Elsewhere in India

4A Generations Learning Kit

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4A.I. : Elsewhere in India

Exhibition dates:

26 October 2024 –
15 December 2024

Location

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
181-187 Hay St, Haymarket

Curators

Thea-Mai Baumann

Artists

Elsewhere in India
aka Murthovic and Thiruda

Elsewhere in India.
Image courtesy the artist.

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Elsewhere in India. Photo: Avinash Kumar.
Previous image: Bhavani Kumar.

Jazz Money, *It's Always Been Always*, 2022, Neon. Courtesy the artist.

Acknowledgements

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art acknowledges the cultures of First Nations peoples in Australia, in particular the Gadigal People, and their continuing cultural and creative practices in this land. 4A pays respect to Elders past and present, as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, work and create.

4A recognises that Australia's culture has been, and continues to be, uniquely shaped by First Nations peoples, by centuries of migration and by generations born in Australia.

This learning kit was developed by artist, arts educator and curator, Lleah Smith, in collaboration with the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and *Elsewhere in India*. Special thanks to the participating artists and technologists for their innovative contributions to post-colonial discourse through digital mediums.

This Kit aims to support secondary high school learners and their educators engage in a thought-provoking exhibition and collaborative artist practice, encouraging critical thinking and creative expression when engaging with India's cultural narratives and futures.

Centre for
Contemporary
Asian Art

Project Overview

Elsewhere in India is a unique artistic project that delves into the intersections of technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), post-colonialism, and cultural memory hosted by the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. This digital and virtual museum exhibition presents an innovative way to reimagine India's cultural landscape through a post-colonial lens. It challenges traditional perspectives on Indian history and identity by utilising digital mediums and AI-driven storytelling. The project is a collaborative endeavour involving Indian artists, curators, and technologists who use these digital tools to reconstruct and question historical narratives and representations of cultural identity. By combining elements of *Indofuturism* with advanced technology, the exhibition seeks to envision new futures for India's past, bridging ancient cultural memory and contemporary digital expression (Elsewhere in India, n.d).

The digital and virtual nature of the exhibition is vital to its approach, providing a space where India's cultural history can be reinterpreted and re-examined. This virtual museum is not a simple digital replication of physical artifacts but a reimagined space where digital art, AI, and virtual reality converge to create new forms of storytelling. By leveraging the potential of these technologies, *Elsewhere in India* presents India's cultural history in an interactive format, allowing the audience to be co-creators in the narrative process. This approach reflects a shift in how we experience culture, moving away from the static displays of conventional exhibitions to more dynamic and engaging digital environments (British Council, 2022).

AI plays a crucial role in the exhibition, serving as a tool to reconstruct and reinterpret India's cultural memory in ways that challenge traditional historical narratives. The project provides new ways of engaging with India's colonial history and post-colonial identity through AI-generated art, soundscapes, and interactive installations. AI enables non-linear storytelling, allowing the exhibition to adapt and evolve based on the viewer's interaction with the content. This technological intervention will allow artists to present different perspectives on India's history, creating a more inclusive narrative that challenges the dominant discourses shaped by colonial powers (NAVA, 2023). Using AI to reframe historical narratives, *Elsewhere in India* invites viewers to think critically about how history is remembered and represented, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of India's past and present.

Elsewhere in India, 2023, Science Gallery (London). Courtesy the artist. Photo: Sachin Soni.

We're using a cyborg as a metaphor for thinking about the future of society.
— Meenakshi, 2023

Elsewhere in India. Photo: Avinash Kumar.

Glossary for key terms from the Kit

AI (Artificial Intelligence)
A branch of computer science that focuses on creating systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. This can include visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation.

Cultural Memory
Refers to the shared memories and experiences that shape the identity of a community or society. It is how groups remember their past and how these memories influence their present and future.

Curator
A person who organises and manages exhibitions, selecting the artworks and overseeing their display in museums or galleries.

Digital Mediums
Tools and platforms that use digital technology for creating, sharing, and interacting with content. This includes virtual reality, augmented reality, AI-generated art, and more.

Hybridity
A concept introduced by post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha, referring to the mixing and blending of cultures that occurs when different societies come into contact. It creates a "third space" where new cultural identities are formed.

Immersive Experiences
In art and media, this refers to environments that entirely engage a viewer's senses, often using technology like virtual reality to make them feel as though they are 'inside' the artwork or story.

