

Why are we scared to imagine our future?

A new exhibition explores why we are not imagining utopia anymore



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By Bhumika Popli

The exhibition *A Time for Farewells* opened on July 19 at Delhi's Shrine Empire Gallery with a thought-provoking talk by curator Premjish Achari. Through the show, Achari wants to bring back the discussions on idea of future, which he says, "was an integral part of modernity but was later abandoned and whose arrival is now delayed."

Achari borrowed the title, *A Time for Farewells*, from Jacques Derrida's eponymous preface that went into Catherine Malabou's 2004 book, titled *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*. Commenting on the show that is strongly influenced by Derrida, Achari says, "I consider this preface as Derrida's masterpiece as he raises some pertinent questions regarding the future of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy. Derrida, guiding the reader towards Malabou's propositions on Hegel, also talks about the future of the idea of future itself. What has really influenced me in Derrida's reading of Hegel is how he positions him as a speculative thinker."



Chronicles of Unicell, a mixed media work by Tushar Joag, is part of the ongoing show, *A*

Time for Farewells

The show includes 10 artists who highlight various issues that are currently worrying for the society. As soon as one enters the gallery, one is greeted by late artist Tushar Joag's illustration, titled Chronicles of Unicell.

The artwork uses the science fiction and satire to criticise the forces of capitalism. The illustration depicts a man having superhuman qualities which a government organisation has made for their own benefit. Giving him superhuman powers yet projecting him as just another worker for Unicell is an interesting take by the artist. Joag, who passed away last year, time and again used to take a sharp criticism on illogical government policies through different mediums of art.



Half Return, a short film of 16 minutes, by Sumedh Rajendran, showcases the non-belongingness of a man when he returns to his homeland Sri Lanka after being forced to move out due to the civil war. The forced migration has now left him in a state of disillusionment and unrest. In the show, the photographs by Julia Christensen take our attention to the innumerable technology dumps we are creating on our planet.

Christensen showcases the phenomenon through her photo series Technology Time. One encounters redundant technological items such as old mobile phones, cassettes, VCRs among others in this artwork. For the same, the artist has visited India three times to document the global e-waste industry.

The exhibition overall brings together engaging art but the curator doesn't want to limit the discussion only to these topics, represented through the exhibits. He wants people to focus on other alarming issues in our society as well. "I want this exhibition as a standpoint where we can discuss about the future of sexuality, gender, automation, art, criticism among others," Achari says.

It will be commendable to see another curator taking this narrative forward to a new place. In the show, more than the exhibits, it will be the discussion by Achari that will reverberate for many months to come. "What has happened to us, why we are not imagining utopia anymore?" he asks.

Till: 10 August

At: Shrine Empire Gallery, Delhi

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