

An Artistic Portrayal

With a keen interest in the protagonists of 19th and early 20th century literature, Berlin based artist Matthias Bitzer poetically retells stories through his work. At the onset of his first solo show in India at Galerie Isa, *Noblesse India* sits down with this maestro to garner what we can expect from his latest show.

By Dipal Desai

Matthias Bitzer.
Photo courtesy Till
Cremer, Berlin



Tell us about your relationship with art.

I studied art in Karlsruhe in Germany from 1999 to 2004, where I had the chance to explore different types of media. My professor, Erwin Gross, supported passion rather than technique, which enabled me to find my space in the art world.

What are the themes present in your works?

All my works stand in relation to each other. They evolve from a magnetism that sets in a direction, making every work a necessary progression. Although each one can be read independently, they are also fragments of a bigger picture that may only be seen from a distance.

Of course, some works carry a more crucial context, whilst others represent bridges to span the disparity between two pieces.

What is the most integral factor that has influenced your work through these years?

Most of my works have emerged out of literature. A lot of the portraits were drafted out of descriptions of fictive characters that have appeared in novels.

In other works, I have focused on the actual author of a story, whose life was interwoven with the character they depicted in their works.

From the theoretical side, the essay *Rhizome*, along with the foreword to *A Thousand Plateaus* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari has had the biggest influence on my art work.

Whom and what do you draw inspiration from?

There are a lot of people whose thoughts and spirits have influenced me. To name a few—Gilles Deleuze, Mark Manders, Leopoldo Fregoli, Francis Picabia, WG Sebald, Augusta Joyce, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Sylvia Bitzer, Fernando Pessoa, Gregor Hildebrandt, Bernard Frize, Malewitsch, Jorge Luis Borges amongst others.

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1. *Untitled*, Matthias Bitzer, 2014, © Matthias Bitzer, Galerie Isa, Mumbai. 2. *The Extensions of a Body*, Matthias Bitzer, 2014, © Matthias Bitzer, Kadel Willborn, Düsseldorf. 3. *Solos*, Matthias Bitzer, 2014, © Matthias Bitzer, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. 4. *Allegory of Absence*, Matthias Bitzer, 2013, © Matthias Bitzer, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York.

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What are the different techniques and mediums that you use in your artworks?

I use a broad variety of styles, medias and techniques in my works. It includes paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, abstract and figurative works and more. The context of the work determines its execution.

Tell us about your show and the artworks that will be presented at Galerie Isa.

The title of the show is 'Islands and Chains'—the show relates to the unfulfilled love between the German writer Rainer Maria Rilke and the Italian actress Eleonora Duse.

Each art work carries an independence that allows it to be dissolved from its precursor and its successor, but, at the same time, shares a continuation in them. The open ends in these structures also allow them to connect to any surrounding.

I find this the most interesting aspect of my practice—how a body of works, produced somewhere in the world, held together by not more than an impalpable string, can inhabit and occupy a space somewhere in another world, without losing its coherence and complexity.

What are your views about art in India?

I have to admit that my sphere of knowledge about the arts in India is yet too limited to comment on it. However, I am more than curious and will take the chance to see as much art as possible during my trip to India. ♦

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