

The Perforated Curtain: Configuring the Public and the Private in Calcutta's Cabin Culture

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When I was very young, eating out was not a regular activity for our family. On one of such rare occasion we ended up in a restaurant where the waiter made us sit in a cubicle with a curtain on one side. You pull the curtain and it creates a weird sense of privacy. That idea of intimate space in the middle of a busy city intrigued me. Later I found many restaurants in Kolkata where they have this sort of cabin, a private eating area. Starting from pre-independence when they were there to provide some privacy to the ladies of the family who were not allowed to eat in public, the cabin witnessed many private affairs with time, from political discussions to lovers' silence. With changing time and the emergence of posh cafes with quirky interiors, the shabby little cabins have lost their charm, but the almost empty cabins, some even without the curtains stand there to tell a story of a time gone by.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9



Image 10

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