Indofuturism
is an artistic and cultural movement that combines elements of India's historical and mythological past with futuristic themes. By blending traditional and contemporary narratives, it seeks to imagine alternative futures for India.

Intercultural
Refers to interaction between cultures. It involves understanding, respecting, and learning from different cultural perspectives.

Interdisciplinary
Involving multiple academic or artistic disciplines (such as art, technology, history, and culture) to explore a concept or solve a problem from various perspectives.

Manifesto
A written statement declaring the intentions, motives, or views of an individual or group, often related to social or political issues. In art and culture, it can be a declaration of the artists' creative philosophy and vision.

Materiality
Refers to the significance of the materials used in creating a work in the context of art. It emphasises how different materials (such as digital media, AI, or traditional art forms) affect the meaning and interpretation of the artwork.

Non-Linear Storytelling
A narrative technique that does not follow a straight, chronological path. Instead, it allows stories to be told out of order or through different perspectives, often using interactive or digital elements.

Extended Glossary

Post-colonialism
is a critical framework that examines colonialism's effects on cultures and societies. It focuses on how colonised people reclaim their histories and identities from colonial narratives imposed by colonial powers.

Prosthetic Memory
A term coined by Alison Landsberg, referring to memories people acquire through media and technology about events they did not experience personally. It allows people to connect with historical events or cultural narratives.

Speculative Storytelling
A creative method that imagines "what if" scenarios to explore alternative futures or possibilities. It often involves elements of science fiction or fantasy.

Virtual Reality (VR)
A simulated experience similar to or completely different from the real world, typically using a headset to create a fully immersive environment.

Elsewhere in India, 2023, Science Gallery (London). Courtesy the artist. Photo: Sachin Soni.

Elsewhere in India, 2023, Science Gallery (London).
Courtesy the artist. Photo: Sachin Soni.

Collaborative Artistic Practice

The collaborative nature of *Elsewhere in India* is fundamental to its innovative approach. This project brings together a diverse group of artists, technologists, and thinkers to explore the intersections of art, technology, and history. These collaborations exemplify how collective artistic practices can break new ground in digital art, reshaping how collective memory and identity are understood. Two of the key collaborators in the project are Murthovic (Sri Rama Murthy) and Thiruda (Avinash Kumar).

Murthovic, a Hyderabad-based electronic music composer, DJ, and sound designer, has worked in the electronic music field for nearly 20 years. His notable works include producing the acclaimed electro-classical dance opera 'Antariksha Sanchar' and serving as the sound designer for Antariksha Studio, producing two IPs—a new video game called 'Antara' and 'Elsewhere in India.' His background spans Western and Indian classical music, with electronic music being his consistent practice. Over the past two decades, he has become a prominent figure in India's festival and club circuit.

Thiruda is an acclaimed media artist, creative director, and curator specialising in creating immersive experiences for electronic music. He has worked with a network of artists, filmmakers, animators, and game developers to produce diverse creative projects that present an authentic viewpoint of India to the world. He co-founded Quicksand, a renowned innovation consultancy, and the UnBox Festival. He is also one of the founders of the erstwhile audio-visual collective BLOT! (2007-2017), which significantly shaped the Indian live visuals and electronica scene.

Elsewhere in India, 2023, Science Gallery (London).
Courtesy the artist. Photo: Sachin Soni.

Collaborative Artistic Practice

The project with 4A also features several other vital collaborators who contribute their unique expertise to create this multimedia and interdisciplinary experience:

Ami Mehta
A cultural researcher and art curator exploring interaction design, creative computing, and future studies through the lens of museums and heritage. She serves as the North American liaison for the project.

Sarbeswar Kalita
The lead character artist with over ten years of experience in 3D art, including work on AAA and indie game titles with companies like Dhruva Interactive, AIGA, Antariksha, and EA Sports. His recent focus has been creating digital humans for games, films, and TV.

Praphul P.A.
The lead 3D artist who has worked on over eight AAA games through Dhruva Interactive, including popular titles like the Forza series, Quantum Break, Enemy Front, City Interactive, Operation Flashpoint, and Star Wars.

Jayalakshmi Eshwar
The cultural director and co-founder of the project, she is an internationally renowned Bharatanatyam (classical dance) exponent, acclaimed performer, choreographer, teacher, and author with over 45 years of experience globally.

