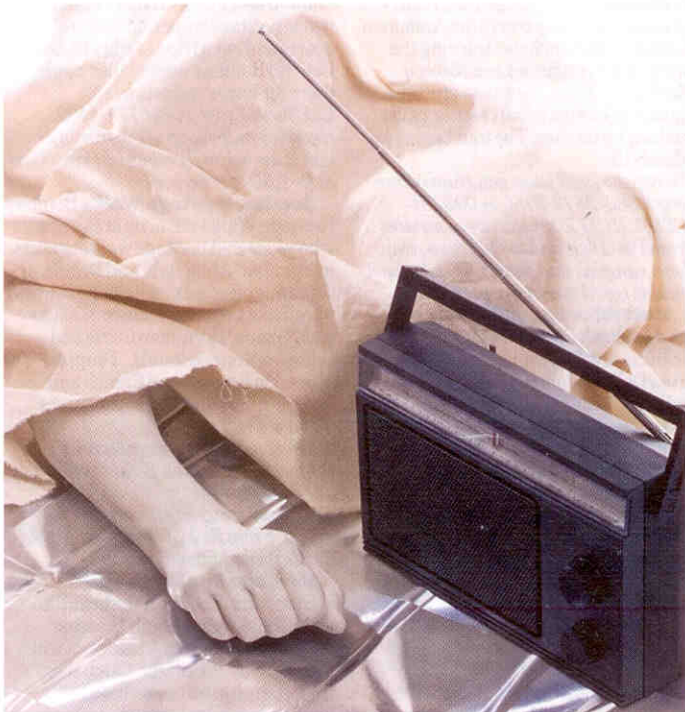


Big deal



LN Tallur and Narendra Yadav's installations are hefty and the point they're trying to make is even larger, says **Deepanjana Pal**

Barbed wire, a glass jar, bits of wreckage from a car crash, a replica of a foetus. These are objects you'd expect to find in a crime lab during an accident investigation. But this fortnight, they will occupy pride of place in Chemould Prescott Road and Warehouse at 3rd Pasta as the key elements in installations by LN Tallur and Narendra Yadav. The artists hope when you stand in front of their works, the installations will make you think about social conditioning and its insidious effects. "I use found objects, I fabricate some things and once it's all put together, I hope they are transformed into something more than what they were originally," said Yadav.

In 1917, Marcel Duchamp famously turned a urinal into a sculptural installation called "Fountain". Since then, artists

have been excited by the idea of using seemingly mundane objects to symbolise much more than their usual function. Installations have grown more elaborate over the years and often, the whole is a sum of many unremarkable parts. For example, Tracy Emin's Turner-Prize winning exhibit titled "My Bed" was precisely that – her unmade bed, complete with dirty sheets and surrounded by real clutter. It offered the viewer a disturbingly intimate look at the aftermath of a nervous breakdown. The empty booze bottles, discarded underwear and cigarette butts weren't evidence of sloth but rather signposts of a mental condition. But creating installations isn't easy. Artists need to ensure that the process of imbuing objects with other connotations doesn't result in a piece that is simply weird or so overlaid with symbolism that the message becomes obscured.

In *Placebo* at Chemould Prescott Road, Tallur's first show in Mumbai since 1999, the installations explore how societies handle the idea of progress. "We



Install stories Celestial Bodies in Conversation from Pavlov's Dog by Narendra Yadav and (right) Souvenir Maker from Placebo by LN Tallur

are designed to assume that we are 'marching forward'," said Tallur. The absurd has been a central theme in much Tallur's work, which has received critical acclaim for its wit and complexity. "For most of us, growing up has been a kind of preparation to face the challenges this rat race might throw up," he said. "The absurdities we see around us are

'The absurdities we see around us are actually survival skills.'

actually the survival skills for all of us in the race." So his "Souvenir Maker", for example, is a machine that makes barbed wire. Each "souvenir" is placed in a glass jar with a label that reads, "Designed in America. Made in China. Conceptualised in India. Sponsored by Korea."

The label could very well be stuck on Tallur, who was born in a small village in Karnataka, had his first taste of critical acclaim

when he showed in New York in 1999, is represented by Arario Gallery of Beijing and now lives between Korea and India.

In Warehouse at 3rd Pasta, Narendra Yadav deals with social conditioning differently. Unlike the grungy industrial aesthetic of *Placebo*, Yadav's installations for *Pavlov's Dog* are clean, often shiny and all smoothly-finished. "It's all about a mock-scientific approach to spirituality and I'm referring to Pavlov because god is the biggest conditioning of all," said Yadav. Though the installations have complicated titles and technicalities, Yadav is looking to evoke responses that are basic: he wants viewers to cringe at parts of an accident-damaged car, recoil at the sight of a startlingly-realistic foetus, be surprised at things popping out of an open book and feel the pain that comes from seeing a needle go through a hand. Once drawn in, Yadav hopes his viewers will listen to "the conversation between the real and the virtual". He explained: "It is sarcastic, mysterious and hopefully, you can't tell how complicated it was to make it." See Exhibitions.