

Urbane and artistically imperfect on canvas

Hassan M. Kamal
focus

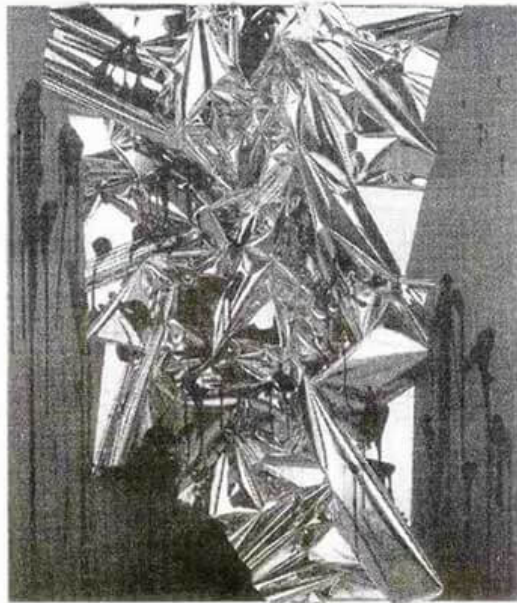
Anselm Reyle, who has world-famous companies collaborating with him, brings works which make you question and challenge conventionalism

Anselm Reyle is an unusual artist in every sense — his approach to creativity, life, understanding of modern art and the materials that are used to construct them on canvas speak of his talent. He works for hours in his studio, layers after layers, to deliver what could best be described as — shock and amazement. Amazement because his work makes you think, often taking you through a journey of self-discovery, but just when you are about to reach at something meaningful, it delivers the shock. You realise that what stands in front of you is a well-thought-of joke.

The hours spent creating it had only one purpose and that was to make fun of your artistic sensibility. "So, you think, you understand art? How about this?" it asks. This question is directed not only to the audience but also to all established systems and styles in the world. Reyle whose selected works "Indian Mylar Vision" are on display at the newly opened Galerie Isa in Mumbai, says, "Art is always questioning itself, the various systems of art that existed in the past or do now. It's like an idiom, but there's humour in it with a sense of easiness to it. The effort is always to make the end result something serious."

And he does all that with class. Perhaps that is the reason why Reyle is so popular among art collectors, and unpopular among art critics. While the former doesn't mind paying high amounts for his work, the latter do not bat an eyelid before labelling his work as "market art" or preposterous. But Reyle is not bothered by it. He takes the criticism easily as his works and beliefs have a similar purpose. "I really like Lucio Fontana and his monochrome paintings. I really love these works. I will spend a lot of money, if I have to buy it. But at the same time it makes me think 'what is it?' There is a kind of mystery in it that you don't really know. A lot of modern art is like that. You have to have some kind of willingness to see through it."

Reyle comes with a sound knowledge of the history of arts, something he acquired by visiting galleries and studying art during his early days. However, his interest was more into things like the boxes used to preserve the art, borders, materials used, colours etc — all these materials find their way into the show, with a



series of untitled works made using Mylar films. "The artwork didn't interest me as much as did the things around it," he says.

Different art genres — art informel, cubism, op art, minimalism and pop art, all combine on the canvas thereby attaching a historical relevance to his works. Sometimes there's a hint of the monochrome paintings, the drip paintings of the 50s, the psychedelic art movement that emerged in the 60s, materials like mirrors, metal pieces, neon

lights etc.

An important part of Reyle's work on display at the Galerie Isa are his two sculptures — an untitled porcelain in glass made of using discarded tea cups from the Meissan factory and a bronze sculpture that resembles the shape of a block of mud cut into two. In its current shape, the Meissan tea cups, stand as the living ruins of the bourgeoisie society of Europe. The deformed porcelain strikes you instantly; It emerges as a mass of dis-

carded parts of the society; at a personal level it is like broken human aspirations, dreams, relationships and lives. And while you are appreciating how magnificent the imperfect pieces of broken porcelain are, it was just a coincidence that brought these teacups from the Meissan's factor to the gallery. The artist however, calls it "a constricted coincidence, referring to the effort put in giving it the shine and giving it a form. The bronze piece was a result of stepping and punching a block of mud, until it took a shape that agreed to his taste."

But the unconventionalism doesn't stop here, as his colour palate is even more abnormal. The artist works with colours that not only are completely alien to each other in nature, but no artist would dare think of them as part of his colour palate. Reyle is more fascinated by urbane, psychedelic neon colours than he would be with natural colours. "I live in a city, and I'm fascinated by neon colours more than the natural ones," he says, adding, "I think it's boring to start with colours that complete each other. I think it's more challenging to begin with disharmony and then arrive at harmony. Even I didn't like these colours when I started working, but I have grown fond of them. For me what's beautiful and what's not changes all the time," he says.

I think it's boring to start with colours that compete with each other. I think it's more challenging to start with disharmony and arrive at harmony

