



GROWING MUSEUM

A contemporary community
art residency by Anagha Kusum

What is Growing Museum?

Growing Museum is a long-term, research-led contemporary art residency that unfolds within living landscapes and communities. It is not a workshop, not an awareness program, and not a summer camp. It is an artistic process where children become collaborators, landscapes become archives, and living ecologies become the primary medium.

Each edition of Growing Museum is rooted in one specific ecological context—grasslands, forests, wetlands, agricultural systems—through which human–plant interaction is studied, observed, archived, and transformed into contemporary art installations.

What emerges is not an exhibition alone, but a living cultural record of a landscape and its people.



Positioning

Growing Museum is built on a flexible collaborative model.

For the artist, it functions as a long-form contemporary art residency. For hosting partners, the same process can be strategically aligned to their context and goals:



Schools

a pedagogical,
inquiry-led learning model



Cultural centres

a public outreach and
engagement model



Gardens & biodiversity parks

a public ecological
awareness model



Community organisations

a participatory cultural
documentation model

This adaptability allows the core artistic process to remain intact while the interface with the public is tuned to the host institution.

Growing Museum holds a clear artistic authorship while embracing

collaboration. It is rooted in contemporary art practice, shaped through community engagement, and guided by long-form research into living ecologies and cultural memory.

It works at the intersection of



Art × Ecology × Anthropology × Living Archives



Core Focus

The central inquiry of
Growing Museum is

**How do humans
coexist with
plant world within
specific
geographies?**

Each edition explores:



Local plant ecologies



Human dependence and care systems



Oral histories and cultural rituals



Agricultural relationships



Landscape memory

Methodology

Every edition unfolds through a slow, three-stage artistic process grounded in ethnographic research tools drawn from visual anthropology.

1

Immersion, Observation & Ethnographic Fieldwork

Long on-site presence by the artist

Training collaborators in basic ethnographic tools: observation, listening, note-making, mapping, material culture study

Walking the landscape and learning to "see" ecologies

Plant observation and seasonal noticing

Conversations, oral histories, and everyday practices

Understanding rhythms of work, care, and coexistence

2

Community Collaboration (Ethnographic + Artistic)

Children as primary collaborators and field co-researchers

Use of ethnographic research tools adapted for children: visual mapping, collection protocols, interview drawing, story-recording through images

Collection of textures, drawings, materials, and stories

Shared making processes between artist and collaborators

Field-based experimentation that merges research with artistic response

3

Installation as Archive

Site-specific contemporary art installation

Children's work becomes the core medium

The artist shapes the final visual language

The space transforms into a temporary living museum

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Scope

1 Stewardship & Continuation (Stakeholder session)

- A dedicated session with host stakeholders and facilitators
- Guidance on care, maintenance, and material sensitivity of the installation
- Optional pathways for slow additions and community-led extensions after the residency
- Clear distinction between artist-led authorship and community-led continuation
- Shared protocols for documentation and respectful evolution

2 Role of Children

- Children are not participants. They are collaborators.
- Their observations, marks, collections, questions, and imaginations become the primary archive through which the installation is built. The artist acts as a translator—shaping their collective ecology into a rigorous contemporary art language.

3 Outcomes

- A site-specific contemporary art installation
- A growing archive of human–plant interactions
- Visual documentation and research material
- Field notes, drawings, organic collections
- Long-term material for future studio-based artworks

4 Beyond the Site

- Each Growing Museum edition continues its life beyond the original location through future artworks, archives, exhibitions, and publications. In this way, every host site becomes part of a larger contemporary art narrative rooted in real landscapes, lived ecologies, and community memory.
- This ensures that what is created together is not temporary or isolated, but contributes to a growing cultural and ecological archive over time.

Previous Editions

Growing Museum has unfolded through three lived field editions, each rooted in a distinct geography and cultural ecology.

Gunehar, Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh

In collaboration with Kahani ki Dukaan

Focus: Local culture, everyday narratives, and living traditions

This edition explored how cultural memory, objects, and daily practices shape a landscape. The work grew through conversations, observation, and shared making with children and community members.



Sonale, Maharashtra

In collaboration with Tarapa Workspace

Focus: Local flora and plant relationships

This edition centered on native plant life, seasonal changes, and human dependence on local vegetation systems, building a visual archive of plant forms and community knowledge.



Deulgaon Gada, Maharashtra

In collaboration with Deep Griha Society

Focus: Whispers of Grasslands

This edition reflected on native grass ecologies, open landscapes, pastoral memory, and fragile grassland systems through slow observation, material collection, and collaborative installation.



Invitation

Growing Museum invites:

- 🌀 Schools
- 🌀 Alternative learning spaces
- 🌀 Cultural institutions
- 🌀 Ecological sites
- 🌀 Biodiversity parks

About the Artists



Anagha Kusum is a visual artist and visual anthropologist based in Pune, India, with over two decades of experience spanning contemporary art practice, education, research, and community-based fieldwork. Her work explores the intersection of art, ecology, memory, and slow observation, positioning artistic practice as a tool for inquiry, witnessing, and cultural dialogue.

Trained as a visual anthropologist, Anagha works with ethnographic research tools—listening, observation, mapping, material culture study, and oral histories—translating lived experiences of people and landscapes into layered contemporary artworks and installations. Her practice is grounded in long-term field immersions, where she studies human–plant relationships, ecological systems, and everyday cultural rituals as living archives.

She works under the broader framework of *Chronicling India*, a research-driven artistic practice through which she develops narrative-led artworks, community installations, archives, and bespoke commissioned projects. Alongside her studio work, she has actively contributed to education and public engagement through workshops, interpretation projects, writing, radio programs, and institutional collaborations across India.

Through projects such as Growing Museum, Anagha brings together children, communities, and landscapes as co-witnesses in slow, reflective artistic processes. Her work invites audiences to pause, observe, and reconsider their relationship with the living world—not as spectators, but as participants within shared ecological and cultural systems.



Sawani Puranik is a graphic designer, animator, and children's book illustrator with a sensitive visual style and a strong narrative approach. As the Assistant Curator for the Growing Museum, she supports conceptual development, visual direction, and the translation of ideas into engaging visual communication. Her ability to work across illustration, animation, and design adds a dynamic layer to the Growing Museum's storytelling and outreach.

Format for Collaboration

- ⦿ Residency duration: 18 to 30 days (site-specific within this window)
- ⦿ The project adapts to local ecology
- ⦿ Long-term engagement is preferred over short-term programs
- ⦿ Installation remains site-responsive

Contact

Growing Museum is an ongoing artistic journey. For collaborations, residencies, or institutional partnerships:

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