

Ascend

Inspired by the Past, Shaped for the Present



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Ascend

/ə'send/
verb

1. go up or climb

This booklet traces the design journey of a stool inspired by a family heirloom—a Mughal-influenced throne-style chair. The project moves through early sketches, iterative prototyping, and cultural references, culminating in a final product that balances tradition with thoughtful minimalism. In this context the name represents honouring the past while stepping into the present.

1**The Chosen Object**

A Mughal-inspired chair from my home that became the starting point.

2**Ideas and Concept**

Initial stool sketches and early prototype explorations.

3**Development**

Adjustments in form, proportion, and structure through prototyping.

4**The Final Product**

The resolved stool, its story, cultural influences, exploded view, technical specifications, and renders

Did you know...

...a team of 10 karigars built it by hand?

It was made in a karkhana in 2002, in a tiny 20x20 ft workshop tucked away in a dense neighborhood. These spaces, often humble, are where some of India's most beautiful furniture still comes to life.

...Indian interiors looked very different back then?

22 years ago, Indian homes weren't as influenced by Western minimalism. Designs still leaned heavily on heritage styles, especially those inspired by the Mughal dynasty.

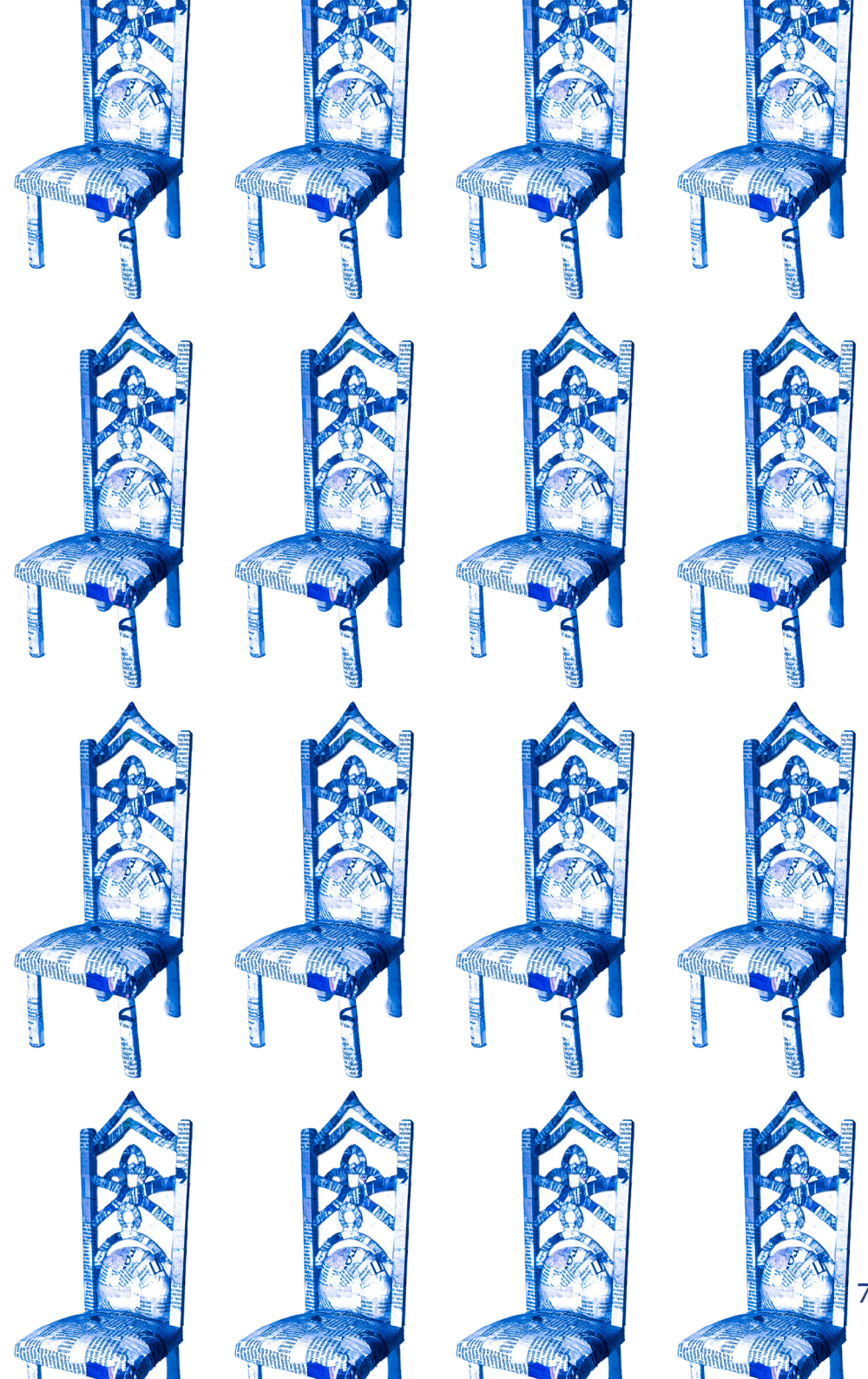
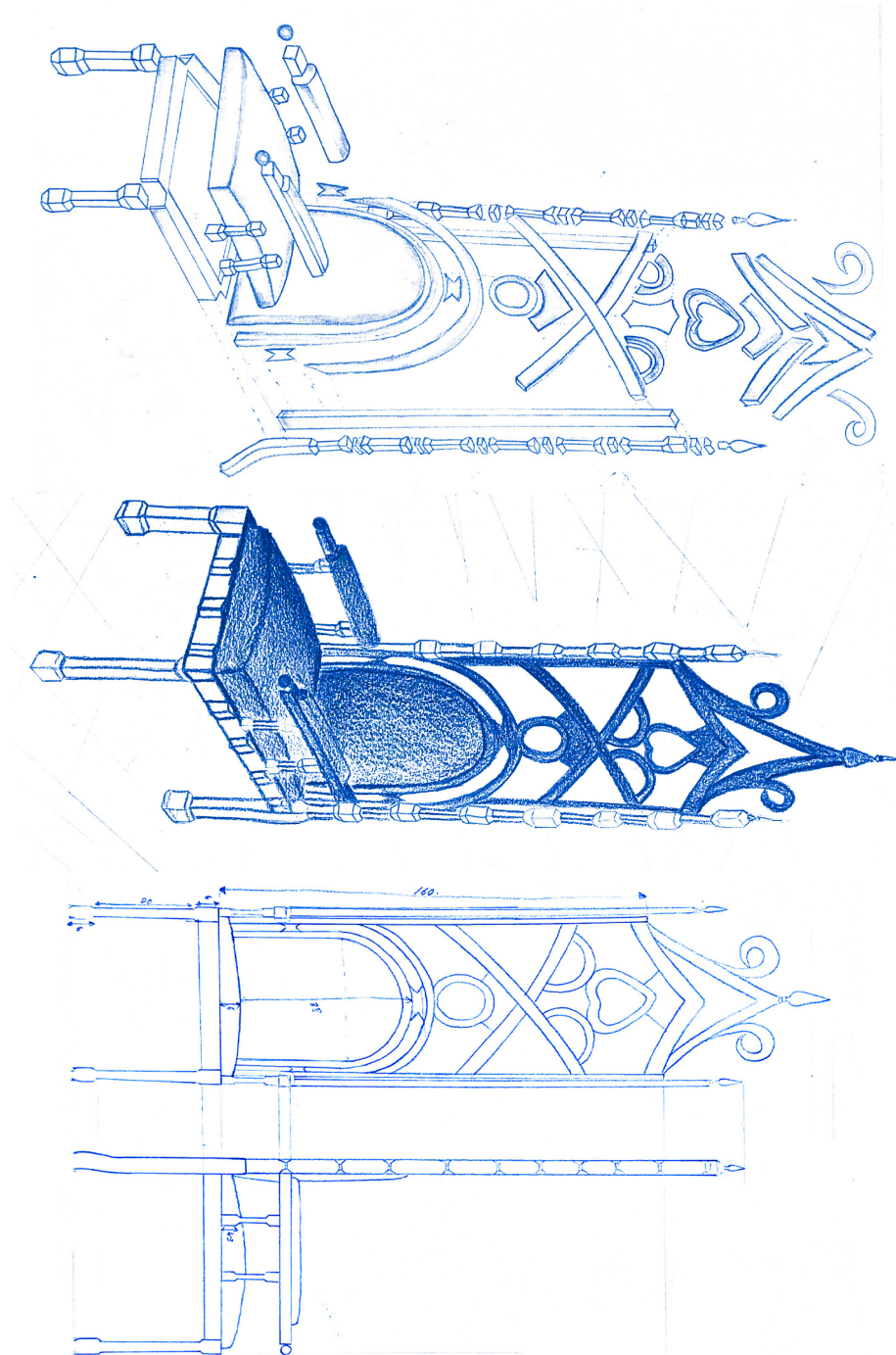
...it was built from an old Indian door frame?

