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THE ART OF NON-CONFORMITY

FROM WORKING WITH ELECTRONIC SCRAP EVOKING A FASCINATION FOR INDUSTRIAL DECAY, TO COLLABORATING WITH DIOR FOR LIMITED EDITION ACCESSORIES, GERMAN-BORN ARTIST ANSELM REYLE DEFIES CLASSIFICATION. HIS DICHOTOMOUS ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IS MERELY A RESULT OF HIS FASCINATION FOR VARIOUS ELEMENTS

By Veyoleen D'souza



Born in Tübingen, Germany in 1970, Berlin-based contemporary artist, Anselm Reyle's initial interest in music and landscape design moved swiftly to painting, sculpture and installation. His past solo exhibitions include shows at Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York (2004) and The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2007), among others. Besides these, he has also participated in several group exhibitions held at Tate Modern in London, Palazzo Grassi in Venice and, recently, at Galerie Isa in Mumbai (2011).

Excerpts from the interview:

Your mother painted highly-textured, abstract landscapes. Did this, in any way, influence your style?

Yes, I grew up with art. My mother's paintings are somewhat between landscape and abstraction. It is about colour, haptic surfaces and texture. These elements are a central theme in my paintings and my work as a whole, even though the artistic approach is quite different.

How has your work evolved with time?

My first paintings were gestural and abstract, in the style of an informal painting, but without thinking about an individual significance. I used [gestures] as a vocabulary of form, similar to the stripes. At the same time I started to work with found objects and found materials. I also used gestural painting as a found object—a found object of modernity, if you will.

Who are the artists that inspire you?

There are many artists who are important for me. For example, [Lucio] Fontana and [Piero] Manzoni, just to name a few, but also, artists of the Nouveau Réalisme movement, such as Martial Raysse, Arman and Yves Klein. And of course pop art; of the contemporary artists I find, for example,



Reyle's paintings include colour, haptic surfaces and texture

Jeff Koons and Takashi [Murakami] quite significant.

Your artistic expression extends to sculptures and installations. Moreover, your artwork alludes also to industrial decay. Tell us more about that.
 I was interested in the confrontation between



Reyle's artwork extends to sculptures and installations that allude to industrial decay



found objects and paintings, for example, decorative objects, like a wagon wheel, or mixing found things directly with painting, as done with my foil paintings. In Western art, terms like decoration, effect and surface have a negative connotation. I used these elements intentionally, and thus, they became an important component of my work. In my material works, I work with other found objects like metal and electronic scrap that are remnants of our civilisation to evoke a fascination for the

ruinous and decay.

You've collaborated with Dior. How did that come about?

When Dior asked me to collaborate with them, I first had to think about it. Some ideas came to my mind and I said, yes. I took the typical Dior bags and developed two different surfaces for them. This, in a way, was similar to my work, but the results are not art objects. They are still handbags and accessories. It's merely a design application.

What are the different materials you work with?

I work in traditional fields like painting and sculpture, and combine traditional materials like canvas and bronze, with non-

"I work with elements that allow associations that lead beyond the visible."



Reyle's collaboration with Dior included bags, shoes and even sunglasses



traditional colours like neon lacquer, silver foil, mirrors and lacquer with effects. Material has increasingly become my artistic language.

Which is your favourite creation till date?

This is difficult to say because my work is broadly diversified. It was strange how, as a painter, I moved to found objects and sculpture. It started with wagon wheels, then some other things and then I discovered a figure on my mother's shelf, an African handicraft made of soap stone, a typical touristic, kitsch item. I got an idea to create a sculpture on a large scale and with a chrome surface. The idea, as always, came quite fast, whereas the processes of choosing the material and the means of fabrication were relatively complex. That was how I arrived at sculpture, which I wouldn't have previously imagined.

How would you define your artistic style?

This is difficult to say—I think I practise a form of Mannerism in relation with Modernism.

How do your designs reflect your personality?

I work with elements that fascinate me. They allow associations that lead beyond the sheer visible, and often, also reach beyond the traditional art context. It is important to me, that my work be understood on different levels.

If you were not an artist, what would you be?

Maybe a musician, that's what I did before. **iris**

