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DECOLONISING RESEARCH:

[Re]claiming Forgotten Narratives of the South Asian Collection at Kedleston Hall

A student-staff collaboration

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Abstract

This paper presents a group reflection between students and academics whilst working on a summer research project. Our aim is to reflect upon the forgotten narratives of the South Asian collection exhibited at Kedleston Hall, a National Trust property in Derbyshire. The spatial presence of these objects in the Hall is being reviewed by the National Trust considering current decolonising initiatives. This is a process we are contributing to by co-designing a framework for a serious (educational) game, which aims to engage younger audiences with the collections, using a decolonial lens to support this. The authors are two students from the BArch; one student from the MArch; a PhD candidate who is also a lecturer, and an established academic. Our partnership is cemented by promoting inclusivity (as a student-staff partnership); broadening understandings of heritage; and supporting a decolonial approach to research. Our long-term aim, which exceeds the content of this article, is to produce a decolonial conceptual framework to reframe how we learn, teach, and conduct research. This article focuses on the process of the research, as a group reflection on our partnership, and how our own individual positionality has evolved in parallel to the research project.

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Introduction

This paper offers a group reflection on a summer student-staff collaboration, which appraised the exhibition of South Asian objects at Kedleston Hall by co-designing a decolonial lens. The topic came to the fore through conversations with different stakeholders, and responds to the need to decolonise universities, museums, and knowledge in general. The following pages record our collaboration, and the different stages of the research process to embrace the decolonising challenge: it started with the engagement with the literature, the co-design of a theoretical framework, the visit to the main case study, which includes our personal reflections on the collection and their forgotten narratives, the co-design of a methodology to explore these issues with participants, and a reflection on our own positionality. Following on the steps of other academics exploring with their students how to decolonize knowledge (Mellor, 2022, 28), our reflection delves on how to reframe dominant hegemonic narratives to include other voices.

Reflecting on our own positionality was an essential aspect of the research due to our own identities, our lived experiences and roles within the project. As Dwyer and Buckle assert:

> "We explicitly and implicitly situate ourselves throughout the research process but, in particular, in data collection and analysis [...]. The personhood of the researchers, including their membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an ever-present aspect of the investigation." (2022, 86).

Kedleston Hall, a country house in Derbyshire, has over 1,000 objects from across the Asian continent (National Trust 2025). The largest group of objects originate from India, and reflect the period when Curzon was Viceroy (1899-1905) in colonial India. This display reflects British Imperialism in India at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

> "The display of Indian and other Asian objects in the 'Eastern Museum' at Kedleston Hall reflects British Imperialism in India at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The objects were acquired by George Curzon (1859–1925), Viceroy of India from 1899–1905. By all accounts Curzon had a passion for Indian art and artefacts, but in recent years we have recognised that our method of display of objects was culturally insensitive. A new project is under way to work with experts in Asian art and history as well as Asian communities to research, interpret and redisplay the collection as much more than the spoils of Empire." (National Trust, n/d).

The National Trust acknowledges that these collections represent a particular era of British history, dominated by imperialism. But they also highlight the importance of reviewing these displays, recognising changes in history, and our current social and political context. Consequently, the National Trust is in the process to 'examine these links as part of our broader commitment to ensure that they are properly represented, shared and interpreted' (Huxtable et al. 2020).

Artefacts can be seen as more than static embodiments of culture, as a medium through which identity, power, and society are produced and reproduced (Ray 2020). This paper presents a group reflection on our student – staff collaboration, the process of co-designing a decolonising framework, and our own positionality which has developed alongside the research project.

Methods

This paper reflects on the research process, more than on the data collected, which will be published in due course. Consequently, this paper is framed by a qualitative methodology, using group reflection as the main method of enquiry, which is a method used widely in the literature pertaining student-staff collaborations (Marquis 2017; Hughes, Evans, Souto 2023). It is important for the authors to include a biographical note that goes beyond our institutional affiliation, to recognise how our own context influences our connection to the topic and the process of research. We believe that this is an important exercise when working in a partnership, especially exploring the idea of decolonising knowledge due to our different backgrounds and life experiences.

Who are you? Why did you take part in the project?

This is Amanpreet's biographical note:

> I am an architecture student entering the final year of my bachelor's degree. I am drawn to creative disciplines because I believe that art can be a language without words. I always wanted to place creativity within a meaningful, practical context. As a British Indian with immigrant parents, the idea of 'identity' often felt blurred and difficult to face. For a long time, I tried to avoid it. But through stories my grandparents would share - of their childhoods, Sikhism and old folk tales - I began to reconnect. One summer, they sent me a parcel filled with handwritten letters, childhood journals, and storybooks, the pages filled with script I could not yet read. That package sparked something in me: a love for poetic calligraphy, scrapbooking, and most importantly, a motivation to truly learn about

myself. I began learning Gurmukhi and Punjabi so I could understand what they had written to me.

