

POP POORN

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THE internet is a constant source of inspiration for art—whether it is a spam mail that gives rise to ‘inappropriate’ material, or porn images that flood one’s inbox. Artists like the Pakistan-based Rashid Rana have made an interesting play with images from these sites, in minute collages that play visual games with the viewer. Sanjeev Khandekar shocked us with some of his findings while trawling the Net. Artist Prema Murthy has gone a step ahead. The artist, who is currently showing at Tamarind Arts Council in New York, has set up faux porn sites like *bindigirl.com* that are actually quite subversive since it tricks the viewer into confronting nationality and gender while commenting on porn.

Brazilian artist Felipe Cama is the latest addition to this list of smutty and subversive takes on the web culture. The 1970-born artist who has had many shows internationally, is showing his work for the first time in Mumbai along with artists like Fernanda Chieco, T Venkanna, Narendra Yadav and Mansoor Ali—all of whom are holding interesting dialogues on issues thrown up in the wake of an overkill of imagery.

“Artists like Cama and Venkanna make us deliberate over the glut of sexual imagery that society almost forces us to see. They bust the myth that society is prude. Other artists like Chieco use the human body as a machine creating a self-sustained system of production,” says Abhay

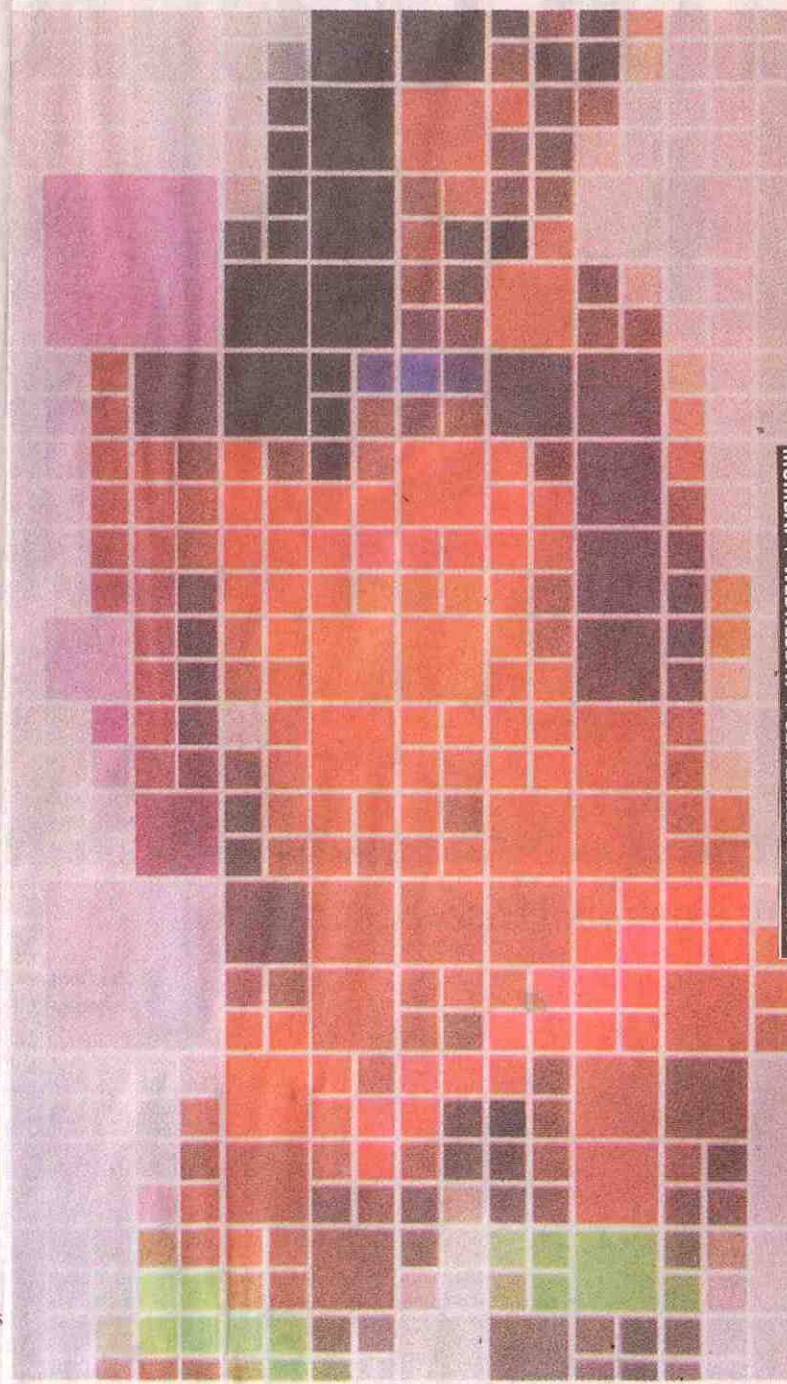
Maskara. His Warehouse, Colaba, is hosting this group exhibition that opened on Tuesday.

Chieco’s drawings, though nude, are confrontational and frank. The women in her work use their bodies to make products like cream, maggots and the tolling of a bell, all functions which perhaps do not have a real place in society. But they are an imaginative way to approach images that would normally be categorised as erotica. “In my work, the human body is a closed organic system that provides all necessary functions that the environment needs to perform,” says Chieco of her large, fine, line drawings that combine small detailed renderings with flat, minimal lines. The very stark nature of the figures robs them in a way of sensuality and opens up a new dialogue box on the topic of body and desire.

Venkanna also confronts the stereotypical ways in which sexuality is understood and defined. His continuous persistence with this subject has stimulated his interest to explore image-making in all kinds of mediums. “My art is a synthesis of the private and the socio-cultural,” says the artist who works with collage, graffiti style art and objects like flip-flops.

“Sexual behaviour is controlled by societal norms. It is due to this, that fantasy gains importance in human life and the daydream is an escape,” adds Venkanna. This artist trawls his resources like newspapers, Internet and magazines to cull out the images he uses in his collages that are best described as ‘lucid dreams’.

Subversive, daring imagery inspired by the profane and the prohibited



MUMBAI | WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 24 | 2008

MUMBAI NEWS
The Indian EXPRESS