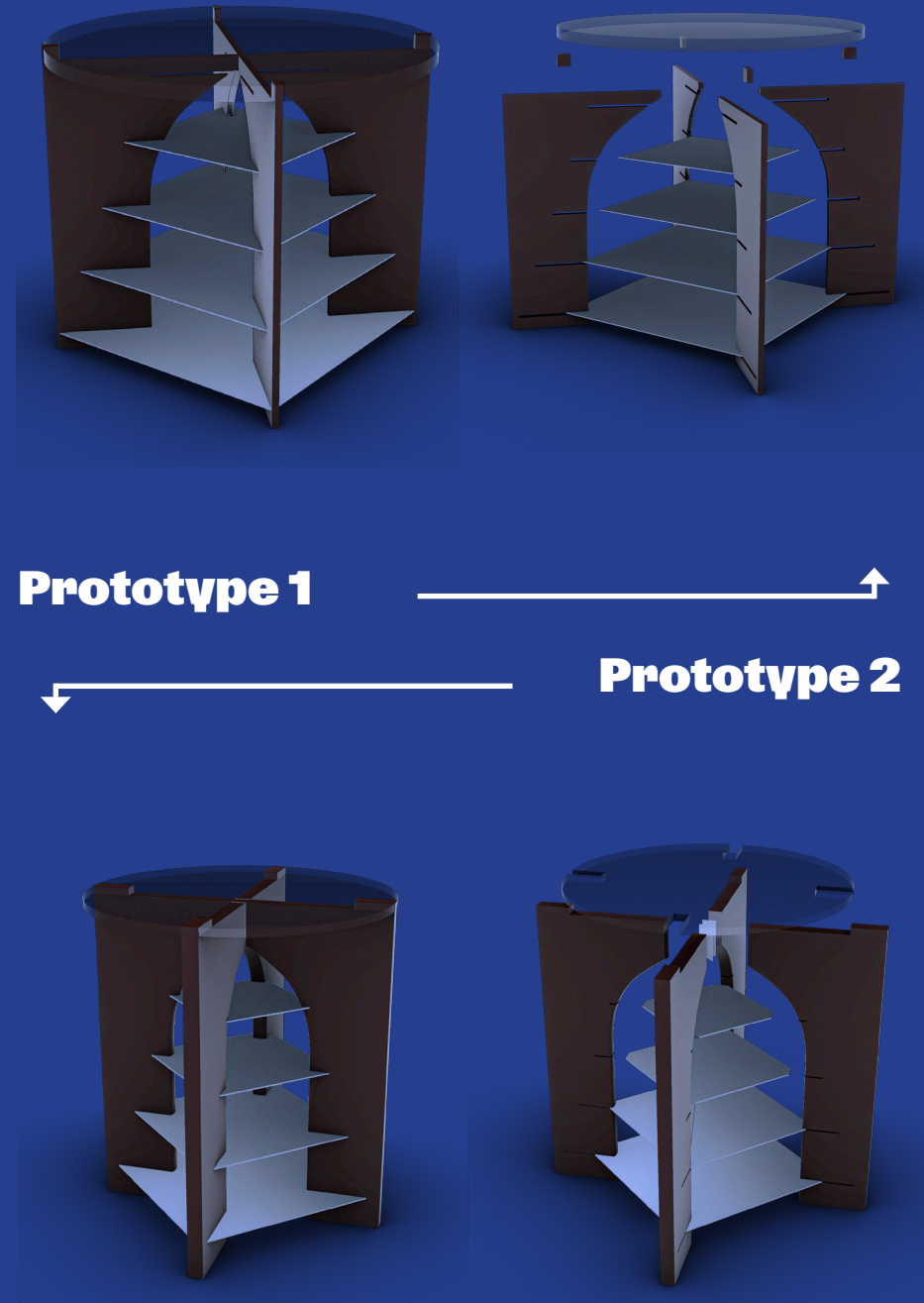
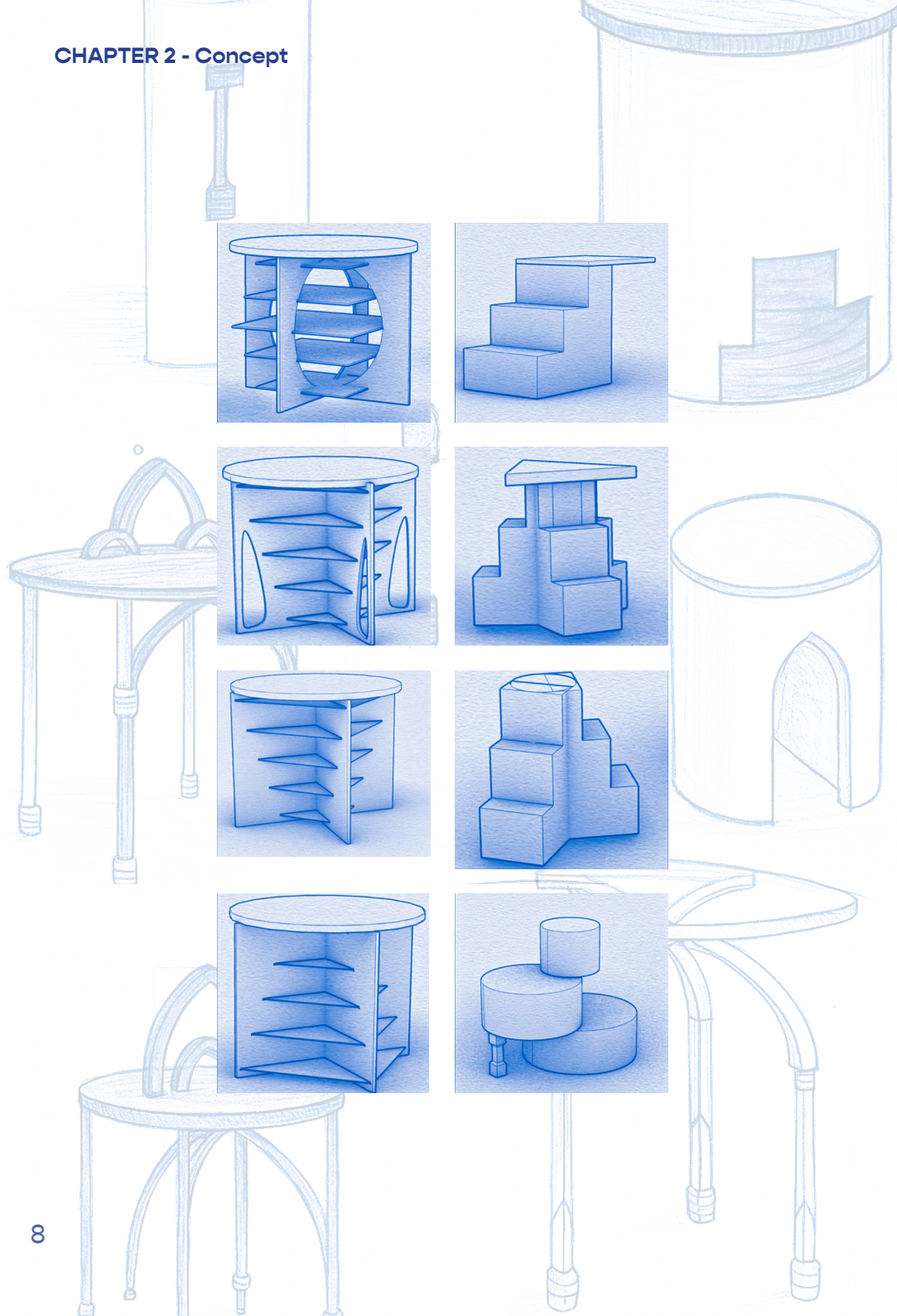
The chair was crafted using repurposed teak wood from antique door frames—an elegant way to reuse materials that already had history in them.

