

Matthias Bitzer.
'Islands and chains'
03 February - 25 April, 2015
Galerie Isa, Mumbai.

Matthias Bitzer's first solo exhibition in India at Galerie Isa presents a selection of paintings, sketches and sculptures set out to enter into a dialog within the space. Their installation seeks to expand the attentive viewer's intellectual horizon, revealing a common thread - if you like - consistent in his work over the years. Matthias Bitzer works with multiple media to create abstract sculptures, drawings, and paintings. Interested in personal identity, Bitzer plays with the visual language of modernism, combining figurative portraits with abstract, geometric designs. Taking a new perspective on classical modernism, the artist combines portraits and geometric constructions and often takes recourse to the formal language, stories, and intellectual historical contexts of the nineteenth and early twentieth century's. A profound interest in questions of authenticity, the construction of reality and hypnagogia (transition from wakefulness to sleep), as well as a preoccupation with structures of manifold personality development and clandestine identity networks are characteristic for the Berlin-based artist.

Protagonists from 19th century literature, film, music and dance, such as Austrian author and dramatist, Arthur Schnitzler, American poet, Emily Dickinson, Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, Argentine story writer and poet, Jorge Luis Borges and Anita Berber, German dancer, actress, and writer who was the subject of an Otto Dix painting, these serve as starting points and inspiration for Bitzer's artistic research. Comparable to the reverberation of familiar sounds they grant images from the past a (modified) revival in the present, a certain mindfulness that phenomenologist Edmund Husserl attributes to the memory: "Perception is the act here [...] that originally constituted the object. The opposite is mindfulness, representation as the act that conjures up an object [...] in the mind's eye." Time as a crack in space? The interactive diffusion of past and present, the reoccurring flash of a moment thought to be extinct bring to mind German philosopher Walter Benjamin's concept of 'Jetzt-Zeit' (now-time). These multiple facets reflect Bitzer's „Phosphor Notes“, wall installations reminiscent of pictorial atlases or visual diaries. Even after multiple viewings the single panels retain their enigmatic aura releasing only traces of their seemingly heterogeneous origin.

Based on these poetic 'figures of thought' Matthias Bitzer uses abstract-figurative works to explore extended space-time concepts: Space, as a moment of doubt (French novelist-Georges Perec) that blurs the boundaries between the inside and the outside, whereby figures and backgrounds are in part inextricably interwoven like a kaleidoscope and space that emerges only through dialogic processes and is primarily disclosed in subject-related, physical intuition (French

philosopher-Maurice Merleau-Ponty). "You reflect everything and your reflection is in everything" - an apt line of Bitzers' poetry, or to describe the steady path pursued in the words of Francis Ponges, the 19th century French essayist and poet: "Consider the artist as a (tough, eager, crazed) researcher, a selfless labourer, who sometimes will strike gold. (Hence the aesthetics of the slow approach, of stoic repetition etc.) [...] Someone who sometimes makes a discovery, but shows little interest in the findings as such: the artist continues the search."

Matthias Bitzer, born in 1975 in Stuttgart, Germany now lives and works in Berlin. Recent shows include *The Collapse of the Features*, Dusseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K21, July 2014 – July 2015 & *Saturine Swing*, New York, Marianne Boesky Gallery, March 27 - April 26, 2014 . In 2010, Bitzer was the recipient of the prestigious Otto Dix Prize, awarded annually to an emerging artist from a German-speaking country.

Text: Ursula Ströbele