



The Anti-Curator

Gallerist Abhay Maskara wants the viewer to fill in the blanks with disparate but intelligently resonant works

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A video by Ruben Bellinkx captures the hideous paws of a turtle peering out of a carapace; on turning around, you realize that there are four turtles carrying a table across a room, something that transforms the table into a turtle of sorts; a throwback to crime-scene photography in the 1920s has Neil Hamon casting himself in 'suicide self-portraits'; Shine Shivan continues to queer the pitch with his Vivienne Westwood meets Faridabad aesthetic. Curator Abhay Maskara tells us what he's up to:

Why have you chosen works that are disparate, where the viewer is left to fill in the blanks?

I am not a fan of themes, theme-based shows. It makes for an extremely restrictive experience. What I believe is that if a work is radical and intelligent, it will resonate with another work that is equally radical and conceptually engaging — a dialogue between works will emerge automatically.

Is the decision to use fewer (and smaller) works conscious? Also, what informs the low lighting aesthetic?

For me, works are never about scale. A small work that is very powerful is just as effective as a large work.

Lighting-wise, the idea is to engage the work very separately. The viewer comes into a vastness, but is forced to confront works from much closer, something that auto-navigates him or her through an experience that is individual. At the same time, care is taken that the lighting design is not theatrical.

There is a tiny house within the very large warehouse, showcasing a sound and text installation by Nadia Lichtig. What prompted you to re-create this in a tiny house?

This work has travelled the world, and never before has *Ghosttrap* been showcased in a house, the artist tells me! But when I saw the work, I couldn't visualize it anywhere but in a tiny house. I didn't want to look for a place to hang it or find a dark corner where an installation could be 'lit'. I think the viewer had to walk away with a more resonant experience of what *Ghosttrap* is trying to say.

Everything is Real...After Life, starring Neil Hamon, Ruben Bellinkx, Nadia Lichtig, Peter Buggenhout and Shine Shivan, opens today at Gallery Maskara, 3rd Pasta Lane.