Why did I get involved, Amanpreet?

Learning to heal and find peace feels so rare in this generation. In a world that seems constantly noisy and fast-paced, I want to remind myself to pause, to breathe, and to hold onto moments of happiness - something timeless and universal. For me, one way of doing that has been through learning: visiting new places, diving into personal creative projects, and saying yes to opportunities that align with who I am becoming. One of those opportunities was being able to work on this research project on decolonisation: to explore identity, memory and power - topics I have quietly wrestled with in my own life. Decolonisation, to me, is just that: recovering what was silenced, questioning dominant narratives, and honouring the voices and stories that have been left out. This project gave me space to ask difficult questions, to rethink how stories are told, and to imagine how museums can become more inclusive, honest and healing spaces.

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This is Nanfe's introduction:

I can only describe myself as just me. I am proudly Nigerian, although I know little of my country's rich heritage. I am a woman. I am Christian. I am straight. I am plus-sized. I have black hair and brown eyes, and my skin has a peachy, cantaloupe-y tone. I love reading—truly, anything—and I'm an avid listener of heart-wrenching ballads. I consider myself well-educated and a critical analyser of most aspects of my life. I have just completed my bachelor's degree in architecture. Ultimately, I am simply a mix of many intersecting identities that come together in perfect proportions to form who I am. It is through this specific lens that I view the world and encounter narratives of my own culture and those like mine, feeling their omissions and distortions acutely.

Nanfe, why did you get involved in this project?

I chose to join the research on decolonisation because I've always had a deep, personal interest in the topic—even before I knew what the word meant. I remember being in high school, passionate about history, yet disappointed by the narrow narratives I found in textbooks. As an African, I often saw my continent represented as underdeveloped, lacking, or somehow stuck in the past. At best, Africa was romanticised—exotic, ethnic, and primitive. This narrative never sat right with me. When I came to university in England, my love for history led me to museums, which I had hoped would be spaces of truth and reverence. However, I often left feeling underwhelmed or even insulted about how African heritage was presented. These experiences fuelled a desire to learn more about what decolonisation really means, and how I could contribute to the reclamation of my culture's dignity. I wanted to add my voice to the broader conversation of how we can begin to unravel a legacy of colonialism that still shapes our world today.

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This is Ghazal's statement:

I am a 26-year-old Iranian architecture student currently pursuing my master's (MArch). I speak Persian as my native language, and English is my second. My cultural roots are central to my identity. I have always felt a strong connection to Persian literature, traditional music, and classical poetry, but I also deeply appreciate Western classical music and global cinema. Growing up in a family that combined engineering logic with artistic sensibility, I found myself constantly navigating between structure and expression. That duality continues to shape how I approach

architecture and life. I consider myself emotionally empathetic, yet highly rational in decision-making. Helping others through design, conversation, or problem-solving gives me a deep sense of purpose.

Why did you join the project, Ghazal?

When I first encountered the term decolonisation during Ana's module, it was entirely new to me. The concept immediately intrigued me although Iran was never formally colonised, I have always felt the lingering effects of cultural and intellectual colonialism. That initial class discussion sparked meaningful conversations not only within the academic setting but also with my family back home, encouraging me to reflect more critically on the structures that continue to shape knowledge and identity. This project introduced me to a field of inquiry I now feel deeply connected to, and it helped me understand decolonisation not as a fixed endpoint, but as an ongoing process of reflection, learning, and inclusion. It has been transformative both academically and personally.

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This is Zeus' biographical introduction:

I am a part-time lecturer currently pursuing a PhD. Being a Parsi born and brought up in India, as a young adult I felt a sense of being the 'other' in the country I lived in. This piqued my curiosity to understand my cultural roots and those of the many traditions I was surrounded by. I got interested in exploring what heritage is in different contexts, what it means to its associated communities, and how it is understood by young adults. For four years I gained experience in the field of Heritage - being involved in documentation, teaching, and research projects that included building assessments, exhibitions, feasibility reports, publications, and design interventions for heritage sites in India, and UK. I am passionate about how heritage sites can be co-interpretated and communicated to young adults beyond their mere aesthetics and toward their multifaceted values and overall significance. This led me to undertake a PhD in co-designing serious games for cultural heritage sites. This process of co-design, of giving voice to different stakeholders, local

Amanpreet

Nanfe

Ghazal

community members, and end-users in shaping the digital interpretation of the site, is a process of decolonisation.