Chris Solarski
The lead gameplay designer who previously worked at Sony Computer Entertainment (London) as a character and environment artist. He is a renowned author and teacher-mentor on art and video games globally (ElsewhereinIndia.pdf).

Elsewhere in India.
Courtesy the artist. Photo: Sachin Soni.

These collaborations are crucial because they bring together different voices and perspectives, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of India's complex cultural tapestry. The exhibition's collaborative approach reflects a broader trend in contemporary art, where artists increasingly use new media and digital tools to explore cultural and social themes. By incorporating AI, virtual reality, and other digital technologies into their work, the artists involved in *Elsewhere in India* push the boundaries of what art can be and how it can engage with history and memory. This approach challenges traditional notions of art and storytelling, opening new possibilities for understanding and interpreting cultural narratives in the digital age (NAVA, 2023).

The collaboration between artists and technologists also highlights the potential for technology to be used for social critique and reflection, providing new ways to engage with complex social and cultural issues. As the exhibition blends various forms of digital art, including AI-generated visuals, soundscapes, and 3D models, it presents an anthology of stories from India in 2079 AD, following a diverse group of characters who connect heritage, science, and society through emergent Indian electro-classical dance music. This multidisciplinary collaboration allows artists and technologists to experiment with new ideas and practices, contributing to the evolving discourse around Indofuturism and post-colonial identity.

Combining these diverse perspectives and expertise, *Elsewhere in India* creates a digital landscape that speaks to historical and futuristic themes. The collaboration is not merely a fusion of different skills but a deliberate effort to construct new narratives that challenge the dominant discourses shaped by colonial powers. This inclusive and multidisciplinary approach allows *Elsewhere in India* to present a richer and more complex narrative of India's cultural identity which is constantly evolving and open to reinterpretation.

Elsewhere in India is essentially an audiovisual Electronica performance. It came from the pandemic, sitting together and thinking about the future of the Earth and the future of India, and it's basically a story set in the year 2079.
- Elsewhere in India, 2023

Elsewhere in India.
Courtesy the artist. Photo: Sachin Soni.

Materiality

Technology and AI in Elsewhere in India's Practice

Elsewhere in India, technology and AI are leveraged to reimagine India's cultural landscape digitally. AI is particularly significant in the project because it allows for non-linear storytelling and interactive experiences that challenge conventional representations of India's history. By using AI-driven tools and techniques, the artists involved in the exhibition can create complex digital artworks that respond to historical and cultural themes in innovative ways. For example, AI-generated visuals and soundscapes offer new ways of interpreting India's colonial past, creating a more dynamic and multi-dimensional engagement with cultural memory (Elsewhere in India, n.d).

AI in *Elsewhere in India* reflects a broader trend in contemporary art, where technology is increasingly used to explore themes of identity, memory, and history. AI's ability to process and analyse vast amounts of data provides artists with new tools to create artworks that can adapt and evolve, offering new insights into historical events and cultural expressions. This approach aligns with the concept of digital art as an evolving practice that encourages constant dialogue and re-evaluation of cultural memory (Ars Electronica, 2023). Using AI to reconstruct and reinterpret India's cultural memory, *Elsewhere in India* challenges viewers to think critically about how history is remembered and represented, inviting them to consider alternative narratives and perspectives.

Elsewhere in India. *Sarod VIewport - 3D rendering*. Courtesy the artist.

Key Themes

The key themes of *Elsewhere in India* revolve around post-colonialism, Indofuturism, cultural identity, and memory. Post-colonialism is a critical framework that examines the impacts of colonialism on cultures and societies, focusing on how colonised people reclaim their histories and identities from colonial narratives. *Elsewhere in India*, takes a post-colonial stance by questioning and critiquing the colonial legacy that has shaped contemporary India's cultural and social fabric. It engages with this framework by using digital and virtual technologies to challenge conventional representations of India's history, offering new perspectives not bound by physical space constraints or traditional storytelling methods (British Council, 2022).

Indofuturism, on the other hand, is an artistic and cultural movement that combines elements of India's historical and mythological past with futuristic themes. This movement imagines alternative futures grounded in Indian culture, offering a speculative lens through which to view the present and future. *Elsewhere in India, Indofuturism* is embodied by blending the speculative with the historical, creating a space where ancient traditions meet digital realities. This approach challenges conventional narratives and offers new ways of thinking about India's potential future (Elsewhere in India, n.d).

