

## Stopped in their tracks

Artists C K Rajan and Bani Abidi explore stillness and chaos

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Leaving the weekday chaos of South Mumbai and entering the gallery, I am met by an enforced stillness and a dazzling whiteness. A coffee cup poised 10 feet high spills its contents in a frozen black stream. 'Absent-minded cup', it's called, reflecting the cup-owner's distracted state.



C K Rajan's 'Time running out'

Welcome to 'Mad Furnitures and Psychic Objects, Part I'.

The arrested energy inherent in C K Rajan's "psychic objects" suggests anticipation: that these objects might start working and then all hell would break loose.

The red blades of 'Psychopathic killer fan' spin at neck level,

forcing you to edge past for a closer look at 'Ageing question mark'. Other suspects include 'Introvert spade', 'Obsessive compulsive disorder garden cutter' and 'Guest faculty from the Third Reich' (a bright pink shovel). In the stark white rooms, these objects appear as straitjacketed inmates in an asylum.

The same enforced inertia prevails in Bani Abidi's video, *The Distance from Here*, playing on loop at her first solo show in Mumbai, 'Section Yellow'. A comment on the red tape that limits human movement, the photographs, text and video tell of people stopped in their tracks, straitjacketed between yellow boundaries — in

this case the lines to demarcate queues at visa offices. The sense of anticipation comes from close-ups of a perfectly attired old man, waiting, families channelled along yellow lines, and bureaucratic incompetence that loses forms, condemning people to more waiting. Abidi sensitively portrays people corralled in, forced into inaction, while higher powers deliberate over their right to movement.

C K Rajan, till October 16 at Galerie Mirchandani+Steinruecke, behind Taj Mahal Hotel, Colaba. Bani Abidi, till October 11 at Project 88, N A Sawant Marg, Colaba