



Galerie Isa, located in a 300-year-old building, will host workshops and exhibition walkthroughs, and (below) an untitled work from the 'Paintings by Numbers' series

Now showing

Finally, Mumbai gets a gallery dedicated to contemporary international artists.

BY DEEPALI NANDWANI

When entrepreneur and avid art collector Ashwin Thadani was looking for a space to set up a new venture, he spent days walking around the Kala Ghoda art district in south Mumbai, scouting for a heritage property that would house his uber chic gallery. "I thought that a heritage structure would work as a perfect foil to the cutting-edge contemporary art I want to bring down to India," he says.

Galerie Isa will open in the middle of this month in the 300-year-old colonial-style Great Western Building opposite Lions Gate, the heritage precinct that houses the naval dockyard. With its warm wooden floors and high ceilings the gallery, which has been designed by young architect Khusboo Parekh and straddles two levels, draws upon the architectural character of

the centuries-old buildings in the area.

Though it is just one among the eclectic bunch of galleries in an area officially designated as an art district, Thadani hopes to make it different by exhibiting only avant-garde international artists once every quarter. "We want to focus on individual art practices with high quality exhibition design and aesthetics," he says. "The shows will run for two months each, and the collectors and art lovers will have ample opportunity to mull over the works and see them at leisure."

Galerie Isa isn't really the first to introduce international art to a city that's seen very little of it, despite its claim of being India's art capital. Galerie Mirchandani+Steinruecke, a 15-minute walk from Lions Gate, flies in international artists every once in a while. What sets Galerie Isa apart, however, is its total focus on



Reyle is a foremost proponent of modern abstract art

artists living and working abroad. "We will look at artists who are in the vanguard of the international contemporary art movement,"

says Thadani. "We will also host a talk and walkthrough with the artists, who will take you through the show, and release a catalogue that will feature an extensive interview and photographs of them at work in their studio."

Thadani hopes to collaborate with galleries, individual artists and curators from across the world on these meticulously planned shows. First off the ground, on December 16, is 'Indian Mylar Vision' by 40-year-old Berlin-based Anselm Reyle, a German artist who works with kitsch and various objects that he picks up at flea markets. He then removes

them from their original context and function, and visually alters and re-contextualises them. His works can primarily be found in famous private collections such as The Saatchi Gallery, London; the Daimler Collection, Berlin; Fondation Francois Pinault, Venice, and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

Reyle's art has been variously dubbed by critics as being "casually self-conscious shabby-chic style, abject abstraction and New Arte Povera (which literally means 'poor art')". His works incorporate loud colours like fluorescent pink, silver Mylar and expanses of black in abstract forms like smears, hard-edged stripes and monochrome patches.

In an interview with Berlin-based art historian and curator Jamila Maria Adeli, who has collaborated with Galerie Isa for the show and also profiled the artist for the catalogue, Reyle says, "Neon is part of my normal colour spectrum. I would compare it to the habit of listening to very loud music. While another person would most probably cover his or her ears, I myself would consider it as normal sound intensity. So I might see colours differently in the sense of needing a little more intensity than the average person."

According to Adeli, Reyle's art blends abstract and modern elements. "Among the found objects he uses are African sculptures. He enlarges and casts them in bronze, chroming and lacquering them. Mylar foil, an industrial kind of foil, is the other off-beat medium he works with."

Adeli has put together an entire spectrum of Reyle's works for his debut exhibit in India. "The idea is to offer Indian collectors and aficionados, who know very little of him, a glimpse into his rather complex art practice."

'Indian Mylar Vision' will run at Galerie Isa from December 16, 2011 to February 16, 2012