

MIND GAMES



Ceci n'est pas une peur

Artist Narendra Yadav probes the mystery of the human mind

ANJULY MATHAI

FEEDING the photograph of an innocent child to a shredder might seem a cruel deed but that's hardly the intention of Narendra Yadav who wishes to probe the inner depths of the mind and the viewer's relationship to his own memories.

Yadav's works are highly conceptual and adhere closely to the notion that art should not be an object but an experience. Thus his installation titled *Awareness* is an amalgamation of various headless parts—a resin dog and a hand holding a handy cam signifying that in some inner depths of the self, there lies a residue of awareness. *Gathering Dust From Memories* is a panoply of ear buds placed in rotating gears with a table strewn with injection bottles serving as a metaphor for memories, the one strategically placed at the edge of the table indicating those memories that will soon sink into an abyss of nothingness. These art works will be showcased at his exhibition of site-specific installations and kinetic sculptures titled 'Memory Minus Me' at



Gallery Maskara, Colaba, till May 21.

"It is my ability to connect two unrelated things and make sense out of them that makes me inclined towards interactive art," says the 46-year-old. The Mumbai-based artist has discarded the traditional canvas in favour of various media, from fiberglass to sweaters to old photographs to mirrors.

Yadav, who's worked with several advertising agencies like Bates and Mudra, is currently the Group Creative Director at Lowe-Lintas. He first got interested in interactive art after reading an interview of Damien Hirst. In 2006, he had his first solo show called 'Labour' at Museum

Gallery. His second solo show was titled 'Pavlov's God' and was named after an installation that showed the Pavlovian response of a man searching for his phone at the ringing of a bell—a metaphor for the automated world that conditions us to respond in certain formulaic patterns.

The genesis of 'Memory Minus Me' lay in something Yadav started doing seven years ago: collecting musty, discarded photographs from the 1930s to the '70s from raddi shops—a father carrying his children on his back, the harsh planes of a street urchin's face, a British family holidaying in India. "These photographs were perhaps the only evidence of a moment in somebody's life," says Yadav.

While most of the installations use a poetic language, the one that might pose a threat to your equanimity is that of a resin fetus getting baked in a toaster inspired by a painting of a pipe by Rene Magritte. "The fear that the installation imparts is not real fear. It's only a representation of fear," says Yadav, who's accordingly titled the installation *Ceci n'est pas une peur*.