

MANCHESTER MUSEUM MEETS LAHORE MUSEUM

Manchester Museum meets Lahore Museum - Join us for a series of online panel discussions and education workshops on the film [Pakistan's Best Kept Secret – Lahore Museum](#)

Panel and workshop dates: Thursday 11th March, Thursday 25th March and Thursday 15th April. All 6pm start (60 minutes incl short segments of the film, panel discussion, live Q&A)

Panel One: Diaspora, Identity and Languages - Thursday 11th March, 6pm - with **Talat Awan** (journalist, BBC), **Dr Sadia Habib** (Manchester Museum OSCH) and **Anwar Akhtar** (film and theatre producer, director of [Samosa Media](#)). Book your free place here – <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lahore-to-manchester-1st-panel-discussion-tickets-140821371513>

Panel Two: Faith, Heritage and History - Thursday 25th March, 6pm - with **Anindita Ghosh** (historian, University of Manchester), **Shahid Nadeem** (playwright and director, Ajoka Theatre Lahore) and **Anwar Akhtar** (film and theatre producer, director of [Samosa Media](#)). Book your free place – <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/141190216739>

Panel Three: Education, Arts and History - Thursday 15th April, 6pm - with **Esme Ward** (director, Manchester Museum), **Anwar Akhtar** (film and theatre producer, director of [Samosa Media](#)), **The Singh Twins** (international artists) and **Uthra Rajgopal** (curator). **Emma Martin** Lecturer in Museology. Book your free place – <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lahore-to-manchester-3rd-panel-discussion-tickets-141190483537>

[Pakistan's Best Kept Secret – Lahore Museum](#) features Anwar Akhtar, British Pakistani journalist and director of [Samosa Media](#), in conversation with Lahore Museum's ex-director Sumaira Samad and playwright Shahid Nadeem. They view the museum's collection and discuss the future role of the institution within Pakistan's wider social, political, religious and cultural context today, as well as Pakistan's relationships with Britain.

"Lahore Museum is amazing, telling the story of multiple Asian cultures and showing the value of history in helping us understand many of the problems and challenges in our world today. Our film provides a portal into Asian history and the story of many members of the British Asian community in Manchester. Understanding the history of the British Asian diaspora involves exploring a lot of British history. As a Mancunian who grew up in Moss Side, I visited Manchester Museum many times. I am delighted that Manchester Museum is hosting these talks, connecting the rich heritage of Manchester and the North West with

the history and heritage of Asia. In particular I hope the panel discussions focus on the educational benefits of studying history, empire, the Commonwealth, religious diversity, cultural plurality, and that the film engages young people in Manchester from all backgrounds. The issues we explore in the film are about the British island story as well as South Asia.” - Anwar Akhtar, about the film.

Barinur Rashid, Manchester Museum Secondary and post 16 Learning Coordinator said ‘ This documentary is really relevant for secondary schools and colleges, especially when studying history. Our current history curriculum needs to show the rich history that is present in South Asia and how it is intertwined with British history through legacy, empire and colonialism. This documentary and event is a must for educators across the secondary school and college sector

Nusrat Ahmed, Manchester Museum South Asia Gallery Lead said ‘For me, the title of the film speaks volumes, from the grandeur of its structure to its comprehensive collections and artefacts, Lahore Museum really is a treasure trove. The film gives you a great insight into the breadth of diversity held within the collections”

Lahore Museum has a rich, ancient and varied collection which shows the historical wealth and religious and cultural plurality of Pakistan, one of the largest Muslim majority countries in the world, with large diaspora communities across the globe. The film explores the significance of the museum in Asia but also in Britain today. Its collection tells stories of ancient cultures – Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim – and those of empire, trade, the arrival of the East India Company, the contribution of British Indian soldiers in World Wars I and II, the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. It also gives some insight into life in Pakistan today.

Pakistan’s Best Kept Secret – Lahore Museum is a partnership production between Ajoka Theatre and Samosa Media

Anwar Akhtar is the founder and director of [The Samosa](#) and led the Royal Society of Arts’ [Pakistan Calling](#) project, which produced more than 70 films looking at education, culture, religion, development, conflict resolution, women, and minority rights in the UK and Pakistan. He was the production consultant on the play *Dara*, working with Ajoka Theatre Pakistan and Britain’s National Theatre, and was previously director of the Rich Mix centre in London.

www.thesamosa.co.uk is an arts and journalism charity that works to embed diversity in the arts and humanities curriculum and produces work that explores cultural and social issues.

[You can watch the film “Pakistan’s Best Kept Secret: Lahore Museum” on YouTube](#)

[Ajoka Theatre](#) was set up in 1983 in Lahore, led by the renowned actress Madeeha Gauhar and writer Shahid Nadeem. Ajoka Theatre is Pakistan's leading theatre group committed to theatre for social change. Established in 1984, Ajoka has presented bold and innovative plays despite hostility from establishment and extremist groups. Ajoka's repertoire includes Mughul history such as Dara; Bulleh Shah, the story of the Punjabi poet and philosopher; the lives and landscape changed by Partition in *Border Border*; as well as comedy in *Burqavagnaza* and *America Chalo*; and confronting violence against women in *Kari*. Ajoka has been actively involved in efforts to promote peace between India and Pakistan through theatre. In 2005, their [play *Dara* by Shahid Nadeem](#) was adapted by the National Theatre UK, from the original Punjabi production for a British audience at the National. Ajoka was given the Otto Award, for Political Theatre by the Castillo Theater, New York in 2012.

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About Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, first opened in 1890. It is the UK's largest university museum with a collection of about 4.5 million items from every continent. Its combination of the academic and the popular is what makes the Museum so distinctive and lies at the heart of its widespread appeal. The Museum's vision is to build understanding between cultures and a sustainable world. Every year over half a million people visit. Over the next two years, Manchester Museum is working towards an exciting new £13.5 million project *hello future*, to transform and develop the Museum becoming more inclusive, imaginative and caring to the diverse communities it serves.

The hello future transformation includes:

- A new Exhibition Hall
- South Asia Gallery
- Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery
- Redisplayed galleries
- New entrance and visitor facilities with focus on inclusive and accessible design

www.manchester.ac.uk/museum

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