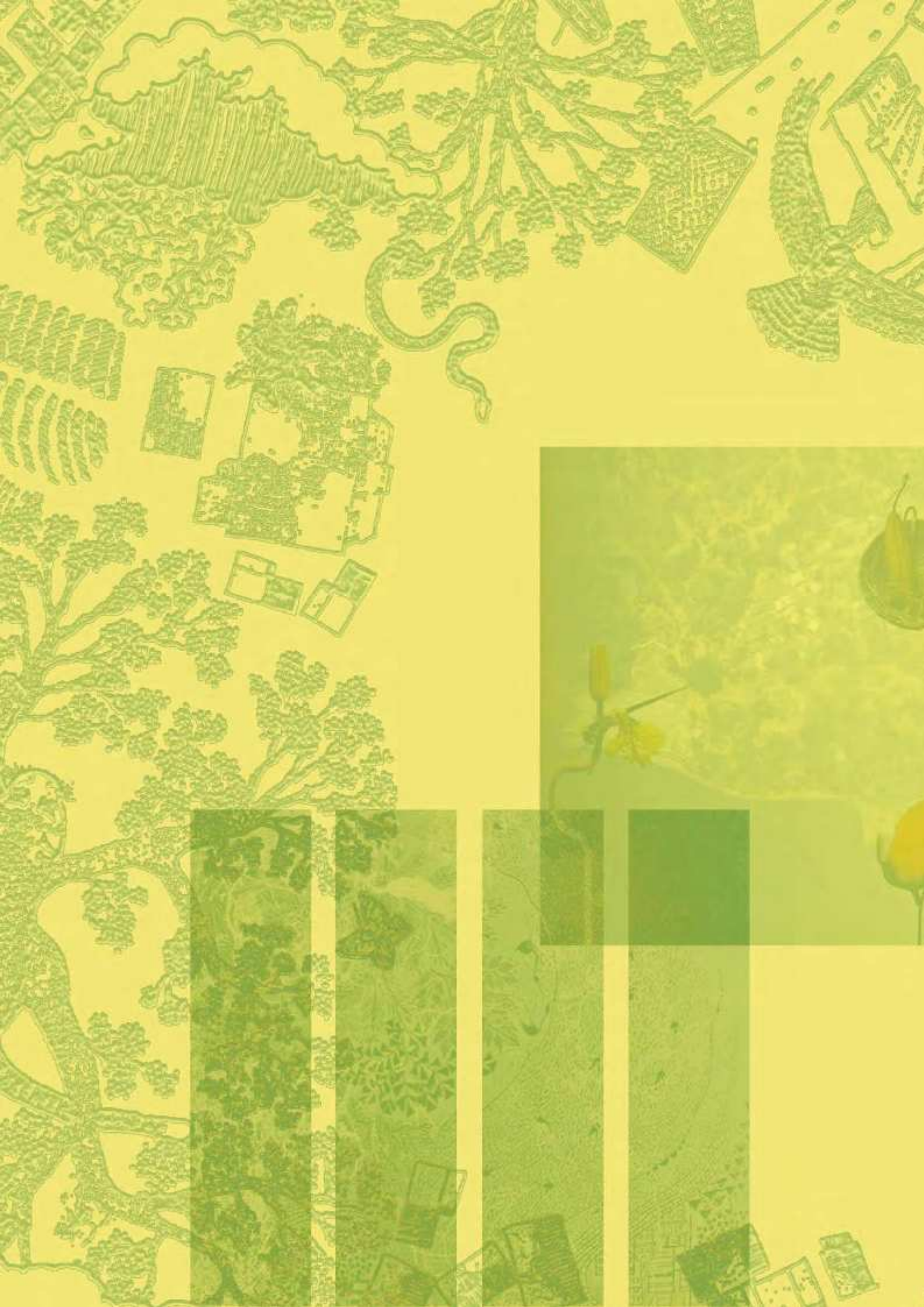
Indian Museum, Kolkata, 7 - 22 December 2024

Nomad: The Art of Tribal Weaves Across Borders from Anatolia to Tibet

National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy, New Delhi,
30 January - 12 February 2024

Raghu Rai: A Thousand Lives

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi, 1 February - 15 May 2024



April 26 - July 2

2024

A FOREST IN THE CITY

Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation

Mumbai

Mumbai, often described as a sprawling concrete jungle, is home to a mosaic of cultures and identities. Yet, within this urban expanse lie pockets of lush greenery – the Sanjay Gandhi National Park and the Aarey Forest – offering vital breathing spaces amidst the city’s hustle and bustle. *A Forest in the City*, held at the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, was an encapsulation of these green enclaves, which were brought to life through an immersive exploration created in collaboration with the forest’s own inhabitants.

This exhibition, based on a three-year research project by the Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture & Environmental Studies and Pani Haq Samiti, examined the interplay of environment, culture, and objects within these forest spaces. It showcased a diverse array of objects – from everyday artefacts of the forest communities to contemporary artworks, maps, and archival documents – prompting visitors to rethink conventional notions of identity and the often exoticised categories of “folk” and “tribal.”

The exhibition was divided into two thematic galleries. The first, ‘Mapping the Forest’, presented various maps that depicted the Aarey Forest as a distinct entity separate from the urban cityscape. Each map offered a unique idea of the forest’s geography, its inhabitants and their everyday lives. The second gallery, ‘The Forest of Claims’, exhibited a collection of objects such as artworks, music, letters, religious totems, and political banners, revealing the diverse and sometimes conflicting ways in which the forest was imagined, claimed, and lived by different groups.



A Forest in the City explored the lived experiences of the Adivasi communities who depend on and protect these forests, while also highlighting the multiple ways in which their access to infrastructure and rights are systematically obstructed.

By drawing in the visitor, the exhibition sought to engage them by challenging dominant narratives of environmental preservation and sustainability, emphasising the key role of indigenous stewardship in the forest ecosystem.





December 2 - October 1

2023 - 24

ANCIENT SCULPTURES: INDIA, EGYPT, ASSYRIA, GREECE, ROME

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Mumbai

The *Ancient Sculptures: India, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome* exhibition at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) was a landmark event in 2024, bringing together sculptural masterpieces from five of history's most influential ancient civilisations. The exhibition was a part of the CSMVS Ancient World Project as part of Getty's Sharing Collections effort aimed at weaving together a global understanding of the ancient historical past. The project was initiated and supported in collaboration with the J. Paul Getty Museum, British Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and various museums in India.

Juxtaposing sculptural masterpieces from India, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, the exhibition challenged the Eurocentric divide between "East" and "West," highlighting how trade, conquest, and cultural exchange influenced artistic traditions. A central theme running through the exhibition was the underlying human quest in representing the divine. A 10th century sandstone sculpture of the *Varaha* or boar in Indian mythic tradition was a standout object in the exhibition, creating a narrative of an important tradition of zoomorphic depictions of deities in antiquarian cultures. Similarly, *Ancient Sculptures* showcased a 3,000-year-old Sekhmet sculpture from Egypt depicting the female deity with a lion-head.

The exhibition resisted a geographic or chronological split and instead curated the sculptures thematically along lines of three different themes, 'Divine Forms', 'Royal Power', and 'The Human Figure'. The themes holistically explored the role of nature in our lives, the divine form, and ideas and paradigms of beauty, that resonated with a contemporary audience fostering greater connection with an ancient past. Augmented reality stations allowed visitors to "restore" fragmented statues digitally.



This exhibition was a triumph of comparative art history, dissolving boundaries between Western Classical and Asian art. By highlighting connections not previously looked at, it attempted to rewrite narratives of isolated and independent civilisational cultures. It instead built on the idea of an interconnected ancient world that was influencing and moulding one another.



The CSMVS's collaboration with the Louvre and British Museum attempted to bring together these ancient civilisations in a dialogue among one another, establishing a contact these cultures were already sharing in antiquity.





April 29 - May 30

2024

DAUGHTER OF PROVIDENCE

The Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation

Bengaluru

In 2024, the Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation unveiled Daughter of Providence, an exhibition that intertwined the artistic legacy of Raja Ravi Varma with the dynamic life of his granddaughter, Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai, chronicling the times of Travancore's last reigning monarch from the 20th century. Hosted in Bengaluru from April 29 to May 30, 2024, the exhibition held particular significance as it commemorated the 176th birth anniversary of the esteemed artist, Raja Ravi Varma, and offered a rare glimpse into the royal archives of the Travancore Collection.

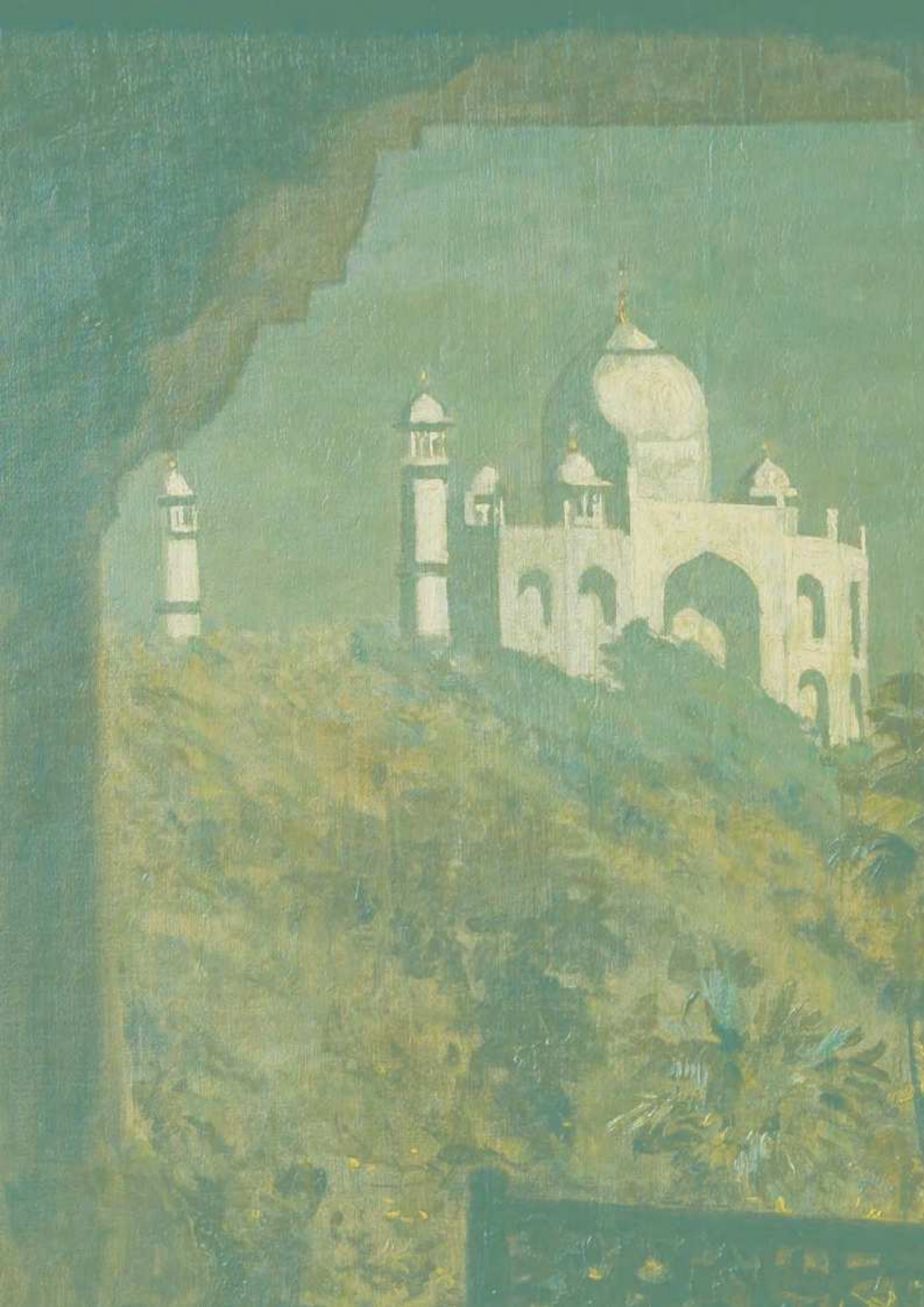
At the heart of the Daughter of Providence exhibition was a previously unexhibited oil painting by Raja Ravi Varma, a treasured piece from the Travancore Collection. The oil painting, created as a gift for his granddaughter, portrayed Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai as a three-year-old child. The exhibition was meticulously curated by the Foundation with in-depth historical research contributed by Dr. Manu S. Pillai, a distinguished historian of late medieval India. Complementing the central exhibit, was a series of photographs outlining Sethu Lakshmi Bai's life from her early years to her reign and her later years as a civilian of independent India. Daughter of Providence highlighted the Maharani's reforms in healthcare, education and social integration in the transformative years of a nascent nation which earned her admiration from contemporaries like Mahatma Gandhi and Mountbatten alike. A notable addition in the exhibition was an oil painting by Sethu Lakshmi Bai's granddaughter, Rukmini Varma, who also chairs the Raja Ravi Varma Heritage Foundation.



