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CRITICS' PICKS

CURRENT PAST

New York

- "Mirror Me"
- Dorothy Iannone
- "Glitz & Grime: Photographs of Times Square"
- Július Koller and Jiří Kovanda
- "The Female Gaze: Women Look at Women"
- Basil Wolverton

Los Angeles

- Lucas Murgida
- "Your Bright Future: Twelve Contemporary Artists from Korea"
- Raymond Pettibon and Yoshua Okon

Mumbai

Baptist Coelho

PROJECT 88

BMP Building, Gound Floor, N.A. Sawant Marg, Colaba,
August 5–August 25

Baptist Coelho's first large-scale solo exhibition in Mumbai is the result of his expedition to the foot of the Siachen Glacier, the peaks of which are the sub-zero zone of contention between India and Pakistan. Coelho embarked on the journey—a self-inflicted torment given that he loathes the cold—to explore the lives of Indian soldiers. The ensuing videos, photographs, and objects (a threadbare uniform, a discarded parachute) blend politics with personal explorations of the body.

The most powerful illustration of this is the video *Beneath It All I Am Human*, 2009, which criticizes myths of masculinity. The work depicts the artist being slowly undressed from soldier's garb, as if by an invisible hand. As the camera affords the viewer extreme, if slightly shaming, close-ups of Coelho's hairy torso, one senses the vulnerability beneath his macho clothes. A dirty tent placed in a cozy corner near this piece explores the disparities between exterior and interior realities more decorously. As visitors crawl inside, they encounter mood lighting, gentle music, and a soft bed with snow-white sheets; the work illustrates the gulf between desire and fulfillment that is the soldier's lot.

Not all the works are so metaphoric, though. The video *If It Would Only End*, 2009, focuses on military provisions (boots, juice, nuts) huddled together in the snow. Purely documentary, it has (sadly) no hidden meanings. Despite some weak spots, Coelho's show is moving. Casting aside jingoistic nationalism, he lays bare the helplessness behind the soldier's heroic pose.

— Zehra Jumabhoy



Baptist Coelho, *If It Would Only End*, 2009, still from a color video, 3 minutes 50 seconds.