

ASK MONA × KNMA · NEW DELHI

Talking with Tyeb Mehta

A voice-first, bilingual AI experience for the Tyeb Mehta retrospective at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi.

SUBMITTED BY

Ask Mona

PARTNER INSTITUTION

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA)

PROJECT PERIOD

April 2026 to July 2026

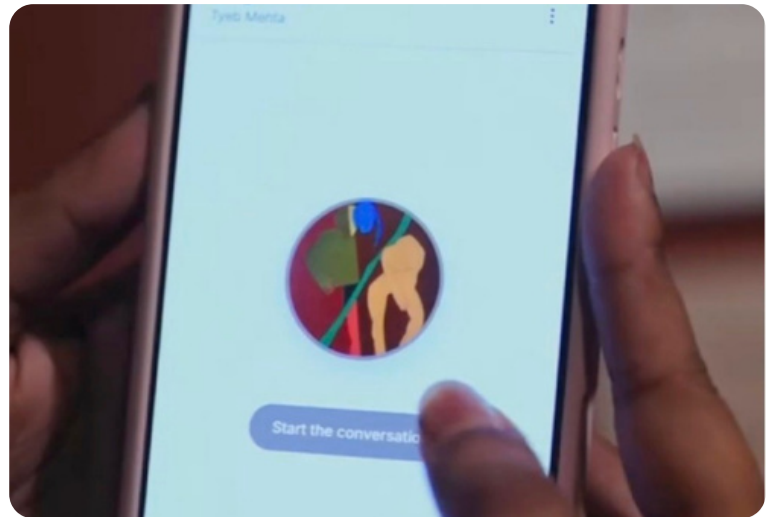
CATEGORY

Best Audience Engagement Initiative

CONTEXT

A museum with a mission, and an interpretation challenge to match

Founded in 2010 by collector and philanthropist Kiran Nadar, KNMA is one of South Asia's first private museums dedicated to modern and contemporary art. Its collection holds more than ten thousand works, with a focus on twentieth-century Indian art. Now led by Manuel Rabaté, formerly Director of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, KNMA is preparing a vast new campus near Delhi, set to become one of the major cultural destinations in the Asia-Pacific region.



Visitors can access the experience from their own phone, without downloading an app, directly in front of the artworks.

THE QUESTION

How could KNMA make modern Indian art accessible and engaging for a broad audience, in a context where museum-going is not yet deeply embedded in cultural habits?

THE CHALLENGE

Located in a shopping mall, the museum reaches visitors with widely varying levels of familiarity with art, from experienced museum-goers to people discovering an art museum for the first time. The challenge was therefore to create an inclusive form of mediation that could adapt to each visitor's interests, knowledge and pace, while allowing them to engage in either English or Hindi. Rather than offering the same fixed interpretation to everyone, KNMA wanted to give each visitor the freedom to ask their own questions and find a personal way into Tyeb Mehta's work deployment.

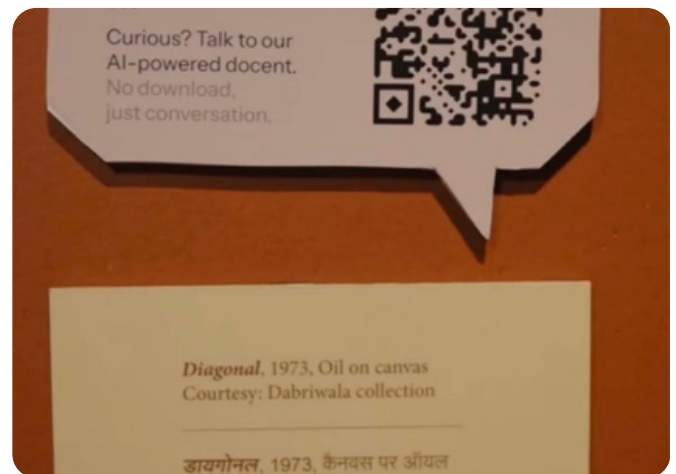
WHAT WAS BUILT

A conversational companion that starts from visitor curiosity

Ask Mona designed a conversational AI agent that visitors could access from their own phones, directly in the gallery. No app, no registration, no screen to hunt for: just a web page reachable by scanning a QR code on the in-gallery cartel.

The experience is voice-first. Visitors can speak their questions aloud or type them. Answers can equally be read on screen or listened to, letting each visitor engage in the way that feel most natural to them. It answers in both English and Hindi, a deliberate choice for a museum whose audiences move between the two every day.

Every response is grounded in content prepared and validated by KNMA's curatorial team. The assistant does not speculate beyond the museum's editorial record: visitors can ask about Tyeb Mehta's practice, the symbols in his paintings, or the biographical context behind specific works, and receive answers that reflect the museum's voice.



"Curious? Talk to our AI-powered docent. No download, just conversation." — in-gallery cartel, KNMA.

