

# BIG ART

The art, artists and everything in between.

JULY 25, 2017 · BY SHALMALI SHETTY

## SHAILESH B R | TARKA



*Display shot*

What happens when ideas, discussions, formulas, concepts, stories, experiments are transformed into machines? The answer seems to lie with artist Shailesh B R, whose first solo titled *Tarka* at Vadehra Art Gallery, premiered this July.

Shailesh's installations are filled with humour and a tart commentary on various social practices. They are a delight to view and unravel. The mechanical nature that underlies a society where machines replace human endeavour is what Shailesh is driving at. *Tarkashastra* he explains is the philosophy of logic, reasoning, and debate.

The close attentiveness to simple mechanisms that marked his childhood, and his fourteen years of Sanskrit learning consolidates into his works. Here he playfully replicates the aesthetics of places of worship and experiments with the mechanical to reimagine the processes of the everyday. He curiously critiques through puns, human behavioural tendencies, and cultural politics. Though he ambiguously denies the projection of any political message through his works, the personal remains to be the political.



*Display shot*

The artist draws his philosophies from Sanskrit, narratives from mythology clubbed with the everyday; formulas from the discovery of accidental processes, eureka moments and mechanical functioning from playful experiments. The drawings/sketches are either visualizations of concepts, theories and discussions or documentations of his own process of thinking and experience of building his machines and devices. The spiritual paraphernalia—either found or replicated—speaks of the conviction that governs the mundane and the perpetual: a process that has been and continues to be. Here the personal becomes the mechanical.

“Machines already existed. But my constructions take the essence of these pre-existing machines and deconstruct them to replicate human conditions. The machines become extensions of the human body, vigorously repeating the nature of its process, its actions and gestures. This is reciprocated to strike an interactive relationship between itself and the spectator,” elucidates Shailesh, the recipient of the FICA Emerging Artists Award, 2015. He has an Undergraduate Degree from CAVA, Mysore with a specialization in Painting and has received a Postgraduate Diploma from Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda, with many achievements to his name.

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**Where:** FICA, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi  
**When:** On view from 13<sup>th</sup> July to 12<sup>th</sup> August 2017