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THE COLLECTION

The show (15,556) has on display 26 chairs, tables, benches, screens, a daybed and lighting. "Not all products are new. Since, I started my practice five years ago, I have been researching on handmade items, how mass production is taking it away from us. That's when I began creating the pieces," says Shroff, who before opening his own practice Rooshad Shroff Architecture + Design (RS A+D) has worked at the offices of internationally acclaimed architects such as Zaha Hadid in London and OMA/REX in New York. Shroff believes that India has an abundance of skilled craft that has not been tapped to its potential. Therefore, when you take a look at his very modern-looking pieces you will notice how traditional skills have been used to create it.

TWIST ON TRADITION

Every piece is handmade. Shroff has essentially explored three crafts. The first is embroidery. "I wanted to see how one could marry different techniques in different ways. So, we have used embroidery on wood. This has been done by drilling holes into wood and then embroidering it with zardozi and French knots," says Shroff. The entire process required a lot of time,



Architect Rooshad Shroff with the embroidered screen

Embroidered wooden bench



Occasional table created using colour-sanding



practice and effort. "An artisan was drilling holes for the first six months just to get used to it," he adds. The next technique used is colour-sanding, where layers of paint are applied on wood and then sanded down to reveal different contours. "I did this physically myself. The layers are peeled off and lacquered," says Shroff. The third technique is marble carving. "India has an amazing lineage, but we need to give it a contemporary appeal. So, we have on offer tables and light pendants from hollowed-out marble, which is then carved."

BLURRING BOUNDARIES

All the woodwork is hand done in traditional joinery techniques, without any screws, nails or glue.

There are six different kinds of marble bulbs, a screen that has been embroidered on both sides so that it looks good from every angle and colour-sanded tables, which have as many as 20 layers. "My basic idea was to blur borders of art, craft and design," says Shroff. The good news is that he will be adding new pieces to the collection.

PRICE ₹90,000 to ₹12 lakh

AT It previewed at Bikaner House, Delhi, till March 3. It will show at the Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai, in June. (rooshads.wix.com/rooshadshroff)



Hollowed-out and carved marble bulbs

CRAFTING SUCCESS

Architect Rooshad Shroff's love for space and objects led to 15,556, an exhibition that celebrates traditional crafts in a contemporary context

By RIDHI KALE

A chair is a very difficult object. A skyscraper is almost easier. That is why Chippendale is famous," said German-American architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, referring to a style of furniture that became popular towards the end of the 18th century. However, this didn't stop 20th century architects like Mies, Le Corbusier, Marcel Breuer, Alvar Aalto, and Eero Saarinen, to name just a few, from designing chairs and products that have become the centre of attraction in important buildings across the globe. Today's architect is no different. Mumbai-based architect Rooshad Shroff, who has received recognition for both his architectural designs and C-Series chairs; has launched his latest collection of furniture and functional objects, 15,556, in collaboration with the Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai. Why 15,556? "It is indicative of the man-hours that went into the collection, acknowledging the time and skill used to create a handcrafted object," says the 35-year-old, adding, "The loss of authorship, of knowledge (traditional know-how) and traceability prompted me to move against the main proclivity and focus on handmade."

Chairs crafted from wood using embroidery and a marble table