Voice-first

English & Hindi

No download

Curatorially grounded

THE VISITOR JOURNEY

01 Scan or open Scan the QR code on the in-gallery cartel, or open the web experience directly from a phone.	02 Speak or type Ask anything, in English or Hindi, by voice or by text. No predetermined script, no fixed menu.	03 Receive an answer A natural-language response, grounded in KNMA's curatorial content, delivered in real time.	04 Keep exploring Ask follow-up questions, move between works, and shape your own path through the retrospective.
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EXAMPLES OF REMARKS / QUESTIONS ASKED BY VISITORS

→ त य ब मेहता कौन हैं? (Who was Tyeb Mehta?)

→ उसके काम में बैल का क्या अर्थ है? (What does the bull symbolize in Tyeb Mehta's work?)

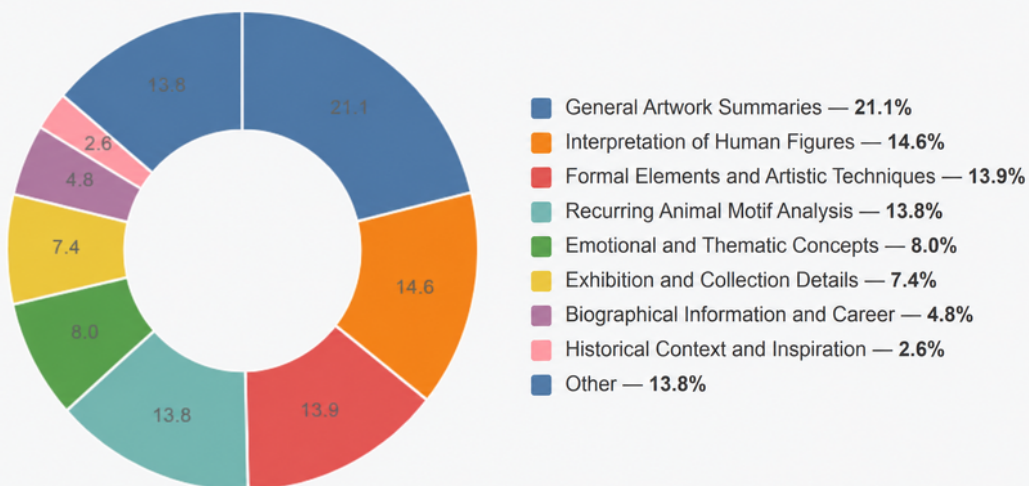
→ *I was not sure about the feeling but the insights you gave truly gave a new perspective.*

→ *What do diagonals mean in his work?*

→ *What was his process like when developing these works?*

NATURE OF CONVERSATIONS

Category distribution



PROJECT VIDEO DEMONSTRATION



See the experience in action at KNMA
youtube.com/shorts/8sG2SAeD_GY

WHAT THE PROJECT DEMONSTRATED

Four outcomes that will shape the museum's next phase

Greater accessibility

The experience offered two languages and a voice-first interaction model, lowering barriers for visitors who may not naturally engage with long written interpretation. Speaking a question is a more direct entry point than reading a panel.

More personal engagement

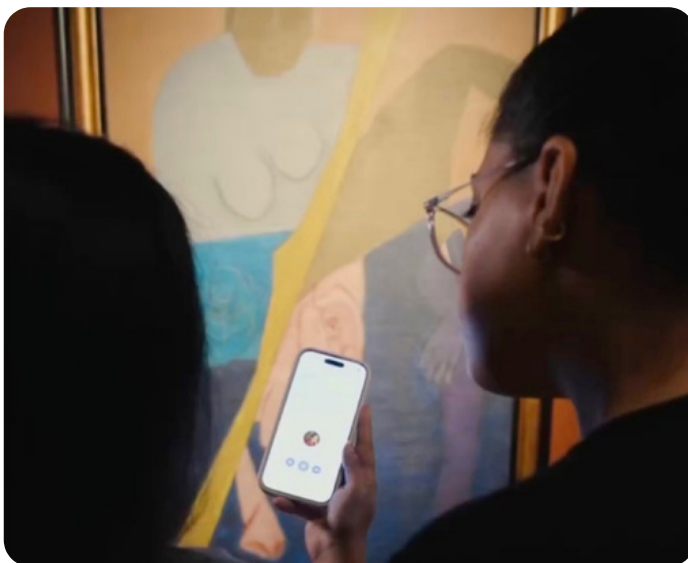
Visitors could begin with their own questions rather than following a predetermined interpretive script. Each encounter with an artwork became distinctly personal, shaped by individual curiosity rather than institutional assumptions about what matters most.

Curatorial reliability

Every answer was grounded exclusively in content provided by the museum. The AI did not speculate beyond the curatorial record, protecting the integrity of the institution's voice while opening access to it.

Scalability

The pilot created a model that can be extended to more works, exhibitions and languages. New content can be added during an engagement as the museum's needs grow, making it a foundation for the future campus rather than a standalone experiment.



A visitor engaging with Ask Mona in front of a Tyeb Mehta work at KNMA.