Decolonization in Indian Museum
How GenZ are perceiving the issue as relevant in the todays cultural offer

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Abstract
Decolonization in art is attracting increasing attention. Intended as the process of challenging and dismantling the historical, cultural, and institutional legacies of colonialism within the art world, this movement is aiming at giving voice to Indigenous discourses, representations, symbols and aesthetics in order to re-balance the dominance of colonial forms of art.
This paper aims at investigating how among visitors to Indian museums (particularly in the city of Mumbai), the theme of decolonization is still perceived as relevant and significant. Across all parts of India, but especially in Mumbai, since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, there has been a significant transformation in the way art and museums have narrated their stories. The first findings, emerging from an exploratory round among young consumers, show the call for more authentic and nuanced representations of Indian artists and a parallel stronger effort in reducing the distance between art and consumers.

Decolonization
The presence of the museum constitutes, in and of itself, a manifestation of colonization. Its inherent structure and symbolic significance arguably represent the epitome and certainly one of the most conspicuous symbolic vestiges of the era of "active" colonialism. Museums, stemming from Cabinets of Curiosities, which were private collections often comprised of peculiar and exotic artifacts frequently acquired through the pillaging of foreign lands, are inherently products of colonization. The deep-seated roots of colonization, coupled with the pervasive "bring 'em back alive" mentality that historically underpinned the formation of such collections, persisted and firmly entrenched themselves in "Western" and "Western-leaning" societies globally, culminating in the establishment of museums.
As a result, any meaningful achievement in decolonization within this context would necessitate the complete physical dismantling of museums and the abandonment of their underlying principles. Given the impracticality of such an outcome, efforts should be directed towards mitigating the dominating influence of colonialism that museums wield, particularly concerning the perspectives of indigenous peoples worldwide. To address this challenge, an alternative approach, mindset, and reconsideration are imperative. These transformative endeavors can only be initiated from within the museum itself, wherein the institution commits to conveying a new reality not only to its internal framework but also to its local community, the broader global audience, and even the corridors of national governance. Only through this internalized process can a museum evolve into a standard-bearer for its own decolonization and contribute to a societal reorientation that prioritizes the long-neglected interests of disenfranchised communities.

Decolonization in art refers to the process of challenging and dismantling the historical, cultural, and institutional legacies of colonialism within the art world. This involves re-evaluating power dynamics, rebalancing control, and recognizing and valuing Indigenous ways of knowing and doing as equal to Western perspectives (Phillips, 2021). It also encompasses the reclaiming of discourse, representation, and the production of new knowledge through the use of Indigenous symbology, aesthetics, and cultural-spiritual practices (Straits et al., 2019). Furthermore, decolonization in art involves centering marginalized voices, debunking narrow definitions, and decentering dominant modes of activism to create a more inclusive and representative art space (Hall, 2019). This process also extends to the re-examination of museum collections, with a focus on integrating Black feminism and art to re-evaluate human skeletal remains in museums (Lans, 2020).

Decolonization in art is intertwined with the broader movements of decolonization in various fields, such as fashion, constitutionalism, and design (Mills, 2021; Reato, 2021; Mareis et al., 2022). It is also linked to the cultural reaffirmation of Black people during the decolonization era, as evidenced by the role of Black writers' and artists' congresses and art festivals in the Black and African Renaissance (Obszyński, 2023). Additionally, the decolonization of art history and institutions has been a focal point, with a recent emphasis on addressing the legacies of major European and American colonial powers (Rampley, 2021).

One of the most relevant examples on how decolonization impacted the arts and cultural fields is the process of renaming of museums in India after independence. This is significant in the context of decolonization and the representation of cultural heritage. This process reflects a broader effort to redefine national identity and reclaim indigenous narratives, signifying a shift towards representing and reconstructing the nation's cultural memory, aligning with the principles of decolonization and the reclamation of heritage Blakkisrud & Kuziev (2019).