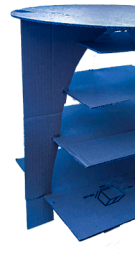
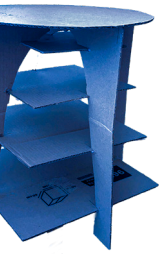
...the chair's design nods to Mughal architecture?

Look closely—the pointed arches and lattice-like patterns draw from traditional Mughal motifs. My mom loved that it felt both regal and culturally grounded









Prototype 1

Structurally, the legs were placed mid-panel instead of aligning with the corners of the base, which **compromised both balance and aesthetics.**

The **arches lacked clarity and proportional elegance**, making the visual language **feel off** compared to the original throne reference.

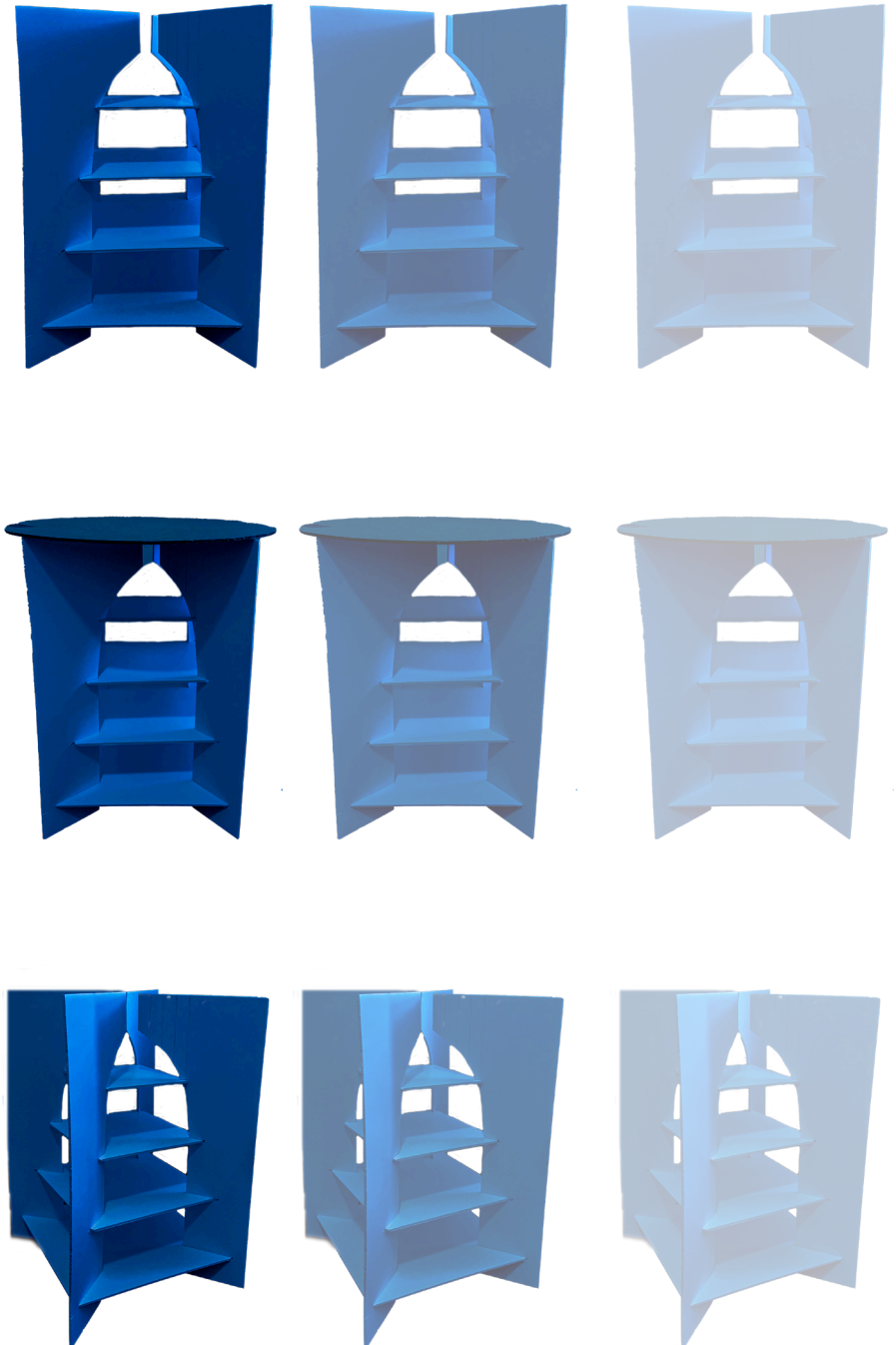
Measurement inaccuracies across components made the assembly imprecise, and the overall geometry felt awkward when viewed from different angles. Overall, this version helped clarify what wasn't working in terms of form, proportion, and alignment.

