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The Museum in our Minds

Visiting museums across India, Philippe Calia reflects on the way museums shape our perceptions of artefacts, and on the constructs of post-colonial institutions.

Photographs by Philippe Calia





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Museums are places where narratives are performed. Innumerable artworks, objects and ideas travel to be recontextualized in ways that are all but casual, and often instrumental in perpetuating consolidated dynamics of power. According to the widespread perception, if an object sits in a museum it's important. If something is written in a museum, it must be true.

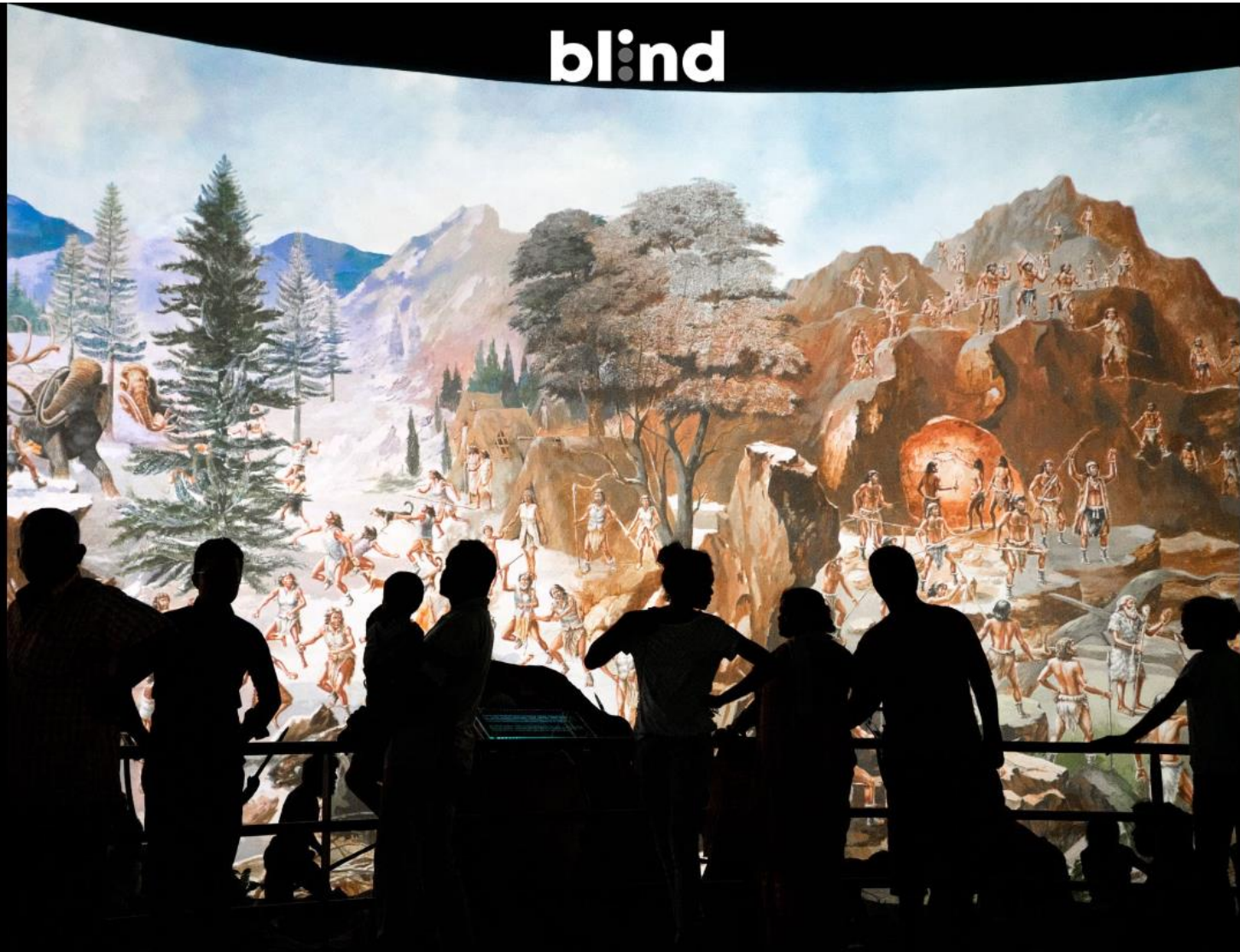




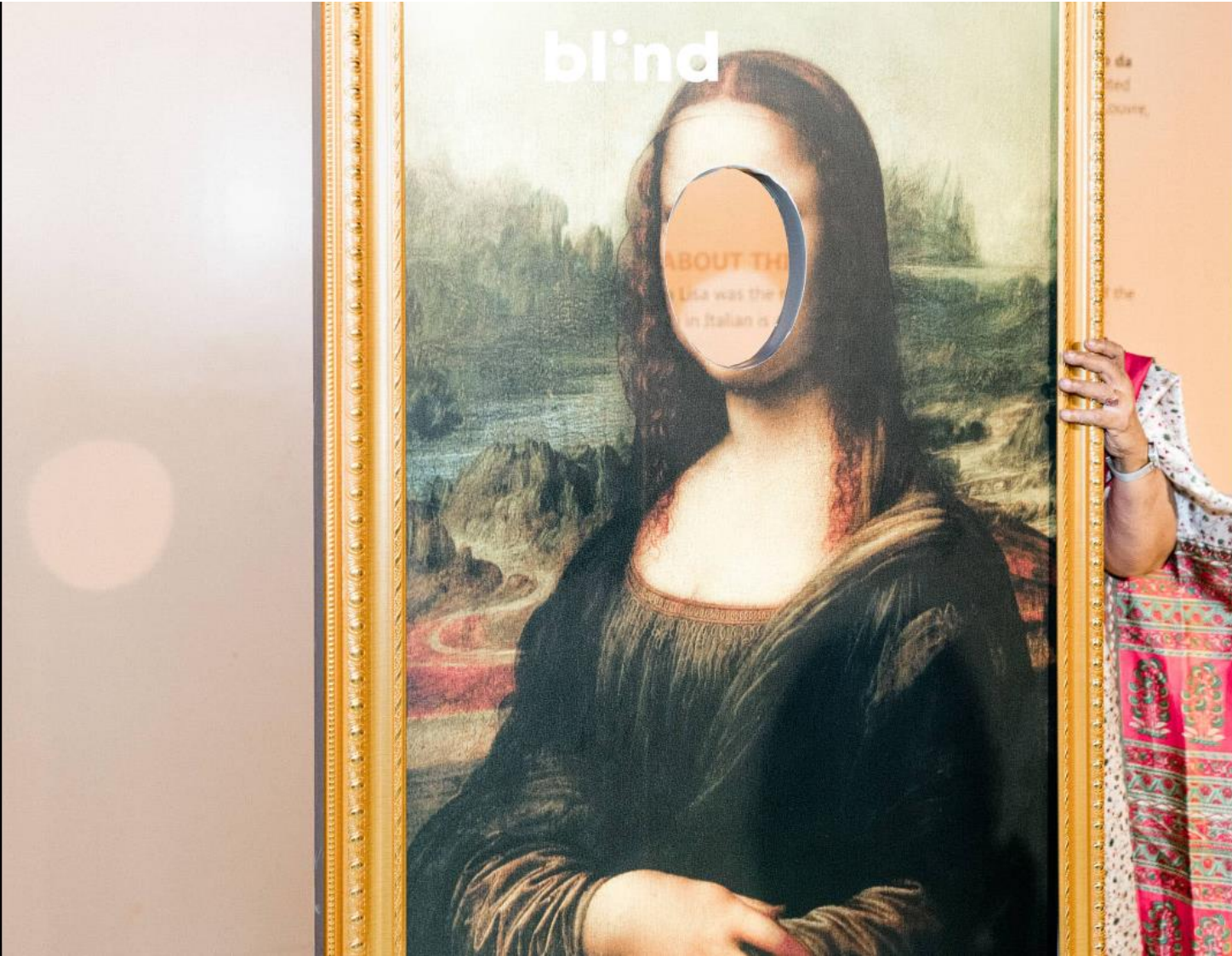
Philippe Calia.
Imaginary Museum VII
(Picabia), National
Science Center, New
Delhi, 2017. Courtesy of
the artist.



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Philippe Calia. Spelling Error, Mother's Wax Museum, Kolkata, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.



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As a French citizen working for fifteen years in India, and a frequent visitor to museums who turned into an art maker himself, the photographer questions his own positionality in this context. He presents surreal images related to the notions of perception, taxonomy, and cognitive bias, recalling the “imaginary museum” in our memory.





Philippe Calia. Vestige,
Indian Museum, Kolkata,
2018. Courtesy of the
artist.



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The exhibition “The Ajab Ghar Archive”, curated by Tanvi Mishra, is on view at the Église des Frères Prêcheurs in Arles, part of the program of Les Rencontres de la Photographie, until September 24.

