

ANSELM REYLE - A SPLASH OF ART



Splash of Art

Art has different perceptions for different people. Coming from a country which has produced some pathbreaking luxury cars and even highly mechanized watches, artist Anselm Reyle defies all pre-conceived perceptions, and gives contemporary art a new meaning as he showcases his work in Galerie Isa in Mumbai.

By: Soumya Jain

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Wide colourful strokes giving a psychedelic and punk look and scraps of metal shaped together to form a structure – that's Anselm Reyle's art if described broadly. And yes, art critics and lovers of impressionist paintings have derided his artworks for their 'superficial' allure. But does that perturb Mr Reyle? Not one bit.

"I think that terms such as effect and surface have rather negative connotations in the art world. Some works are often quickly dismissed as being supposedly 'only' superficial or fishing for effects. I have always been aware of this kind of critique and those considerations are part of my work. So, this form of critique has become an important component of my art and is also embedded in my concepts." That's Mr Reyle, who seeks to experiment with light and unorthodox industrial materials.

Born in 1970, in Tübingen, near Stuttgart, Mr Reyle attended the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design and Karlsruhe Academy of Fine Arts. Soon after graduating in 1998, Mr Reyle began to create abstract paintings, sculptures and installations in his studio in Berlin.

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Mr Reyle was, and probably still is, identified with his vertical stripe paintings. He uses quite jarring colours and his stripes also bear widely varied textures like silver foil and glittering black sandpaper. "I am interested in the direct confrontation of colour. There is a history of the stripe paintings. Actually, many artists before me seem to have dealt with this issue, so nothing new is to be expected. It is exactly this tradition that I find interesting," says Mr Reyle when we asked what fascinates him about this particular pattern.

In a short time, Mr Reyle amassed many fans and became an international art star. He has now moved into a larger Berlin studio and hired about 60 assistants to fulfill orders and an ever-growing waiting list for his creations.

Ever loyal to the abstract form of art, he gives his works a contemporary twist as well. "I am interested in the basic elements of painting - colour, texture, surface and composition - things that you'll find in their most pure and direct form in the abstract art. However, I also use materials and objects that don't belong to the traditional art context, like mylar, mirrors, car lacquers, objects from the flea market and of architecture which I bring together with abstract painting. This way of working attempts to open new doors and pull us out of the dogma of abstract art, that is what makes them contemporary," he said.

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Apart from the premium that his own artworks demand, Mr Reyle also took a try in the glittering and expensive world of luxury fashion, and collaborated with Dior for a special collection. The collection, which was recently showcased at Art Basel, drew a lot of gasps. This transformation in the field was a little perplexing for Mr Reyle, but it proved to be quite an eye-opener in the end. "When Dior contacted me, I first had to think about it. However, soon I thought it would be interesting to work with them on a cooperative project. I was surprised to find that such a big fashion label develops ideas in a similar way to an artist in the studio - for instance by using a pair of scissors, glue and tape. I really liked that," he reminisced.

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The Dior collection sports a blast of cheerful colours, made stylish by well-coordinated shades and perfect shapes. Apt for all the fashionistas to flaunt in the coming up party season we think!

However, Dior is not the reason we are talking about him today. It is his first, upcoming exhibition in India, titled 'Indian Mylar Vision', at the soon-to-be opened Galerie Isa, which is owned by art collector Ashwin Thadani. And Mr Reyle tells us quite frankly that he has absolutely no idea about India. "It will be my first time that I am in India. Until recently, I haven't had much contact with this country, except for when I was a child. Some family friends here in Germany were Indian. Of course, I know Bollywood films which have become quite popular in Germany. I am looking forward to seeing if real life is reflected in any way in the films. I don't know the Indian art market that well, but there are some Indian collectors who have purchased works of mine," he said.

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Expect some blinding, flashing works of art - whether in terms of colour or in terms of materials which you never thought could consolidate so artistically. But don't make the mistake of considering these artworks as just a pretty picture. There is a meaning behind them all which is the actual soul of his creations... ■

Show Dates: December 17, 2011

Coordinates: Galerie Isa, 132, Great Western Building, 1st Floor, 585 Road, Opp. Lion Gate Clock Tower, Fort, Mumbai 400 023, India

