

# Belonging

*flexibly*

NON-MUSLIM MIGRANTS  
FROM MUSLIM ASIA

Photographs by  
Moska Najib



# MEDIA INFO SHEET

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

*Belonging Flexibly* explores the diasporic experiences of non-Muslim communities from historically Muslim-majority cities in Asia, including (post-)Soviet Central Asia. The exhibition captures the journeys of communities that migrated due to political instability, international intervention, and civil conflict yet maintained enduring cultural and economic ties to their places of origin.

Through vivid imagery, *Belonging Flexibly* highlights the cosmopolitan skills, cultural resilience, and flexible identities of these communities in the diaspora. The project stems from the Afterlives of Urban Muslim Asia research initiative, led by academics from the University of Sussex, University of Cambridge, and Copenhagen University, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

- **Afghanistan's Sikhs and Hindus:** Documenting London's Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities, their trade networks, and enduring social bonds with Afghan Muslims.
- **Bukharan Jews:** Examining the Bukharan Jewish community in Vienna, their revitalization of historic Jewish districts, and the persistence of traditional professions.
- **Syrian Armenians:** Highlighting cultural and commercial exchanges between Syrian Armenian Christians in Armenia and Muslim visitors from the Middle East.
- **Syrian Jews:** Tracing the history of Aleppine Jews, their migration to Brooklyn, and the preservation of Syrian-Sephardic cultural identity.



## KEY THEMES & COMMUNITIES

## INQUIRIES & COLLABORATION

For further information, collaborations, or media inquiries, please contact:

**Magnus Marsden, University of Sussex**  
Email: [M.Marsden@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:M.Marsden@sussex.ac.uk)

*Belonging Flexibly* has been exhibited at:

- SOAS, University of London (July 2024)
- Copenhagen University (November 2024)

### About the Photographer

**Moska Najib** is a writer, visual storyteller, and founder of Act Five, a storytelling and content consultancy. Born in Kabul and raised in India, she has worked as a BBC journalist, written for The Guardian, and co-authored a travel guide on Afghanistan. Her photography series From Kabul to Kolkata has been exhibited internationally and featured in The Wall Street Journal, BBC, and CNN.

### About the Research Team

**Magnus Marsden** is Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Asia Centre at the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex. He is a specialist in the study of Afghanistan and Central Asia.

**Vera Skvirskaja** is Associate Professor at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen. Vera's work focuses on the post-Soviet world.

**Paul Anderson** is Associate Professor, Department of Middle Eastern Studies and Assistant Director at the Centre of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge. His research focuses on Syria and its diaspora.