

ART WITH AN expiration date

In his exhibition *Shelf Life*, artist Prashant Pandey uses bodily fluids and other remains to create shocking art, finds Apoorva Dutt

In his installation pieces, Prashant Pandey uses ephemeral materials like sugarcane, chocolate, cigarette butts and quite literally, his own blood, sweat, and tears. Working within the circles of human existence, Pandey re-structures every piece with everyday 'remains' to create evocative art. *DNA Viva* catches up with the artist as his show at Gallery Maskara, Colaba, comes to a close.

What was your concept behind such unusual installations?

I am based in Jaipur, and come from a long line of traditional stone carvers. Though I began by working within these traditions, I was fascinated by the human experiences of life, love, death, sadness, desire and loss. What do these experiences mean for us as humans, who live with and interact with each other? We use and discard materials mindlessly. We leave behind bodily waste. But from our experiences in the world, something beautiful can be created. I used my bodily fluids to create the skull of a female fetus. I want to highlight the fact that human life is ultimately as ephemeral as anything else.



What was the experience of creating and maintaining such an organic exhibition?

It took me eight months to collect all the materials for this exhibition. I walked the streets, collecting cigarette butts for the 'Universe' piece. Cigarettes leave behind a foul smell, but they are something we desire and yearn for. The piece is visually appealing, but smells terrible. I enjoyed the creation of this beautiful flower imagery through something you wouldn't associate with 'art'.

Who have been your artistic influences?

I influence other artists! I can't think of any Indian artists, but I have been somewhat influenced by artists such as Damien Hirst.



What has the reaction to your art been like? Any negative responses?

I have not received any negative reactions as of now. This art is not for sale; it is meant to give the viewer a unique experience.