



Museum of Material Memory

Guidelines for Submission

[The Museum of Material Memory](#) is a crowdsourced, digital repository of material culture of the Indian subcontinent, tracing family history and social ethnography through heirlooms, collectibles and objects of antiquity. It was founded in 2017, and invites South Asians and those connected to the culture of South Asia to write narratives about their heirlooms and belongings through the lens of personal and familial storytelling. The aim of the Museum is to create a cohesive and organic archive of material culture which focuses as much on memory as it does on the history of an object. It also strives to locate objects of national or cultural importance that can teach us directly or indirectly about a shared South Asian history or identity. The objects in the Museum date from or before the 1970s.

Take a look at our [website](#)/ [Instagram](#).

CONTENT OF THE PIECE

Things to think about as you write are –

1. Origin –

- a. Where did the object originate?
- b. If the origin is a place other than its current location, how was it brought to where it is today?

2. Time period –

- a. What is the date / time period of the object? This does not have to be exact, it could also be an approximate decade.

3. Ownership –

- a. Who owned the object?
- b. Their name, date of birth, area of birth and anything else that may be relevant – for instance, family life, work life, if they affected by any major events in history, etc.

4. Physicality of the object. Here are some ideas to help you –

- a. What material is it made from?
- b. What is the object's colour and shape?
- c. Has it been altered from its original state in any way?
- d. What are its dimensions?
- e. Does it have any particular markings on the surface?
- f. Does it have a particular smell or texture?



Museum of Material Memory

5. Condition –

- a. What is the current state of the object? Pristine condition, worn out, does it have any cracks or tears?
- b. Has it been altered from its original state by restoration or weathering?

6. Usage and storage –

- a. Is the object still used? If not, then why?
- b. If not, then where is it stored/ preserved and how?

7. A narrative about the object –

Write about a memory attached to the object(s). This can be yours, or the original owner. It could be about the first time you were introduced to the object, or what it represents for you, why it is an important part of your life, and what its legacy is. Please include as many details as possible.

LENGTH OF THE PIECE

The pieces should be about **800 - 1000 words long, but it's perfectly fine for it to be longer**. It can always be edited down, but it's difficult to keep adding details, so the richer the first draft, the easier the process. As you are writing, keep in mind the usage, tactility and history of the object - any history that you can remember or collect about it or the person who owned it would be lovely.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. We use photographs on our website, Instagram posts and stories, and Twitter. The photographs will be credited to you, or anyone else who has taken them.

2. Since the archive is digital and we don't physically take objects from anyone or display them anywhere, we like to showcase as high resolution and accurate an image as possible. The photographs are an essential part of every piece we do. Therefore, we prefer to have 10 or more images of the object (but the more the better!) from different angles in **vertical and horizontal format**.

3. Some tips for the images –

- a. Photos are best taken in natural light, perhaps by a window or during daytime.
- b. Please make sure that you have a solid, clean background or a neutral cloth kept underneath so that the focus is only on the object. You could also keep it on a solid surface like a table, the floor, a windowsill or any shelf. Please make sure that any patterned surface you use does not crowd the image and take away from the object.

3. We often urge people to take photos of smaller objects in one's hand to show the scale of the item.



Museum of Material Memory

4. Including photographs of the original owner brings a more intimate perspective to the object. If you have old black and white photographs, do include them - these could be scans (wherever possible) or photos of old photographs.
5. Do make sure that the photographs are of a high resolution, otherwise they might pixelate when uploaded. Phone photographs are absolutely okay, provided the resolution is good enough. In the case of documents or photographs, you could also scan them for best resolution.

Some examples of photographs