The renaming of museums in India after independence is a testament to the country's endeavor to assert its cultural sovereignty and reshape the narrative of its historical and cultural heritage.

Examples are the Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay (now Der. Bhau Daji Lad Museum) or the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India which now is Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) in Mumbai.

Methods of research

According to the new wave of decolonization in marketing, this study aims at acknowledging the importance of including multiple voices in research and adopting new ways of knowing and doing (Eckhardt et al. 2022). The research team is made of Indian and Italian researchers with different expertise and a shared genuine interest in Indian culture and history.

Following the recommendation of rigorous qualitative research (e.g., Belk 2007), we apply a multi-method approach based on in-depth interviews, focus groups and in-site observations. The interviewees have been selected using purposeful sampling. The majority of interviews have been conducted in person or using online platforms like Zoom from October to December 2023. The research was carried out largely in Mumbai area. However, informants from other Indian areas were also involved. During the interviews and focus groups, we collected data in the form of narratives to allow self-reflection.

The questions and discussions covered the informants' lives, personal interests, daily life, use of social media and sources of information, experiences of museum visits, arts, and their idea of what Indian culture and history mean to them. When needed, we applied projective techniques to stimulate the understanding of those feelings, emotions, and attitudes about which individuals can be unaware. We asked informants to choose images to express their feelings or their conceptualization of Indian art, or to provide associations with pre-selected images related to the topics under investigation. The data collected provided information on the different perspectives, experiences, and attitude towards art consumption and Indian culture in general, and most of all, the multiple visions about what decolonization in intended in contemporary India. Overall, around 80 informants belonging with Gen Z with different backgrounds and living in different Indian cities have been involved and took part to the project.

The process of data analysis and interpretation is still in progress. Following rigorous procedures (e.g., Thompson et al. 1989; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Spiggle 1994), three authors have concluded vertical analysis of the transcripts, and have developed open and axial coding for a relevant section of the dataset. The main codes used in the vertical analysis were both suggested by the literature and in part emerging from an emic approach.

Context of the research

Observations and interviews were conducted with a particular focus on the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai as it plays a pivotal role in the decolonization of cultural institutions in India. By renaming the museum and focusing on indigenous cultural narratives, the institution challenges colonial legacies and promotes a more inclusive and representative understanding of Indian heritage.

Museums were established in India by the British colonial government in the mid-19th century to promote various objectives. These included primarily trade to increase profits for the colonial administration and the documentation of flora and fauna to understand the potential resources of the

colonised land. Of almost equal importance was the documentation of indigenous communities in an effort to control and segregate the local populations to effectively rule in a vast and strange land. Segregation was especially used when hiring for the armed forces and different communities and castes were employed in different regiments and competition between them was encouraged. Frequently museums were employed to showcase the superiority of the coloniser demonstrated through improvements to building techniques as opposed to indigenous forms, technological improvements in farming, water dispersal systems, drainage, urban planning etc. Craftsmen were singled out for particular attention in an effort to improve their techniques and skills so as to produce objects that could be sold at International Exhibitions, fairs and shops in the West. Ostensibly presented as an educational project to expand the knowledge of the masses, museums became the fora through which the coloniser could present themselves to the colonised as a benefactor whose systems of organisation and codification represented a better model for development. By presenting themselves as superior the coloniser attempted to encourage emulation so as to exercise greater control and mute resistance. Much of the above is demonstrated in the collections of the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum, the erstwhile Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay.

Established in 1857, the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum is Mumbai's oldest museum and the third oldest in the country. In 1975, it was renamed after the eminent scholar and philanthropist Dr Bhau Daji Lad, whose tireless efforts had helped to establish the Museum. The Museum was built to showcase the city's art and craftsmanship through a rare collection of fine and decorative arts of 19th-century India. In its original conception in the mid-19th century, the Museum was intended as an encyclopaedic institution with a strong focus on artistic innovation to appeal to European clients and encourage trade. Its collection, initially similar to curiosity cabinets of the time, included natural history and geological specimens as well as gifts, archaeological finds and rare objects. It evolved and expanded to include skilfully crafted dioramas and clay figurines that highlighted the life and culture of India in the 19th century; paintings, rare books, manuscripts, textiles and an extraordinary collection of decorative arts executed in an early modernist style that was made by some of India's finest master craftsmen.