...there are glimmers of hope that are coming up in different parts of the world as well as in our characters and what they represent. The aesthetic we're trying to focus on could be classified as 'post-cyberpunk', which [unlike cyberpunk] looks at what India or the global south needs to think about, which is essentially: How do you resolve the problems? How do you create a sense of hope? How do you bring people together in spite of the dystopia?

- Meenakshi, 2023

Post-colonialism

Elsewhere in India explores post-colonial themes by critiquing and questioning colonial history and its lasting impact on contemporary India. The project aligns with ideas from post-colonial theorists like Homi Bhabha, who believes that art and culture are vital in connecting language, stories, and images to build a shared understanding of the world. Bhabha suggests that art and culture are not just about representing ideas; they also help unite people by navigating complex ideas of mixing cultures, blending identities, and embracing uncertainty (Bhabha, 1994). Within this context, *Elsewhere in India* uses digital and virtual technologies to create a space that reflects these ideas, presenting new perspectives on India's history beyond traditional storytelling (British Council, 2022).

Bhabha's idea of 'hybridity' is essential for *Elsewhere in India*. Hybridity means creating new cultural forms from the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised, forming a 'third space' where identities are constantly mixed and redefined (Bhabha, 1994). *Elsewhere in India,* this hybridity is demonstrated by combining Indian cultural elements with digital and AI technologies, creating a unique space where ancient traditions meet modern digital tools. This blending challenges the dominant colonial narratives and encourages a more inclusive and evolving understanding of India's cultural identity. The exhibition provides a space where multiple worlds and perspectives can coexist, similar to Bhabha's idea of different roles—like host, guest, neighbour, and self—interacting dynamically (Bhabha, 2007).

The exhibition also takes inspiration from Bhabha's concepts of 'radical hospitality' and 'radical friendship,' which promote diversity in cultural and artistic practices. These ideas highlight the need to create spaces where different cultures and communities can interact, learn, and grow together. *Elsewhere in India* reflects this idea by including various voices and perspectives in its stories, allowing for a deeper exploration of India's post-colonial identity. The exhibition encourages viewers to think critically about how colonial history has shaped modern India and how technology and art can help rewrite these stories (British Council, 2022).
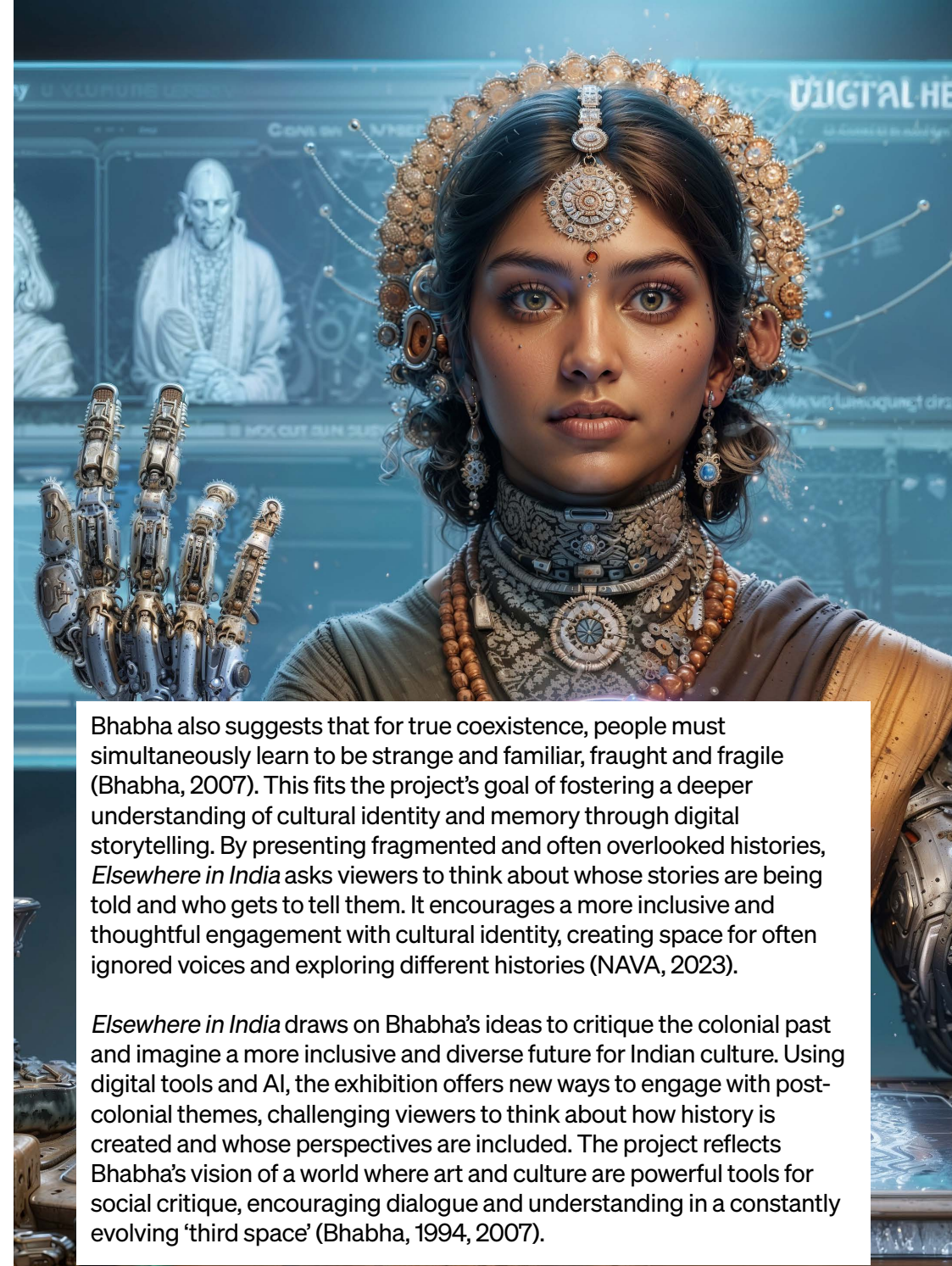
Bhabha also suggests that for true coexistence, people must simultaneously learn to be strange and familiar, fraught and fragile (Bhabha, 2007). This fits the project's goal of fostering a deeper understanding of cultural identity and memory through digital storytelling. By presenting fragmented and often overlooked histories, *Elsewhere in India* asks viewers to think about whose stories are being told and who gets to tell them. It encourages a more inclusive and thoughtful engagement with cultural identity, creating space for often ignored voices and exploring different histories (NAVA, 2023).