Through this thoughtfully curated exhibition, visitors were offered a unique and enriching opportunity to witness the compelling confluence of art, history, and enduring legacy.



Daughter of Providence was beyond a mere display of Raja Ravi Varma's artistic brilliance. It stood as a profound tribute to the life of Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai, whose actions and policies significantly shaped the course of Indian history during a period of immense change.



July 13 – August 24

2024

DESTINATION INDIA: FOREIGN ARTISTS IN INDIA 1857-1947

DAG (Delhi Art Gallery)

New Delhi

Destination India, Foreign Artists in India 1857-1947 held in Delhi Art Gallery (DAG), brought together artworks of around 40 Western artists who had come to India and documented life in the colony from 1857 to 1947. Instead of focusing on the Company paintings from the preceding centuries, the exhibition offered a fresh outlook on European romanticism of the Indian colony in its documentation of the social life and people of India, the monuments and architecture in a more intimate engagement. In the aftermath of the mutiny in 1857 and the British Crown taking over the reins of the Indian colony, Western artists were freer to visit India and document the lesser known towns of Udaipur, Lucknow, Delhi and Kanpur, not just in its architectural rigidity but in its personal depiction of people and everyday life.

Curated by Gilles Tillotson, the exhibition was thematically and chronologically organised, offering visitors a critical interpretation of the colonial gaze and depiction. *Destination India*, instead of shying away from complexities, embraced the nuances of it. Paintings of artists like William Simpson and Edwin Lord Weeks captured Indian subjects with technical finesse, but their compositions often reinforced asymmetrical relationships between the observer and the observed. Indian people, when included, were frequently rendered as passive figures, represented as objects of curiosity rather than agents of culture. Monuments and cityscapes were aestheticised, frozen in time, as if untouched by the political violence and social upheaval occurring around them. At the same time, as if in contrast, the exhibition also featured the works of Japanese artists like Yoshida Hiroshi's woodblock prints, presenting a more respectful visual engagement, borne by cultural affinity rather than an imperial documentation. William Carpenter's paintings engaged with the bustling streets of Indian towns and bazaars, depicting an honest engagement with life of the populace in the 19th and 20th centuries.

These artists, hailing from Britain, France, Germany, America and Japan, were drawn to an understanding of the colony through an ethnographic documentation. Their works served as historical documents, reflecting the Victorian sensibility and the fascination with the 'Orient' prevalent during that period. *Destination India* offered a way of exploring colonial encounters and ways of seeing in a period of social and political transformation.





While on the surface the exhibition celebrated the aesthetic allure of India as seen through the eyes of foreign artists, it also offered a compelling opportunity for visitors to revisit and unpack the layered implications of how South Asia was framed, both literally and metaphorically, during the colonial era.





Public Buildings, Bombay.

*26th I have been sight-
seeing public buildings -
in Bombay. From*

April 6 - August 18

2024

HELLO & GOODBYE: POSTCARDS FROM THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Museum of Art & Photography

Bengaluru

Hello & Goodbye: Postcards from the Early 20th Century, presented by Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), Bengaluru showcased a painstakingly curated set of 80 cards from its extensive collection of around 1300, primarily donated by South Asian art collectors Kenneth X and Joyce Robbins. Curated by Meghana Kuppa and Khushi Bansal, the exhibition offered a unique lens to view the early 20th century Indian subcontinent through the medium of postcards.

The exhibition highlighted how postcards emerged as a distinctive mode of communication – not only through written messages but also through their rich visual imagery. These postcards served as informal yet powerful carriers of ideas, opinions, and conversations across borders and communities. *Hello & Goodbye* provided a fresh perspective on museum curation by focusing on ‘tiny objects’ from MAP’s collection, which also included textile labels, stamps, and matchboxes from across the subcontinent.

The postcards on display revealed a complex visual language centered around monumental buildings, mythical deities and the life of people. Many of these postcards were produced by Western printing presses and adopted by the Indian Postal Service, reflecting a colonial viewpoint and imperial ambitions projected onto the subcontinent. Created primarily by European officers stationed in India, these images often reduced India’s diverse cultures into colonial souvenirs- capturing landscapes, monuments, and ethnographic documentation through a colonial gaze.

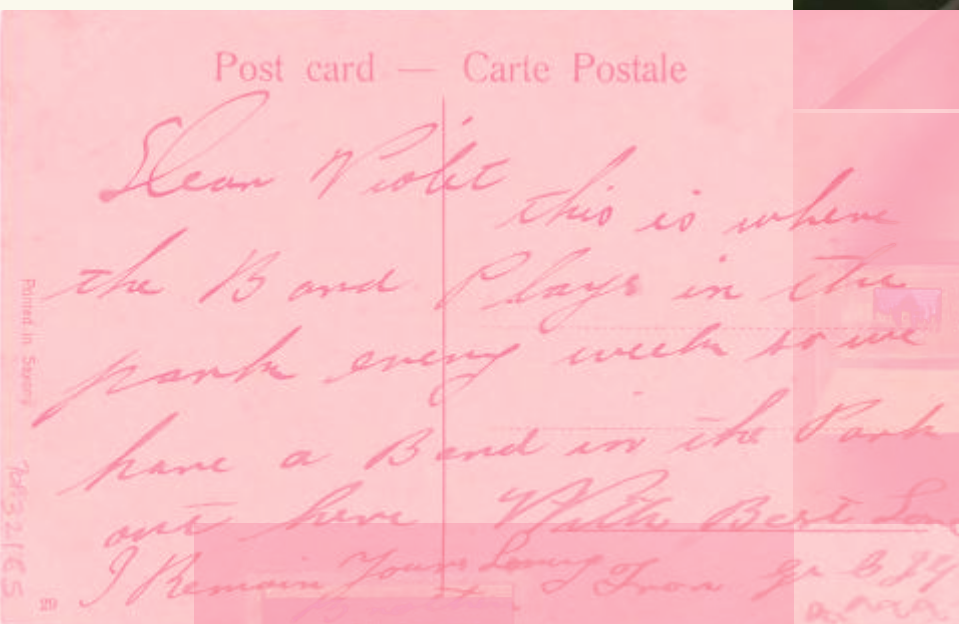
Alongside these, the exhibition also showcased postcards printed by emerging Indian presses, which offered a counter-narrative to Western depictions. These Indian-produced postcards reflected a unique visual language shaped by local perceptions, outlooks, and a rising tide of nationalist sentiment.



Visitors to Hello & Goodbye experienced a slice of early 20th-century history and perception through these versatile postcards.



The exhibition encouraged interaction by allowing visitors not only to write and send postcards but also to digitally create their own, inspired by the collection.



6
 (1991-1992)
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 1991-1992

December 7 - December 22

2024

NINGYO: ART AND BEAUTY OF JAPANESE DOLLS

Indian Museum

Kolkata

A delicate fusion of art, ritual, and craftsmanship, *Ningyo* at Kolkata's Indian Museum, co-curated with the Japan Foundation, was a poetic exploration of Japan's doll traditions. The travelling exhibition has earlier been hosted by several museums since 2020 across the world. In 2024, the exhibition found its place among an Indian audience, in Kolkata's Indian Museum and Chennai's Government Museum. *Ningyo*, which translates into "human-shape", has been an important doll-making tradition of Japanese artistry and culture, reflected in its myriad styles. Japan's deep love for dolls and doll-making has been reflected in this exhibition, transforming these often-overlooked objects into vessels carrying history and emotion.

The exhibition presented 67 carefully selected dolls that narrated Japan's rich history and cultural heritage, portraying Ningyo as far more than toys, but as talismans, theatrical props, and even divine representations. The display was organised into four thematic sections: dolls used to pray for children's growth, Ningyo as fine art, Ningyo as folk art, and the spread of Ningyo culture. Originating from protective rituals, dolls like Amagatsu and Hoko were crafted to shield infants from evil spirits. Dolls of exquisite craftsmanship, favoured by royalty, were often exchanged as gifts or used in celebrations, showcasing intricate techniques, gold embellishments, and luxurious fabrics. Alongside these, folk dolls made from simpler materials such as clay, wood, and paper highlighted Japan's vibrant popular culture, symbolising everyday life and imagination. The exhibition was unique in presenting a comprehensive introduction to the aesthetics of Japanese dolls – from Katashiro and Amagatsu, which are considered to be the archetypes of dolls in Japan, to local dolls that reflect the climate and anecdotes from across the country, dress-up dolls that are beloved in Japan today as doll toys, and scale figures that are highly regarded around the world.