After Independence, the Museum was neglected as a colonial relic and was in a derelict condition. The Municipal Corporation of Mumbai owns the Museum and it was persuaded to enter into the Public-Private Partnership in 2003 and establish an autonomous Trust to manage the Museum, at a time when conservation was an unknown science in India and museums were forgotten and forlorn institutions. It took five years to completely restore the Museum building as well as over 3000 objects from the collection and redesign and re-curate the display, for which the Museum won UNESCO's 2005 Asia Pacific Award of Excellence for Cultural Conservation, the highest award in the field. The project involved reconstituting the entire institutional structure to make it an autonomous government institution and the re-curation of the permanent collection in the light of new research. It also involved hiring and training new Museum personnel.

The project of repurposing the BDL Museum, from the beginning was intended to interrogate colonial legacies manifest in both the building and the objects and also to extend the interrogation into the contemporary environment. Much of the colonial intentions and attitudes that BDL Museum question continue to prevail albeit in different forms today. The post restoration intention at the Museum has always been to destabilise and question modes of authority and their forms of legitimation that enable antithetical social ways of being. These legacies continue to inform current political and social interactions and impede social cohesion and progress. The Museum believes it can actively contribute to the post-colonial world by helping people understand and deconstruct these colonial legacies

It was therefore daunting to reinvent a colonial museum and represent it as a modern institution (and not just as a typically ethnographic colonial museum) with the intention to explore and redefine these histories through contemporary cultural practice. The new display privileged the subaltern point of view. At the centre of our endeavour was the intention to give primacy to the Indian artist and craftsperson, who were responsible for the building and the objects but who had been denied recognition during colonial times. The miniature figurines of the craftsmen who made the objects were presented as central to each vitrine display. They were given pride of place and our multi-lingual labels and research emphasised this. Similarly, our exhibition program privileges Indian art practice and brings the artist into focus.

George Birdwood, the first curator of the erstwhile V&A Museum, Bombay, was an important Victorian aesthete and colonial administrator. He was responsible for almost singlehandedly articulating the aesthetic canon that would define Indian art for the Western imagination, as well as determining the Museum's collecting policies and its exhibition strategies and mode of engagement with the viewer. These were predicated on economic objectives and a prejudiced understanding of both the artist and the craftsman's ability to create artworks or objects considered to be "fine" art. The Victorian canon privileged the naturalistic representation of subjects above all else. Indian artists worked within a predetermined schema and an idealized representation of the subject and narrative. The two canons were diametrically opposite. This disjuncture led to British administrators, such as Birdwood, and critics, such as the British aesthetic ideologue John Ruskin, to term Indian art as primitive and lacking intellectual refinement. More than those of any other British administrator, Birdwood's views on artistic and cultural practice in India determined Western perception and understanding of Indian art and artefacts. He was friends with Ruskin, whose writings about In¬dian art influenced generations of London's intellectual elite. Their views, unfortunately, informed the general perception of Indian art well into the late 20th century and bedevilled the reception of Indian modern and contemporary art in the international arena.1

As a museum, BDL Museum had been deeply mindful about countering inherited debilitating narratives and deconstructing colonial and other negative perceptions. Our exhibition and education programs help our audiences understand and decode subtle forms of derogation and exclusion evident in the ways in which the collections were conceptualised as well as legacies that continue to impinge on society today. BDL Museum has responded by putting in place a robust exhibition program that invites 'fine' artists who had earlier been excluded from the Museum to interrogate the archive and the history of the Museum. Artists have responded by unpacking layers of meaning in juxtaposition with the collection to produce new readings of the collection that give it a new agency.

