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From Top: A wooden canopy for CEPT University co-created with Jwalant Mahadevvala of Andblack design studio; Close up of the sliced, drilled members stitched together with metallic staples. Photos by Jwalant Mahadevvala; Embroidered Sofa - recycled Burma teak is hand sewed with zardozi designed by Maximiliano Modest; C-Chair is crafted using aged joinery methods minus power tools. Photos by Cyrus Dalal

Rooshad Shroff, Mumbai
Website: www.rooshadshroff.com

ROOSHAD SHROFF

The young, multi disciplinary architect's creations combine timeless craft with fresh technique

Rooshad Shroff is matter-of-fact: He calls a spade a spade, a sofa a sofa, and when I ask what his design philosophy is, he says, "No clue. It's too early to say," with a wry grin and a glint in his eye. Starting his own Mumbai based, eponymous practice a little over a year ago, the architect's introduction to the field was just as straight forward: Growing up with parents in the profession, family holidays meant visiting more buildings than parks and being "subconsciously drawn towards the craft." Turning into his "default" career choice at 18, Rooshad's academic journey has spanned far wide and long - an undergraduate degree from Cornell University, a masters at Harvard University and internships with Rem Koolhaas OMA and Zaha Hadid, all packed into 10 enlightening years.

STEPPING OUT

But how did product design begin to feature in his repertoire? "While I was at Cornell I took part in something outside of the curriculum, creating laser cut corsets that borrowed techniques from architecture for a fashion show - that got me interested." Not until his last year at grad school though, on a semester off in Mumbai, did he pay it heed, "While I was here a friend commissioned me to do two wooden objects and it was really enjoyable. I made some structures for myself with the leftovers and after returning from Harvard, it all picked up." One such prototype, the C-Chair, occupies a corner in his office, unique, intriguing and "a little off in proportions."

A TWIST OF TRADITION

All his pieces focus on the importance of artisans. "I take existing forms of craft and make them do things they're not typically comfortable doing." Like joining timber devoid of metal fasteners or knot embroidering on hand drilled Burma teak. And whether he's working on these, completing the interior of couturier Krishna Mehta's duplex or gearing up to design Christian Louboutin's first Mumbai store, Rooshad Shroff is undoubtedly "keeping busy." ♦

Urvashi Keswani