

A question of conditioning

Narendra Yadav has ideas that would stir mixed responses writes **Jigna Padhiar**

Artist Narendra Yadav is all smiles, as he addresses potential questions in a witty manner, in his installation art show, *Pavlov's God*, beginning today at Gallery Maskara.

A comment

"We all are conditioned to think in a particular manner and get accustomed to beliefs from the past. I want to make a comment on this conditioning of ours," says Yadav, who had his first solo show in 2006.

The inspiration of this show was born from one work in the first show, titled, *Pavlov in Conditioning*, after which the artist worked on the subject for two years to come up with this show. Just as psychologist Ivan Pavlov's dog was conditioned to respond to the ringing of a bell, Yadav sees a metaphor in the dog and us, the humans.

"I call it Pavlov's God, because god is the biggest conditioning that we all are born and grow up with and no one ever

questions it," he explains.

However Yadav has taken care to keep serious comments subtle. "I am not shying away from addressing questions and at the same time, I have made the subject lighter so that the viewer should not read it in the wrong manner or feel hurt," he remarks.

The stories

Among the nine works in the show is *Stories*, a work with a pedestal on which he places three comic story books. "We elevate what we believe in. After all, all these are stories," he says it with a tone of sarcasm.

Another work titled *Paper Plane* is a minimalist replica of the WTC towers, one of which is struck by a paper plane. "We all have made paper planes in our childhood. Something that we played with as children, can have such an enormous effect," he wonders.

In the exhibition note, Ranjit Hoskote writes, 'Yadav's works are neither sculpture, nor assemblage, nor sculpture-installation. They are provocations to reassess oneself.'



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The installations are in steel, fibre glass, video projection and wood, the colour tones subtle, like off whites, steel and brown.

His quirky sense comes to play in the work titled *Sound of Eternal Hope Ticking*, where with the help of a video projection he stops a pendulum from swinging, because none of us want to believe that time is running out. "I want to depict the awkward and humorous side of this fallacy by making time appear still.

Creative thought

Yadav, who was born in Ratnagiri, pursued applied art at the J J School of Art. With a day job as an art director in an advertising firm, he is a fine artist over weekends.

"With a routine life, it is sometimes difficult to be a fine artist. Keeping to the idea I start a work with, is difficult." He has had been exhibiting his art in group shows for four years now.

In the work, *Divisive Habit*, he mentions, 'It's my confession that all the statements that I make are also subjective, dimensional and the result of my conditioning.'