

THE GUIDE *on friday*

A visual ode to music

EXHIBITION

On his maiden showcase in India, starting February 5, Berlin-based artist Gregor Hildebrandt will apprise Indian art lovers with his unusual technique where he uses song recordings on cassette tapes to create artworks. In an email interview, the artist explains the process to Ruchika Kher

Please tell us a bit about your works that will be on display in the city.

Except for two granite works, I will exclusively show my rip-off paintings. Onto all of them, I have pre-recorded the song, Bloodflowers, by The Cure. Also, the title of the exhibition, These Flowers Will Never Die, is taken from this song.

How did you get inclined towards using cassette tapes for your paintings?

In 1997, I had a crucial experience while working on an artist book related to my picture, *Wie die Motten ans Licht* (As Moths to the Light). I wanted to incorporate a song by Einstürzende



Artwork, titled *Flowers of Good*, made using cassette tape, adhesive tape and acrylic paint on canvas

Neubauten, which proved difficult at first. Then a solution occurred to me — to record the song on cassette and then cut the tape in strips and glue these strips onto the book pages. That's how I got started.

What edge does this process add to your works?

I'm interested in the transformation of songs recorded on a small cassette to a



Painting, titled *The Dark Beauty of Mistake (Swans)*, made from cassette tape and acrylic paint on canvas



Gregor Hildebrandt

large gestural canvas. Also, I am fascinated by the intangibility of music; the fact that it cannot be presented to the eye. There's a certain mystery to this concept, and that's maybe the edge!

Your art usually inches towards minimalism. Is that a conscious effort? What are your inspirations?

My art is minimal because I'm drawn towards minimalism. The inspiration comes from everything I'm involved with, for example, the place where I live finds its way into my work. For instance, I did *The Carny NC* (San Michele) after my sojourn in Venice in 2004. But most of my inspirations come from Berlin; its everyday life makes things happen. Besides, I am also inspired by artists like Andy Warhol, Christopher Wool, Rudolph Stingel, Anselm Reyle, Matthias Bitzer and Saâdane Afif.

FROM February 5 to April 26
AT Galerie Isa, 27, Great Western Building, first floor, SBS Road, Fort.
CALL 66373432

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

The artist begins by recording the same song on the cassette tape over and over again. Then he marks the end and the beginning of the song on the tape with adhesive crepe tape. He then applies strips of the recorded part of the cassette tape onto a special white canvas completely covered with acid-free adhesive tape with its sticky surface facing out. This surface is treated in a way to make it less sticky. Once the tapes are arranged on the treated canvas, he presses down the strips of cassette tapes in places where he wants, using a brush or with his hands. The

coating comes off the tape, and only the transparent carrier film is left. "Each piece of tape behaves differently in this process, and this leads to different structures. Then, all the tapes are successively ripped off and glued vertically and without gaps onto another canvas of the same size. The places where the dark coating has stuck to the original canvas are white on the second canvas, because here only the transparent film is left and the white canvas shines through. The result is a negative of the original image," says Hildebrandt.