BDL Museum has created a space in Mumbai where for the first time you could see comprehensive solo exhibitions of contemporary artists in an unusual institutional setting that added layers of meaning and context to their work and practice as well. Since it opened to the public in 2008, over 85 exhibitions have been presented, which include collaborations with both local and international institutions and organizations. Past exhibitions have showcased contemporary art and creative practices in design, crafts and textiles, architecture, urbanism, and film and video art.

In addition, BDL Museum has extensive education and outreach programs that include movies at the museum, theatre, workshops, and talks and discussions for both adults and children of varying age groups that specifically address issues arising from colonial and other debilitating legacies. BDL Museum does not want to be didactic but to provoke audiences to question and hopefully decode issues by understanding legacies and their implications. BDL Museum has also foregrounded the practice of craftsmen through festivals and craft demonstrations as their authorship went unrecognized in the Museum during the colonial period. By acknowledging and celebrating the artist and the craftspeople BDL Museum has attempted to recognize and promote their practice and give them an important sense of their contribution.

BDL Museum has done deep research on the collection to enlarge the understanding of the colonial impact on such institutions and have recently brought out a book 'Mumbai: A City Through Objects - 101 Stories from the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum'. The book unpacks the colonial perspective and brings new readings to the collection in light of new scholarship on the subject. The book was launched in 2022 to commemorate the Museum's 150th anniversary and was co-published with Harper Design, Harper Collins' new design imprint and has won several awards including Art Book of the Year, Best Design and Best Production from the publishing industry.

The museum's approach to decolonization is reflected in its efforts to present Indian history and culture from an indigenous perspective. It focuses on local artisans, crafts, and traditions, aiming to provide a more authentic and nuanced representation of Mumbai's cultural heritage (Trivedi, 2017, Ramaswamy, 2008). This shift challenges the colonial narratives that often marginalized or misrepresented local cultures and histories.

Moreover, the museum engages in various educational and outreach programs that encourage public participation and foster a deeper understanding of Mumbai's cultural heritage. These initiatives are part of the museum's broader strategy to make cultural heritage accessible and relevant to contemporary audiences, particularly the younger generation.

Preliminary findings
Consumption of arts as pillars of identity formation and personal growth
One of the most interesting empirical pieces of evidence emerging from our research is related to the shared positive feelings and attitudes towards the salience of art and culture in everyday life and in the construction of personal biographies.
One of our informants, a young woman who holds a bachelor in History, and lives in a city with a remarkable heritage, experiences the consumption of art as part of her identity. According to her, art and culture are integral to individual and collective identity formation and personal growth:

"*Let me think, to be very honest, like art includes a lot of things. Like it includes architecture, customs, your religion. Like every part. Like whatever you look around, it is part of art and culture. Like it's part of your heritage and the people. Like what I personally feel is like what I am is because of my culture and my Heritage. So if I do not have the knowledge about it, so like I kind of question my identity, like if I don't, if like I won't find out like who I am, so the people will tell me who I am. So just basically, it kind of shapes us like in every single way, like be it in our like every single spare of our life. Art and culture shape us.* […] *It is basically for me personally. It's part of me trying to reclaim my identity and me telling the world who I am rather than the world telling me who I am, if I'm making any sense*" (inf_01)

Another interviewee, who has a professional background in fashion and marketing, with a focus on luxury brands, acknowledge the contribution of art in developing and nurturing her own interest in aesthetics and visual communication:

"*Coming from the world of fashion and design, art has been a significant influence, not only shaping my field but also serving as a primary source for research in both my college projects and professional work. This realization has led me to prioritize keeping up with the dynamic evolution of the art world, now an essential component of my day-to-day responsibilities*" (inf_02)

Other informants reflect on art as a form of self-expression and creativity:

"*So to me, art is basically a peek into a person's soul, so the kind of art at that a person patronizes or produces is the kind of person he or she might be*" (inf_03)