Elsewhere in India draws on Bhabha's ideas to critique the colonial past and imagine a more inclusive and diverse future for Indian culture. Using digital tools and AI, the exhibition offers new ways to engage with post-colonial themes, challenging viewers to think about how history is created and whose perspectives are included. The project reflects Bhabha's vision of a world where art and culture are powerful tools for social critique, encouraging dialogue and understanding in a constantly evolving 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994, 2007).

Elsewhere in India. *Meena XR Reworked.*
Courtesy the artist.

Indofuturism

Indofuturism is a central theme in *Elsewhere in India*, offering a unique way of imagining the future by combining elements of India's rich historical and mythological past with futuristic and speculative ideas. Indofuturism is a cultural and artistic movement that seeks to create new stories about India's future, grounded in its traditions but open to new interpretations and innovations. This movement encourages artists and thinkers to use creative tools like digital art, AI, and virtual reality to imagine what India might look like in the future (Elsewhere in India, n.d). Indofuturism looks at the past not as something fixed and unchangeable but as a foundation for imagining new possibilities. By blending the speculative with the historical, *Elsewhere in India* challenges the old stories that have traditionally defined India's cultural identity and opens up space for new ways of thinking about India's future. The project uses Indofuturism to connect ancient traditions with modern digital tools, creating a space where the past and future meet. This approach allows artists to create familiar and new stories, showing how ancient knowledge can inspire future innovations.

According to recent research by Bhandari (2021), Indofuturism is about reimagining the future of South Asia through speculative and future-oriented artistic practices. This means it is not just about dreaming of a different future but also about challenging the present-day ideas from colonial and Western views of what India should be. Instead of accepting these views, Indofuturism invites artists and thinkers to envision the future rooted in their cultural heritage and push beyond it. For example, *Elsewhere in India*, digital tools like AI-generated art and 3D environments help build new worlds that question and expand our understanding of India's cultural future (Bhandari, 2021).

