

Contemporary abstract artist, Anselm Reyle, is showcasing his works in India for the first time. DHAMINI RATNAM talks to him about his works, and the colourful India in his head

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# IMAGINING INDIA THROUGH FOIL

ANSELM REYLE, a Berlin-based artist associated with the Gagosian gallery in New York, is showing his works in an exhibition titled Indian Mylar Vision that began last week.

The abstract contemporary artist will exhibit his works in Galerie Isa, a newly opened gallery in Kala Ghoda till February 20, 2012.

Ashwin Thadani, owner of Galerie Isa and art collector said, "We're trying to create a collector base of contemporary international art, by bringing down both, young artists with international gallery backing, as well as mid-career artists,

like Anselm Reyle. There is an increased interest in international contemporary art among Indian collectors and art enthusiasts. I opened this gallery to cater to them."

Reyle, known best for his foil paintings — in which the artist uses mylar, a kind of foil used for decoration in Germany, to form precise geometric shapes contained in glass boxes that belie the tactile quality of the work — is labelled by critics as a 'market artist'. He recently collaborated with fashion brand Dior to create a line of bags and accessories. However, in a conversation with curator Jamila Adeli, the artist says his

"aim is to offensively deal with that which has been regulated as trivial and superficial within the Western art system."

Excerpts from an interview:

**How much of your work is about undercutting the canon through irony?**

There's irony, but more self-reflexivity and humour. I try to question the rules that govern painting and sculptures in my works, because I feel the painting has the autonomy to be fully self-reflexive — about itself, and its content. For eg, it is already known that mylar foil is used for decoration, but I've made it part of a serious painting. A traditional painter

in Europe wouldn't do that, but it lends humour to my work, and an easiness that questions the role and function of art.

**Did you study the Indian art market before choosing what to bring here?**

It was never my goal to address the art market when I started as a painter. But it's clear that if I make art as an artist, I am automatically part of the art system. I spoke to the gallery owner, Ashwin Thadani and we chose the works together. I've never been to India before, but I had an image in my head. I think of it as a very colourful land. The title of my exhibition is Indian Mylar vision — if you see my earlier foil works, they're black and silver. The works in this exhibition are turquoise, purple, gold, which on one hand is kind of funny, if you think of them as Indian versions of my earlier works.

**Meissen is a traditional porcelain manufacturer in Germany. You recently produced a sculpture for them, which was a mass of broken porcelain cups and statues that you found discarded in their factory.**

**How did they react to this?**

When they asked me to collaborate with them, I went over to their factory and discovered a pile of discarded porcelain pieces that were flawed. I often work with trash and discards — found objects — so that was my original idea to work with that pile. They liked the idea, I think. In the beginning, perhaps they were a bit taken aback, but later saw the beauty in it. I've done three different works like this, with discarded piles of porcelain.

AT: Galerie Isa, 132, Great Western Building, 1st Floor, SBS Road (Opp Lion Gate), Fort; call 66373432  
Open from 11 AM to 6 PM, except Sundays



Anselm Reyle at Galerie Isa. The contemporary German artist works with found objects, such as a pile of discarded porcelain (inset), and mylar foil. The exhibition Indian Mylar Vision will be on till February 20, 2012.

PICS/ SHADAB KHAN