"*It is all about creativity, in my opinion, like creating something new with the whole thing, like imagining things from a different angle, perspective, or method. The word, the art, conflicts with my ears*" (inf_04)

Art is interpreted by the viewers who ascribe their own meanings to the pieces of art to which they are exposed to:

"*Art for me is expression, not just like the artists expression, but what the viewer sees in it as well. Because a lot of the time, one may have created something having a particular emotion in mind, but for somebody else, it may mean something completely different. That's why we say that colors have feelings and colors have emotions that could be different for a lot of people.*" (inf_05)

Art means also the materialization of societal imagination, struggles, and ideologies. The diverse experiences and backgrounds of our informants do not impact on their genuine interest towards the arts. Despite professional expertise and education paths are related to a deeper knowledge about historical roots of Indian art, the acknowledgment of the importance of art is remarkable for any interviewee.

Indian art and heritage for Gen Z
Gen Z is proud of Indian art and heritage and appreciate its aesthetics, the richness of artifacts and the variety of forms of expression that includes architecture, craftmanship, jewelry, paintings, sculpture, music and cinema.

"Gen Z has fresh vibes with Indian culture. We blend the traditional with the modern, giving it our spin. It's like remixing tradition for the digital age." (inf_06)

"If I think for Indian, I mean Indian art and heritage, it is important that you know a lot of the we have a lot of existing heritage in terms of caves, in terms of you know, our, you know, ancient like let's say the Nalanda, you know Gandhara art. And you know even in later times we had so many different arts schools, so many different you know, architectural traditions that prevailed across the subcontinent… So I think in Indian context, there is, I mean an abundance of material, there is an abundance of evidence that exists for artistic work for architecture. And yeah, it is something that can greatly enrich our understanding of what India really stands for." (inf_07)

"I think about Saree, Clothes, and even jewelry. I also consider music and dance, like Bharatanatyam, to be a huge part of Indian art… I believe that India has always been a hub for textile. I am a Gujarati and Gujarat is known for its textile and forms of Design making. Like "Patola", which is one of the most ancient, luxurious and intricate Saree making art. There were many art Textile and handicraft artforms which were very famous in India but were lost after the British Invasion." (inf_08)

"I think of Rajasthan, Jaipur, the Palaces. Indian art for me is something which is Royal and shows our heritage. The Cultural aspect that reflects from the monuments and Architecture in Rajasthan is just what I think is a perfect example of Indian Art for me." (inf_02)

"Ladakh… The monasteries, the prayer flags – it's like art in the landscape. The mix of spirituality and the raw beauty of the region, it's something you can't put into words." (inf_09)

The abundance of cultural and artistic material that can enrich the understanding of Indian tradition and heritage is at the heart of Indian pride.

The impact of colonization and decolonization in art

The implications of colonization and decolonization are clearly depicted in our informants' mind. They relate decolonization to the act of reclaiming the authenticity and pride of Indian identity, of overcoming the feeling of inferiority that was common in the recent past:

"Decolonization is like reclaiming identity – shaking off foreign influences and embracing our own culture. It's about rewriting our narrative and journeying towards authenticity…. Decolonization brings cultural pride and authenticity, while colonisation can dilute our unique identity, erasing local voices and stories." (inf_02)

"Yes, I remember one time I was visiting the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya and I came across an exhibit about the history of the Indian independence movement. I was really moved by the stories of the people who fought for freedom from British rule. It made me appreciate how important it is to stand up for what you believe in." (inf-19)

"Talking about the problems with colonisation, one big issue is that it can make our own culture less visible. When another culture mixes in, our original art and traditions might not stand out anymore. Also, sometimes important art pieces can be taken away by the colonisers, and we lose a part of our history. Now, when we look at the good side of getting rid of colonisation, it's like rediscovering who we are. It lets us blend our culture with others in a way that can make our art even better. We might come up with new kinds of art that represent our country well, something worth keeping for the future." (inf_02)

