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## Where The Wild Things Are

**Georgina Maddox** Posted online: Sunday , Apr 18, 2010 at 0158 hrs

*Artists use the hybrid of animal-machine to make multiple points*

A two-headed canine at the end of a kitschy fur-covered vacuum cleaner is titled "Hungry Dog Eats Dirty Pudding". Another sculpture has a gigantic 12 ft giraffe neck hanging from a fan, while, in a third, the human brain morphs into a gigantic fly equipped with futuristic antenna on its wings. These are some of Bharti Kher's fantastical creatures currently housed at the Saatchi Gallery collection in the UK.

The artist says this is her humorous takes on the uneasy cusp of nature and machine. "I continue to pun in new ways with my magical beasts, and they have become a metaphor for an Alice in Wonderland kind of world," says the New Delhi-based Kher. While Kher has been working with the animal and machine fusion for over five years, there are several new artists engaged in creating mutations of the "ani-machine".

A prime example is the 35-year-old Tarun Jung Rawat's solo at the India Habitat Centre, opening on April 21, titled "Never Mind the Bull Fish, Here's a Spot of 'T'". "The bull fish is a negative shape-shifter in animation films and the reference to 'a spot of T' or tea is an encouragement to go ahead and enjoy life despite negativity," says Rawat. His mechanized fantastical animals invite you to play with them. The drawings and sculptures are embedded with hidden sensors that make them move when a viewer comes within its range.

Mumbai-based Arzan Khambatta, too, has produced several wild things. Though he is currently doing abstract commissioned works, one cannot forget his loveable tadpole-frogs made of old hinges and bolts, or his monumental rhino created from corrugated sheets of metal dating back to the late 1990s. "When I started working with scrap, I realised that there is a close bond between nature and machines. I try merging them," says Khambatta. "My latest piece is an amalgam of a motorbike and a spider with dragonfly wings. It's a comment on how machines have captured our lives, whether it's the cellphone or the car we drive".

A sinister merging of the animal and machine can be seen in Mumbai-based Narendra Yadav's work. This adman-turned artist is having a solo at the Gallery Maskara in Mumbai, titled "Memory Minus Me". A catchy sculpture is of a blue fibre-glass dog minus its head, with an arm carrying a camcorder protruding out of its collar. "My show is about memory and documentation and how we move from specific memories into a blur of anonymity," says Yadav. He came across the toy dog used in the sculpture at the Mumbai chor bazaar . "This work raises the question, if our heads were to be removed where would memory reside?"