

# REGEN PROJECTS

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## whitewall



### Doug Aitken Illuminates Mumbai with at NMACC with “Under the Sun”

A three-floor, immersive meditation on time and transformation, UNDER THE SUN marks Doug Aitken’s India debut—where film, light, architecture, and artisanal collaboration converge at Mumbai’s NMACC.

This winter, the **Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC)** in Mumbai unveils “**UNDER THE SUN**,” the first exhibition in India by American multimedia visionary **Doug Aitken**. Spanning three floors of the **Art House**, the show is an ambitious, crystalline reflection on time, its sedimented past, its flickering present, and the abstract horizon of its future. **Aitken**, long celebrated for dissolving boundaries between film, sculpture, architecture, and light, brings to Mumbai a project that is not just installed but *grown*: an immersive environment shaped through two years of intense dialogue with more than a dozen Indian artisans, fabricators, and craft houses.

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Curated by **TRIADIC** partners **Roya Sachs** and **Mafalda Kahane**, and produced by **Elizabeth Edelman**, “UNDER THE SUN” stands at the intersection of advanced digital innovation and India’s centuries-old craft traditions. It is, as Isha Ambani describes, “a collaborative exhibition that realizes the institution’s mission to foster global artistic exchange.” In many ways, the exhibition feels like a milestone not only for **NMACC**, now entering its third year as a nexus for cultural dialogue, but for **Aitken’s** practice itself. His longstanding interest in hyper-connectivity, sensory fragmentation, and the organic-versus-digital tension finds new language through the skill and material intelligence of Indian craftsmanship.

## Past: A Tactile Landscape of Memory



Doug Aitken, First Floor; Installation view at NMACC, Mumbai, India, 2025, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Dhruvad Shukla/Floating Home Studio.

The first floor, titled *Past*, is a revelation in material poetry. Doug Aitken orchestrates a landscape of carved wood, reclaimed debris, natural fabrics, and stained glass, an ecosystem assembled almost entirely through Indian craft traditions. At the center, a constellation of spiraling wooden boats encircles six monumental sculptural human figures, each rising from the floor like ancient sentinels. Their surfaces oscillate between the rawness of logs hand-selected across Gujarat and the geometric precision of robotic milling. They appear unfinished, paused in a moment of metamorphosis, yet their proportions align uncannily with the human body. They become, as Aitken suggests, “pixels of matter,” fragile and imposing, ancestral and futuristic.

Encircling them, six extraordinary textiles map sacred Indian rivers across outlines of hands, forming a meditation on the continuous flow of cultural lineage. The textiles were

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born from nearly 600 hours of collective work by artisans from Mumbai-based Milaaya Embroidery House. Digital weaving merges seamlessly with embroidery using Indian and global stitch techniques, modeling the exhibition's broader theme: the handshake between tradition and modernity.

It is in this first chapter that visitors sense the porousness of time, how the past is never static, but a living material, always ready to be reactivated by new hands, new tools, new eyes.

## Present: A World Caught in the Flicker of the Screen



Doug Aitken, "NEW ERA," 2018, Video installation; courtesy of 303 Gallery, New York; Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; Victoria Miro, London; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles.

Arriving on the second floor, visitors step into the mirrored, prismatic environment of *NEW ERA*, Aitken's celebrated video installation. Present becomes a kaleidoscope of images, slide, multiply, and fracture. The work centers on Martin Cooper, inventor of the mobile phone, whose story becomes a lens through which to question the psychic texture of our age.

The narrative collapses the natural world with technological artifacts: the palm of a hand holding a glowing device dissolves into vast deserts, seas, and skies. The piece meditates on the increasing tension between connection and isolation in a hyper-digital era. Here, the screens feel like portals and mirrors reflecting not only our devices but our compulsive need for them.

The installation's mirrored architecture amplifies the sense of being inside a living organism, one that pulses with both beauty and unease. As visitors move, they fragment

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and reassemble across reflective planes, becoming part of the accelerated circuits of the image. The experience is disorienting, electric, and strangely intimate. It is Aitken at his most direct, holding up a contemporary portrait of humanity caught between the natural and the virtual.



Doug Aitken, *LIGHTFALL / OTHER WORLDS*, 2025; Installation view at NMACC, Mumbai, India, 2025, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Dhruvad Shukla/Floating Home Studio.

The third floor opens into *LIGHTFALL / OTHER WORLDS*, a new site-specific commission that reads like a prophecy made physical. At its center floats a glowing orb with a vertical core of suspended LED tubes. Waves of light ripple upward and outward in a continuous, breathing rhythm. Visitors are invited to lie on the warm, rustic wooden flooring, an intentional return to the tactility of *the Past*, and gaze upward into the shifting sphere.

Light, sound, and haze merge into an atmospheric near-void. The orb pulses like a star, a heartbeat, an atom or perhaps an AI consciousness flickering to life. A hypnotic drone envelops the room, inviting a surrender of perception. It is both a sanctuary and a threshold. Aitken has long explored light as a sculptural material, but here it takes on a new anthropomorphic dimension, suggesting both an end and a beginning.

In this final chapter, *Future* becomes not a prediction, but a sensory proposition: that the world ahead will be shaped as much by energy and perception as by material or technology.

## A Bridge Between Worlds by Doug Aitken



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Doug Aitken, First Floor; Installation view at NMACC, Mumbai, India, 2025, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Dhruvad Shukla/Floating Home Studio.

“‘UNDER THE SUN’ creates a bridge between Indian and Western cultures, a dialogue across time and material,” Doug Aitken notes. And indeed, the show functions like a contemporary mythology. Each floor offers a different pulse: the raw physicality of natural materials, the flickering language of the screen, and finally, pure energetic abstraction.

For NMACC, this exhibition also marks the evolution of its curatorial residency with TRIADIC, following the strikingly immersive *LIMINAL GAPS* and *RUN AS SLOW AS YOU CAN*. Once again, the Art House becomes a site where global and Indian practices converge to produce something neither could achieve alone.

In Mumbai, one of the world’s most dynamic, restless, future-facing cities “UNDER THE SUN” feels strikingly at home. It speaks to a nation where tradition and technology coexist in constant negotiation. It invites viewers to slow down, expand their senses, and reconsider their place in a rapidly shifting world.

Doug Aitken’s first exhibition in India is ultimately a reminder that time is both structure and illusion a material we shape as much as it shapes us. Under the sun, everything is always in motion.

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Doug Aitken, Portrait, 2025; NMACC, Mumbai, India, 2025, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Dhrupad Shukla/Floating Home Studio.