The measurements are more accurate, leading to a **cleaner and tighter assembly**.

The arches are more **symmetrical**, and the rhythm of the horizontal planes is more balanced.

However, one flaw remains: the top panel **doesn't fully touch** the vertical side supports, likely due to a **slight miscalculation** in height or arc clearance. This version is far closer to the intended result, but minor dimensional adjustments are still required to ensure a perfect structural fit.

Prototype 2





Ascend

This stool is **lightweight** and easy to move.

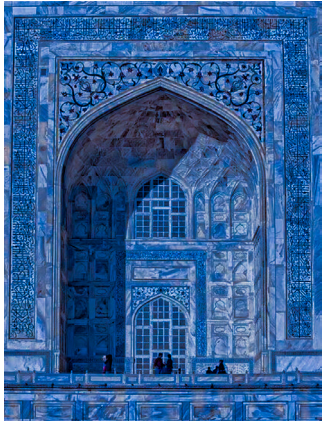
It can be **flat-packed** for transport or storage.

Assembly requires **no screws, glue, or tools**.

The interlocking parts simply slide into place.

Each component is precisely cut and cleanly finished.

The design is functional but sculptural.

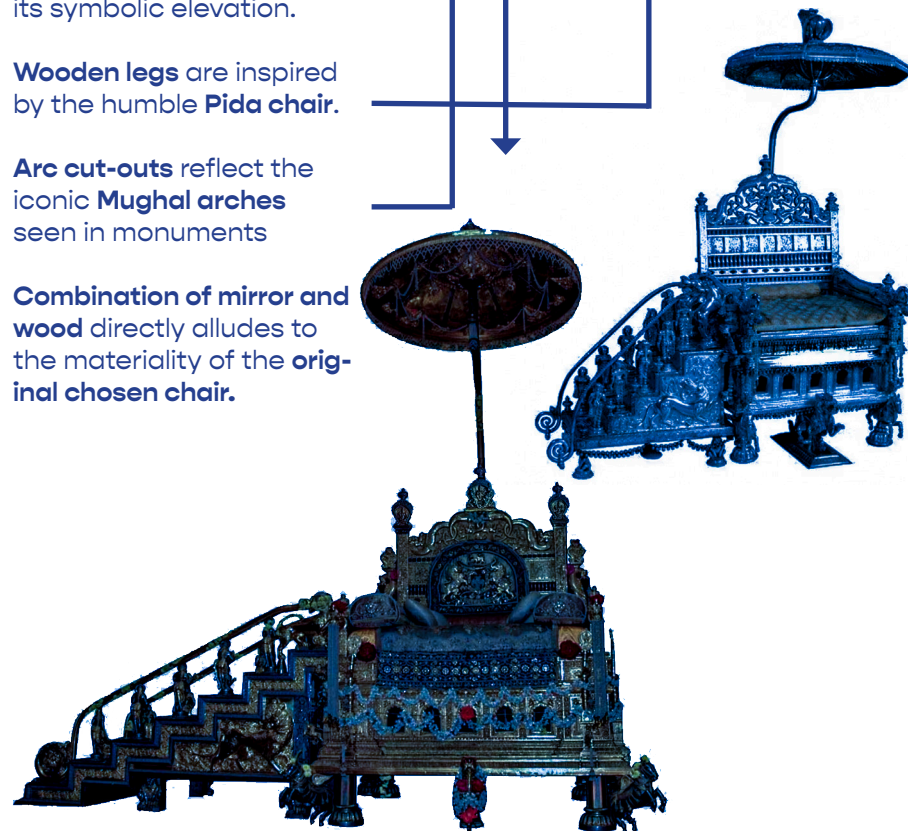


Layered, **stair-like structure** references the **Golden Throne of Mysore** and its symbolic elevation.

