Objects

Vadehra Art Gallery

In *Objects: Making and Unmaking*, 13 artists, including hotshot Subodh Gupta, explore "the history of the object in contemporary Indian art" through installations and sculptures.

The sculptures have a wide range in terms of complexity of thought and execution. At one end of the spectrum is Kausik Mukhopadhyay's "Edge of Nation", which incorporates electrical circuitry and lights to create a working tank made of bicycle chains and assorted machinery, which can be controlled by the viewer.

On the other end is Kiran Subbaiah's simplistic display of "Rin, Rim and Vim": soap, a cellphone and washing powder, with the words "If you don't like my work, I'll feel really bad."

But most works have an acute sense of the political potential of three-dimensional art, either as social commentary or as a means to question more fundamental, accepted norms. George Martin's bright red "Coloured Opinions" stands out as a nuanced look at the interplay of Marxism, industry and capitalism. Sharmila Samant commemorates tragedy through photography in her "7/11" – a montage of 16 close-up prints of machinery, which play with abstract versus documentary photography.

Shilpa Gupta's adhesive tape with "There is no border here" printed on it and her "There is no explosive here" – objects confiscated from Mumbai's international airport and wrapped in white canvas – are simple but effective.

Other sculptures play with perception and the functionality of objects versus their aesthetic possibilities. Aparna Rao's two-metre long red rotary "Uncle Phone" plays with distance, communication and purpose. Arun Kumar HG's "What's in the belly?" deconstructs a table and chair using hinges to create opening flaps that break up otherwise flat surfaces. Joze's oversize steel-studded handbag presents wealth in an ominous light and Mukhopadhyay's "Public Sculpture for Ants" makes use of those little objects around the house that no longer have any use.

Though occasionally inane, the show is redeemed by the stuff that does work. Stop by. *SS*