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Finally, this is how Ana introduced herself:

> I have been an academic for the last two decades. At the core of my practice is to promote collaborations with students, using extracurricular projects to think together. Originally from Spain, I spent two years in Mexico before moving to the UK. It was in Mexico when I first experienced the idea of decolonising knowledge, even though was not aware of it then. I was teaching 'Universal History' when the lesson about 1492 challenged what I had learnt in Spain (a narrative about the Discovery of America and the benefits of the Colonial period), against the narrative I learnt from my Mexican friends, students and colleagues (an acknowledgement of the brutality of the Conquest and subsequent inequalities that were dominant during and after the Spanish rule). I am still working on decolonising my knowledge and approach to research and teaching: this summer collaboration has been essential as part of this process.

Why did you, Ana and Zeus, co-designed and facilitated this project?

> As many other projects, the idea for this collaboration emerged in a very organic way, when three colleagues from CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India, visited our institution in April 2025. Visiting Kedleston as a group of 'others', offered us an opportunity to reflect on the disparities encountered in the Hall, especially in terms of the curation and exhibition of the objects from the South Asian collection, and the opulence of Western decor in the State floor. Zeus' interest in designing serious games to promote further engagement with younger audiences, also aligned with the need to update current curatorial practices using a decolonising lens.

Figure 01:
This is us, Amanpreet (student), Nanfe (student), Ghazal (student), Zeus (student and co-lead), Ana (academic and co-lead).

Mohammadi, 2025.

Zeus

Ana

Discussion and analysis: The research process

The main output of this summer project was to develop a theoretical framework and test it through a case study of Kedleston Hall, Derby. This will inform future phases of the project, which later will engage stakeholders and end-users to co-design a 'brief' of a serious game. This serious game aims to support the efforts to decolonise exhibitions in UK institutions. The next pages explain how we designed a conceptual framework to decolonise exhibitions, as well as the impact that this had on the development of our own positionalities.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Carrying out a literature review on decolonising knowledge towards developing a conceptual framework for a serious game was both intellectually stimulating and, at times, monotonous. Despite the richness of the topic, I felt a lack of engaging and objective, resources on decolonisation. Many of the sources were politically charged, and the authors biases were often becoming evident. The literature sparked great group discussions which were some of the most fulfilling aspects of the process. We debated, we questioned, and we tried to make sense of the complexity of decolonisation. In many ways, that back-and-forth became the real heart of the work – the reading existing knowledge, reflecting on that knowledge, then forming one's own view to then bring forth for discussion, hearing what the research team thought and then repeating the process. The fluid and often amorphous nature of our writing further complicated the task of synthesising ideas across the team: navigating this complexity required constant dialogue and clarification to ensure that individual interpretations could be integrated into a shared understanding.

The literature review highlighted the authors that resonated with our interest in the topic, which also informed the development of the group's conceptual framework. This can be seen as part of the Literature Review Diagram (figure 2). Decolonisation does 'not seek to rewrite history but rather broaden the boundaries by which it is examined' (Zabunyan 2022, 153). This idea resonated strongly with our project, since decolonising museums is not about erasing the past but presenting it with fuller context. Our interviews revealed that many visitors, even without knowing the term 'decolonisation,' were concerned about representation, accuracy, and transparency. Participants often expressed that they wanted to see multiple cultural perspectives reflected in exhibitions and believed that museums should address their colonial histories honestly without censorship, but with explanation and accountability.

Through this process, we learned that emotional responses to these issues such as discomfort, empathy, and curiosity were shared across diverse backgrounds. This showed us that decolonisation is both institutional and personal: it begins with inclusive dialogue and a willingness to reconsider dominant narratives. As suggested by Zabunyan, embracing a pluriversal approach can help restore visibility to the stories that have long been excluded, allowing museums to evolve into spaces of reflection and shared knowledge.

We often frame colonialism through stolen artifacts, but what is important is the way institutions continue to present knowledge through a colonial or biased framework:

> "Knowledge and culture were as much

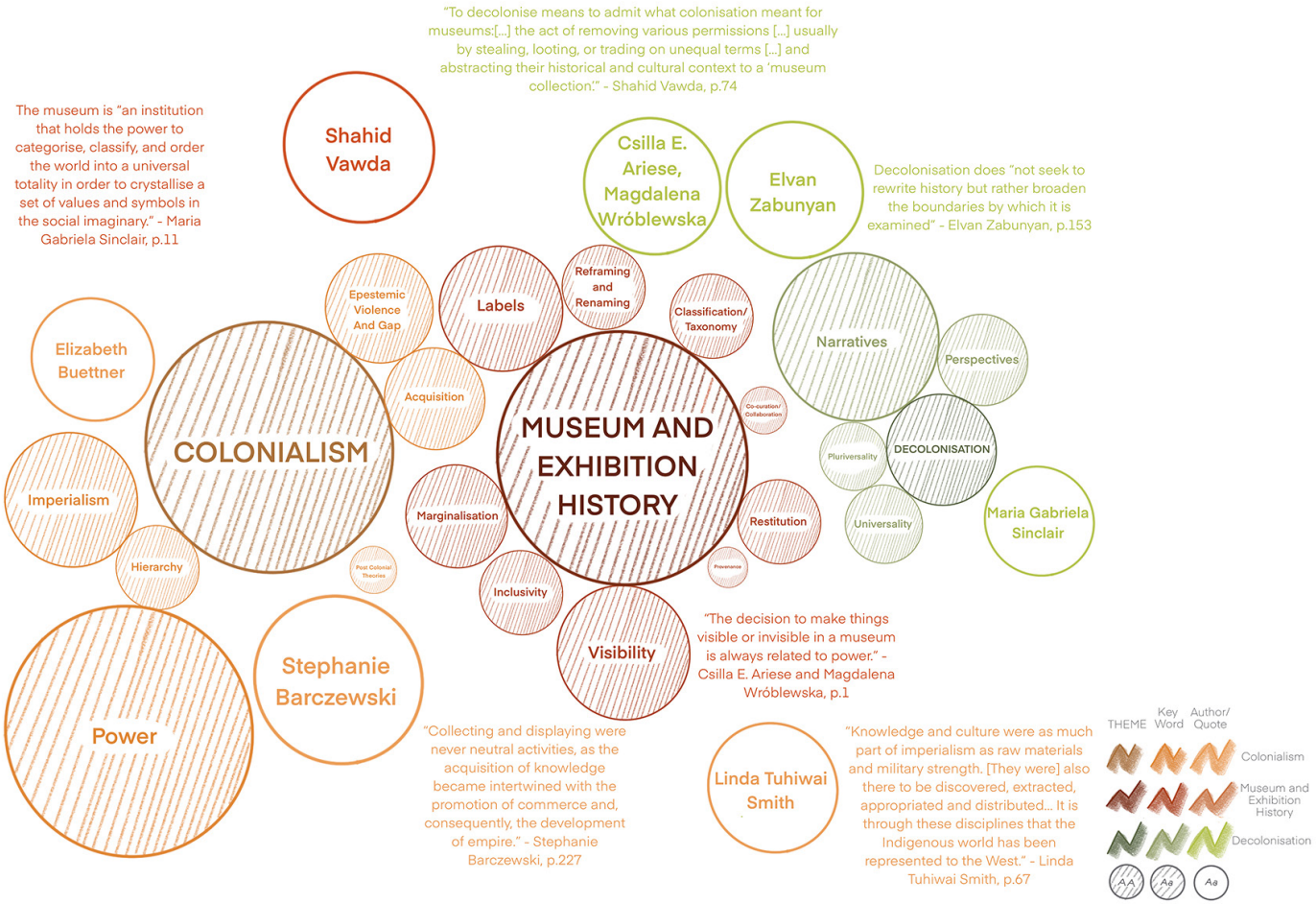
> part of imperialism as raw materials and military strength. [They were] also there to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed... It is through these disciplines that the Indigenous world has been represented to the West." (Smith 2021, 67).

Western imperialism used disciplines like ethnography and archival practices to claim ownership over Indigenous knowledge and culture, presenting them as 'discoveries' and placing them within Western systems of value. This reveals how knowledge production/storage in institutions like museums was not neutral but deeply entangled with colonial domination. This is very visible in collections like the Eastern Museum of Kedleston Hall, where objects acquired under colonial rule remain labelled with imperial taxonomies, their original meanings erased by the very systems that claimed to 'preserve' them. To this day, immigrants to Western nations may also search for fragmented parts of their identities within institutions such as museums. The task ahead would then be to transform museums from sites of extraction into spaces of co-creation, where marginalized communities reclaim authority over how their knowledge is stored, displayed, and valued.

One key point that emerged during the literature review was the understanding that 'collecting and displaying were never neutral activities, as the acquisition of knowledge became intertwined with the promotion of commerce and, consequently, the development of empire' (Barczewski 2014, 277). This observation was significant to our

Figure 02:
Literature Review Diagram.

Lar, 2025.