"Art includes a lot of things and decolonization basically means reclaiming the part of my heritage and my identity.. For example, like there's this word Dharma, so there's not an English equivalent of the word Dharma in the English language. So therefore when the Britishers came and everything they kind of ascribe it to religion. So we have been following like I was personally following like the Dharma

means religion for the past 20 years of my life, which recently I discovered like no, Dharma doesn't mean religion, it means something else. So for me, decolonization means reclaiming part of my heritage and identity and telling the world that no, this is, this is what dharma means. You do not have the word for this, this particular word. So it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist or something like that. So that is part of if I'm making any sense." (inf_10)

"An example like when I went to London Museum, over there there was these idols of Lord Shiva and Natraj and everything and in our religion or like in our culture these people are living human beings. These people have Pran (soul) in them. These are not some sort of aesthetic decoration for the living room or drawing room. And in those museums those like these idols are being placed some sort of like like that only. So what I feel is like we as the people of India need to reclaim our heritage back. We need to get our idols and gods back from these Britishers or other European countries because for us these people are living beings, these people are not some sort of statue or something. So like for me personally, when I went to British Museum I really felt that Strong urge to take all the idols back, but unfortunately I couldn't." (inf_09)

The respondents elaborate about this topic in different ways and provide multiple examples, and at the same time, are concerned for the ones who are not aware of or are not enough familiar with it:

"Basically, like if I have to go like what decolonization personally means to me and why is it important for me? Simply because there's this all like if you look 20 years back, the people kind of had some sort of inferiority complex that our culture is very bad, our arts and forms, they are nothing. Our languages are very, you know, they're inferior to the British languages, Latin, Greek and everything. So we had these inferior complexes. What I felt like once I started reading about my own heritage, my own art, my culture and everything, I became more of a confident person in my own identity. Because at the end of the day I am part of this culture, I'm part of the soil only, right? So when I even went to London and and I had talked to people of other cultures and they were from like America and everything. So they also had the sense of pride in being an American. And for the first time like I've been out, like I've been abroad a lot of many times. But for the like, in the last past two years, it was the first time I kind of I was proud that I'm an Indian because of the fact that I was able to and because of the fact that I have studied a lot and I know what my culture stood for. So it kind of like it has played a very important role in my life, like this decolonization thing, because it gave a sense of confidence in me. Like me, being part of this culture is kind of a very big thing and it's not a small thing and I should be very proud of it." (inf_03)

Some informants see also colonization as a source of culture enrichment in the way it has brought variety into the Indian art that at the end has benefited by this melting:

"I perceive the changes if you asked me in a very like positive way as well as a negative way. There is no perfect answer for this. We did lose many cultural aspects of India before colonization. But then again, you know, art is also formed by the mixture of two cultures. So when British colonized us, whether you like it or not, they brought in some things with them, like the railway, right? We got to know about Britain's art and since Britain had different colonies, different parts of the world. So India also gained some cultural aspects from the other countries and as well as Britain. That is my overall perspective of it." (inf_02)

Motivation and (dis-)engagement with museums
Young Indian consumers demonstrate a genuine interest in museums, viewing them as avenues for learning, inspiration, and cultural engagement. Their motivations for visiting museums vary, from academic pursuits to personal interests, indicating a multifaceted approach to engaging with cultural heritage. They experience these spaces as immersive places that provide opportunities to explore a wide range of art forms, historical artifacts, and cultural narratives:

"I really enjoy the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, formerly known as the Prince of Wales Museum. It has a vast collection of artefacts from India and around the world. I also like the

Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, which has a focus on Indian art and artefacts… I love learning about new things and seeing different perspectives on the world. I also enjoy the peace and quiet of museums. They're a great place to escape the hustle and bustle of city life." (inf_20)

