



Islands and Chains

Matthias Bitzer:

Matthias Bitzer's first solo exhibition opened earlier this week at *Gallery Isa*, Mumbai. The artist works with multiple media to create abstract sculptures, drawings, and paintings. Protagonists from 19th century literature, film, music and dance, such as Austrian author and dramatist, Arthur Schnitzler, American poet, Emily Dickinson and other such figures take centre stage in his work.

Born in 1975 in Stuttgart, Germany, Matthias now lives and works in Berlin. His recent shows include *The Collapse of the Features*, Dusseldorf, *Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen*, K21, and *Saturine Swing*, New York, *Marianne Boesky Gallery*. In 2010, Matthias was the recipient of the prestigious *Otto Dix Prize*, awarded annually to an emerging artist from a German-speaking country.

We connected with the artist to know a little more about his work and his debut show in India.

This is your first solo exhibition in India. Could you please deconstruct your series for us?

My artwork for the show, *Islands and Chains* circle around the relation between the writer Rainer-Maria Rilke and the actress Eleonora Duse. The practice in the show ranges from abstraction to figurative works including drawings, paintings and sculptures.

What motivated this series in particular?

I wanted to depict the distinct impulse to maintain a momentum of desire, prolonging the inevitable emptiness of fulfillment.

What dialogue do you wish to establish through this exhibition?

All my works are rooted in a particular motivation. I consider the message bound to a process of transformation that is fundamental to the constant fluxus in the works. I seek to abstract a singular reading and in this suggest an inherent and organic multiplicity. It's an offer for a dialogue.

19th century icons from the field of film, literature, music & dance serve as starting points and inspirations for your work. What draws you to include them in your work? What triggered this interest?

The protagonists that appear in my works evolve from manifold sources. Time and place are not essential conditions for embedding them into the work. Some are drafted from fictional characters out of stories.

In some cases my explicit endeavor is to deconstruct their origin, transforming them in some sort of universal symbol, which stands in no relation to these parameters. In "Islands and Chains" I refer to Eleonora Duse and Rilke, but not for reasons of narrative or nostalgia.

How did your collaboration with Gallery Isa come about?

Ashwin Thadani had been following my work since quite some time. Last year he visited me in my studio and we talked about doing a show at gallery ISA. I was intrigued by the idea of showing my works in India. And things just sort of picked up well from there.

What does the blueprint of 2015 look like?

I have planned a few trips in order to business and research. The next trip will take me to HongKong to attend Art Basel. And in September I will open a solo show at Almine Rech Gallery in Brussels.

Islands and Chains is going to be showcased till the 25th of April, 2015 at *Galerie Isa*, Mumbai.