

# THREE IS COMPANY

Pushing the boundaries of material, three young artists explore mortality

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WITH mercury falling through delicate glass tubes and a crimson liquid that turns out to be blood suspended in tear-shaped glass vials, Tatheer Daryani's art resembles an impossible science experiment. Nityanand Ojha's 15-foot bone, covered in mangalsutras and gaudy costume jewellery resembles an artifact from a natural history museum, with its eerie bearing on our own mortality writ large over it. Aaditi Joshi has sculpted plastic — the urban material that we all abhor yet cannot dispense with — into ethereal beings from another planet. These three artists, encouraged by Abhay Maskara, whose gallery Warehouse is hosting their exhibition Moonwalk, are "fresh and exciting," said Usha Mirchandani, who marveled at the works on the opening night.

"I'm seen as a rebel in my sculpture department, since working with mercury, glass or blood is not a conventional form of sculpting. Still, I found working with these materials appropriate for exploring my own emotions," says Daryani, a Pakistani artist currently graduating at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU, Baroda. This 29-year-old finds the paradox of mercury fascinating. "On one hand, it is a beautiful looking substance but in reality, it is toxic. It's this dichotomy that I want to explore, since emotions have the same quality," says Daryani who found straddling the Sanskritised text of the Art History course a challenge, one that provoked her to explore the *bhavas* (emotions).

Her fellow student Ojha has a similar take on emotions, though his approach is



Ojha contemplates the mortality of love

markedly different from hers. "I look at emotion as a kind of death — when one is disappointed by love or by loss then it is a kind of death. I may have already died around 60 times in my life for the number of losses I have faced emotionally," says the frail artist whose larger-than-life bone is a symbol of masculinity, while the delicate mangalsutras are predictably female. "This coming together of the two forces of male and female constitutes the dialogue of love and its impermanence," says

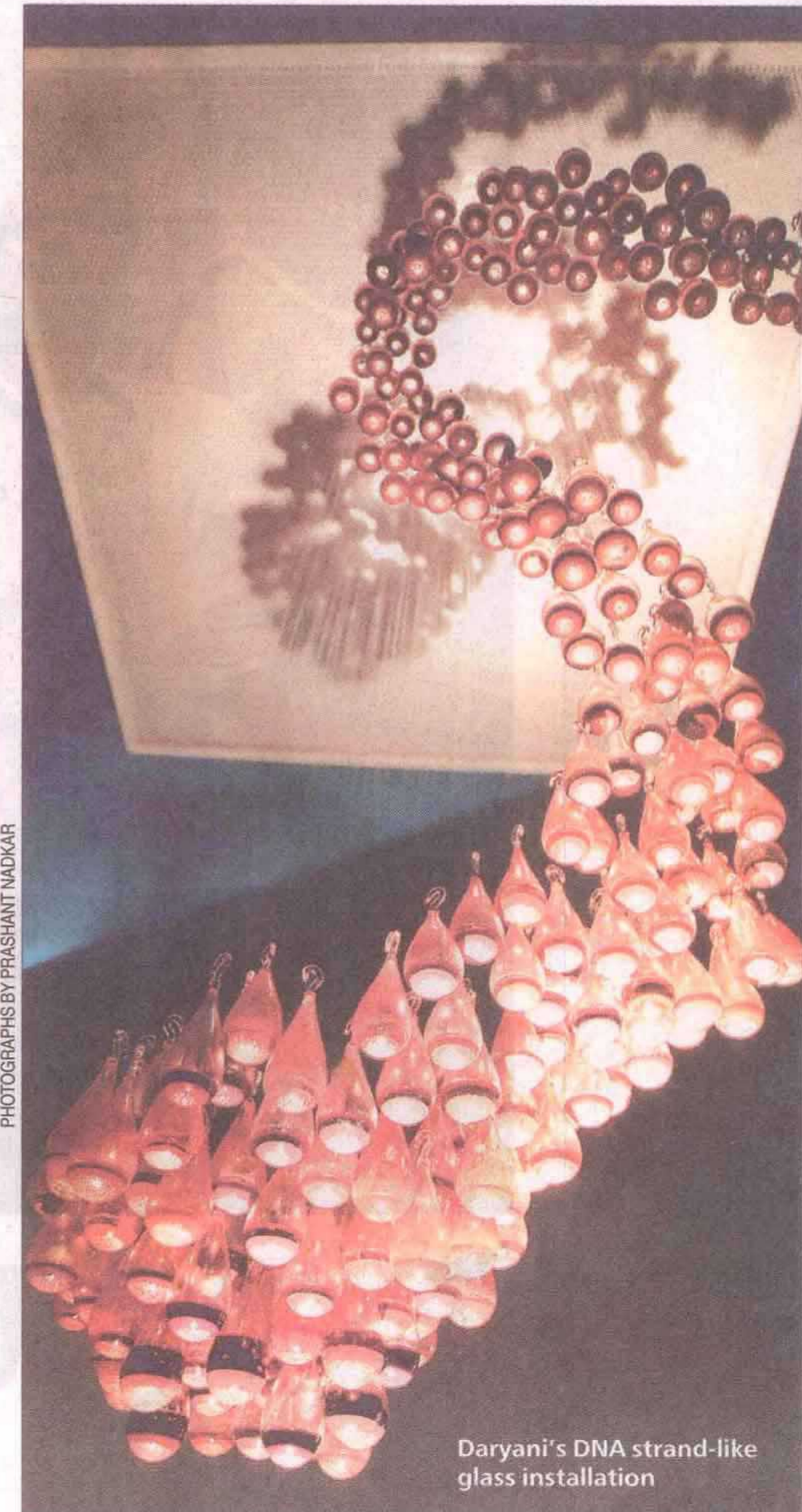
the 30-year-old.

Joshi is keen to avoid ascribing preconceived notions to her plastic creations. She prefers to just explore the medium itself not engaging in the debate raging for or against it. "I've been working with plastic for a long time, but it was a much smaller format. I wanted to see what would emerge if I joined the heated plastic bags together," says the 29-year-old artist. However reading the work — the plastic creatures are a chilling prediction of

planet's future — one where nature may be replaced by plastic cities. Joshi's seven-minute video piece, *Suffocation*, depicts the artist with her head covered by a plastic bag. She attempts desperately to breathe within its confines — a cutting reminder of our crowded, smog-filled cities, where fresh air is a depleting 'commodity'.

The tone of the exhibition may be melancholy, but one must admire the bold, experimental work that budding talent brings.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PRASHANT NADKAR



Daryani's DNA strand-like glass installation