Wooden legs are inspired by the humble **Pida chair**.

Arc cut-outs reflect the iconic **Mughal arches** seen in monuments

Combination of mirror and wood directly alludes to the materiality of the **original chosen chair**.



The Story

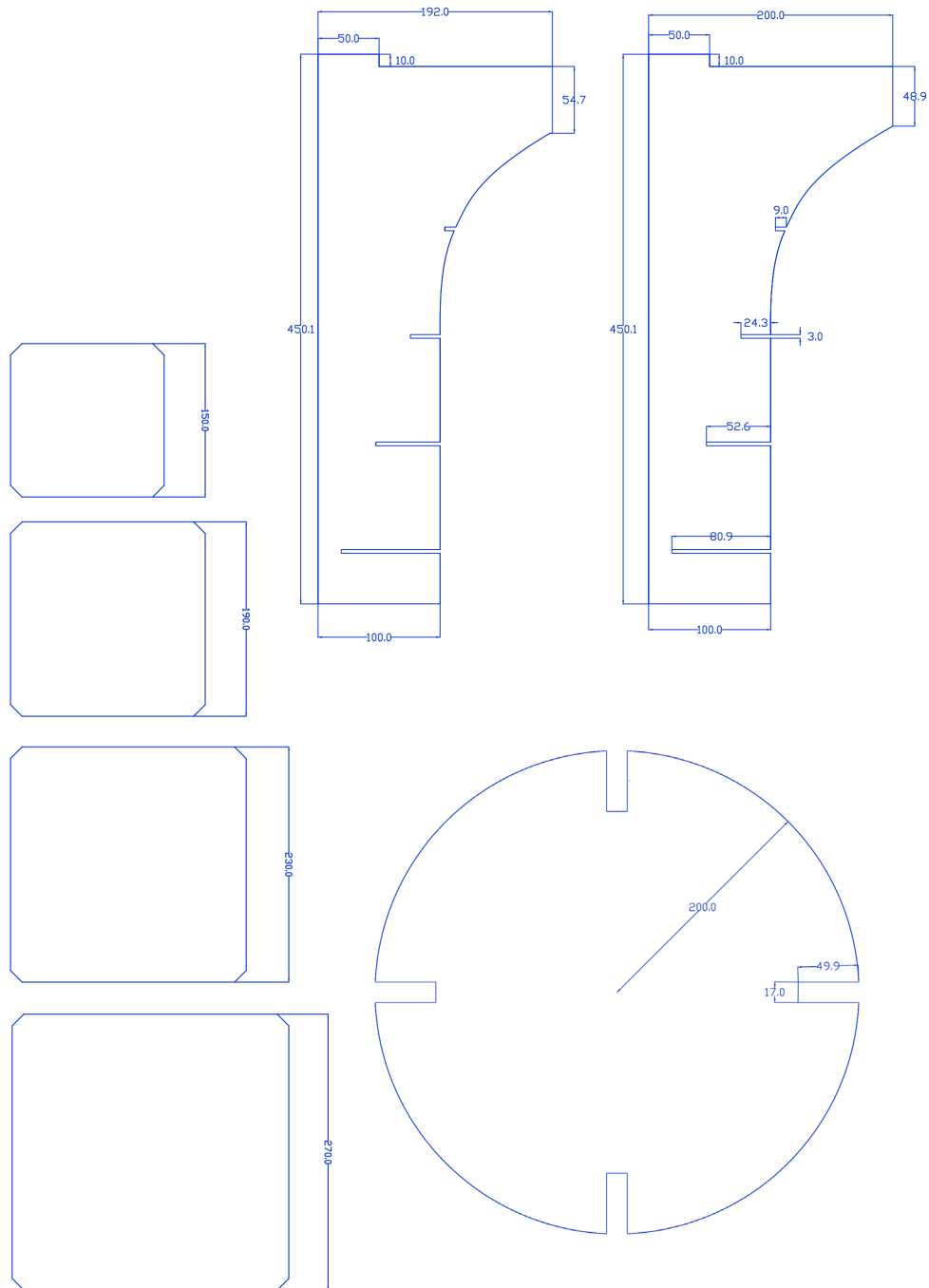
This stool design began with a throne-like chair from my childhood home—a tall, elegant object made from repurposed wood and embedded with mirrors. The chair carried traces of Mughal architectural influence, visible in its pointed arches, symmetrical form, and rich material play. That personal memory became the starting point for a deeper exploration into Mughal-era seating culture.

I focused on two contrasting examples from that time: the Golden Throne of Mysore (a grand, elevated seat accessible only by ascending a flight of stair), and the Pida chair (a small wooden seat commonly used by the working class). These examples revealed a visual hierarchy embedded in furniture: to sit higher was to command power, while sitting low implied modesty or labor.

This idea of “ascent” as meaning became central to the stool’s design. Its stacked, stair-like layers reference the symbolic steps of the throne—an act of physically and socially moving upward. At the same time, its form is simple and minimal, a deliberate departure from the ornamental language of the original chair.

