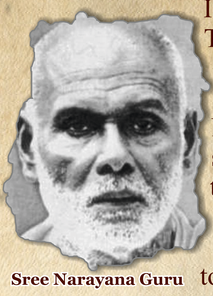
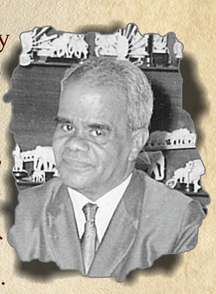
Timeline



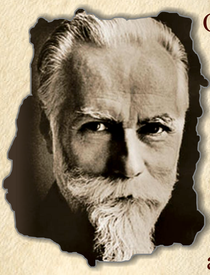
Sree Narayana Guru

In the late 1920s in erstwhile Travancore a young boy by the name of T.N Natesan approaches the renowned spiritual mystic (Sree Narayana Guru) for seed capital to start a business.. He is given rupees two to get started. Begins by making tiny little carved ivory buttons that he would carry by bus to Kodaikanal to hawk to visiting tourists.



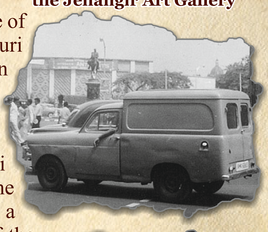
T.N. Natesan

Close contact with a British lady by the name of B.M Tweedle helps him establish his business as a tiny shop in the posh Spencer's Hotel, then a British Company. Names his business "Travancore Ivory Works'. Over the years he begins to buy and sell antiques, an upcoming area of interest in pre-independence India. Hands over charge to his sons.



One of the most knowledgeable antique collectors of the times, Dr.Svetoslav Roerich, the son of the famous painter, Nicholas Roerich frequents the shop. Sensing a deep interest in learning, he begins training the next generation. Roerich soon became a mentor, guide and tutor for the boys. The business is re-christened 'ANTIQARTS" by clubbing the words antiques and arts.

Kala Ghoda on 11th June 1964, Antiqarts' banner on the Jehangir Art Gallery

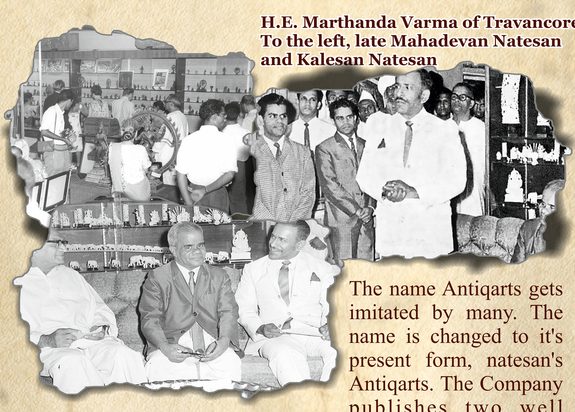


In 1964 on the continued insistence of a noted art collector, Mrs.Madhuri Desai, the Company sets up shop in Bombay. Madhuriben, as she was fondly called, was the daughter-in-law of Bhulabhai Desai. She headed the Bhulabhai Desai Institute, a respected promoter of the arts. She helps the Company find a suitable location (the basement of the Jehangir Art Gallery) and even goes to the extent of advancing money to renovate and buy stock.

Mrs. Madhuri Desai

Years later, Natesan's sponsors a Bhulabhai Desai Institute publication – A Map of architectural and structural Monuments of India. This map can be seen on display across the country till today.

H.E. Marthanda Varma of Travancore. To the left, late Mahadevan Natesan and Kalesan Natesan



The name Antiqarts gets imitated by many. The name is changed to it's present form, natesan's Antiqarts. The Company publishes two well known art books – Indian Miniature Paintings and Pahari Ragamalas. Kalesan Natesan, the son of the founder co-authors " The Spirit of India ' - the catalogue of the collection at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. In the early 90s Kalesan Natesan joins hands with Adrian Maynard, the most respected Asian Art dealer of the times (who headed Spink & Son for 37 years) to float Natesans Galleries Ltd in London.

Post year 2000 the Company begins to promote Ancient Indian Art in a big way within the country. Organizes shows and talks on various mediums to create awareness about the country's ancient heritage.

In 2015 the Company shifts to a larger street facing century old building overlooking the Naval dockyard.