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Atul Dodiya
Bose Pacia Modern
508 West 26th Street, Chelsea
Through May 31

The centerpiece of Atul Dodiya's haunting New York solo debut show is an installation titled "Broken Branches," composed of nine tall, glass-fronted wooden cabinets. Each is filled with well-worn objects, including photographs, tools, human bones and handmade prosthetic limbs.

The tools belonged to this artist's father, now dead, a building contractor who in 1938 moved from the Indian provinces to Bombay to establish a more prosperous business and a new home for his family. Other items — a 1970's photograph of the Arte Povera artist Mimmo Palladino in Manhattan, for example — relate to Mr. Dodiya's development as an artist with an international presence, as does the vitrine format itself, which has associations with Joseph Beuys.

Still other components of what amount to nine meticulously composed still lifes suggest the complex political and emotional texture of India itself. Vital and diverse in resources, but crippled by unwieldy traditions and sectarian hatred, that country has moved forward only haltingly in the half century since the independence that Gandhi fought for. The cabinets Mr. Dodiya uses are exact copies — right down to the slanted tops meant to discourage birds from nesting — of those found in the Gandhi museum at Porbandar, where relics of that leader, himself a conflicted symbol, are on display.

The show also includes a series of recent large-scale watercolors, sepia-gray in tone, which also refer to connections between India, where Mr. Dodiya lives, and the world at large. In several of the paintings the figure of a yogi appears, an emblem of introspective self-control, surrounded by birds, plants and dark, geologic formations. He could be the young Gandhi or an illustration from a commercial how-to manual, or Purusha, the mythic universal man. Archaic as he is, he balances the silhouetted forms of the World Trade Center on his body.

Just as "Broken Branches" implies that the political and the personal issue from the same roots and are, for better and worse, tightly intertwined, the paintings suggest that all things human rise and fall according to the way energy is generated and channeled. The anti-progressive stillness of the yogi may lead to stagnation, but it may also be a source of saving restraint.

HOLLAND COTTER