

Poonji

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This collection brings to light the issues faced by Indian women due to social norms like dowry. Daughters are often treated as a burden as they are considered 'paraya dhan' or 'another's wealth' by their families. The father of the daughter is made to fulfil the demands of the groom upon marriage and fill a huge dowry trunk with expensive items.

Due to being seen as a burden on a family's wealth, daughters are often killed at birth. They may also face adversities at the hands of the family of the groom. Not only this, but daughters are often denied education to save money to fill their dowry trunk.

Through my work, I have tried to showcase a representation of a dowry trunk in its true size and form. This trunk can be broken apart into separate entities reflecting an ideology of breaking apart from this custom. Efforts have also been made to shed light on what inheritance might mean from a cultural aspect. Inspiration has been taken from the harmonium, an Indian reed musical instrument, used to both depict its importance in culture, and mirror the movement of collapse and expand embedded in the structure of the trunk.

Materials like the elements of wood have been sourced from an old household door owned by my grandfather, to further attach values of inheritance into the project. The exterior of the trunk is carefully handcrafted in the patterns of Phulkari, an important embroidered craft handed over to the bride at her wedding. The inside of the trunk has been left hollow and dark, to comment on the inherent materialism attached to the societal norm of Dowry.



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