A crucial part of Indofuturism is the idea of 'speculative storytelling', which uses art, games, and digital media to create possible futures. This type of storytelling allows for many possibilities, encouraging people to think beyond what they know and imagine different scenarios. *Elsewhere in India* embodies this by presenting futuristic characters and worlds deeply connected to Indian heritage.

Indofuturism challenges the idea that there is only one way to imagine the future. It suggests that different cultural perspectives and experiences can shape many futures. As Bhandari (2021) points out, Indofuturism provides a platform for reclaiming narratives and futures often overlooked in global discussions. For *Elsewhere in India*, this is achieved by creating digital environments where viewers can explore multiple narratives and histories that challenge the dominant stories told by colonial powers. This approach allows for a more inclusive understanding of the future, encouraging diverse voices to contribute to the conversation.

Image courtesy the artist.

Image courtesy the artist.

In the early days of humanity, Indian Vedic texts described mythical beings with goddesses and demigods. As time went on these stories began to inspire the imagination of innovators and scientists in India who sought to replicate these feats through more mechanical means.

- Elsewhere in India, 2023

Cultural Identity

The exhibition explores how our understanding of our identity is shaped, remembered, and represented in today's digital age. It uses modern digital tools like virtual reality, AI-generated soundscapes, and interactive installations to reconstruct and reinterpret memories of India's past. This approach helps viewers understand that identities are not fixed but are constantly changing, influenced by different factors such as history, culture, and personal experience (Elsewhere in India, 2023).

Iain Chambers' work on cultural identity provides a helpful way to think about how identities are shaped and reshaped. Chambers argues that identity is like a journey, always in motion. He suggests that *Cultural Identity* is not about having a fixed sense of self. Instead, it is about understanding how our identities comprise many different influences, such as languages, histories, and personal experiences (Chambers, 2008). In this sense, *Elsewhere in India* reflects that cultural identity is fluid and continuously evolving, particularly in a digital world where multiple perspectives and stories can be explored.

Chambers also discusses how migration and cultural diversity challenge the idea of a single, unchanging identity. He argues that when people move from one place to another—physically or through digital spaces—their identities become more complex and layered. This is because they adapt to new cultures, languages, and environments, leading to new ways of seeing themselves and others. Similarly, *Elsewhere in India* uses digital mediums to present fragmented and often forgotten histories, providing a platform for voices that have been marginalised or silenced.

This approach encourages viewers to consider different perspectives and how cultural identities are shaped by various experiences (Chambers, 2008). The exhibition uses digital archives, soundscapes, and AI to explore how identities are shaped, remembered, and represented in a digital age. By presenting memories and histories in digital formats that can be revisited and reimagined, *Elsewhere in India* opens up new avenues for understanding cultural memory. It allows for an inclusive platform where diverse perspectives can be shared and explored, challenging dominant narratives shaped by colonial powers (Elsewhere in India, n.d). This approach is similar to what Chambers describes as the disturbance and dislocation of history, culture, and identity, forcing us to rethink how we understand the world (Chambers, 2008).

Cultural Memory

Cultural Memory explores how memories of the past are constructed, preserved, and represented using digital and analogue tools. These tools help reconstruct and reinterpret memories of India's history, presenting them in new and engaging ways. Elsewhere in India's practice opens up discussions about how cultural memories are formed and how they shape our understanding of who we are today,

According to Assmann and Czaplicka (1995), *Cultural Memory* differs from individual memory because it is shared by a group and passed down through generations. It includes traditions, stories, and symbols a community uses to keep its past alive. In *Elsewhere in India*'s work, digital tools present these collective memories, allowing for a more inclusive and dynamic representation of India's cultural history. The exhibition uses AI and digital media to create new forms of storytelling that reflect these shared memories and invite audiences to engage with them in fresh and interactive ways (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995).

The exhibition also explores the idea of 'prosthetic memory,' a term Landsberg (2004) introduced to describe how technology and media allow people to connect with memories of events they did not experience personally. *Elsewhere in India* uses AI-generated art and immersive digital experiences to create a shared memory, allowing viewers to connect with India's colonial past and its many untold stories. This use of digital media creates new ways for viewers to experience history and cultural memory, encouraging them to reflect on how these memories shape their understanding of the present and future (Landsberg, 2004).

