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## DISHING THE DIRT

RECONCILING THE MICROSCOPIC WITH THE GRANDLY APOCALYPTIC, PETER Buggenhout's installations, composed of mangled debris, looked like compact hollow-faced galactic rocks conflated with giant dust-cakes. At Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, from July 18th to September 7th, the four works on view were composed of polystyrene, iron slag, industrial scrap, damaged plaster, plastic trash and dust bought from cleaning companies. Though the artist's choice of re-employing discarded matter and abject objects to create new works was patently to facilitate a critical encounter between aesthetic and anti-aesthetic registers, it was also an attempt at provoking a meditation on the formulaic ways in which we think of the life of art and the art of life.

The installations looked spare and stark, thanks to the uniformly white walls of the gallery (the glaringly even lighting, however, created bland shadows around the exhibits). Composed of mixed organic and inorganic waste, they called into question our cultures of hyper-consumption and rampant excess, which pose grave environmental threats and create communities worshipping flash and gloss.

Dust, dirt and trash carry leading clues about our transforming urbanscapes. Buggenhout's show, curated by Sofie Van Loo and Abhay Maskara, was titled, *The Blind Leading The Blind*; even as it referenced Pieter Bruegel the Elder's famous painting of the same name, it made us aware of how men refuse to learn from the script of history written on the dust of time.

ABHAY SARDESAI



**Peter Buggenhout.** *The Blind Leading The Blind #26.*  
Mixed media, disposable material, dust. 53" x 65.5" x 59". 2008.