

## VILLAGE LIFE AND VITAL ORGANS

### **Pandey Pummels our Senses by Avni Doshi**

Shelf-Life

Gallery Maskara

Warehouse on 3rd Pasta (b/w Dena Bank ATM and Sanghvi Exports) 6/7, 3rd Pasta Lane,  
Colaba, Mumbai, India

August 31, 2010 - September 26, 2010



Prashant Pandey's exhibition, "Shelf-Life," at Mumbai's Gallery Maskara gives one the feeling of being present during the slow biodegradation of fossilized forms. Materially, the artist uses objects and substances that we normally throw away, and things we might deem to be waste. Not bottles and cans, but cigarette butts and blood samples, which fall outside the categories of what we might ordinarily think of recycling. "Shelf-Life" is particularly successful because each work gives the distinct impression that something is missing or absent from view, and that this something is the actual object of value. In "Crash Trash," the sugarcane casket seems as though it once contained a model airplane. Pandey leaves us with the shape of the plane, while perhaps suggesting the sugarcane platform was a kind of conveyance to be discarded once it had fulfilled its purpose.

Pandey is most successful with his handling of delicate materials, which he transforms totally, sometimes to the point of being unrecognizable. "Gift," a commentary on female feticide in the shape of a large skull made of a combination of bodily excrement, seemed overwrought, while in "Universe," Pandey carefully opens residue filler cigarette butts into buds of another kind. The result could be mistaken for a circular net of flowers. In an untitled work from 2009, the artist places a spider's web inside a glass box, where chance and time have created a mesh-like microcosm with the spider as its weaver. Cobwebs are also used in the visually arresting Red, which stacks microscope slides to create two small translucent towers of dried blood and dust. Smell is also central to the experience of viewing these works, as Pandey's materials carry odors as a mark of their ephemerality. Particularly pungent are the leftovers of cigarettes, the sculpture of expired chocolate, and the little bags of urine.



-- Avni Doshi

(Images, from top to bottom: Gift; The Red. All images courtesy of Gallery Maskara and the artist.)