



Museum London composite image, using elements from: Zinnia Naqvi, *Heart-shaped Box* (still), 2016, multi-media and video installation, Courtesy of the Artist. Unknown photographer, *Biscuit Stall and Seller, British India*, 1940s, photograph, Collection of Museum London, Gift of Somerville Industries, Ltd., London, Ontario, 1990

## New Installation at Museum London Reframes Colonial Photography Through Contemporary Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**London, ON — JUNE 1, 2026** — Museum London is pleased to present *Biscuits and Empire: Reframing Colonial Photography*, a new installation opening June 6, that examines the intertwined histories of colonial trade, photography, and representation through archival materials and contemporary video art.

Tying together colonial-era photographs from Museum London's material culture collection and a video installation by artist Zinnia Naqvi, the installation traces how photographs have helped shape understandings of identity, agency, migration, and empire across generations.

Naqvi's mixed media installation, *Heart-shaped Box*, offers a contemporary perspective grounded in personal memory and lived experience. Drawing on home videos, music posters, and 1990s pop culture that document the artist's family's immigration from Pakistan to Canada, the work captures intimate scenes of Naqvi and her siblings singing along to the Nirvana song of the same name.

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"In viewing my piece *Heart-shaped Box*, I hope that visitors are reminded of similar moments from their own childhood," said artist Zinnia Naqvi. "Culture is not meant to easily fit into boxes, but is shaped across time and seas, and spread by the people who embody it."

The installation's archival photographs, taken in the 1940s, reveal how London, Ontario, was connected to the global biscuit trade through colonial supply chains tied to British India. Captured by a visiting photographer at a moment when imperial control was beginning to unravel, the images reflect the assumptions embedded within colonial image-making traditions.

"I'm fascinated by these old biscuit-centered photographs taken in colonial India", said Museum London's TD Curator of Collections Zahra McDoom. "Biscuits fed the growth of the Empire. The colonial street scenes of luxury cars and biscuit sellers begged to be visited from a new angle. Art spurs us to think differently."

Through its pairing of archival and contemporary works, the installation considers how visual culture continues to shape ideas of belonging, identity, and power, while creating space for more personal, self-determined forms of storytelling.

*Biscuits and Empire: Reframing Colonial photography* will run from June 6 through November 8, 2026, on Museum London's Entrance Wall. The installation will be a part of the five new exhibitions and installations celebrated in this month's [Summer Launch Party](#) on Thursday, June 11, 2026.

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### **About Museum London**

Museum London mobilizes art and history to build community and co-create an inspired future. Through exhibitions, programs, and events, we connect communities, challenge ways of thinking, and ignite creativity toward a more just world.

For more information, high resolution images or interview requests, please contact:

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