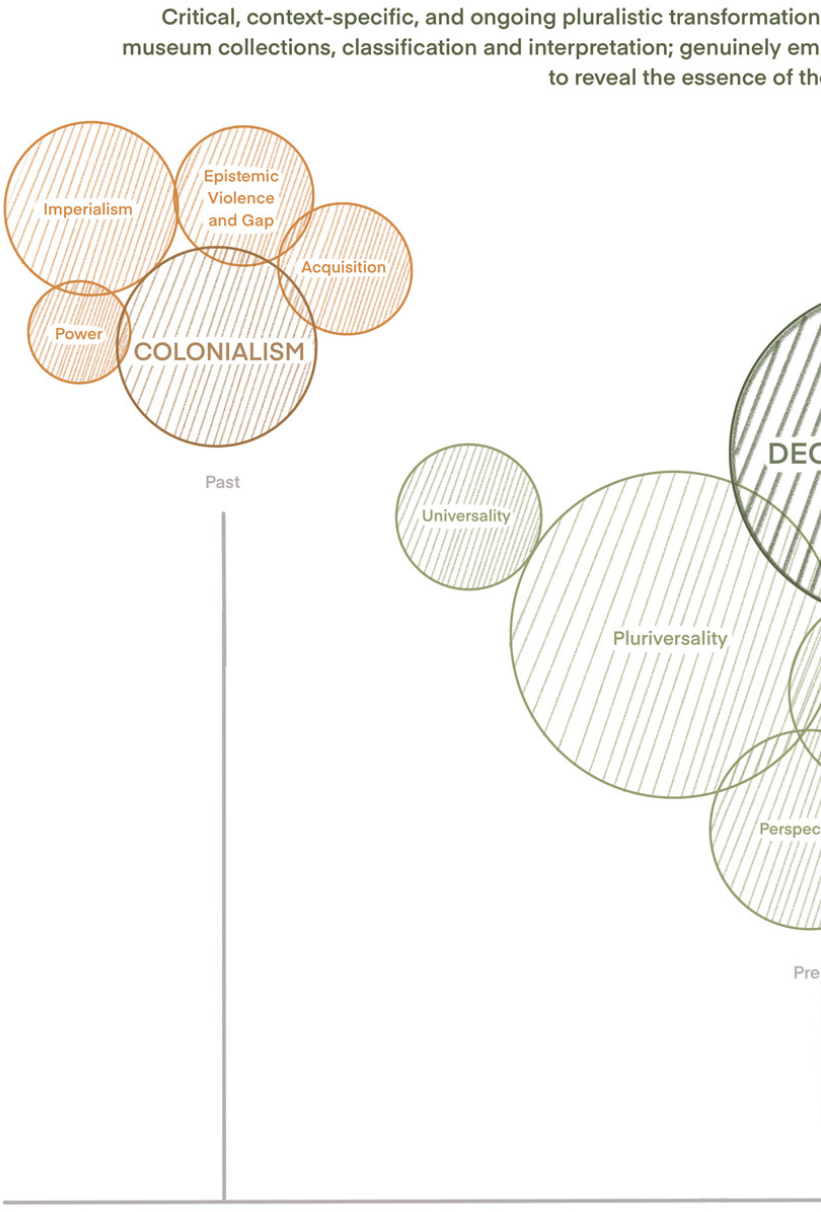
research, as it underscored the fact that the origins of many museum practices are rooted in systems of power and hierarchy. If these practices remain unchanged, the objects within these institutions continue to reflect colonial frameworks rather than neutral historical narratives. More critically, this insight highlighted the necessity of adopting a nuanced perspective—one that seeks to understand complex histories in their entirety rather than selectively interpreting them to support a preconceived stance. Just as the historical presentation of artefacts often served to legitimise empire, the way knowledge is framed today can also reinforce ideologies. The goal, therefore, should not be to promote a singular 'correct' narrative, but to foster a more holistic and inclusive account—one that resists simplification and reflects the plurality of experiences and perspectives involved.

This links to one of the quotes that we have used as a driver of the project:

> "In architecture particularly, the dominant voice has historically been a singular, exclusive voice, whose reach and power ignores huge swathes of humanity — financially, creatively, conceptually — as though we have been listening and speaking in one tongue only. The 'story' of architecture is therefore incomplete. Not wrong, but incomplete." (Lokko 2022).

As educators in the School of Architecture we tend to omit the 'other' as part of the history of architecture, as precedents for design projects. We are clearly missing out, and we must change the culture at the university to embrace those hidden by the colonial narrative.

The transition from the literature review to the development of a decolonisation framework was one of the most fulfilling parts of the process. Identifying key concepts emerging from the literature and reflecting on how they applied to our own practice allowed us to co-create a framework that was both critical and grounded. It felt as though we were drawing together multiple strands of inquiry into a coherent expression of our collective understanding. This statement summarises the theoretical foundations and the values that guided



our approach: Critical, context-specific, and ongoing pluralistic transformation is what will fundamentally challenge the colonial foundations of museum collections, classification and interpretation; genuinely empowering diverse voices and dismantling enduring power structures to reveal the essence of the multiple realities present.