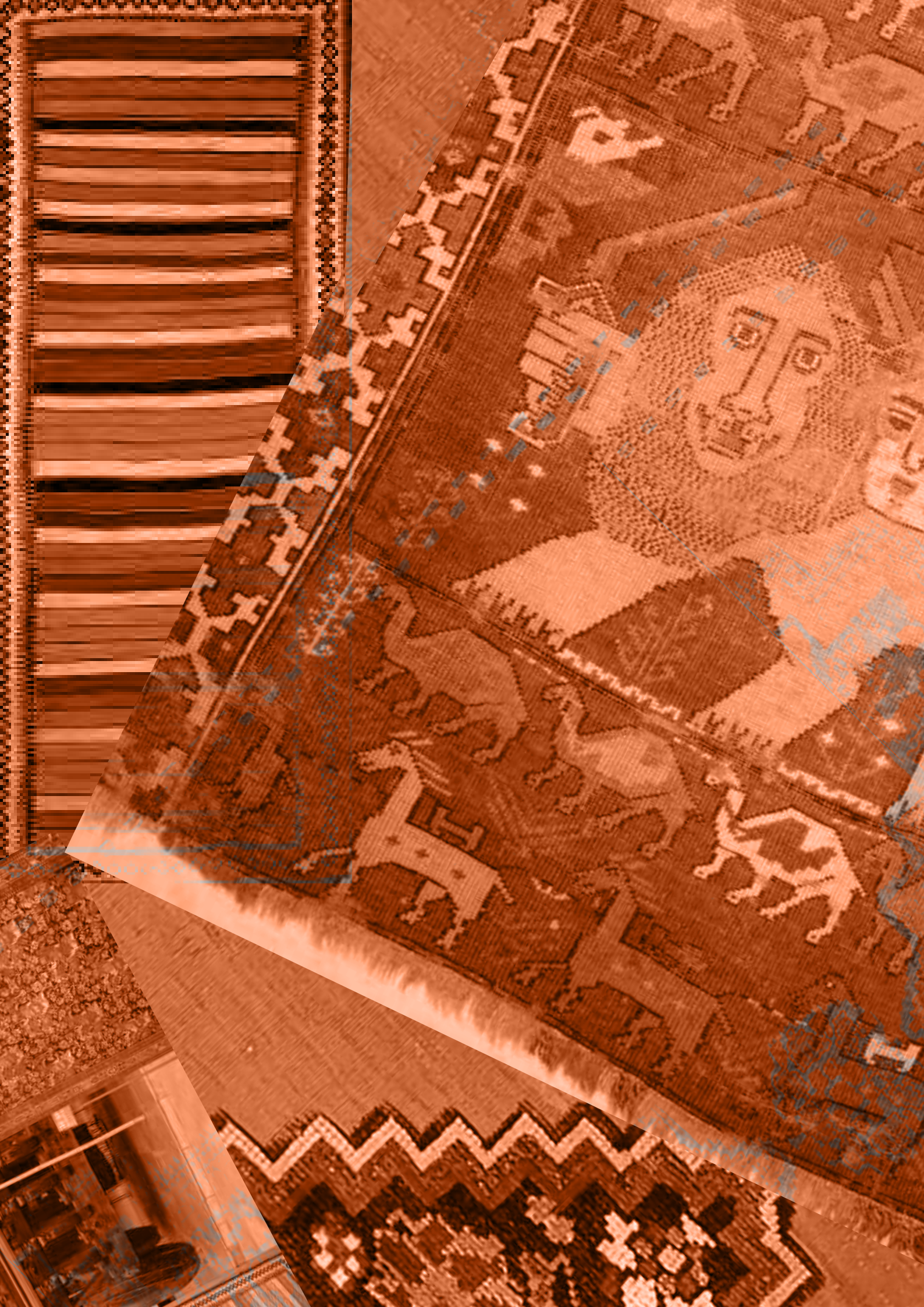


The exhibition space was designed to evoke the atmosphere of a traditional *ryokan* inn, complemented by a live *Ningyo* theater performance that enriched visitor engagement.



Its intimate scale and lyrical storytelling made the exhibition popular and highly memorable, proving that small objects can carry immense emotional weight.





January 30 - February 12

2024

NOMAD: THE ART OF TRIBAL WEAVES ACROSS BORDERS FROM ANATOLIA TO TIBET

National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy

New Delhi

Along the Central Asian steppes, runs a landscape of wide and vast pastures, home to multitudes of Central Asian people who have been living, moving and sustaining on the land for centuries. For a long time, popular imagination has primarily sustained the belief of Central Asia as one of a 'rugged', 'tough' and 'harsh' topography with a sporadic culture. Amita Goel, the chief curator of the *Nomad* exhibition at the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy, sought to challenge this very ideal and belief through the medium of textiles and rugs from the Central Asian steppes. The exhibition brought together a curated set of fifty flat woven rugs or *gelims*, saddle bags and horse blankets of the Central Asian region dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries, collected by David Housego and Mandeep Nagi over the years in their travels through the region. Presented in collaboration with Shades of India, the exhibition benefited from the brand's longstanding commitment to reviving and celebrating traditional textile arts.

The exhibition highlighted the artistic weaving traditions of diverse nomadic tribes including Kurds, Shahsavan, Qashgai, Bakhtiars, Khamseh, Afshar, Baluch, and Turkmans, spanning regions from Iran, Turkey, the Caucasus, Turkestan to Uzbekistan along the Silk Route. These hand-spun wool textiles, naturally dyed in vibrant reds, blues, greens, blacks, and yellows, featured intricate geometric and figurative motifs that reflect each tribe's environment, beliefs, and nomadic lifestyle. For the tribes and peoples of Central Asia, rugs or *gelims* were woven for their encampments and interiors, often also serving as dowries. Women in their pastoral and nomadic community weaved abstract designs in these rugs, relying more on improvisations and skill. The rugs on display evolved in nomadic encampments, evoking intricate geometric patterns, figures of trees, flowers and motifs that took on localised meanings and connotations, showcased in its intricate craftsmanship in the exhibition.



With its stunning curation and visual impact, the *Nomad* exhibition was a celebration of the enduring spirit of Central Asian cultures in their resilience, and ability to preserve and adapt their traditions through the art of weaving.





The exhibition served as a reminder of the interconnectedness of human creativity and the universal language of art transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.



Feb 1 - May 15

2024

RAGHU RAI: A THOUSAND LIVES

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA)

New Delhi

Curated by Roobina Karode and Devika Daulet-Singh, *Raghu Rai: A Thousand Lives* at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) marked a significant moment for Indian photography and museum culture in 2024. This expansive retrospective brought together nearly 300 black-and-white photographs from critically-acclaimed photographer Raghu Rai's pre-digital, analogue era (1965-2005), many of which were displayed publicly for the first time. The exhibition wove a visual epic of India's post-colonial journey, revealing how Rai's lens captured the soul of a land and its people, oscillating between trauma and hope.

A Thousand Lives positioned Raghu Rai as a visual historian who masterfully captured the breadth of Indian life: from the bustling streets and quiet rituals of everyday people, to defining moments of political upheaval, spirituality, and cultural transformation. Rai's long-spanning career in *The Statesman* gave him access to journaling his contemporary political figures and spiritual leaders – on view here were Rai's chronicling of Indira Gandhi, often captured in her turbulent periods of power and vulnerability, of Jayprakash Narayan, Indira Gandhi's chief political adversary, in his life and death, and of the Dalai Lama in Ladakh. A recurring theme running through the exhibition – and a key focus of its curation – was the photographer's ability to find intimacy within chaos and poetry in the mundane everyday life of ordinary people. The design of the exhibition, with dark-walled galleries, mimicked a photographic darkroom, where spotlit prints were arranged chronologically. A brilliant touch was the inclusion of Rai's handwritten notes and rejected frames, providing visitors rare insights into his creative process, while also setting a new standard for biographical curation.



In an era dominated by fleeting digital images, Rai's film-based works reminded viewers of the power of photography as witness and resistance.





Rooted in Raghu Rai's background of photojournalism, *A Thousand Lives* showcased a documentation of a newly formed India and its people in its hope and struggles.

Museum Influencers 2025

Museum Influencers 2025 honours individuals in the sector who are rewriting the grammar of museums, not as neutral spaces of preservation, but as contested terrains of memory, identity, and power. In a country where heritage often slips between the cracks of state agendas and public apathy, these individuals hold the line—and redraw it.

This year's list features cultural workers who are unsettling the notion of who belongs in a museum and what stories deserve space. From Aruna Madnani's revival of displaced Sindhi memory, to Rige Shiba's tactile invitations to the visually impaired, from Sumona Chakravarty's street-level interventions to Deepanjana Danda Klein's transnational bridges—their practices are as diverse as they are disruptive.

Here, influence is measured not in metrics, but in the quiet, persistent transformation of how we hold our histories.

RIGE SHIBA



ARUNA
MADNANI



DEEPANJANA
KLEIN



DR ACHAL
PANDYA



SHILPA
VIJAYAKRISHNAN



SUMONA
CHAKRAVARTY

VICTOR HUGO
GOMES



DR PANKAJ
SHARMA





Aruna Madnani

Founder and Managing Trustee,
Sindhi Culture Foundation

Shilpa Vijayakrishnan leads the Education & Outreach Department at the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP), Bengaluru, a role she has held since the department's inception in 2016. With a postgraduate degree in Arts & Aesthetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, she brings a deep academic and curatorial grounding to her work. Shilpa has curated over five exhibitions specially designed for younger audiences and developed a wide range of educational programmes for schools, children, and adults. Formerly the editor of the Tasveer Journal, her writing has appeared in several publications. She has also curated digital narratives for MAP on Google Arts & Culture on subjects such as Women in Hindi Cinema and the Pichwai painting tradition.

In 2024, Shilpa continued to expand MAP's educational outreach through innovative programming rooted in accessibility and inclusivity. She spearheaded the popular 'Tuesday Titbits' series, offering behind-the-scenes insights into museum operations to demystify the institution for a broader audience. During MAP's flagship Art is Life festival, she curated and facilitated workshops that bridged traditional and contemporary practices, making art engagement dynamic and hands-on.



Dr Achal Pandya

Professor & HoD (Conservation),
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)

Dr Achal Pandya is a distinguished conservator and academic, currently serving as Professor and Head of the Conservation Division at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi. He has advanced degrees in chemistry and conservation—including a PhD from the National Museum Institute. His team specialises in conservation of diverse artefacts across India and internationally, offering expertise in museum services, research, and training. Dr. Pandya was instrumental in launching the Re-org Museum Storage campaign in India in collaboration with ICCROM and is an expert member of UNESCO's Disaster Risk Management for Library, Archives and Museums programme under the Memory of the World initiative.

In 2024, Dr. Pandya spearheaded key heritage initiatives, including a major workshop on Museum Disaster Risk Reduction with the National Institute of Disaster Management. He oversaw the restoration of 150 rare books from the Rashtrapati Bhavan library, including notable works like A Catalogue of the Original Works of William Hogarth and contributed to improving storage systems for over 30,000 artefacts at the Craft Museum in Delhi.



Deepanjana Klein

Director of Acquisitions and Development,
Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA)

A distinguished art historian with a Ph.D. in Indian Art History from De Montfort University, England, Deepanjana has more than a decade of experience as the International Head of Modern and Contemporary and Classical Indian and Southeast Asian Art at Christie's. Her passion for public institutions and collection building has led to collaborations between Christie's and major institutions, including The MET. She has hosted numerous successful collaborative events and strengthened institutional relationships. She is the recipient of several awards, including a grant from the Mellon Foundation (ArtStor) for her photographic documentation of the Ellora cave temples. Klein's leadership at KNMA has been instrumental in expanding the museum's collection and fostering international collaborations. Notably, she was part of the team that contributed to the KNMA's participation in the 2023 Venice Biennale's 'Mnemonic' project, highlighting the museum's role in postcolonial cultural narratives.

In 2024, under her strategic leadership, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) made several landmark additions to its collection. One of the most notable acquisitions was an 18th-century miniature painting by British artist Thomas Daniell, procured at AstaGuru's 'Historic Masterpieces' auction. Believed to be the earliest known visual representation of cricket in India, the 1792 artwork offers a rare and romanticised glimpse into colonial Madras (now Chennai), capturing the sport at a time when it was first taking root in the subcontinent.



Dr Pankaj Sharma

Director of Archaeology & Museums,
Government of Gujarat

Dr Pankaj Sharma is a distinguished museum professional and the Director of Archaeology & Museums, Government of Gujarat. With a background in heritage management and prior experience as Senior Curator at the MSMS II Museum, Jaipur, he has been instrumental in expanding museum access and innovation. During the pandemic, he conceptualised Museums at Your Doorstep, a pioneering virtual tour series that reached over a million participants globally, making Gujarat's museums digitally accessible.

