MUSEUM OF ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY (MAP) INDIA DESIGN BRIEF

India's age-old picture tales meet today's graphic novels – see where comics came alive.

Background

MAP (Museum of Art & Photography) in Bengaluru, India, is a five-year-old modern and vibrant hub where art, culture and community intersect. Launched in the pandemic, it adopts a digital-first strategy to all its activities that span exhibitions, programming and education. Last year, it was voted as one of the top 10 global hotspots. Spanning six floors, it showcases a diverse art collection – from 10th-century sculptures to contemporary pop culture – through its exhibitions and programming, alongside digital experiences, digital museum, research and learning centres. MAP is also one of India's most accessible and inclusive spaces. MAP wants to democratise art, as it believes that art has the power of transforming human lives. At its core, MAP is about sparking global conversations and making art a part of everyday life for all.

Indian Visual Storytelling: From Timeless Traditions to Modern Comics.

Opens in August 2026 at MAP | Travels to France in 2027

This first-of-its-kind exhibition delves into the rich and unexpected contours of Indian sequential art, tracing its evolution from ancient visual storytelling traditions that predate books to contemporary, avant-garde digital narratives. It charts the emergence of cartoons, comics and graphic novels in India, revealing an idiom and sensibility unique to the subcontinent – shaped by its history, cinema, pop culture and global influences. The exhibition features artworks from the MAP collection and is supported by The French Institute in India (cultural services of the French Embassy in India).

Spanning two galleries, the exhibition is organised into four thematic sections:

- Sequential Art Before Comics, which explores oral storytelling traditions and the

proto-forms of sequential art
- The Multiverse of Mythology
- The Classic Popular
- Graphic Novels and Modern India.

The challenge

Design a flexible visual identity for the exhibition and supporting assets that:

- disrupt the perception that 'comics' are a western, child-centric medium
- reveal the depth and timeline of India's own sequential-art tradition
- balance playful accessibility with MAP's scholarly credibility
- deliver instant 'stopping power' onsite and online – imagery that makes people pause, share and decide to visit.

Teams must also create a name for the exhibition in line with the visual identity.

Target audience

Gen Z / young adults (primary audience):

- **Demographics:** 16–25 years old, students and first-jobbers; heavy mobile and social use; "non-museum-goers" by self-description
- **Psychographics / motivations:** Visual learners, meme-literate, crave share-worthy experiences that validate personal creativity

Practitioners and scholars (secondary audience)

- **Demographics:** 25–45 years old, metro India and diaspora, tertiary-educated,

art/design/media/academia

- **Psychographics / motivations:** Seek archival depth, authenticity, networking; value cultural ownership

History and pop-culture enthusiasts (secondary audience)

- **Demographics:** 30–55 years old, lifelong learners, parents, educators
- **Psychographics / motivations:** Curious about India's cultural evolution; motivated by bridging past and present for themselves and others

Insight

Centuries before speech-bubbles and stapled pages, India was already telling stories frame by frame – on scrolls, puppets and printed labels. Realising this flips casual nostalgia into an urgent need to witness the whole visual timeline in one place today: visitors feel they're not just consuming culture – they're reclaiming it.

Strategy

- **Playful education:** Pair bold, instantly legible forms with layers of explanatory depth so visitors can 'skim' or 'deep-dive' at will.
- **Inclusive accessibility:** Ensure typography, colour and layout remain readable for school groups and scholars alike. Comply with MAP's accessibility ethos.
- **Digital-first echo:** Assets must translate seamlessly across onsite signage, social media and MAP's virtual museum ecosystem, reflecting its digital-first DNA.
- **Stopping-power priority:** Every design touchpoint should interrupt a scroll, halt a hallway stride and spark the impulse to attend.
- Develop a visual identity and campaign ideas for digital platforms that appeal to teen audiences and up.

- Come up with a sub-line to introduce the exhibition/create curiosity.

Key message

Pause the scroll and explore every frame of India's epic visual story – only at MAP.

Personality

- **Attitude**: Discovery-driven, welcoming, intellectually curious.
- **Tone**: Bold, witty, erudite, with a wink of playful sarcasm.

Campaign dos and don'ts

DO:

- Develop a legible, playful **visual language** suitable for teens upward
- Use **MAP** collection images in compliance with rights
- Maintain **consistency** across on-site and digital touchpoints
- Come up with a **sub-line** to introduce the exhibition/create curiosity.

DON'T

- Use stereotypically 'ethnic' motifs or clichés. Examples
- Use Comic Sans font unless wielded ironically
- Use foul language, religious themes or political references

- Use low-contrast colour combinations (e.g. grey on white, red on black) that are hard to read
- Use decorative, script or condensed fonts that compromise legibility – especially on invites, posters and wall texts
- Place text over busy images, textures or patterns that interfere with readability
- Make text too small – avoid anything under 18pt for wall text and under 24pt for titles or posters
- Crowd text with tight line spacing or long, uninterrupted blocks – break it up for easier reading.
- Use glossy or reflective materials for wall labels or digital screens – glare hinders visibility.
- Rely on colour alone to convey meaning – use symbols or labels in addition.
- Use fast-moving, flashing or auto-scrolling content on digital screens – it can be disorienting or inaccessible.

Competition submission requirements

Teams must submit the following:

1. **A digital presentation image** (jpg/jpeg) – a concise visual overview of the work in A3, digital case-board style.
2. **A three-part written submission including:**

    a. **Background** (150-word limit) – brief overview, objectives.
    b. **Creative idea and insight** (150-word limit)– brand relevance, audience fit.
    c. **Execution** (150-word limit) – design elements, touchpoints and development process.

3. **The title of the exhibition.**
4. **OPTIONAL - digital supporting content** – any additional visuals to aid Jury understanding.

APPENDIX

Sequential Art Before Comics
● Chitrakathi Paintings and Puppets: Chitrakathi is derived from two words, 'chitra' which translates to 'a picture' and 'katha' meaning 'story'. The Chitrakathis are a nomadic community of storytellers that were once found across Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. They were known to travel from region to region, only to unpack their bundles of paintings and puppets and begin their long sessions of narrating stories, myths and legends.

  ○ Ravana disguised as mendicut, Maharashtra, Opaque watercolour on paper, PTG.02056

  ○ Golden Deer, Maharashtra, Opaque watercolour on paper, PTG.02057 and PTG.02059

  ○ Sita telling Lakshmana to get the deer, Maharashtra, Opaque watercolour on paper, PTG.02060

  ○ Leather Puppets, 1950–1960, Andhra Pradesh, Animal hide painted and incised, bamboo sticks, SCU.00065, SCU.01824 and SCU.01834

  The Multiverse of Mythology;

● Textile labels were among the earliest forms of branding in India, blending art-historical and commercial significance. Mass-produced and affixed to cotton fabrics from British and Indian mills, these labels infused the act of buying with desire, memory and meaning.

○ Finlay, Muir & Co. (Sita Haran Ticket), early 20th century, Manchester, England, Chromolithograph, H. 24.2 cm, W. 17.4 cm, POP.11573

Graphic Novels and Modern India.

● Lagaan Comic Book: A certain number of Bollywood cinema scripts were adapted into comic form, though available only as limited editions. This book of the classic Hindi film *Lagaan* visually retells the story of the film in print form. Ephemera such as this were widely popular for promotional purposes. POP.17813