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ART BEAT

DUST TO GLORY

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Peter Buggenhout's dust sculptures create new meanings from castaway material

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E NTERING the Warehouse in 3rd Pasta Lane, one is not prepared to deal with Peter Buggenhout's sculpture. The creature, that has crawled out of its crate, after being shipped all the way from Belgium to India, is difficult to describe. Is it a relic dug up from an ancient burial ground? Is it the monster that haunted you through childhood? Or is it the fragile remains of urban refuse that's come to confront you in a new avatar?

Unable to pin a name on the 'thing' one settles for a feeling, one that evokes a dark disturbing place that most of us would not voluntarily want to visit. For want of a name Buggenhout's creation has been classified as dust installations that are created from abject material (objects that are rejected as waste and relegated to the dump yard). Urban refuse held together with resin and glue soon become unrecognisable as the artist covers them in layers of dust.

"My intention as an artist has always been to move away from creating objects that can be classified as simple recognisable forms. Very often we tend to simplify things in life and run away from feelings and ideas that are not easy to define. My art is an attempt to confront those complicated emotions," says the artist who initially began working with horse and cow

intestines—objectionable material reclaimed and translated.

Buggenhout's art creates an interesting dichotomy of repulsion and curiosity. "Often I've observed that people tend to approach my art as a dog would approach something. At first there is tentative sniffing, then moving closer and sometimes it ends with touching the objects," says Buggenhout who encourages interface with the art. Two of the objects are however to be displayed in glass cases, "I have noticed that my art appears more fragile when encased, their power expands when they are raw and out in the open," he says.

Abhay Maskara, gallery owner of Warehouse came upon Buggenhout's art and decided to show it in Mumbai. "The idea is to initiate a dialogue with art that is different from the glossy finished and consumable objects that we often see in galleries. Peter's art excites me because it's not safe or predictable and I admire him for taking these risks," says Maskara.

It goes without saying, marketing dust sculptures is difficult given that most collectors have their eyes pinned on art that has resale value and moves quickly up the sensex in the art market. However, those who seek to engage in a thought provoking experience may want to take a longer look at what art critic Sofie Van Loo has termed 'fragile meteors that have crashed into the exhibition space'.

Buggenhout with his dust sculpture