Kansteiner (2002) adds that cultural memory is constantly being constructed and reconstructed, influenced by current social and political contexts. Using digital technologies to explore cultural memory, *Elsewhere in India* encourages viewers to think about how memories are formed, preserved, and represented in a digital age. It challenges the idea that cultural memory is static or unchanging, showing that it is fluid and open to reinterpretation. This aligns with the idea that cultural memory is an active process that requires us to constantly engage with the past and reconsider how it shapes our present and future (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Erll, 2011).

I think the audiences can see a humble effort to bring together various cultural practices and art forms of Indian origin, and also Southeastern origin, basically South Asian origin, so that we can piece them together and present it to future generations and the current generation. Because if not dying, they're surely diminishing, and it's a good way to contemporise and introduce older practices and the richness of it in a very playful manner with music, visuals, and other things.

- Elsewhere in India, 2023

Image courtesy the artist.

PRE-VISIT WORKSHOP

Concepts Run...

Aim:
Through fun and interactive peer-to-peer sharing, you will learn about key concepts from the exhibition, such as;

- *Cultural Identity*
- *Indofuturism*
- *Post-colonialism*
- *Cultural Memory*

This activity will help you understand these ideas.

Materials:
- Paper and markers for planning
- Access to digital tools (smartphones, tablets) for meme creation or recording skits
- Timer

Instructions:

1. Divide into pairs or small eams. Each team will be given one key concept from the exhibition (e.g., *Cultural Identity, Indofuturism, Post-Colonialism* and *Cultural Memory).*

2. You will have 30 minutes to prepare a creative 2-minute presentation that engagingly explains your concept through a digital tool. This could be an app, a short skit, a meme presentation, or a mock TV interview—be as creative as you like!

3. After preparing, each team will perform or present their concept to the class.

Sharing:

- After the presentations, discuss what you found most memorable or exciting about each concept as a class.

- Reflect on how creative digital formats helped you better understand these complex ideas. Think about which concepts you are most excited to explore at the exhibition.

Documentation of CLUB 4A X Powerhouse.
Performers: Sela Vai & Hei Zhi Ma.
Photo: Edward Lais & Lehan Zhang.

Concepts Relay (ideas in motion)...

Aim:
You will research and share exciting facts about Indofuturism, Post-Colonialism, and India's cultural context. This activity will help you connect the exhibition themes to broader historical and contemporary issues.

Materials:
- Computers, tablets, or smartphones with
- Internet access
- Chart paper or a whiteboard for presenting findings
- Markers or pens
- Timer

Instructions:

1. Form small teams of 3-4 students. Each team is assigned a different research topic related to the exhibition, such as 'Indofuturism in Contemporary Art,' 'Post-Colonial Perspectives in India,' or 'The Role of AI in Cultural Preservation.'

2. Set a timer for 30 minutes. Use this time to find at least five exciting facts or insights about your assigned topic. Make sure to use credible sources and write down brief notes.

3. After the timer goes off, each team has 10 minutes to present their findings in a creative format. This could be a short skit, a storytelling session, a visual chart, or a news report-style presentation.

Sharing:

- After all presentations, engage in a quick Q&A session where you can ask questions about each topic.

- Discuss how these themes are relevant to the *Elsewhere in India* exhibition and what you want to learn more about during your visit.

Elsewhere in India. Documentation still from *Antara*. Courtesy the artist.

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KINETIC BOOMERANG

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AI Art Generator

Aim:
You will use AI tools to create digital art inspired by futuristic themes from your culture. This activity will give you hands-on experience with AI, a key element in the exhibition.

Materials:
- Computers or tablets with internet access.
- Access to free online AI art generation tools (DALL·E 2, artiphoria, mid-journey).
- A list of your cultural symbols, motifs, or futuristic themes for inspiration.
- Printer (optional for printing artwork).

Documentation of 4A Generations workshop.   24

Instructions:

1. Play with AI art generation tools such as DALL·E 2, artiphoria, mid-journey, etc. Choose one that interests you and start experimenting with it.

2. Play with your list of cultural symbols, motifs, or futuristic themes (e.g., T*raditional Indian Architecture Meets Cyberpunk, AI-Generated Mandala, Post-Colonial Futurism x Chinese ink drawing*). Think about how to combine your cultural aesthetics with futuristic styles.