"… what we mean in the context of museums is in some ways to represent that essence that I alluded to. It is in some ways to present these art sort of artifacts or this art, you know, these artistic masterpieces. All of this in a manner that we're able to understand and we're able to in some ways connect with that shared heritage that brings together people from across the subcontinent, from across the, you know, erstwhile colonized domain. And to understand that there is a certain continuity from, you know, ancient times. There's a certain way in which people have imagined our, you know, this, the civilization from earlier times. And to try and understand, to try and connect with that and explore" (inf_05)

Paradoxically, despite this positive approach they do not visit them frequently. Many of them prefer to experience the immersion with friends and not alone. Some informants remember themselves as children visiting museums and feeling bored and only as adult are able to understand all the positive benefits.

The main barriers are related to the perceived lack of knowledge in art that limits the capability to understand the messages conveyed by the artists or the heavy traditional lecture-based way of approaching to them. The high-brow and exclusive nature of traditional exhibitions pose significant barriers to accessibility, limiting the engagement of diverse audiences, including younger generations like Gen Z. This limitation is not only geographical but also socio-economic and cultural. Traditional exhibition spaces, with their formal settings and sometimes prohibitive entrance fees, create an environment that alienates individuals who do not conform to traditional art-world expectations:

"I just remember it being a little boring because I was too young to appreciate another time. But now that I look back in. The building itself, the way was made like other buildings in the South. I'm impressed by the British architectural. Pretty beautiful here." (inf_18)

Moreover, the lack of accessibility extends to the presentation and interpretation of art within these spaces. The traditional reliance on academic language and exclusive art historical narratives can further alienate audiences, particularly those who may not have formal art education. The result is a disconnect between the art world and the broader public, hindering the democratization of art appreciation:

"The general public, including Gen Z, isn't fully aware of our nation's art and culture due to the openness of the world. The internet, providing easy access to global cultures, plays a significant role in this awareness. Gen Z adapts by aligning with various cultures worldwide, potentially leading to a partial detachment from our native culture. The internet, while fostering diversity, presents both benefits and drawbacks to our generation's connection with cultural roots." (inf_01)

"… having just the exhibits, like the traditional form of doing it, exhibits and then a little card or a placard, which is, which has a lot of literature over it, because it is very difficult for a person, a normal person to read who is not an expert in that field" (inf_06)

Museum curators and government could do more and taking inspiration from other cultural institutions in the world:

"If I will have to quote a current example like basically the old parliament building it's getting renamed at Samvidhan Sadan, something like that, the Constitution House or something like that. And it's turning into a museum. And what I feel is it it's a good step in that way because they are they're naming it in in big terms and not in the English language terms. So it's a good step towards colonization and they're kind of reclaiming our identity over this. Secondly, what will I say in the colonization of museums, I will say like the museums which are currently in India like in Delhi and whatever the Art Museum and everything they are still on a very European lines like they're basically date wise and your wise and

everything. So what I feel is what government can do is they can more follow the Indian tradition of making it a more like story wise format and they can have more of the initiatives and everything around it." (inf_03)

"I have visited museums in Europe and I really liked it. It had a very different vibe. Some were appreciative, some of them were, there were some kids who were just roaming around... people don't know enough about them, because I haven't been to any museum in India but in France, yes. Because it's a thing there to visit museums. I don't have much knowledge about museums in India. Though recently there was something about Van Gogh, which I saw a lot on Instagram. It was well promoted where I actually wanted to go but couldn't. Even NMACC is doing a really good job in promoting themselves." (inf_21)

Some Indians museums are appreciated for the efforts to involve visitors through new technology and immersive experiences:

"The National Museum, Delhi was mind-blowing. It felt like stepping into the future with interactive exhibits one of its kind, housing over 200,000 artifacts ranging from the pre-historic to the modern age were amazing." (inf_08)

"A couple of years ago, I explored the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai. Witnessing the legacy of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, a profound theorist of Indian art, was surreal. Yet, it was the diverse array of art spanning different eras that truly captured my imagination." (inf_17)

