

# SPARSH AHUJA

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I'm an award-winning **communications strategist** and **storyteller** with a proven track record of shaping compelling narratives across climate and Indigenous justice, migration, and technology. I use multimedia to shift public perception, influence donor and policy agendas, and foster cross-sector alliances for a just future.

Work exhibited in venues such as The Smithsonian, Victoria & Albert and Asian Art Museum, and featured at Sundance Film Festival, SXSW, MUBI, The New Yorker, TIME, The BBC and Al Jazeera amongst others.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### Strategic Content & Partnerships Consultant

Freelance

Melbourne, AU

2020 - Present

- Secured over **\$680,000 AUD** across creative, cultural, and climate justice projects through high-impact proposals and donor engagement strategies for philanthropic, government, and corporate funders in Australia, the UK, and the US.
- Experienced in end-to-end fundraising strategy including proposal development, audience engagement documentation, donor communications, acquittals, and impact reporting. I have secured funding from Arts Council England, Creative Australia, The British Council, The Ford Foundation, AHRC/UKRI, Innovate UK, VicScreen, Screen Australia, National Geographic and the Goethe Institut amongst others.
- **Peer Assessor** for Creative Victoria Creator's Fund for Screen Projects [2023]
- Currently staffed on a confidential impact project for the Cambodian Children's Trust, an archival engagement for a major museum in Malaysia, and an impact report for a touring comedy collective in regional Australia.
- Member of the Global Impact Producers Alliance (GIPA).

### Founder & Director, Immersive Storytelling & Communications

*Project Dastaan*

South Asia/UK

Mar 2018 - Present

- Founded [Project Dastaan](#), an award-winning digital humanities initiative reconnecting communities across borders through immersive storytelling. Directed a multilingual team of researchers, creative technologists, and filmmakers. Centred on community healing, the project leverages global partnerships to drive peacebuilding and cultural education.
- Led the [virtual reconnection](#) of over 15 survivors of the Partition to their ancestral homes across the India-Pakistan border. This involved a rigorous process of in-depth interviews, user-centered narrative co-design, and transforming gathered footage into bespoke VR experiences. Designed trauma-sensitive workflows ensuring sensitivity and respect for survivors' mental health, including episodes of complex trauma and PTSD.
- Recognized internationally for innovation in immersive storytelling - listed in the UK National Archives and British History Curriculum; features in [TIME](#), [The BBC](#), [The New Yorker](#), [Reuters](#), [Nikkei](#), [NPR](#), and [National Geographic](#) amongst others. Endorsed by Malala Yousafzai and Gabo Arora, director of Immersive Storytelling and Emerging Technologies at John Hopkins University.

#### *Education, Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy*

- Ran a successful \$28,000 USD Kickstarter campaign (450+ donors, 130% of goal), producing campaign videos, managing global donor comms, and leading gift fulfilment logistics.
- Produced a multilingual digital education suite (touchscreen map, web platform, classroom toolkit) on the Partition for the British Council, available in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Bangla.
- Worked with Stanford University SPICE (Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education) to develop a [Teacher's Guide](#) on Partition, decolonization and migration - including a pre-test, informational handout and assignment, and an exercise in conflict analysis.
- Led the production of a [VR industry whitepaper](#), working with a PhD researcher to create a case study on how new entrants to the immersive industry in the UK could access public funding and distribute their projects. This was commissioned by Immerse UK and Arts Council England.
- Curated and toured an [international exhibition](#) across top global venues including the Smithsonian, VA, Asian Art Museum, and BFI. Attracted thousands of visitors; now permanently installed across India-Pakistan border, with 2025 showcase planned at 4A Centre, Sydney.

- Collaborated with [SOAS University](#) on an [AHRC funded research project](#), employing qualitative research methods such as surveys and participatory workshops to explore how VR technology and visual media can be used to inform pedagogical practices. Awarded University of Warwick's Enhancing Research Culture Fund to lead a project on "Visual Identification with Partition History" through VR and animation.

### Development Producer

Dreamchaser Entertainment

Melbourne, AU

Jul 2024 - Jul 2025

- Dreamchaser is a contemporary Australian content studio. I developed original non-fiction concepts on themes of climate justice, true crime, and national identity for film and television audiences.
- Oversaw end-to-end public grant applications from VicScreen and Screen Australia; secured marketplace interest and access to community talent and stories.

### Co-Founder and Digital Platform Lead, Imagining Peace

*Funded by Global Cultural Relations Programme (EU and Goethe Institut)*

Remote

Nov 2021 - Jul 2023

- [Imagining Peace](#) is a first-response web toolkit to support artists in conflict/post-conflict states with financial and industry resources, incubated at the [Global Cultural Relations Programme](#) 2021. Co-led design, editorial direction and UX.

### Narrative Consultant & Interview Coach

Crimson Consulting

Melbourne, AU

Jan 2024 - Present

- Delivered 170+ hours of tailored mentorship in academic and interview preparation for top UK universities. Specialized in articulating complex personal narratives and application essays with clarity, purpose, and confidence. My students have secured offers at Oxbridge and other top universities.

### Line Producer (Professional Exchange)

Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée

Montpellier, FR

Feb 2024 - Jun 2024

- With the support of the Ian Potter Cultural Trust for Emerging Australian Artists, I completed a production residency with Golden Globe Award-winning studio, Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée. I contributed to their co-production strategy for feature animation; supported development dossiers and funding applications to EURIMAGES and CNC.

### Consulting Associate (Internship)

*Boston Consulting Group (BCG)*

London, UK

Jul 2018 - Aug 2018

- Chosen as one of 12 interns out of >2000 applicants for summer program, engaged in a confidential legal project for a major financial services player in London, and received a full-time offer upon completion of the program.