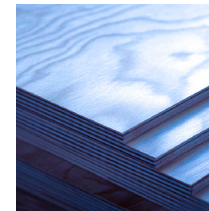
The materials also reflect this duality. The stool uses wood—a material tied to craftsmanship, familiarity, and working-class labor—and metal, often reserved for wealthier households or ceremonial objects in Mughal interiors. This fusion mirrors the original chair’s play between mirror and wood, but translated into a more abstract, modular expression.

The final result is a design that isn’t decorative, but symbolic. It merges opposites—rich and humble, past and present—into one coherent object. A stool that quietly holds the layered stories of both social identity and personal memory.



Technicals

Vertical Leg Component



Material: Pioppo Wood (Poplar)

3 sheets: 400 × 400 mm

Thickness: 8 mm

Production method: Laaser cut

Internal Stepped Panels



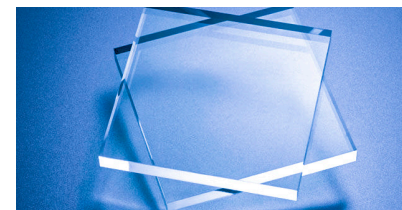
Materials: Mirror Plexiglass

1 sheet: 890 × 380 mm

Thickness: 3 mm

Production method: Laaser cut

Top Circular Seat

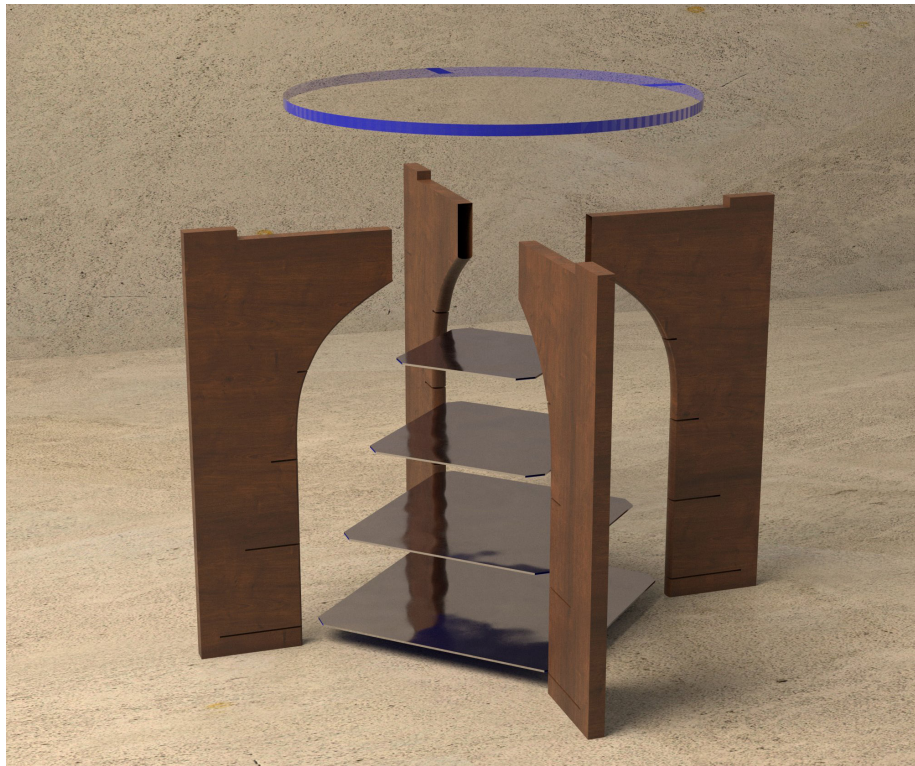
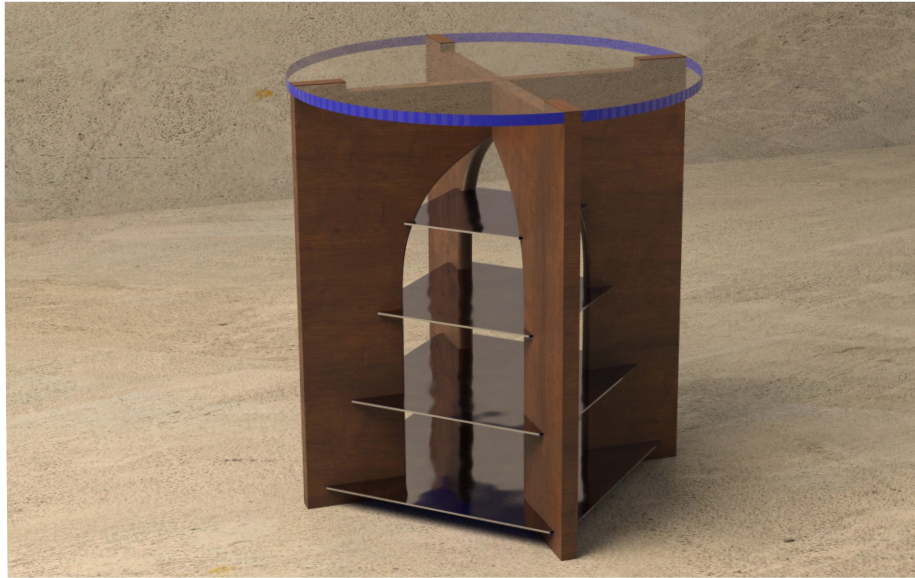