is what will fundamentally challenge the colonial foundations of
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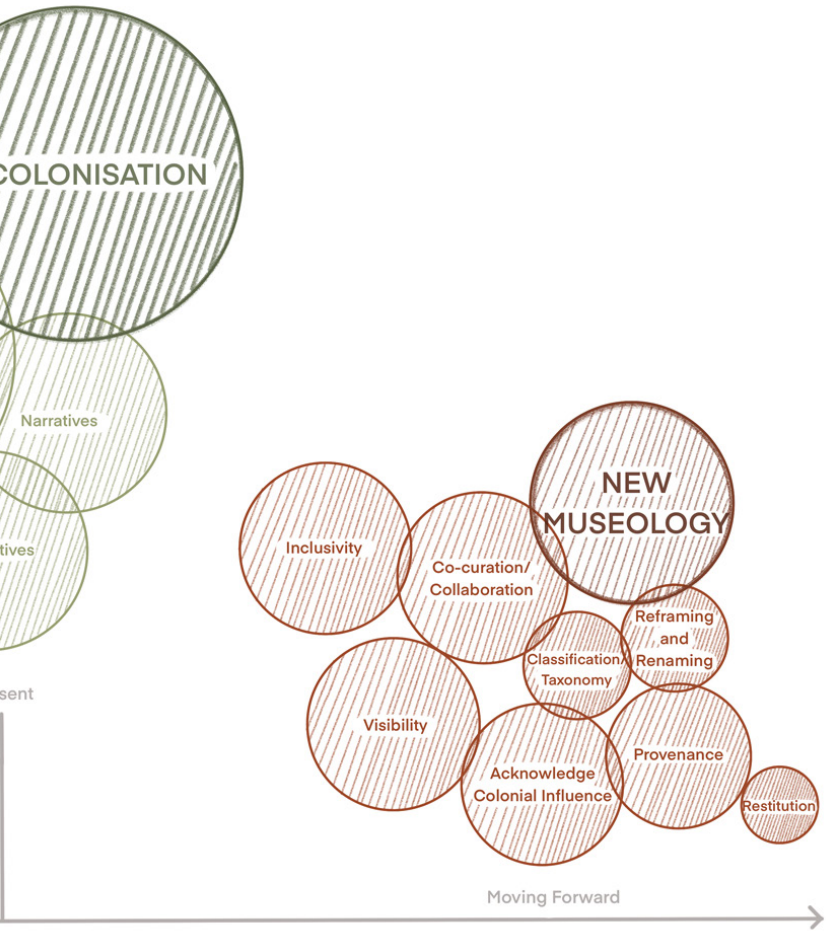


Research Methodology

After gathering weeks of research, our next challenge was transforming that knowledge into meaningful interview questions. We organised our thoughts and quotes into three categories, connected to the stakeholders we wanted to participate: end users, community members and cultural heritage experts. Our initial pool included around 60 questions, but through several rounds of editing and discussion, we refined them down to 18. To stay within our 40-minute target for each session, we conducted mock interviews and developed a smooth routine to keep things professional, consistent, and on schedule. This stage of the project taught us that designing questions is not just about curiosity—it is about clarity, sensitivity, and responsibility.

This process of data gathering highlighted how much room there still is for public education and awareness in this area. The interviews were not only a tool for data collection, but a form of mutual learning. As we listened to diverse opinions and engaged in conversation, we gained a more balanced view of the topic. Despite the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences, we also encountered shared values and emotional responses that transcended nationality or race. These moments reminded us of our shared humanity: how feelings of displacement, care, discomfort, or hope are not bound to one culture but are universal. This understanding added depth to our project and reinforced the importance of listening across differences.

Figure 03:
Decolonising Framework.

Lar, 2025.

Visit to Kedleston Hall

Our visit to Kedleston Hall was emotionally charged and critically revealing—particularly in relation to its Eastern Museum and colonial artefacts. Entering the dim, cramped basement gallery—a space starkly neglected compared to the sunlit, contemplative grandeur of the State Rooms—felt profoundly disrespectful. The artefacts, many originating from colonised regions, were presented under poor lighting, with vague or inaccurate labels, and an overall sense of disregard. Persian objects, familiar to one of us through personal cultural heritage, were misattributed to other cultures—fundamental errors that seriously undermine any curatorial authority. The imbalance is striking: the main house celebrates British heritage with care and reverence, while the colonial collection is exhibited in a dark, small space.

This experience underscored how colonial legacies persist through subtle marginalisation—via careless display, selective storytelling, and the erasure or distortion of non-Western histories. We were left questioning how museums shape public understanding through omission and misrepresentation. The absence of curatorial intentionality was glaring; even a modest acknowledgment of this marginalisation could have shifted the gallery's message from one of neglect to one of critical reflection.