In 2024, he led the development of the Vadnagar Archaeological Experiential Museum which was inaugurated in January 2025. Designed as an immersive journey through 2,500 years of continuous habitation in Vadnagar, the museum is the first of its kind in India, and comprises several thematic galleries. Integrated with an experiential walkway that connects the museum to a live excavation site, the space has been conceptualised in a manner that helps visitors to fully grasp the rich history and significance of the ancient town of Vadnagar.



Rige Shiba

Museum Education Officer,
National Museum, New Delhi

Rige Shiba has been at the forefront of redefining museum education in India. A graduate in History from Delhi University and a postgraduate in Museology from the National Museum Institute, she has pioneered inclusive and interactive learning experiences within the museum space. Shiba is best known for conceptualising Anubhav: A Tactile Experience, India's first permanent tactile gallery designed for persons with disabilities, created in collaboration with UNESCO. Her educational programmes—including Playtime at the National Museum, Touch and Learn sessions, and Meet a Museum Doctor—are celebrated for their accessibility and imaginative formats. Beyond her institutional work, she is also deeply engaged with the Youth Library Movement in Arunachal Pradesh, fostering reading and storytelling in tribal languages across remote regions.

In 2024, Shiba continued to lead with innovation and inclusivity at the heart of her practice. She expanded the National Museum's digital outreach to make cultural content accessible to wider audiences, especially children and young visitors, through engaging, play-based learning models. Educational workshops were enriched with interactive formats that encouraged curiosity and hands-on participation. Her initiatives have helped transform the National Museum into a more dynamic, welcoming, and educational space.



Shilpa Vijayakrishnan

Head of Outreach & Education,
Museum of Art & Photography (MAP)

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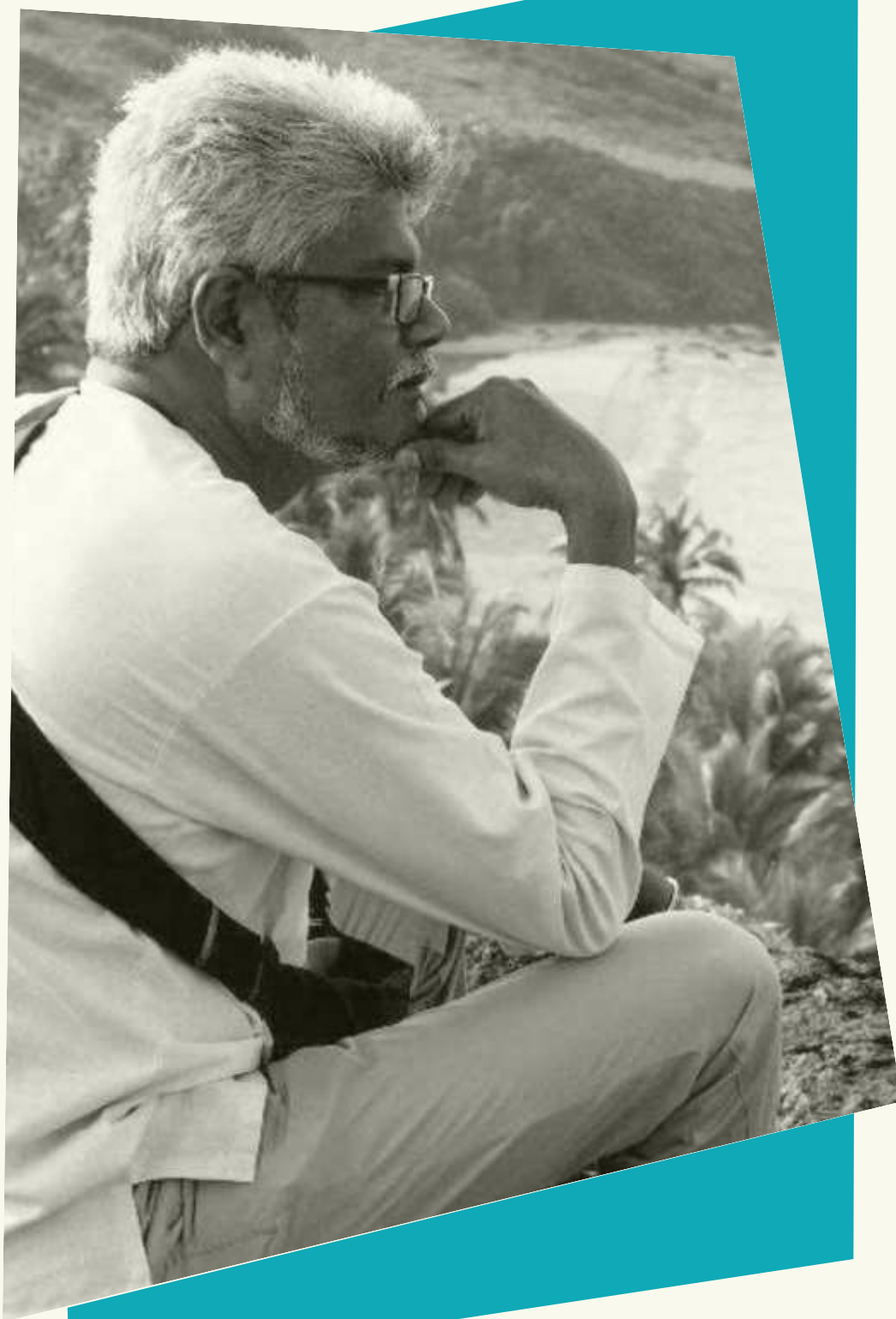


Sumona Chakravarty

Deputy Director,
Museums, DAG

Sumona Chakravarty's practice reimagines how museums and public spaces can foster inclusive cultural dialogue. A graduate of Srishti School of Art, with a master's from Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Chakravarty has been a fellow with ArtThink South Asia and the EU's Global Cultural Leaders Programme. As Deputy Director of the museum vertical at DAG Kolkata, she leads initiatives to democratise art and expand public engagement. She is also the founder of Hamdasti, a Kolkata-based artist collective known for Chitpur Local, a long-term community art project in the historic Battola area. Her participatory approach brings together diverse communities to collaboratively explore local histories and intervene in public spaces.

In 2024, Chakravarty spearheaded Play Fair, a travelling interactive art festival that activated museum spaces like the Indian Museum and Victoria Memorial Hall with human-scale games and participatory installations. She also curated the fourth edition of The City as a Museum, which focused on the Tebhaga movement through immersive public art and archival materials. Her work continues to bridge art, education, and public history—bringing heritage into everyday experience and fostering collective imagination.



Victor Hugo Gomes

Founder,
Goa Chitra Museum

Victor Hugo Gomes is a curator, artist, and restorer who has dedicated over three decades to preserving Goa's rich and diverse cultural heritage. Through a tireless, self-funded effort, he has collected and restored more than 40,000 artefacts—ranging from traditional agrarian tools to everyday objects—creating a unique, immersive museum experience that tells the story of Goa's social and material history.

In 2024, under Gomes' leadership, the Goa Chitra Museum, along with its branches Goa Chakra and Goa Cruti, further cemented its place as a dynamic cultural hub. It hosted a wide array of events and community programmes, including the Purmetachem Fest celebrating local culinary traditions, the lively Bondo Live music concert, rotating art exhibitions, and the much-loved Annual Christmas Traditions Revival. Alongside these, the museum organised workshops and educational activities for audiences of all ages, fostering hands-on engagement with Goan traditions.

Museum Trails

Museums are often experienced through linear narratives. But what happens when we step away from the chronology and follow a theme instead? Museum Trails invites readers to reimagine their relationship with museum collections through a fresh lens, one that cuts across galleries, periods, and genres.

Each trail in this series presents a thematic journey through a single museum, revisiting familiar favourites and lesser-known objects not for their historical placement alone, but for how they speak to a shared idea. By gathering objects from different corners of a museum under one theme, these trails reveal a more intimate, layered story that reflects the richness of lived experience as much as it does the sweep of history.

Food, Ware and Utensils: Culinary Cultures Through Time

Jibin George

(In)Visible Women and Work

Monjima Kar

Monuments of Loss and Memory

Anjana Premchand

The Natural World of The Mughals

Moby Sara Zachariah

Woven Lives

Aditi Chaudhary

Food, Ware and Utensils:

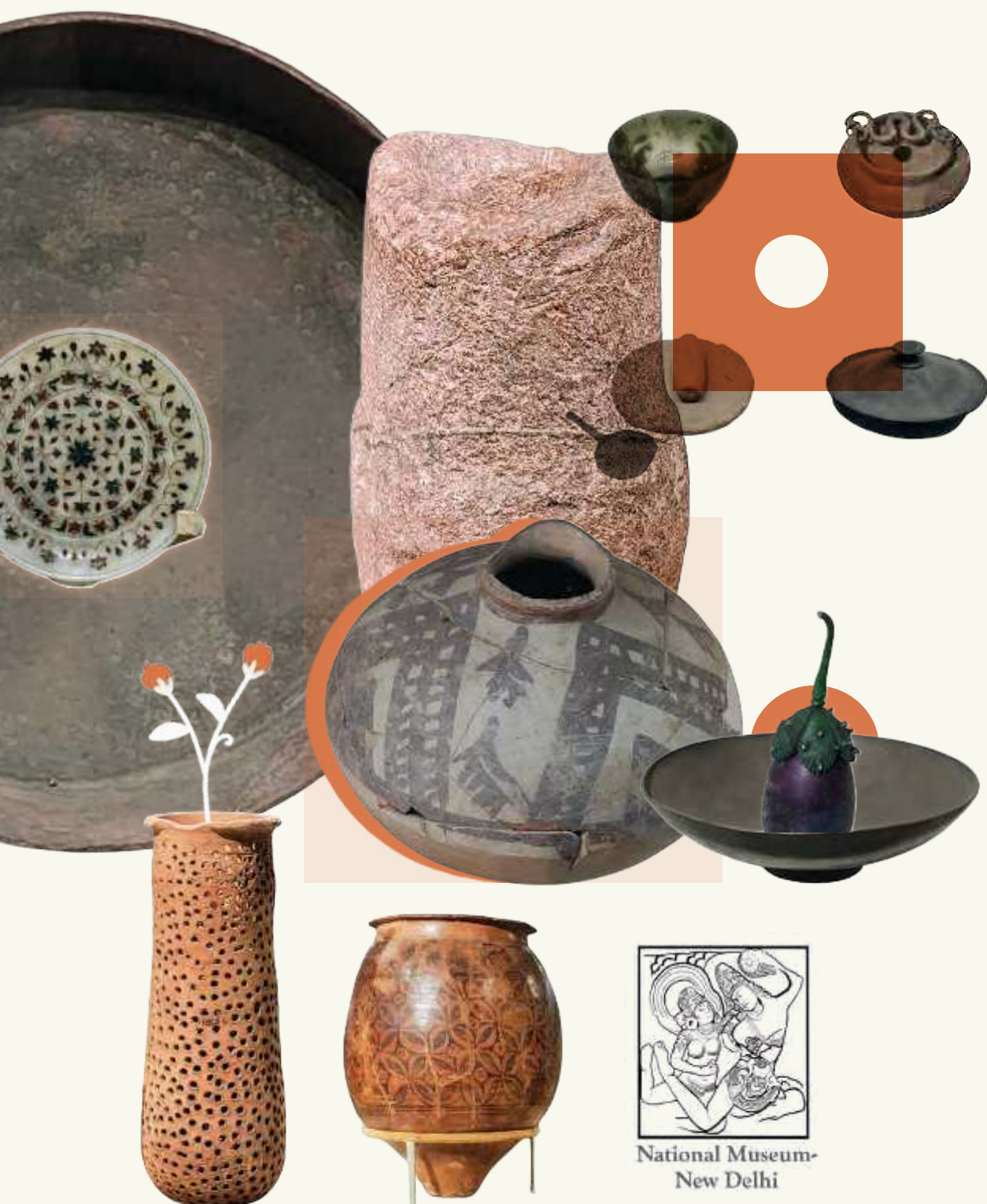
Culinary Cultures Through Time

The preparation, storage, and sharing of food is among the most enduring human activities—at once *intimate and communal, utilitarian and symbolic*. Across time and cultures, the tools and vessels associated with food have carried meanings far beyond their immediate function. They reflect how communities relate to *the land, to ritual, to social hierarchies, and to each other*. Through these objects, we gain insight into the rhythms of domestic life, the technologies of production, the pleasures of the table, and the ceremonial or spiritual significance food and its paraphernalia can hold. This trail through the diverse collection of the **National Museum** captures the essence of how food, its preparation and storage have shaped societies.