Material: Transparent Plexiglass

1 sheet: 400 × 400 mm

Thickness: 10 mm

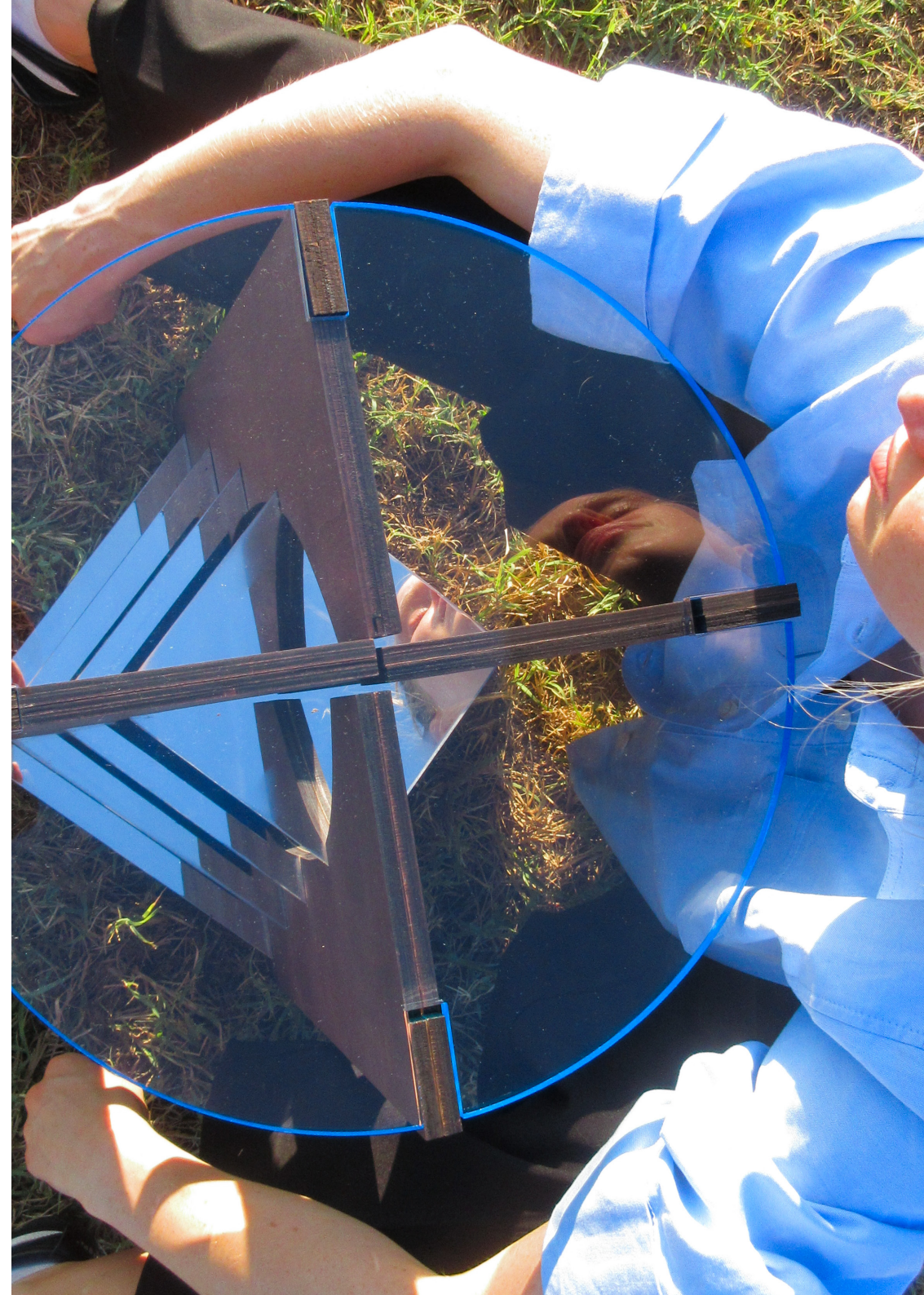
Production method: Laaser cut







Through the process of building the final prototype, I faced a few challenges—such as making the mirror slot openings exactly 3mm wide, thinking it would hold the pieces more securely, but in reality it made assembly very difficult. In hindsight, offsetting the slot size by 0.5mm would have helped. Additionally, when I ordered the transparent plexiglass circle at 40x40cm, I didn't account for the 3mm safety margin required by the laser cutter, which slightly altered the final fit. Despite these small issues, I'm very happy with the overall result. If I revisit or expand this project, I'll keep these technical details in mind to ensure a smoother and more efficient assembly process for potential users. The final stool reflects not only where the design came from, but also where it's going.





Furniture Design

NABA

2025