

TimeOut

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EXTRA

What's on
in Pune
this fortnight.

For Identity

Warehouse at Third Pasta, Colaba

From the moment you walk in to T Venkanna's debut, it's obvious that the star of the show is a young artist. This is not because his works are raw but because of the sense of mischief that runs through *For Identity*. Venkanna makes no bones about being young, cheeky and somewhat preoccupied with sex. It's the theme that runs through most of the sooty drawings hung on the walls and anyone who has been inside a Shiva temple will have no trouble seeing the sexual innuendo in the sculptural installation that is the centrepiece of *For Identity*.

At the heart of the gallery, hovering in mid-air like a mothership, is an enormous papier mache crown. Below it, Venkanna has erected a pedestal and placed a tiny replica of the large crown on it. The fragility of the papier mache filigree and the solidity of the pedestal make for an intriguing set of contrasts. There's a third crown that's



My Right Hand Middle Finger is Black

created out of the shadows thrown by the papier mache one and it is up to the viewer to decide their nature. As insubstantial as they may be, the shadows crawl up on the pristine whiteness of the wall, much like the layers of images that swarm Venkanna's paper works.

The best of Venkanna's drawings are deep in the belly of the gallery. There are some fun textures created – for one drawing, Venkanna crushed charcoal under

his feet and then walked on the paper – and all of them ask of the viewer a little time. Images are layered into the works and obscured with doodles. Sometimes the doodles are too dense and the underlying drawing has to be sensed rather than actually seen. In "Ketchup in Kitchen", for example, it takes a while to figure out that the thing being sliced up in the pan is a penis. The leering faces in the background can barely be glimpsed through the smudges and scribbles. Look closer at "I'm Not a Fly" and the surface is encrusted by carefully-drawn flies with translucent grey wings.

Despite the literal darkness that fills Venkanna's paper works and the grim ponderousness of the exhibition title, this is a fun show once the viewer is able to find their way through the tangle of images in each piece. What Venkanna's drawings need is a little restraint so that they don't feel dauntingly crowded and impenetrable to the viewer. *DP*