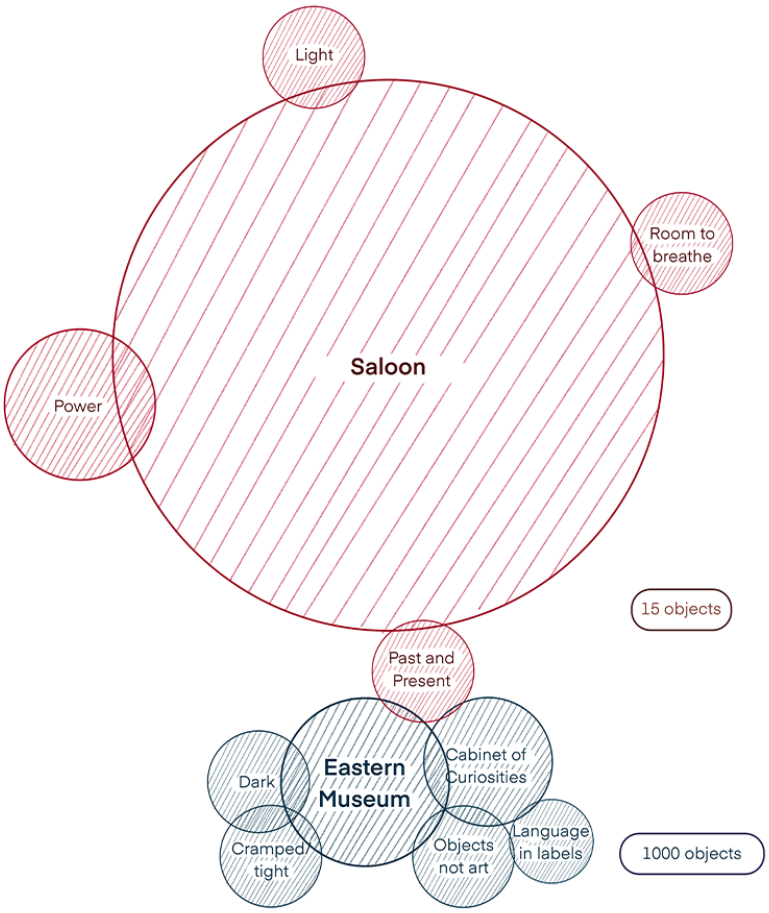
By contrast, visits to the Derby Museum and the Museum of Making offered a powerful counterpoint. Both institutions demonstrated thoughtful and respectful curation: artefacts were given space, context, and dignity. These visits reinforced a vital lesson—regardless of provenance, all artefacts deserve a baseline of care through accurate labelling, appropriate lighting, and preservation. This not only honours the objects and their originating cultures but also respects the public's capacity to engage with complex histories.

At a recent visit to Kedleston Hall in November 2025, we were encouraged to see the Hall covered in Diwali decorations, celebrating the 'Festival of Light', the most celebrated festival in India and is celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs' (National Trust, 2025). This is the third time that Kedleston Hall has embraced Diwali, creating an extraordinary precedent for other National Trust properties to recognise the pluriversality of their collections. Moreover, Kedleston Hall is now promoting a dialogue with visitors regarding the Eastern Museum. Some of these comments have now been displayed, including comments such as: 'What a glorification of colonial power this was... please, be more critical', or 'Feelings are mixed: I like to see these things but feel a slight sadness as to how it came to be here'. These comments aligned with the feelings expressed above by the research team. However, other comments displayed in this conversation express different views: 'I didn't find anything unsettling about the museum. Matter of fact I'm grateful that Lord Curzon kept these artifacts for so long and maintained them so well for us to see'. We hope that adding this conversation alongside the South Asian collection may spark further reflection around decolonising Kedleston Hall.

Museums must recognise their power—not only as institutions of knowledge, but as agents capable of empowering visitors and fostering critical awareness. History must be presented fully and transparently, not selectively, and not hidden. Only then can these spaces move beyond preservation to become sites of reckoning and reflection.

Figure 04:
Thousands Below, Fifteen Above – Visualising Display Disparity.

Mohammadi and Lar, 2025.


Light
Room to breathe
Saloon
Power
15 objects
Past and Present
Eastern Museum
Dark
Cabinet of Curiosities
Cramped tight
Objects not art
Language in labels
1000 objects

Findings and conclusions

How this project has shaped our positionalities

As part of the project, we invited Melanie Wellsley, leading the Decolonising efforts at our university, to run a workshop on positionality mapping. This led to an in-depth reflection, whereby we acknowledged who we are, and how we became those individuals. The main themes that emerged highlighted the liberating experience to engage with a deep reflection on identity and values, an open and liberating dialogue with others, using text and drawing as equal ways of communication.

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As Amanpreet reflects:

> I was able to reflect more deeply on what truly shapes my identity. I've often found it difficult to speak about this topic, but having the chance to explore it visually unlocked many childhood memories. It felt almost liberating to finally see how different elements—like race, language, and class—come together to form the bigger picture of who I am. Sharing this space with others and seeing how they mapped their own identities was equally uplifting and gave the experience a strong sense of connection and solidarity.

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For Nanfe, this was one of the more meaningful exercises within the project.