Jibin George

Co-founder, Unfold Delhi





Harappan Gallery

Image Credits:
National Museum, New Delhi

A treasure trove for artefacts from the Harappan Civilisation, the museum has a huge collection of over 3500 objects, making it the world's largest collection on the civilisation in any museum. Many terracotta figurines and painted pottery were discovered from various sites, including storage jars, perforated jars, unique dish-on-stand jars, cups, and so on. The Harappan Civilisation was known for its sophisticated pottery, which was mainly crafted on a potter's wheel and kiln-fired, giving one an insight into its culture, artistic skills and technology.

Storage Jar, c.2700-2000 B.C.E., Mature Harappan Period, Chanhudaro



The tall storage jar is from the Mature Harappan Period (2700-2000 BCE), excavated from Chanhudaro, Sindh, Pakistan. The jar without a slip is made up of red clay adorned with plant motifs, presumably peepal leaf (Indian Sacred Fig) in black (red on black pottery), highlighting sturdiness, well-baked nature, and complex kiln technology and firing processes of the Harappan pottery.

Perforated Jar, c. 2700-2000 B.C.E., Mature Harappan Period



There are also unadorned pottery pieces, such as the perforated pottery – tall and cylindrical, featuring large holes at the bottom and small perforations on the walls, possibly used as strainers for liquids or suggesting its ceremonial or ritualistic roles beyond utility, emphasising the cultural practices of the time.

Copper Objects, Pottery and other Domestic objects, c. 2700-2000 B.C.E., Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Dholavira



Harappan pottery can be further classified into kitchenware, tableware, storage, decorative, and ritualistic wares. A large number of jar or dish covers have been found from different sites of the Harappan Civilisation. Featured here is an excellent example of a copper lid with a knob in the middle to hold it.



Various kitchen wares such as cooking pots, serving bowls, plates, and drinking vessels were often made up of copper and bronze. On display is a copper dish, believed to be used for either cooking or serving food, dating back to the Mature Harappan Period (2700-2000 BCE).



Copper wares were symbols of wealth and status. As per the study of leftovers in these dishes, research suggests that the Harappan Civilisation had dynamic cooking practices which included preparation of beans, pulses, tubers, roots and so on, presence of cereals such as wheat, barley, rye, millets, etc and their diet included animal-based foods including goat, chicken, fish, shellfish, deer, along with dairy products.



Harappan people were highly skilled in working with metals such as copper and bronze, which were often combined with other materials such as stone and wood. One of the essential tools used was the grinding stones and mullers, for grinding grains and other food materials, excavated from Harappa, Lothal, etc., indicating their use in daily lives. Among the many excavated grinding tools is the stone mortar (okhali) from Rakhigarhi, Haryana, which indicates five lines on

Tribal Lifestyle of North -East India Gallery

Image Credits:
National Museum, New Delhi

The gallery is dedicated to the art and culture of the tribal societies of the North-eastern part of India. The diverse and fascinating gallery exhibits attires, ornaments, headgear, puppets, utilitarian objects, basketry, and more highlighting the rich traditional, religious, and social heritage of the tribal communities from the North Eastern Indian states.

Rice Beer Mug, c. 19th-20th century, Phom, Nagaland, Bamboo; Carved



In Nagaland, the rice beer known as Zutho or Thutshe, a beverage served during festivals, family gatherings, and celebrations, is traditionally served in bamboo mugs. This rice beer mug carved out of bamboo, is used by the Phom Naga tribe of Nagaland, and belongs to the 19th-20th century, showcasing the tribe's rich culture and craftsmanship.

Betel Container, c. 19th-20th century, Nagaland, Bamboo, Cane



Betel nuts in Nagaland are known as tamul and are often served after a meal mainly as a digestive aid. A betel container used for keeping the betel leaf and assortments from Nagaland made out of bamboo and cane from the 19th-20th century.

Fruit Pot, c. 19th-20th Century, Arunachal Pradesh, Wood



One of the utilitarian objects providing insights into daily life is the colorful painted fruit pot from Arunachal Pradesh, dating to the 19th-20th century, made out of wood.

Kushan Gallery

Image Credits:
National Museum, New Delhi

The Kushan gallery displays art objects from the Kushan era (1st – 3rd century CE), including wonderfully executed sculptures of Lord Buddha, votive tablets and panels, and a small section of clay including painted grey ware and red polished ware, and metal objects. This era marked a transition from previous styles and saw new styles in ceramic crafts.



Of the many jugs, bowls, plates etc., as part of tableware, displayed is a metal dish with a unique handle excavated from Taxila, now in Pakistan, dates back to the 1st century BCE to the 1st century.



Decorative Arts Gallery

Image Credits:
National Museum, New Delhi

The gallery offers a glimpse into royal patronage and refined craftsmanship in India from the Medieval period, showcasing daily and ceremonial objects made from ivory, jade, ceramic, wood, metal, and more.

Perfume Container (Eggplant Shape), Rajasthan, 20th century, Ivory: Carved And Painted



One of the uniquely crafted objects is the carved and painted perfume container in purple Brinjal/eggplant shape from Rajasthan, dating back to the 20th century, made of ivory.

Bowl Inscribed With The Name Of Akbar-II, Northern India, Late 18th Century, Jade; Carved



The jade section of the decorative arts gallery showcases the utilitarian items; the most unique object displayed here is the cup, which has the name of Mughal Emperor Akbar Shah II (1760-1837) inscribed. He was the second son of Shah Alam II and the father of Bahadur Shah Zafar II. This object dates to the late 18th-century Mughal period from Northern India.

Plate With Floral Rim, Northern India, Mughal, Early 18th century, Jade; Carved



Another carved jade artefact, from northern India belonging to the early 18th century Mughal period is the vibrant plate with floral designs on its rim.

Surahi (Flask), Jaipur, Rajasthan, Late 19th century, Blue and White Ware



Another royal object, a surahi (flask) from Jaipur, Rajasthan, belonging to the late 19th century, is made of blue and white ceramic ware.

(In)Visible Women and Work

For centuries, women's labour has been rendered invisible and relegated to the periphery, often masked in notions and roles of duty and honour. The labour that women put in everyday has historically not been taken into considerations of economic work, but considered within categories of love and care. This trail at the *Salar Jung Museum* explores the spaces that women occupy in the realm of work that gets deliberately erased and invisibilised.



Monjima Kar

Researcher, Culture



Mother and child, 20th century

Image Credits:
Salar Jung Museum and Library



The European sculpture of a mother holding her child close to her breast captures a timeless act of nurturing, one that is deeply intimate yet socially universal. It speaks to the labour of motherhood as a constant, consuming, and often invisible form of care that has sustained families and communities for generations. While acts like breastfeeding and child-rearing are vital, they remain excluded from traditional definitions of “work”. The sculpture anchors the beginning of the trail, inviting visitors to reimagine care not as a passive act of love but as sustained, skilled labour that goes unpaid, unrecognised, and is profoundly political.

Dressing up time, 18th century Deccan School

Image Credits:
Google Arts and Culture



At first glance, the painting exudes elegance. A noblewoman is seen seated, adorned in fine textiles and jewels, surrounded by attendants helping her dress and prepare for the day. The scene belongs to the private zenana quarters, a space often romanticised by the male gaze as leisurely. However, this very personal quarter becomes a site of looking at forms of gendered labour and class.

The central figure symbolises power and privilege, but the women surrounding her are not just companions. They are workers who are skilled dressers, hair arrangers, perfume bearers, and caretakers. Their labour, though physical and intimate, is made to disappear into the background of elegance. It reflects how the beauty and refinement of elite femininity were sustained by the daily, repetitive, and often invisible labour of women of lower social status.

Princess and Ladies of the Harem, 19th century, Rajasthani School

Image Credits:
Google Arts and Culture



The painting shows women of the harem, poised in an intimate, serene setting. At first glance, it appears to depict leisure, beauty, and stillness but within the context of this trail, the scene reveals deeper layers of domestic labour and political strategy. The harem, often imagined as a space of seclusion, was in fact a complex world of governance, ritual, and influence. Women within these walls were not idle but were actively shaping alliances, mediating power, raising future rulers, and curating the cultural life of the court. Their actions were forms of labour rooted in performance, diplomacy and tact. This artwork reminds us that domesticity was never separate from power.

Jogini with Pet Tiger, 19th century, Deccan School

Image Credits:
Google Arts and Culture



The arresting image of a Jogini, a female ascetic, seated with a pet tiger, presents a striking counterpoint to conventional representations of women in Indian courtly art. She is self-possessed, enigmatic, and powerful in a direct gaze. The tiger at her side, a symbol of both danger and control, reinforces her authority rather than diminishing it. As the last object in the trail, this painting becomes a moment of quiet rebellion.

While most women in the 19th century were represented as companions, entertainers, or subjects of adornment and devotion, female ascetics existed outside those norms. Yet her labour in the sphere of the spiritual is also a form of work. It required discipline, ritual practice, emotional austerity, and a break from the prescribed roles women were expected to perform. The Jogini with Pet Tiger stands as an emblem of female autonomy, pushing back against systems that reduce women to their roles as caregivers, servers, or consorts.

Portrait of Chandabibi, 20th century

Image Credits:
Google Arts and Culture



Mah Laqa Bai, born as Chandabibi, was an accomplished poet and dancer in the Asaf Jahi court of Nizam Ali Khan, Nizam II and Sikandar Jah, Nizam III. She was the first woman sahib-e-dewan, whose works were published in a collection called Gulzar-e-Mahlaqa. Not only was she a celebrated courtesan, but was frequently consulted and trusted on political matters, appointed as an “Omrah”. Though history often sidelines women like Mah Laqa Bai under labels such as “courtesan,” her life tells a more complex story of carefully navigating a patriarchal court system to carve space for autonomy and expression. Harnessing considerable power and influence, she commissioned a school with 300 girls and built a library. Her life reframes the understanding that cultural labour of singing, writing, and performing has always been work. It requires cultivation, endurance, and strategic navigation of a public sphere dominated by men. That she performed it so publicly and so powerfully makes her a vital figure in reframing our modern understanding of women’s work as overlooked when it does not conform to acceptable norms of femininity or respectability.

