

Inside EDS 2026: What to expect at the Experience Design Summit

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~Others

May 23, 2026

70 Views

There is a specific hour in October in Rajasthan when the light goes gold. Everything it touches, the stone, the dust, and the Aravalli ranges at the edge of the sky, looks like it was designed to be looked at. On the battlements of Mundota Fort, Jaipur lies 500 years deep beneath them. That is where EDS 2026 reveals itself.

The [Experience Design Summit](#) 2026 runs from the 23rd to the 28th of October at Mundota Palace, Jaipur, India.

One hundred and fifty people. Five days.

A question that every attendee, regardless of their industry or discipline, has been living with in their own way — *what does it actually mean to design something that moves someone?*

This is not a conference

EDS does not describe itself as a conference, and the distinction matters more than it sounds. Conferences transfer information. **Experience Design Summit** is built to transfer something harder to name: a shift in how you think, what you notice, and who you become in conversation with people who take the same questions as seriously as you do.

You do not come to just listen and learn. You come to challenge ideas, build relationships, and leave changed. The people in the room shape how the world experiences culture, hospitality, public spaces, brands, tourism, luxury, and immersive storytelling.

The word *proximity* is doing real work here. It is the argument for keeping attendance to 150. It is the reason EDS chose a palace rather than a convention centre. It is why the programme deliberately moves between intellectual intensity and unstructured time — because some of the most important conversations at any summit happen in the spaces the schedule does not own.

Jaipur was never an accident

The choice of Jaipur for the **Experience Design Summit 2026** is, in itself, a piece of curatorial thinking worth examining. The Pink City carries centuries of design intelligence in its bones; its architecture, its craftsmanship, and its relationship between space and story.

Mundota Palace & Fort is one of Rajasthan's genuinely storied properties. An estate with five centuries of continuous history, a war fort above its upper grounds, and a courtyard that has witnessed eras this summit's participants can only imagine. It is a space that already knows how to hold people. The light at different hours, the weight of the stone, the silence in certain corridors, the view from the battlements across the plains of Jaipur: these are not amenities. They are the architecture of an experience that begins before the programme does.

When you spend five days asking questions about how spaces make people feel, being inside a 500-year-old fort above Rajasthan is not background scenery. It is part of the answer.

An invitation-only design summit with intention

One of the defining aspects of **Experience Design Summit 2026** is that it remains an invitation-only design summit. That choice is not about exclusivity for the sake of status. It is about protecting the quality of conversation.

Large-scale conferences often create transactional networking environments where interactions become rushed and performative. EDS approaches the community differently. The summit intentionally brings together people from different disciplines who are curious, reflective, and willing to engage beyond surface-level introductions.

The room includes founders, architects, cultural curators, luxury hospitality leaders, immersive storytellers, destination developers, brand builders, event creators, and creative strategists — people whose work, across wildly different industries, shares a single preoccupation: how do you make someone feel something real?

The result is a different kind of energy. Instead of attendees trying to pitch themselves, conversations unfold naturally — over meals, installations, quiet moments, and shared experiences. The environment encourages openness rather than performance. That changes the texture of every exchange, every shared meal, every argument that spills past the session and into the courtyard.

The faculty: twelve minds, one obsession

What makes **Experience Design Summit** distinct is not the seniority of the faculty, though that is considerable, but the range of disciplines they represent. The summit has drawn together practitioners who have approached the question of transformative experience from completely different angles, working in domains that rarely share the same stage.

Ferdinando Buscema will bring his practice of magic and future thinking, having worked at Ferrari as a magic experience designer after becoming the first-ever magician-in-residence at the Institute for the Future. **James Wallman**, a cultural forecaster who saw experientialism coming before the word existed. **Paul Bulencea** and **Claus Raasted**, who built a college inside a medieval castle and watched it get recognised as one of the world's finest experiences.

Monica Dogra will bring sacred performance and the ability to dissolve the boundary between artist and audience in ways that change the temperature of a room while **Seema Anand** has spent her career making India's classical literature feel as alive and urgent as the present moment. **Barnet Bain**, who brought cinema and consciousness, asking why certain stories enter a person and never quite leave.

Colin Nightingale will bring the inside knowledge of immersive theatre, having helped build *Sleep No More* into a production that rewrote what audiences



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expect from a live experience.

Koert Vermeulen unpacks light and darkness, composing environments the way a musician composes sound while **Omung Kumar** conjures production design and cinema.

Roshan Abbas, the founder of Spoken Fest, has inhabited three decades of live media and platform building. **Brenton Sizwe Zola** will bring the intersection of Congolese spiritual heritage, improvisation, and immersive installation.

Twelve approaches. One question. Five days in Jaipur this October to find out where they converge.

What the days actually look like

Much of **Experience Design Summit 2026**'s programme is still being kept under wraps, described only as transformative and unconventional. But even the experiences already revealed hint at something far beyond a traditional gathering.

Nākaloka, created by Monica Dogra and Victorien, transforms the palace courtyard into a sacred immersive gathering where the usual boundary between artist and audience dissolves. Built around what its creators call a *radical unified field* — sound, ritual, and collective presence — it is not something you watch. It is something you step inside of.

The Sundowner at the War Fort offers a different rhythm entirely: DJ Vic, the Jaipur skyline, the Aravalli sky at dusk, and a room full of people simply sharing a moment together.

Then comes the **Polo Lunch and Exhibition Match**; an afternoon of open skies, long conversations, and Rajasthan's deep connection to the sport.

The most powerful experiences are rarely the most controlled ones. EDS knows this, which is why not everything at the summit is designed. Some of it is simply allowed to happen.

It is a reminder that some of the best experience design is simply knowing when to get out of the way and let a place be itself.

Why Experience Design? Why now?

There is a phrase at the heart of EDS's philosophy: *Experience is the economy*.

It is worth pausing on. The claim is not that experience matters alongside other factors such as quality, price, and convenience.

It is that experience is the product. The moment someone chooses a hotel, a city, a brand, a restaurant, or a cultural event, they are choosing a feeling. Something they cannot photograph but will carry for years.

The organizations that understand this are not just competitive. They are building things that outlast the transaction. They are shaping what it feels like to be alive in this cultural moment.

EDS is the room where that conversation gets the seriousness it deserves.

How to apply to Experience Design Summit?

Applications for EDS 2026 are open now, with attendance limited to 150 curated participants. To inquire or begin your application, write directly to the team at explore@expdesign.org.

The window is limited by design. This is an **invitation-only design summit** that has built its room with the same intentionality it asks of everyone inside it.

Visit our website: <https://expdesign.org/>.

23rd to 28th October 2026. Mundota Palace & Fort, Jaipur, India.



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