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The Unfiltered History Tour /

Vice

Media platform exposes the true story behind stolen artefacts on display at the British Museum, generating 32 million social impressions

► https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_4yOtFhMU

With a collection of at least [8 million objects](#) (80,000 of which are on display at any one time to the public), the British Museum in London is heralded as an institution dedicated to human history, art and culture. However, according to media platform **Vice World News**, the museum is hiding the much darker truth behind the origins of the objects it displays and the illicit journeys that brought them to the UK.

For example, the British Museum describes the Gweagal shield it displays as an artefact that was obtained on British explorer Captain Cook's first voyage to the Pacific. In reality, Captain Cook and his men [shot the shield's owner](#) and returned with it to England.



In December 2021, to shed a light on the museum's misleading narratives, Vice and **Dentsu Webchutney**, Bengaluru, partnered with Instagram to create **The Unfiltered History Tour**: a mobile-based guided tour of the British Museum's stolen artefacts.

The experience is accessed via a [dedicated website](#), on which people are encouraged to locate each of the 10 stolen objects in the museum. Once found, clicking 'unfilter' on the site redirects the user to Instagram whereby the app's AR filter reveals the object's unfiltered history, with an audio clip playing to explain the truth. Each clip is narrated by a person from the object's homeland.

For those not at the museum, the site offers the chance to learn more about the artefacts through audio and video episodes. The goal is to educate people about the history and impact of colonialism.



According to Dentsu Webchutney, the audio clips are also available on all major podcast channels including [Spotify](#) and [Acast](#).

'The Unfiltered History tour is an important teaching tool for our audience,' John Montoya, senior director of audience and content strategy at Vice, said in the press release. 'We want to continue to educate them on the historic and modern inequalities that have been woven into our everyday lives, using technology and social media to unlock a fuller experience. There is still so much to unpack about colonialism in Britain today; we hope that this project can play a part in furthering this.'

Results / According to the agency, the campaign generated **\$631,000** in earned media within a month of its launch, which led to **32 million** social impressions and **5,200 hours** worth of 'unfiltered' tours. The Unfiltered History Tour also increased Vice's TikTok followers by **40%** and resulted in a **49%** increase in Instagram impressions, while the 'unfiltered' podcasts were downloaded **21,583** times. A poll conducted weeks after the tour was launched revealed that **59%** of Britons believed that the Parthenon Marbles (part of the tour) belonged in Greece. The Unfiltered History Tour also scooped a Grand Prix in Design at the 2022 Spikes awards. This campaign has also won Grands Prix in Brand Experience & Activation, Radio & Audio and Social & Influencer at the 2022 Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity.

Update 11/07/22: To read more about the campaign, and find out what inspired the idea, read our [Insight & Strategy](#) interview with **Harsh Shah**, managing partner at Dentsu Webchutney.

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To tell you the truth / This campaign is a continuation of Vice World News' [efforts to bring](#) 'an unvarnished look at some of the most important events of our time and [shine] a light on underreported stories around the globe'. Since launching in 2013, the current affairs channel has accrued nearly 2.5 billion views of its [online videos](#) from its 7.5 million YouTube subscribers. It has made a name for itself by exploring stories that don't get deserved airtime in the mainstream media – in 2020, Vice News launched a video series called [Empires of Dirt](#), which uncovered stories of colonialism that are often not taught in schools. Topics included how the British Empire became one of the biggest drug pushers in history and how China got hooked on opium. According to the agency, by the end of 2021 the Empires of Dirt video series had been viewed 19 million times across Facebook and YouTube.

By smuggling its mission into the heart of the institution responsible for the corruption (in this case the British Museum), Vice is able to hammer home its purpose and give even more credibility to its cause.

Heart to heart / An important part of this campaign is Vice's decision to use the voices of those affected by the stolen artefacts to create emotional resonance with its audience and provoke a reaction. In *Viral Marketing: The Science of Sharing*, Karen Nelson-Field [offers advice](#) on the business of video sharing and going viral. According to Nelson-Field, videos that evoke high-arousal (extreme emotion) are shared twice as often as those that create a low-arousal emotion. While Vice's Unfiltered History Tour doesn't abandon rational fact-telling altogether, it couples history with an emotional overlay that is likely to increase its impact.

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