Seven Labourers, 20th century J. Swaminathan

Image Credits:
Salar Jung Museum and Library



The painting by Jagdish Swaminathan, a key figure in postcolonial Indian modernism, presents seven female labourers who are faceless, anonymous, yet grounded in their collective strength. They carry brick and mortar while climbing the stairs to a construction site. Women, often deemed inferior to men in their physical strength and capabilities, have for long been engaged in straining manual labour.

In the context of this trail, this painting evokes the unacknowledged work of women, especially in agricultural fields, construction, textile workshops, and domestic spaces routinely dismissed as unskilled or informal. The figures resist individuality since they have never been given that luxury in official narratives. Here, we begin to restore their presence and their power.



Plantation, 1999 Yasala Balaih

Image Credits: Wikioo

The Batik painting on cloth represents three ladies sowing in rice fields, capturing a group of rural women immersed in an agricultural field. Rendered in a vibrant style, the image celebrates community while quietly acknowledging toil. Within this trail, it portrays the essential yet unrecognised work women perform in agricultural economies.

Despite their central role in food production, rural women's labour has long been deemed as informal. Balaih's depiction becomes a visual testimony to labour done without visibility, recognition, or rest. This scene is not idyllic, it is essential – the women seen here are not the background, but the field itself.

The Natural World of The Mughals

India's first 'sunken museum', nestled like a secret chamber beneath the very earth it celebrates. Built in 2024 as part of the *Humayun's Tomb complex*, the museum highlights the life and legacy of the second Mughal king, Humayun, and the 700-year-old glorious heritage of the *Nizamuddin area*. This trail explores the many ways nature is mirrored, measured, and meditated upon in the museum's collections.

This trail through the *Humayun's Tomb Museum* is more than a look at flora and fauna, it offers a window into how nature was deeply embedded in the rhythms of Mughal life – in science, in symbolism, in sustenance, and in splendor.

Moby Sara Zachariah

Founder, Unfold Delhi





The Emperor and the Stars

All Image Credits:
Humayun's Tomb World
Heritage Site Museum |
Photograph by Narendra
Swain, courtesy Aga Khan
Trust for Culture (AKTC)

Humayun was an avid lover of astronomy and astrology. He had invited a family of astrolabe makers who started referring to themselves as 'Humayunis'. There are three such Humayuni instruments on exhibit.



One of a kind with its excellent workmanship, this glided astrolabe (left) – used for making astronomical observations and for navigation, has six plates, and there are 16 named star pointers. It was believed to have been produced in the Middle East in CE 1495.



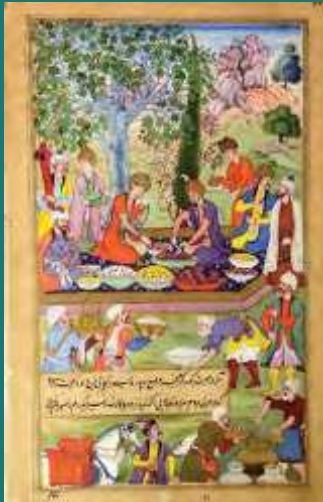
There is another astrolabe (left) with a kursi (throne of God) which appears like a cluster of four tulips, a ring, a shackle, a rete for 35 stars, and 5 plates. The ecliptic ring is divided into 12 zodiac signs and star pointers. There are 31 cities marked in the outer circle and 14 in the inner circle, including Dilli (Delhi). This artefact dates to CE 1625 made by Muammad Muqim Humayuni (astrolabe maker to Humayun) during the reign of Emperor Jahangir.

The museum also displays a variety of other astronomical instruments such as celestial spheres. Humayun believed that the celestial spheres influenced life on earth. These spheres are used to represent the position of the stars and planets and to study their movements.



The copper celestial sphere on display is inscribed with a full set of 48 constellations and 1022 stars, made in the 1840s by Lalah Bulhomal Lahori, who was well-versed in Sanskrit and Persian, and made celestial spheres for the King of Kapurthala. During his journey to Persia, it is believed that Humayun ordered a celestial sphere when he arrived at Tabriz.

Heaven on Earth: The Mughal Gardens



Babur Enjoying A Feast In Herat,
CE 1598, Baburnama, National Museum

Grand beyond any mausoleums built in India by then, Humayun's tomb and its surrounding enclosed gardens were inspired by the descriptions of Jannat (paradise). The grand garden (chaharbagh-four-fold garden) has water channels and water tanks in the four wide

This beautiful painting (late 16th century) from Baburnama shows a feast organized by the Mirzas for Babur in a garden under the shade of a chinar tree. Emperor Babur visited Herat in 1507, where he saw lush gardens, mosques, and mausoleums.

Avifauna and Fauna of Hindustan



Peacock And Peahen, Baburnama,
CE 1598, National Museum

In his memoirs, Babur reveals himself to be a scholar, poet and a keen naturalist which also has amazing illustrations of birds and animals of Hindustan including rhinoceros, elephants, several kinds of monkeys, many kinds of parrots including adjutant stork, alligators and crocodiles, great bat etc. The stunning painting from Baburnama (Book of Babur, CE 1598) shows a peacock and peahen along with squirrels, Demoiselle Cranes, and fish in natural surroundings.

Flowers that Never Fade



The metal flower vase on display is engraved with floral patterns and is believed to be from the 18th century. It is said that the gardens of Humayun's tomb had a variety of flowers, including red oleander, jasmine, hibiscus, daffodils, tulips, lilies, roses, poppies, and more.



The object 'fish in a pond bowl' from the 14th century has a painted carp fish swimming amongst water plants such as duckweed, eelgrass, water chestnuts, and grasses. The outer side of the bowl has a band of twelve lotus panels.



The museum also exhibits another ware with a large carp fish in the centre surrounded by lotus flowers and other aquatic plants.



Another bowl on display features a pair of Mandarin ducks swimming in a pond with lotus blooms. The painter's observation of minute details and realistic depiction is just remarkable.

Water As Memory



This traditional vessel, a surahi (pot), used for storing and serving water in our country, has been an integral part of Indian households and culture for ages. In the past, pilgrims and travellers were served with water from wells or stepwells in such traditional vessels. Featured here is a copper surahi from the 18th – 19th century. The museum also displays lotas (spherical water vessels), dishes, and glassware.



Surahi, Copper, 18th/19th Century

Lota, Brass & Copper, 19th Century

Smell the Fragrance of Nature



Another interesting artefact is a rosewater sprinkler from the 18th century, most probably used for sprinkling on guests and in the royal court. Rose water was incorporated into food and beverages, hence playing a vital role in the social customs, celebrations, culinary practices, personal hygiene, and other aspects of life.

Rosewater Sprinkler,
18th Century,
National Museum

Woven Lives

Partition Stories Through Textiles

This trail at the
Partition Museum Amritsar
weaves together threads of
trade, tradition, trauma, and
tenacity.



Aditi Chaudhary

Programme Manager, Culture



Textile Labels/ Shipper's Tickets

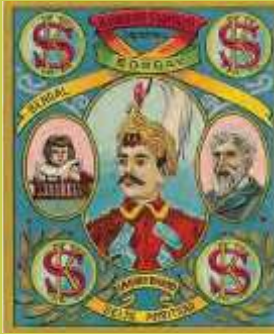


Image Credits:
Google Arts & Culture



These vivid *chromolithograph labels* that were once affixed to bolts of cloth, served as visual trademarks in a booming international textile trade. Produced for export, they advertised mills from Bombay, Calcutta, and Amritsar to buyers across Europe and Africa. Though small in size, these labels bear the weight of a world once interwoven through commerce, colonialism, and visual culture. *Amritsar's Hall Bazaar* stood as a hub of such trade that bustled with merchants, colour, and conversation. Now prized by collectors, these fragments reflect how textiles were more than fabric, a currency, identity, and power. It also makes one ponder what it might mean for a label to outlive the textiles it once represented.

Phulkari Coat and Leather Bag of Pritam Kaur and Bhagwan Singh Maini



Image Credits:
Google Arts & Culture

When 30 year old *Bhagwan Singh Maini* and 22 year old *Pritam Kaur* were introduced in 1947, they were strangers soon to be married. But Partition scattered them—his brothers killed, her family fleeing. She arrived in Amritsar with a bag and a phulkari coat, he with only a briefcase and his degrees. Fate brought them back together at a refugee camp queue at Khalsa College. These two objects, the coat and the case, hold more than utility; they cradle fragments of the life they had almost lost and the life they would build anew.

Embroidered Textile by Santosh (1948)



Image Credits:
Google Arts & Culture

In *Tetulia, East Pakistan*, Santosh embroidered this cloth before Partition. When violence broke out in 1948, she carried it across the border to India, a thread of continuity in a fraying world. The central motif, the Royal Bengal Tiger, roams across what is now India and Bangladesh, its habitat undivided by human borders. Even as Bengal was cleaved in two, shared symbols like this tiger reveal a cultural fabric that still resists separation.

Burkha of Tikka Rani Jagjit Kaur Bedi



Image Credits:
Google Arts & Culture

Once worn in observance of purdah in pre-Partition Punjab, this burkha was the last one *Jagjit Kaur* ever wore during her flight from Kallar to Delhi. After resettling, she stepped into a new life and never returned to the veil. This garment, once a symbol of status and seclusion, now speaks of transformation, resilience, and the unexpected freedoms Partition forced upon many women. It makes one reflect over the fact that once the familiar is no longer there, identities shift, and about all that one leaves behind.

Sewing Machine



Image Credits:
Google Arts & Culture

Generously donated by *Mrs. Bhatia*, not much has been mentioned about this sewing machine, but the object itself speaks volumes. For countless women after Partition, stitching became a lifeline, economically and emotionally. Machines like this allowed families to rebuild their lives. In many refugee colonies, tailoring became a profession born of necessity, rooted in skill passed down through generations. Could this machine have made school uniforms? Wedding clothes? Everyday shirts that helped a family start over again?

Instagram Handles We Love

In a sea of endless scrolls and fleeting reels, these Instagram accounts stand out for what they bring to the table—forgotten postcards, heirloom jewellery, everyday memory, and more. This section is our ode to the handles that keep culture alive and relevant in the digital space. They make us pause, reflect, and sometimes even re-learn. Each one, in its own way, reimagines how we engage with art, memory, and heritage beyond the walls of a museum, and right on our screens.



@kathikaolddelhi



@historyofindiancostume



@itihaass



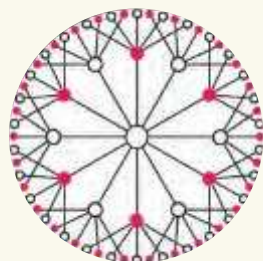
@picture_postcard_empire



@amrapalimuseumrialmemory



@museumofmaterialmemory



@sahapedia



@dag.museums



Kathika Cultural Centre and Museum

@kathikaolddelhi



Rooted in the heart of Old Delhi,
Kathika is more than a
museum—it's a living archive
celebrating the vibrant cultures of
Delhi and beyond.



