



Designer and musician Ranjit Makkuni's exhibition of unusual music installations aims to bridge the gap between technology and traditional culture

Music medley

How would you define a series of five monk statues, each holding an alms bowl that actually throws sound? For, if you drop metal pebbles into these bowls (they are helpfully provided by the artist), they generate a melodious sound, which you can tune in to through headphones placed next to them. Then there's a pair of Magical tablas that emit fast percussive beats when you place your hand near the surface. As you move your hand away, the beats become slower and finally turn into a faint whisper. All these music installations -- and more -- are part of multimedia researcher, designer and musician Ranjit Makkuni's ongoing exhibition at the National Museum, New Delhi.



A series of five monk statues, each holding an alms bowl that generates a melodious sound if you drop metal pebbles in it Photograph by Jagan Negi

Titled *Musical Landscapes & The Goddess of Music: Recent Advances in Interactive Art*, the exhibition opened to public earlier this week and will be on till January 16 next year. "I try to explore innovative ways of building bridges between techno and traditional cultures. I believe engagement with culture is a valuable process to spark off technological innovation," says Makkuni. And true to his word, a slew of his works showcases tech wizardry. The *Abstract Woman* sculpture has the Sri Yantra (a device formed by nine interlocking triangles) embedded in the waist, that plays back 1,000 names of Goddess Lalita when touched. The show also presents traditional and new instruments inspired by the Indian Sitar, Burmese Saung Harp, Thai Xylophone, Korean Kayagum and more.

By Susmita Saha

Photograph by Jagan Negi