

PASSING BY

Fascinated with India



TRAVELLER Italian sculptor Simona Bocchi

My family was very close to an Indian family when I was young. They used to tell us stories about India which fascinated me - like a fairy tale does," says Simona Bocchi, the Italian sculptor who recently exhibited her works in Delhi. Living in Udaipur since seven years now, Simona is still fascinated by India's art and architecture. She shares this fascination with Metrolife.

"I am sure something started at that tender age itself which later drew me to India. Even during my childhood, I have been reading a lot about spirituality unlike people in

the west where society is too mechanical," shares Simona for whom India is much more different than the pre-conceived notions of people in her native country. "Many people still remember India the way it was 15 years back when they could find a dead body on the street. This is shocking but obviously it is not true," shares the artist who finds India as an unexpected experience.

"In the West, everything is expected. But it is only here that you will find surprises. One day you might see a camel crossing a road in Delhi, on another an elephant walking down the street in

Udaipur and you feel 'wow! Only India can give you such unexpected experiences," she says and shares that she feels a connect with India. "After working in Italy, I was looking for a new place to add experience to my art and so I went to Thailand. I spent three months there, had fun but couldn't relate to the people so went back to Italy. Then one of my journalist friends living in Delhi suggested that I relocate to India and I thought it was time for me to see the country that I had dreamt of, all through my childhood."

Her love for India and Indian art and architecture doesn't end there for after coming here, she visited a number of places of architectural importance, from Hampi to Ajanta and Ellora and Haridwar and Rishikesh too. "I have been to places which have beautiful architecture and also which are spiritually significant like Haridwar. But I still have a lot to explore and want to visit places like Orissa and Kerala," says Simona. She is equally attracted to places of spirituality for it is this that keeps her in India. "I find my life and myself in the spirituality that prevails all over India. I love to meditate which I think is very important for a human being."

She feels that the culture and spirituality of India makes her feel a "connection with this country." "I'm so happy to live here for I find people with the right approach than in the West. Even if I go to Italy to meet my family, it is nice for two months. But I don't find the freedom and simplicity like I do in India. When you are in a country like India, your life changes," says Simona who wishes to spend the rest of her life here itself. Welcome home, Simona!

Henna Rakheja