> While I've always thought deeply about who I am and had many conversations about identity and values, I had never visually mapped it out. Seeing the intersectionality of my identity on paper was powerful. It helped me better understand how the different parts of who I am—my nationality, gender, faith, race, and intellect—shape the lens through which I see and move through the world. It was both grounding and enlightening, and it sparked thoughtful dialogue with others.

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For Ghazal it was a pivotal moment:

> Visualising my identity through drawings, symbols, and diagrams was entirely new to me. I'm used to reflecting through writing, but this visual challenge allowed me to understand how interconnected my personal, emotional, and cultural layers truly are. Seeing how other participants mapped their identities also gave me insight into their perspectives often in ways that words cannot express.

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Zeus realised that:

> My citizenship, generation, and qualifications impact my input towards this research project. Being Indian, Parsi, and having spoken English as my first language my whole life strongly influences my position on India's colonisation by the British. Being a millennial and having interacted with many young adults of my generation and gen. Z, I am a strong advocate for digital tools and interactive engagement at heritage sites. Being an architect who specialised in conservation and has a hobby of table-top and video games, I am curious about the potential of gamifying historical narratives in a sensitive and authentic manner.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this journey into decolonising knowledge has been far from straightforward. It has been frustrating, enlightening, emotional, and thought-provoking.

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Nanfe highlights how much she has learnt:

> I have learned a lot—about the subject, about others, and most importantly, about myself. The project not only deepened my academic understanding but also reinforced my desire to contribute to a more honest, inclusive, and critically engaged narrative of history and heritage. It was wonderful working with people across such diverse backgrounds because it enriched the discussions and provided perspectives that I had not previously considered.

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Similarly, Ghazal reflects on how the research journey has changed:

> The way I think not just about decolonisation, but about myself. I've grown more confident, especially in situations like interviews that once caused anxiety. I've learned to be more patient with complexity and more aware of the ethical weight of my words and actions. Most of all, I've come to see research as a creative, emotional, and deeply human process one that continues long after the official project ends.

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Amanpreet recognised how the research process:

> Helped me grow in confidence—not just in contributing ideas, but in trusting that my voice mattered. Speaking up in group discussions felt more natural as I began to understand the value of my perspective. At the same time, I became increasingly aware of the ethical responsibility that comes with research, especially on sensitive topics like decolonisation. I realised how important it is to be intentional with the words I use and to approach every part of the process with care and respect. This balance between confidence and humility became one of the most meaningful lessons I took away from the project.

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For Zeus, as a co-lead of the project:

> It was a wonderful experience to collaborate with students and staff on this project. In my opinion, the best way to work together is to bring researched points of interest to the table for discussion, be open to whoever makes the best argument, and let the research process unravel dynamically in the direction agreed upon collectively by the team.

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Finally, Ana reflects on this project in comparison with others delivered in the past:

> For me this has been one of the most meaningful student-staff collaboration projects I have been involved with. Even the recruitment process was a great experience, exploring issues of decoloniality, teaching and learning, with like-minded students. Moreover, I believe there is a significant legacy from this project, which will underpin future cohorts of students in Architecture.

Recommendations

Guided by the insights gained through this project, Kedleston Hall (and many other collections!) stands at a pivotal moment to reframe its' legacy. We welcome a more inclusive and critically engaged narrative, which Kedleston Hall has already iniated. Without appropriate contextualisation, this site becomes a missed opportunity for critical reflection on a tumultuous and violent past. Furthermore, all artefacts—regardless of their geographic or cultural origin—deserve a baseline of

curatorial respect for their artistic and historical value. Currently, the disparity in spatial treatment between the grand state rooms and the Eastern Museum is striking. We recommend enhancing the lighting and layout of the Eastern galleries, affording each object space and dignity. Additionally, labels should reflect multiple perspectives, including voices from descendant communities, to foster inclusive and critical reflection.

At the core of these recommendations is the amplification of voice and autonomy. Kedleston Hall must actively seek partnerships—with academic institutions, local communities, and representatives from the cultures where these artefacts originate. Such collaborations can foster a critical, context-specific, and ongoing pluralistic transformation—one that challenges colonial legacies in collecting and interpretation. Through this, Kedleston Hall can genuinely empower diverse voices, dismantle enduring hierarchies of power, and foreground the multiplicity of narratives that these objects hold.

Finally, we believe that engaging with younger generations will support the efforts to decolonise exhibitions and knowledge in general. Raising awareness of the colonial past and its influence in our current context are essential to promote a more just present and future. Hopefully, the co-design of a serious (educational) game to promote younger audiences to further engage with Heritage and make more sense of our present by exploring the past.

Ethics: this project received favourable opinion from the Art, Architecture, Design and Humanities Ethics Committee, Nottingham Trent University (June 2025).

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