History of Indian Costume

@historyofindiancostume

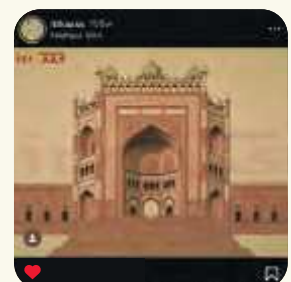
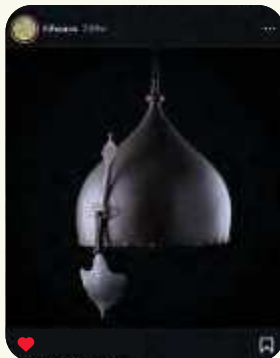


Itihaas's page reclaims and reinterprets South Asian histories through bold visuals, archival material, and a strong decolonial voice.



Itihaass

@itihaass



Journey through India's history with this personal blog, where striking visuals - from majestic monuments to hidden relics - reveal stories and facts from our shared past.



Early Postcards from India

@picture_postcard_empire

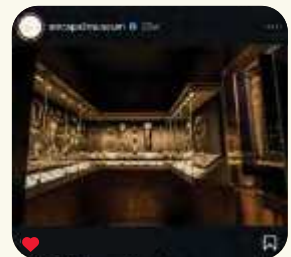


Co-curated by Stephen Hughes & Emily Stevenson, this handle is an evocative archive of colonial-era postcards peeling back layers of empire, ethnography and anthropology.



Amrapali Museum

@amrapalimuseumrialmemory



A treasure trove in the truest sense, the Amrapali Museum showcases India's dazzling jewellery heritage, every object telling a story of craftsmanship, culture, and opulence.

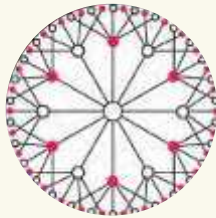


Museum of Material Memory

@museumofmaterialmemory

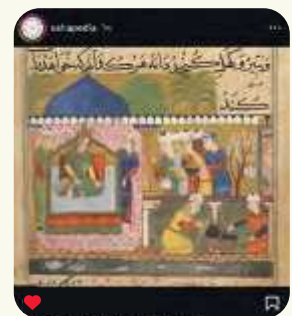
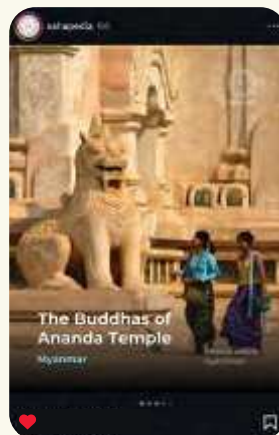
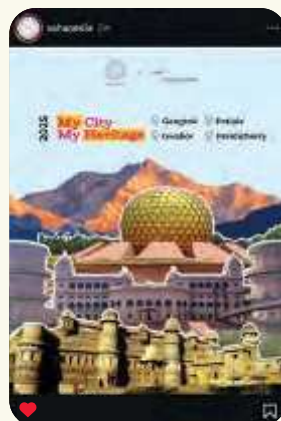
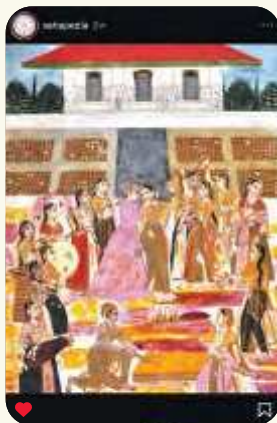


A crowdsourced digital repository celebrating everyday heirlooms and forgotten objects, mapping memory through material across the subcontinent.



Sahapedia

@sahapedia



A rich, ever-growing, open online resource bringing the depth of South Asia's art, culture and heritage.



DAG Museums

@dag.museums



DAG Museums is an initiative by DAG World to make Indian art visible, approachable and part of everyday conversations.

Museum Resources

The work of museum and heritage professionals often draws upon a rich network of shared knowledge, ranging from exhibition toolkits and community engagement frameworks to interpretive strategies and documentation studies. In this section, Museum Mosaic brings together a selection of resources that have informed, supported, or emerged from thoughtful museum practice in recent times. Each offers insights, methodologies, or models that can be reimagined and adapted across institutions and practices. Scan the QR codes accompanying each resource to explore it fully.

India & The World: A History In Nine Stories | Toolkit For Educators



Developed by Flow India in collaboration with the National Museum, Delhi, CMSVS, Mumbai and the British Museum, the educator toolkit is designed to engage Social Studies teachers working with students aged 11–14. It offers four comprehensive lesson plans, worksheets, and pre- and post-visit sessions to deepen student engagement with the landmark exhibition India and the World. The toolkit fosters observation, creativity, and interdisciplinary thinking—encouraging educators to use the museum as an immersive, curriculum-linked classroom.

Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0



The toolkit offers a self-assessment methodology to evaluate and improve the management effectiveness of World Heritage properties and other heritage places. Comprising 12 adaptable tools with supporting worksheets and questionnaires, it enables heritage managers to identify strengths, diagnose weaknesses, and enhance conservation outcomes. Designed for natural, cultural, or mixed heritage sites, the toolkit supports better planning, resource allocation, and response to threats such as development, tourism, and climate change.

Sustainable Practices: Handbook For Museums In India



In collaboration with Urban Morph, ReReeti has developed India's first comprehensive guide dedicated to sustainable museum practice. Bridging a critical gap in the sector, the handbook encourages museums to adopt eco-conscious approaches—offering actionable strategies across carbon reduction, energy efficiency, ethical procurement, and waste management.

Inclusion in Museums: Perspectives of People with Disabilities

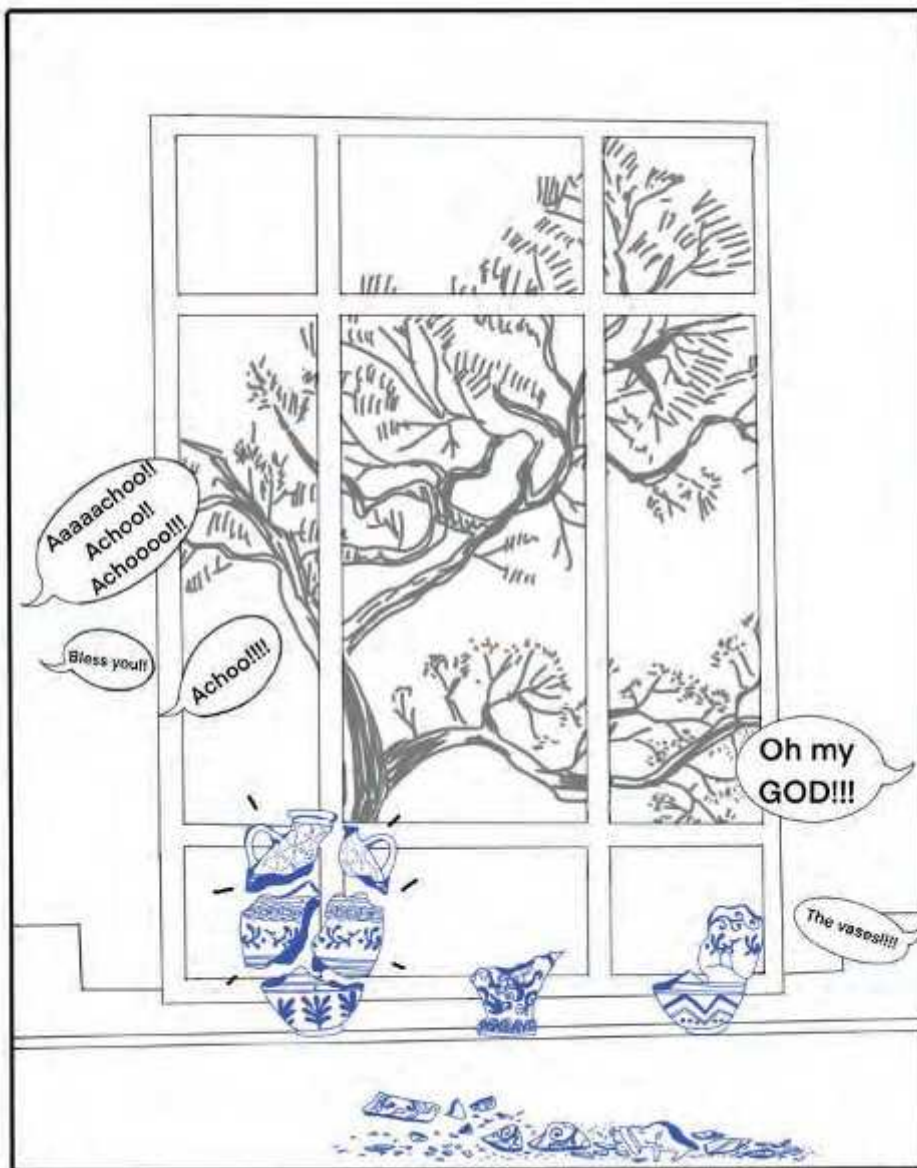


Commissioned by MAP India and conducted by ReReeti Foundation, this landmark study highlights the lack of inclusivity and accessibility of people with disabilities in the museum and cultural sector in India. Through qualitative interviews across a spectrum of disabilities, it identifies the access barriers and offers recommendations—ranging from tactile replicas and ISL interpretation to multisensory learning and universal design. The findings call for museums to move beyond compliance, embracing inclusion as an ethos.



Museums Through Your Eyes

This section showcases illustrations that celebrate the magic of museums. Each artwork in this section captures their quiet corners, iconic objects, and the people who bring them to life. These creative expressions reveal museums through diverse, personal perspectives, highlighting them as living spaces that inspire curiosity, connection, and imagination.



Shatterday at the Museum

Maitreyee Chaware

The comic tries to capture a perfectly timed disaster. In a quiet gallery of the Fitzwilliam Museum, centuries of history stand undisturbed, until a visitor sneezes mid-step, trips over his shoelace, and crashes into three priceless Qing dynasty vases. The vases shatter, and as the dust settles and the museum gasps in horror, the unlucky tourist is still mid-sneeze.



The Emperor's New Exhibit

Maitreyee Chaware

The comic pokes fun at the Invisible Art exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, where blank canvases and empty pedestals were seen as deep, thought-provoking art. Inspired by The Emperor's New Clothes, adults pretend to see meaning, while honest kids point out the obvious - there's nothing there! This is a playful take on how we sometimes overthink art just to fit in.



Whispers with the Dancing Girl

Arundhati Rana

Do you ever feel like the art in a museum has stories to tell? This illustration leans into that idea, presenting a playful encounter within the hushed halls of a gallery. Against a backdrop of rich red walls and glimpses of framed artworks, we see a museum visitor whispering to a life size rendition 'Dancing Girl'. It is a gentle play on the sense of curiosity and connection.