3. Spend 30 minutes creating your digital artwork using the AI tool. Experiment with different styles, inputs, and effects. Save your final artwork and write a short artist statement (2-3 sentences) that explains your inspiration and how it connects to the themes.

Sharing:

- Display your AI-generated artwork on the classroom screen or print them for a gallery walk.

- Engage in a class discussion about how AI interpreted cultural inputs and whether it captured the intended essence. Consider the limitations and possibilities of using AI in cultural representation.

- Think about how this experience might relate to what you will see at the exhibition and what questions it raises for you.

POST-VISIT EXERCISES

Cultural Mash-Up: Podcast Experience

Aim:
You will explore cultural identity through creative dialogue and audio storytelling. This activity will help you consider how your background can influence a future world inspired by Indofuturism.

Materials:
- Smartphones or tablets with audio recording apps (e.g., Voice Memos, GarageBand).
- Access to a computer with audio editing software (e.g., Audacity, GarageBand).
- Headphones.
- Internet access for research and sound effects.

Instructions:

1. Pair up with a classmate to form a podcast team. Decide who will be the interviewer and who will be the interviewee.

2. Write a brief outline for your podcast episode. Include a title, intro, essential questions, and a creative closing statement.

3. Begin the interview - be sure it record it: Consider questions like, *"How might your cultural background shape a futuristic world?"* or *"What traditions from your culture could evolve in the future?"*

4. Edit your podcast to ensure it flows well and includes interesting sound effects. Aim for a final episode length of about 5 minutes.

5. Layer sound effects or background music to make your podcast more engaging. Think about how to capture your listeners' attention.

Sharing:

- Once your podcast is ready, share it with the class. You can play your episode aloud or, if time allows, set up listening stations around the room where classmates can listen to different episodes.

- Reflect on each episode: *What new perspectives did you hear? How did different students creatively interpret the theme of a futurist cultural identity?*

Elsewhere in India. Documentation still from *Antara.* Courtesy the artist.

Indofuturist Manifesto

Aim:
You will combine critical thinking with creative writing to imagine new futures for India influenced by the exhibition's themes.

Materials:
- Paper and pens or laptops/tablets for writing.
- Art supplies for making props or costumes (optional).
- Recycled sculpting materials.

Instructions:
1. Imagine you are a time traveller who has visited India in the distant future. Think about what societal, cultural, or technological changes you have witnessed.

2. Write a 'manifesto' outlining these changes inspired by the themes and elements from the exhibition. Consider: *What traditions have transformed? How have futuristic technologies merged with cultural heritage?*

3. Be bold and creative in your writing—this is your chance to envision a radically new world!

4. Once your manifesto is complete, consider how to present it dramatically. You could use props, create a costume, or even act out a scene that depicts a future scenario.

Sharing:
- Present your manifesto to the class in a dramatic format. Think of it as a mini-performance or TED Talk where you share your future vision.
- After all presentations, have a class discussion about the different futures imagined. What themes emerged? How did the exhibition influence your visions?

Hack the Narrative: Digital Art Remix

Aim:
You will challenge yourself to reinterpret existing art by remixing it digitally. This workshop will help you question dominant cultural narratives and express new perspectives.

Materials:
- Computers with Internet access
- Digital editing software (e.g., Pixlr, Photoshop, GIMP)
- Collage materials (scissors, magazines, glue)
- A collection of digital files (provided by the teacher) featuring classical Indian art, colonial-era imagery, and modern Indian pop culture.

Instructions:

1. Select one or more images from the digital or printed files provided. These could be classical Indian art pieces, colonial-era photos, or modern Indian pop culture graphics.

2. Remix these images using your chosen digital or analogue editing software to create new artwork that reflects a post-colonial or futuristic narrative. Think about what you want to challenge or highlight in your work.

4. Consider blending elements from different periods or adding futuristic elements to classical pieces. You might aim to create something thought-provoking that reimagines how history and culture are represented.

4. Once your artwork is complete, prepare a brief explanation of your creative choices. What message are you trying to convey? How does your remix challenge traditional narratives?

Image courtesy the artist.

We showcase, remix and interact with cultural heritage in a vibrant yet respectful, considerate manner.
- Elsewhere in India, 2023

Documentation from 4A Generations workshop.

References

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The Womanifesto Way: Sydney Gathers (opening image), 2023;
Photo: Maxwell Finch for 4A