



ANCIENT INDIA SENSORY TRAIL

This trail will guide you through the exhibition. There are five stops with sensory activities for you to enjoy.

Throughout the gallery, you will find signs like this one with sensory items that you can touch, smell and listen to.



Enjoy your visit!

In collaboration with



**The British
Museum**

Report on the Development of the Sensory Trail for the Ancient India Exhibition at the British Museum (London, U.K.) with Access For ALL (Bombay, India)

Team Access For ALL:

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Research team – Nirali Shah, Rohan Marathe, Gauri Gupta

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Over the past 15 months, Access For ALL has collaborated with the British Museum to conceptualize and develop a Sensory Trail for the Ancient India exhibition. This initiative marks a historic first-of-its-kind collaboration in the British Museum's 270-year history with an Indian-origin DEI consultancy.

The project has been community-driven from inception, ensuring the voices and lived experiences of neurodiverse audiences and persons with disabilities are central to its design.

Community Collaboration and Research

The foundation of the Sensory Trail was built through extensive community engagement. Access For ALL worked in close partnership with the Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA), the British Museum's Access team, and the curatorial team of the Ancient India exhibition led by Sushma J. and Kajal. The research process was designed to be inclusive, sensitive, and participatory.

Siddhant Shah, Founder of Access For ALL, played a crucial role during the on-ground research. By conversing in Hindi and Gujarati, he was able to create a comfortable environment for APDA members, enabling them to openly share their perspectives and feedback. This linguistic and cultural bridge proved invaluable in capturing authentic community voices, which directly informed the design of the trail.

Design and Curation of the Sensory Trail

Following the research phase, the Access For ALL team collaborated with the British Museum's Access team, particularly Jess and Jaime, to design and curate both the Sensory Trail and a supporting resource kit. This process was anchored in accessibility, creativity, and inclusivity, ensuring that the final design would resonate with neurodiverse audiences.



The Sensory Trail was developed with five distinct stops within the Ancient India exhibition. Each stop was carefully designed to offer a multi-sensory experience, integrating visual, tactile, and auditory elements. This approach allowed visitors to engage with the exhibition content in diverse ways, making it more inclusive and immersive.

Implementation and Facilitation

On 18th August, Siddhant Shah facilitated the Sensory Trail as part of the Relaxed Opening at the British Museum. The session was conducted in both English and Gujarati, reflecting the commitment to linguistic accessibility and inclusivity.



The event was well received, drawing participation from over 36 attendees. Feedback highlighted the value of the multi-sensory approach and the importance of tailoring museum experiences for neurodiverse communities. The relaxed environment further supported visitors in engaging with the exhibition in a meaningful way.

Knowledge Sharing and Outreach

In addition to the Sensory Trail session, Siddhant Shah also conducted a hands-on presentation with the British Museum's International Training Programme (ITP) fellows. During this session, he shared insights into the process of developing a sensory trail and discussed broader strategies for enhancing museum access for persons with disabilities. This interaction not only broadened the impact of the project but also contributed to knowledge exchange with cultural professionals from around the world.

Conclusion

The Sensory Trail for the Ancient India exhibition stands as a significant milestone in inclusive museum practice. Built on a foundation of year-long research, community participation, and international collaboration, it demonstrates how cultural institutions can evolve to meet the needs of neurodiverse audiences and persons with disabilities.

Access For ALL's partnership with the British Museum underscores the potential of cross-cultural, community-centered approaches in creating meaningful and accessible heritage experiences.



The British Museum