



ART

ARTICULATE

Celebrated German artist MICHAEL KUNZE has consistently delved deep into the HIDDEN FACE of MODERNISM with his artworks. As he gears up for his FIRST SHOW in INDIA, he talks to L'Officiel India about his aim to create new and textually embedded images that brings to the spectator a visual memory of something they have never experienced before.

BY Praachi RANIWALA

L'OFFICIEL: *Why do you tilt towards the anachronistic medium of painting? Is there a message you hope to send across through your work?*

MICHAEL KUNZE: Painting is an old medium. When I was studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in the late '80s and early '90s, the Internet and the digital possibilities of imaging grew tremendously and painting was completely forbidden, almost redundant. But I was very clear that this was my area of interest. The roots of contemporary imaging such as computer games can be found in the big epoch of painting where painters discovered the illusionist perspective and possibilities of a constructive reality. It's important to know these things with their accompanying cultural connections to understand our world today better. After all, we don't descend from nothing, and to know something of the past means to know something of the future. An anachronistic medium like painting is up to date when one brings this anachronism into the spotlight instead of hiding it. The more digital our world becomes, the more interesting it is to bring into

focus the opposite. Also important for understanding our actual position is penetrating the internal structures of an analogue procedure through which we can understand and recognise our world in the past. Therefore, it allows one to discover surprising connections between times and spaces. In this way, the old medium becomes a sort of corrective for the new media.

Which artists have influenced you the most?

I try to follow the Shadow-Line of modernism that shows us a hidden, less popular path of modernism in the visual arts. In this Shadow-Line lies all the motifs and historical references that present an image of the world other than the mainstream modernity we are accustomed to. It's a sort of anti-modern modernity. Artists who are a part of this special historical path; who are more in an isolated position as opposed to being a part of an *avant garde* movement, such as Balthus, Francis Bacon, Anselm Kiefer and also Matthew Barney have inspired me. I have always been inspired by paintings from the time period of 1500 to 1800: the artworks



LEFT TO RIGHT
MICHAEL KUNZE.
'SCHWARZORANGE
II', 2011.

of today can never match up to these endlessly rich centuries. We can only make attachments and allusions in that direction, and if we do so with intensity, the results can be extremely interesting.

Do you plan on seeing the works of any Indian artists while you are in the city?

I shall surely be visiting some galleries to see the exhibitions by various Indian contemporary artists while I am in Mumbai. I have often seen the works of artists like Subodh Gupta, Bharti Kher and NS Harsha at art fairs and am looking forward to broadening my knowledge of Indian contemporary art with this trip.

What are your Christmas and New Year's Eve plans?

I am eagerly looking forward to my first visit to India and my show at Galerie Isa, after which I will spend a few relaxing days in Goa. I plan to head back to Berlin to spend Christmas with my family. The holidays are all about a nice time with the family and close friends for me.

Michael Kunze's works will be displayed at Galerie Isa from December 14, 2012 to February 12, 2013. www.galerieisa.com.