Sir Henry Unton

Alice Li

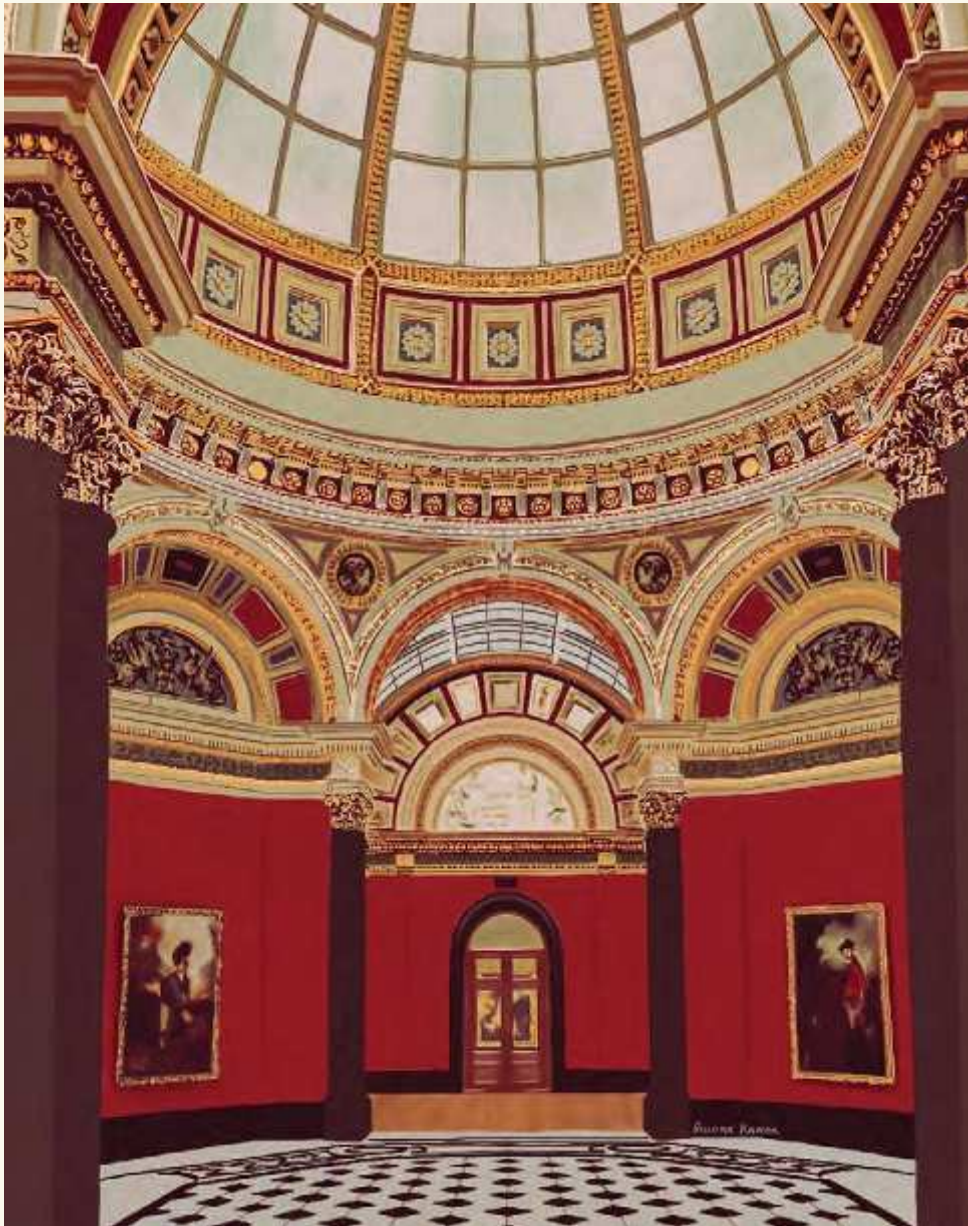
Sketch based on: Sir Henry Unton, attributed to Richard Scarlett, c.1558–96,
National Portrait Gallery

This sketch is inspired by the striking memorial portrait of Sir Henry Unton, a diplomat from the Tudor era. I was immediately drawn to its unique composition and narrative approach, which felt surprisingly modern and illustrative. Unlike traditional portraits that focus on a single static pose, this painting unfolds like a visual biography—presenting episodes from Unton's life, from childhood to death, arranged almost like scenes in a graphic novel. I found it fascinating that such an intricate and storytelling-driven depiction existed as early as the 16th century. Through my sketch, I want to highlight the illustrative quality of the original work and reflect on how portraiture can serve as a window into personal history and collective memory.



Avalokiteshvara Shenuka Corea

This illustrated Riso print brings to life a sculpture of Avalokiteshvara Padmapani from the MET's South Asian Sculpture Gallery.



The National Gallery

Rishika Kapoor

This illustration shows the interiors of The National Gallery, an art museum in London. The details show the grandeur of the neoclassical building.

Spot the Difference!

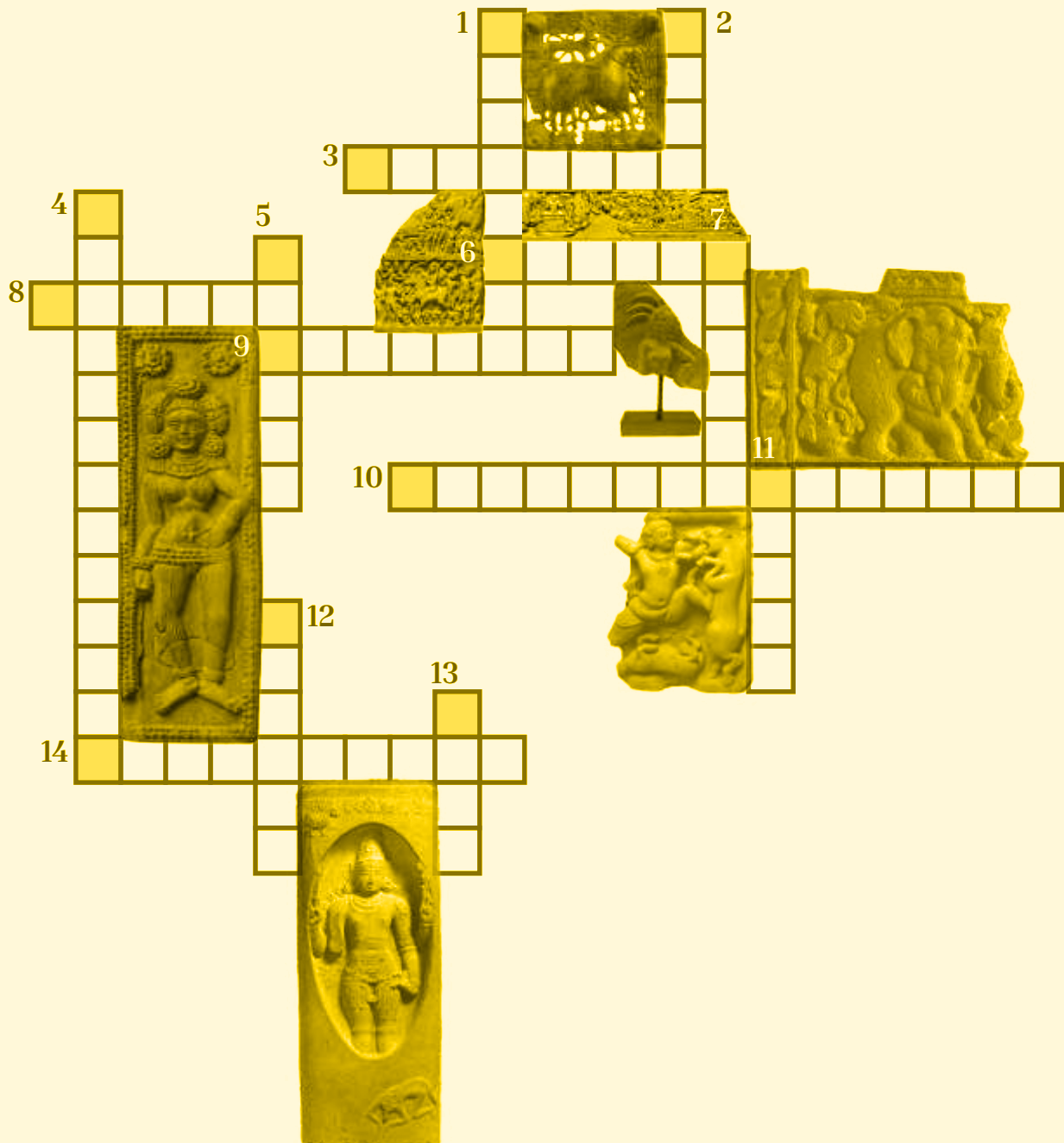


Challenge your powers of observation with this spot-the-difference puzzle inspired by a late 17th-century scene from the Shangri Ramayana in the Cleveland Museum of Art's collection. The artwork portrays King Dasharatha instructing Sumantra to summon Rama. However, there are 10 subtle differences between the two versions presented here – variations hidden in composition, symbolism, and intricate details. Can you decode them all?



Museum Mania: Crossword Challenge

Think you know the museums of India? It's time to put your knowledge to the test! Whether you're a heritage buff, a curious wanderer, or just here for the fun of it, dive in and see how many you can get right. No pressure, just a little brain workout, museum style.



Across

- 3. The foundation of this museum was laid by a showcase of Indian art in London that later arrived in New Delhi. (8)
- 6. This museum highlights the top of Emperor Ashoka's Pillar, installed beside the Great Stupa in Madhya Pradesh. (6)
- 8. Located in Jaipur, this museum is famous for its collection of traditional block printing. (6)
- 9. The Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai was earlier named _____ & Albert Museum. (8)
- 10. Dating from the Maurya Dynasty (321 to 185 BCE), the _____ is one of the finest sculptures crafted from a single piece of Chunar sandstone and is currently on display at the Bihar Museum. (9, 6)
- 14. This fort museum in Jodhpur, renowned for its architecture, was home to India's first museum gift shop. (10)
- 15. Made using the 'lost wax' technique, the _____ was unearthed during excavations at Mohenjodaro, a major site of the Indus Valley Civilisation, in 1926. It is currently displayed in the National Museum in New Delhi.(7,4)

Down

- 1. Besides Delhi, the Partition Museum is also situated in this Indian city. (8)
- 2. This museum preserves and presents India's railway legacy. (4)
- 4. This Ahmedabad-based museum explores conflict through art, audience participation, and archives. (13)
- 5. The _____ Water's Museum is a digital museum that narrates India's water heritage through visual stories. (6)
- 7. Located in Kolkata, this is the oldest and largest museum in India. (6)
- 11. The _____ Diamond, also called the Imperial or Victoria Diamond, is the world's fifth-largest polished, colourless diamond. The Indian government acquired it with other Jewels of The Nizams and currently holds it in the Reserve Bank of India vault in Mumbai. In the past as part of the Nizam's jewellery exhibition, this jewel has been displayed at the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad and the National Museum in Delhi. (5)
- 12. Museum _____ is an annual publication by Cultre that recaps development in India's museum and heritage sector. (6)
- 13. This Bhopal-based museum is known for showcasing the lives and traditions of indigenous communities. (6)

Down: 1. Amritsar | 2. Rail | 4. Conflictorium | 5. Living | 7. Indian | 11. Jacob | 12. Mosaic | 13. Tribal

Across: 3. National | 6. Sanchi | 8. Anokhi | 9. Victoria | 10. Didarganj Yakshi | 14. Mehraangarh | 15. Dancing girl

At CULTRE, we don't just design spaces - we craft cultural experiences. Our design practice spans spatial and exhibition design for museums and heritage institutions, with a focus on storytelling, visitor engagement, and immersive interpretation.

Alongside our spatial work, we are equally passionate about creating experiential museum merchandise that makes collections more accessible, playful, and memorable. Through our CultreBOX series, we design hands-on, activity-based kits that allow users to explore India's rich heritage from home. Each box is inspired by real museum collections and includes puzzles, games, stories, and craft activities- turning historical learning into a tactile, joyful experience.

By blending design, education, and cultural storytelling, we aim to bring museums beyond their walls - into homes, classrooms, and everyday lives.

Explore our products at www.culture.in/culturebox
Interested in collaborating with us? Write to us at

info@culture.in



MUSEUM MOSAIC²⁰₂₄

India's Annual Recap