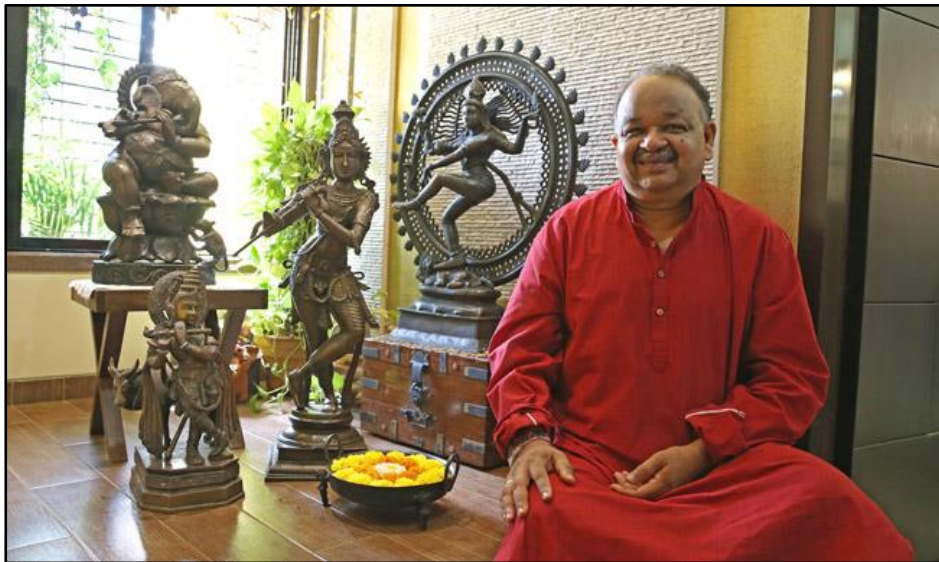


OUTLOOK BUSINESS

THINK BEYOND. STAY AHEAD.

For The Love Of History

UFO Moviez' Rajesh Mishra is a self-taught student of Indian architecture, and has been working to preserve our heritage for more than a decade now



Rajesh Mishra, CEO, UFO Moviez, likes to talk about his love for travelling quite often, for it is also what has given him his aesthetically pleasing collection of historical artefacts and statues of deities. On nearly every vacation he takes with his family, he finds a place to find an authentic antique statue, preferably one of Ganesha!

"I had not always been into collecting artefacts, and part of the credit for developing this interest goes to my wife. She too loves gathering different kinds of paintings, statues and artefacts, while we are on our trip," Mishra says. The couple specifically likes to collect Indian pieces. "Western art has its own beauty, but there is so much to explore in India. The two of us love the history behind all the deities that we preserve. I have always been attracted to our temples, some of our architectural history dates back 2000 years. Indian architecture, I believe, is way ahead of the curve than the Europe's," he says.

Mishra is undoubtedly a history enthusiast though he has no academic background in this. "This is a completely self-taught hobby. I am not a history student, in fact, I hold a bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Bombay, and further went on to complete chartered accountancy," he says.

Of course, while he was busy pursuing his professional dreams, he had no time to follow his other passion. It was only 10 to 15 years ago that Mishra started collecting artefacts. His first ever purchase was a statue, on a trip to Jaipur with his wife. He admits that the two of them are devotees of Ganesha and they started their collection by buying his statues first, and then slowly moved to furniture and artefacts. "For a long stretch of time, I could not buy those statues because we did not have a farmhouse, and we needed to buy one. Then one day, my wife and I sat down and meticulously worked on the decor of our farmhouse, and how it can be a representation of our interests. So if you visit our farmhouse now, you will sense our appreciation for the rich Indian history and heritage," he says. His favorite piece there is the black stone Ganesha, which stands five and half feet tall. Mishra bought this one with his wife on their trip to Tamil Nadu.

Many of the artefacts he owns costed him anywhere between ₹40,000 and ₹300,000. But price is never a criteria he considers, he says. He simply goes by their beauty and history. Another one that is close to his heart is a Nataraja statue he bought six-months back.

“I have learned the importance of travelling while pursuing this hobby. You gather much knowledge, and we are trying our best to even imbibe this spirit in our children. We hope they too travel the world and learn as much as they can. Even though my daughter is very young, we never stop her from travelling,” he says.

For this modest man, his collection is a source of contentment. “They are great pieces of beauty, and just a glance at them makes me happy. It gives me my peace of mind,” Mishra says.