

Variety

art

THE EROS OF FARIDABAD

Shine Shivan's art is a riot of gender-benders that tweak our perceptions of masculinity and sexuality

VISHWAS KULKARNI

Sex and sexuality are natural, gender is created by society," says Shine Shivan from Faridabad, who has mounted a show that coruscates with astonishing originality and an incredible dexterity with the stuff between your legs. For instance, an artwork titled *Used Dicks* lines up many Baya Weavers' nests. The male-dominated insertive motif we associate with copulation is reversed here; it is the male who creates a soft, inviting cavity to attract the female. The female 'enters' the opening of the nest, and a union is thus forged, the evidence of which is manifest in the remainder of the nest, a dangling phallus of straw and hay. Instead, Shivan uses these elements along with human hair to demonstrate the role reversals at play in nature.

Empty Spaces Between Desire and Fantasy is a mini-museum of the perversions prevalent in (and inherent to) nature. With dried palm thorns, dried bottle gourd, dried pumpkin, fabric and cotton thread, Shivan illustrates with an encyclopedic obsession the very dilemma that sex (or even merely allure) can represent. One approaches an attractive array only

to find a vicious wickedness at the centre of it all: a *swadeshi* hybrid of S&M gleefully created by the Eros of Faridabad. And there are Hellenic flourishes at play as well in this internalized Khajuraho: *The Rape of Ganymede* is ingenious and hypnotic.

The legend goes that so besotted was Zeus by Ganymede's beauty that he transformed himself into an eagle and swooped up the young man all the way to Mount Olympus. What might have transpired there tickles Shivan no end. Thus a taxidermied eagle and crane wings, semi-precious stones, fabric and cotton thread all merge to create a hyper-erotized shrine revering an erect phallus and what could be interpreted as very angry, demanding and hairy legs. The work is mounted at a height so that we are forced to 'look up' to the violation as a divine act.

Sperm Weaver is a dazzling exercise in pushing the boundaries, with two gigantic installations and even a drag photo fantasy. Make it a point to visit the show. It's an exhibit that simultaneously elevates and shames our art world.



PIC: SACHIN HARALKAR

Sperm Weaver by Shine Shivan opens tomorrow at Gallery Maskara, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba. Until Jan 23. Call 22023056