Gen Zers ask for more innovation based on new technology within cultural institutions as they envision it as a powerful and effective tool to make the meaning of artifacts more easy to grasp to general audience:

"Virtual reality exhibits, augmented reality guides – make it immersive! Picture walking through history with AR overlays or experiencing an artist's studio in VR. That's the future. Museums must embrace tech to remain relevant and appeal to the tech-savvy crowd." (inf_08)

"I believe museums can embrace technology more effectively. Introducing interactive exhibits, integrating VR experiences, or crafting user-friendly mobile apps for self-guided tours can transform the museum experience into something more immersive and attractive for younger audiences." (inf_17)

Another strategy that is perceived as insightful and effective to make museums more inclusive is the engagement of local artists or communities:

"It's paramount for museums to showcase a rich tapestry of art that reflects diverse cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Collaborating with local artists or communities, and providing a platform for their work, can infuse museums with fresh perspectives, making them inclusive spaces for everyone." (inf_16)

Conclusions

This study provides insights into the perspectives of young Indian consumers regarding the decolonization of art and museums, particularly in the context of Mumbai. Through an extensive qualitative research approach, incorporating in-depth interviews, focus groups, and on-site observations, the study highlights several key conclusions:

    A. Cultural Pride and Identity Formation: young Indian consumers view art and culture as integral to their identity formation and personal growth. They express a strong sense of pride in Indian

heritage and recognize the role of art in reclaiming and asserting their cultural identity post-colonization.

B. Diverse Interpretations and Meanings: Art is perceived as a multifaceted medium that allows for personal interpretation and self-expression. The study participants appreciate the diverse forms of Indian art, including architecture, craftsmanship, jewelry, painting, sculpture, music, and cinema, and see these as crucial components of their cultural heritage.

C. Impacts of Colonization and Decolonization: the respondents are acutely aware of the historical impacts of colonization, including the erasure and appropriation of their cultural heritage. Decolonization is seen as a process of reclaiming authenticity and pride in Indian identity, overcoming past feelings of inferiority, and addressing historical injustices.

D. Engagement with Museums: while young consumers demonstrate a genuine interest in museums, viewing them as spaces for learning and inspiration, they also identify barriers to engagement. These include the perceived lack of accessible knowledge, the high-brow nature of traditional exhibitions, and a disconnect between the art world and the broader public.

E. Recommendations for Museums: to enhance engagement, the study suggests that museums adopt innovative approaches, such as integrating new technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) to create immersive experiences. Additionally, collaborating with local artists and communities can provide fresh perspectives and make museums more inclusive and reflective of diverse cultural backgrounds.

F. Role of Technology: participants envision a future where technology plays a central role in making art more accessible and engaging. Interactive exhibits, VR experiences, and user-friendly mobile apps are seen as effective tools to attract and educate younger audiences, making the museum experience more relevant and immersive.

G. Educational and Promotional Efforts: there is a need for better promotion and education about Indian museums and their offerings. Informants suggest that museums could benefit from more effective marketing strategies, drawing inspiration from successful international examples, to raise awareness and interest among the public.

H. Empowerment and Inclusivity: the study underscores the importance of empowering marginalized communities by celebrating diverse cultural heritage and creating platforms for underrepresented voices. Decolonization efforts in the art world should focus on inclusivity, ensuring that all cultural narratives are recognized and valued.

I. Ongoing Research and Analysis: the preliminary findings indicate a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences related to art consumption and cultural heritage. Further research and analysis are required to deepen the understanding of these themes and to develop comprehensive strategies for decolonizing art and museums in India.

Through this research, we aim to contribute to the broader discourse on decolonization in marketing and cultural studies, highlighting the significance of multiple voices and perspectives in shaping a more inclusive and representative art world. The findings suggest that young Indian consumers are keenly aware of their cultural heritage and are actively seeking ways to engage with it meaningfully, advocating for a decolonized approach that honors their history and identity.

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