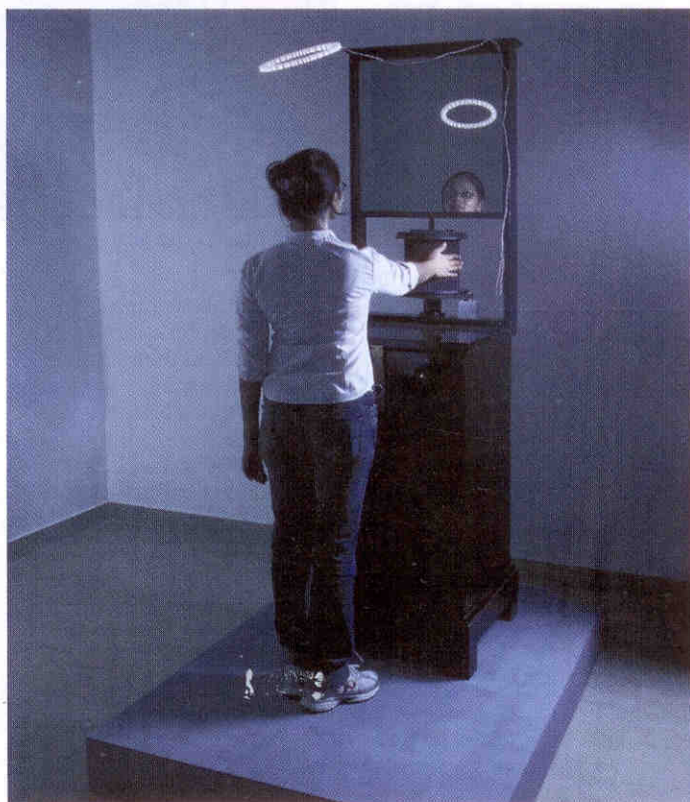


## Lest you forget



**Halo high** Narendra Yadav's interactive installation titled *As Far as I Remember*

Narendra Yadav wants you to fiddle with his works even if the result is destructive, says **Zeenat Nagree.**

At Narendra Yadav's new show, you might find yourself shredding an old photograph. If the act of destroying someone's record of a memory disturbs you, Yadav will consider his installation a success.

Titled *Memory Minus Me*, the installations deal with the themes of time, memory and social conditioning. Some of the works on, like the one mentioned above, are interactive. In this work, which shares its name with the title of the show, Yadav places old photographs in drinking glasses with a shredder next to them. When a viewer shreds a photograph, a kaleidoscope captures the shredded strips and projects them as patterns onto a wall. Through this conceptual work, Yadav refers to the constant distur-

tion and destruction of memories within a person. The act of interacting with the works becomes yet another memory in the mind of the participant, which will also go through several stages of mutilation over time. Without the participation of a viewer, installations like *Memory Minus Me* cease to convey these ideas.

Yadav has been using interactivity in his works since the beginning of his career as an artist. In his first solo show in 2006, he displayed a work titled *Stress Release Toys for Instant Justice*, in which the viewer could topple a figure of George W Bush or Saddam Hussain by turning a lever. Yadav's preoccupation with interactivity stems from his background as an advertising executive, in which the aim of every campaign was to get the viewer to act. "I don't try to consciously make my works interactive," Yadav said. "It just happens."

Multimedia artists Neha Choksi

and Shilpa Gupta have also experimented with participatory exhibits in some of their works. In 2008, Choksi presented *Petting Zoo*, rendering herself unconscious alongside a few animal companions who stood wide awake. Viewers were invited to pet Choksi and as a result could think about the ideas of objectification, the disturbing similarities between sleep and death, and the role of consciousness in our lives.

In an untitled video work, Gupta presented seven avatars of herself dressed in camouflage gear in an interactive work in 2007. They started off like clockwork dolls with the click of a mouse and transformed into figures of killers.

Works like these allow artists to turn passive viewers into integral participants in a work of art. At Yadav's show, this is achieved through the installation titled *As Far as I Remember*. Yadav places a daan peti (charity box) and a wheel on a pedestal. Behind these objects is a mirror. If viewers climb onto the pedestal and turn the wheel, a halo lights up above their heads. The work refers to the various actions that people perform in order to be remembered and to manipulate these memories in the minds of others. "In many of our temples we see names of patrons etched outside," Yadav pointed out. "This is not an act of generosity but an attempt to remain in the memories of others even after we die."

Many of Yadav's works keep coming back to theme of obliteration of memory. He wants the viewer to experience the process of destroying what is remembered. In *Holding Back the Tears*, half-knit sweaters, caps and socks are mounted on a wall. The loose ends from each of these garments are attached to a pole that can be turned to unravel them further. Even though it was originally intended to be an interactive work, Yadav decided against it. "These memories might get destroyed within two hours," he explained. *See Warehouse at 3rd Pasta in Exhibitions.*

Art