### Research Associate, Contemporary South Asian Studies Programme

*University of Oxford*

Oxford, UK

Sep 2019 - Mar 2020

- Mixed methods ethnographic work including photo elicitation, film and oral history interviews.

## PUBLICATIONS & FILMS

### **Fear and Loathing in Kathmandu (2024)** *Feature Documentary, Director*

[Link](#)

The dramatic story of Nepal's transformation - from a 1960s hippie haven where legal cannabis fuelled a thriving counterculture, to a nation unravelled by foreign intervention and civil war.

### **Birdsong (2022)** *Short Documentary, Director/Producer*

[Link](#)

Climate-focussed documentary commissioned by The Guardian, [Audible UK](#) and [Aesthetica](#). Premiered at SXSW 2023, official selection at Sundance London and Palm Springs IFF (Special mention for Best Documentary Short). Shortlisted for a Grierson and International Documentary Association (IDA) Award, longlisted for the British Independent Film (BIFA) Award, and chosen as a Vimeo Staff Pick.

### **Hiking Sacred Peaks: Spiritual Act Or Desecration? (2023)** *Feature, Noema*

[Link](#)

In Australia, a local dispute over mountain climbing on an Indigenous sacred site has become a flashpoint for confronting the nation's tarnished racial history and relationship to climate and environment. Shortlisted for the LA Press Club Race and Society Reporting Award.

### **Child of Empire (2022)** *Animated VR Documentary, Director/Producer*

[Link](#)

Funded by CreativeXR, BFI Doc Society and Unity Technologies. Premiered at Sundance Film Festival in 2022, official selection at Sheffield DocFest and 2020 Venice Production Bridge Gap Financing Market. Received the inaugural "[XR History Award](#)" from the Korber Stiftung Foundation. The project was reviewed in [The Economist](#) and [The Journal of Religion and Film](#).

**Muslim Scholars Are Working To Reconcile Islam and AI (2021)** *Feature, WIRED* [Link](#)  
Scholars are wrestling with the non-western cultural and religious implications of leaving AI to play God.

**Lost Migrations (2022)** *Animated Anthology (3X10 Mins)* [Link](#)  
Commissioned by British Council and National Geographic Society. Premiered at the British Film Institute in Southbank, reviewed in [Al Jazeera](#) and [Alkersal Online](#). Now streaming on [MUBI India](#) and [NOWNESS ASIA](#).

**Off the Record (2022)** *Animated VR Documentary, Director and Co-Writer* [Link](#)  
StoryFutures (Royal Holloway, University of London) [commissioned 6 eligible creative companies](#) to use and reinterpret British national media archives, in partnership with the BFI and BBC. I made an 8-minute archive-based VR experience exploring the rise of bhangra music and South Asian British identity, in collaboration with London's Emmy-Award winning No Ghost animation studios.

**Amma (2022)** *VR Hybrid Piece, Line Producer (360 Shoot)* [Link](#)  
Contracted by London's Tara Theatre to line produce a hybrid VR piece shedding light on the unheard experience of women during the War of Independence in Bangladesh. The piece won the Digital Innovation Award at the 2023 UK Theatre Awards.

**The Day They Banned Spring** *Print Feature, Ori Magazine* [Link](#)  
Lahore's colorful string began to unravel in 2004, when the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), a militant Islamist group, demanded an end to the beloved kite-flying festival of Basant.

**Justice, One Screenshot At A Time (2020)** *Feature, Rest of World* [Link](#)  
The strange case of the Bois Locker Room scandal and the "ethical hacker" who believes "to get justice, you need to do unethical things."

## EDUCATION

<b>University of Oxford</b>	Oxford, UK
BA (Hons.) Philosophy, Politics and Economics (FitzRandolph Scholar - Upper Second Class)	2016 - 2019

## FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

<b>Originate Factual - VicScreen</b>	2024
A three-month, multi-stage program designed to support 12 mid-career Victorian producers to develop high-end documentary series with global appeal under the guidance of leading industry professionals.	
<b>Ian Potter Cultural Trust - Emerging Australian Artist</b>	2024
<b>National Geographic Explorer</b>	2020
<b>Webby Award (Nominee - Best VR Video)</b>	2020
<b>CatchLight Global Fellowship</b>	2019
\$30000USD Fellowship, selected as one of four artists amongst over 300 applicants from 61 countries.	

## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

**Games for Change**, Parsons School of Design NYC, [Virtual Bridges for Refugee Communities](#), Jul 2025  
**Harvard Kennedy School**, India Caucus, June 2025  
**Yale University**, South Asia Youth Initiative, June 2025  
**World Archaeology Summit**, AlUla Saudi Arabia, [Saving Archaeology One TikTok at a Time](#), Sep 2023  
**Bangalore International Centre**, [Workshop on Animation and Production](#), Feb 2023  
**Unity for Humanity** - [Changing the World with Immersive Storytelling](#), Jan 2022  
**Syracuse University** - [Virtual Narratives: Evolving Storytelling Through Gaming Platforms](#), Jan 2022  
**Double Exposure Symposium x MIT Media Lab** - [Making the Metaverse](#), Dec 2021  
**Geneva Peace Week**, Rotary Action Group for Peace Incubator, 2020  
**TedXIGDTU** - [Crossing Borders with Technology](#), 2020  
**Oxford University**, [Iris Festival of the Future](#), 2020

## SKILLS

Languages:	English, Hindi/Urdu, French
Software:	Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Notion, Airtable, WordPress, elementary HTML/CSS