

Baptist Coelho

2016 Sovereign Asian Art Prize

by The Sovereign Art Foundation, Hong Kong

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www.baptistcoelho.com

Selected Press <http://baptistcoelho.com/press.php>

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Updated: May 2018

2016 Sovereign Asian Art Prize

Indian artist Baptist Coelho wins Asia's most prestigious contemporary Art Prize

HONG KONG, June 2016 The Sovereign Art Foundation is delighted to announce that artist Baptist Coelho, of India, has won the 12th annual Sovereign Asian Art Prize. The prize is Asia's longest established and most prestigious prize in the arts along with Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, of the Philippines, won the Public Vote Prize for their piece Left Wing.

Baptist impressed the panel of judges with his artwork Attempts to contain, 2015 – a piece consisting of 8 photographs on archival paper that explore how the body responds to the physical and psychological need to protect itself by forming a mesh of interlocking body parts. The inspiration for the artwork traces back to 1984, where the conflict between India and Pakistan over ownership of the Siachen Glacier was fought at an altitude of around 18,000 feet - the highest battlefield on earth. Bitter cold temperatures reaching to - 60 Celsius made living conditions unbearable for soldiers. In this work, the artist illustrates the trajectory of various attempts at weaving and intertwining the human body in order to provide its own layer of protection. This interaction between the warp and weft of mind and body implies a deeper psychological understanding; where the soldier seeks his own personal resolve; often unconsciously weaving a mesh that would psychologically hold, protect and contain.

Baptist was nominated into the Prize by longstanding Sovereign Asian Art Prize nominator Brain Curtain – an Irish-born lecturer, art critic and curator of contemporary art. Brian's work has been published in Frieze, Flash Art, Artforum.com, Art Asia Pacific and Art Review Asia; and he has mounted curated exhibitions in China, New York, Korea and the UK as well as regionally. As well as acting as a SAAP nominator he has nominated for the Prix Pictet award in photography, and the Google Photography Prize in collaboration with Saatchi Gallery London.

To ascertain the Top 30 Finalists of this year's prize, fifty independent art professionals from around the Asia Pacific region first had to nominate 200+ mid-career artists. Then, a judging panel comprising world-class art professionals including curator David Elliot, Chinese artist Song Dong, independent Indonesian curator Asmudjo Irianto, Hong Kong-based Alexandra Seno and Taiwanese artist Michael Lin, voted to shortlist 30 artists from across 16 different territories. Each member of the judging panel then flew to Hong Kong to view the art a second time, in person, before deciding on an overall winner.

Read more <https://www.sovereignartfoundation.com/press-release/2016-sovereign-asian-art-prize-winners-announced/>

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The Four Seasons, Hong Kong, Photo courtesy: Sovereign Art Foundation



The Four Seasons, Hong Kong, Photo courtesy: Sovereign Art Foundation

Attempts to contain

Attempts to contain, 2015

8 digital prints on archival paper

Print dimensions in centimeters: 2 Nos. (Width 76 X Height 50.5), 2 Nos. (Width 40.5 X Height 50.8), 1 No. (Width 38 X Height 30.5), 2 Nos. (Width 45.5 X Height 30.5), 1 No. (Width 30.5 X Height 38)

Archival Paper: PhotoRag, 308 gsm, acid-free

Display dimensions: variable

Attempts to contain, explores how the body responds to the physical and psychological need to protect by forming a mesh of interlocking body parts. The work takes its starting point from the artist's audio/video, "**Beneath it all... I am human...**", 2009, where a Siachen soldier's clothing is mysteriously removed layer by layer to finally reveal the skin. The soldier's body can be safeguarded by sophisticated clothing manufactured to endure extreme temperatures and to withstand illnesses such as, Hypothermia, High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema, to name a few. However, beneath these fabrics there exists the vulnerable inner-layer of the human body. The artist broadens his investigation by asking; 'How does one shield the body from a mental state, when these protective layers of clothing are removed?'

Attempts to contain, is a series of photographs of varied dimensions layered in tandem. Here, the artist illustrates the trajectory of various attempts at weaving and intertwining the human body in order to provide its own layer of protection. The work draws similarities to the act of weaving, which involves interlinking the warp: a set of vertical threads with the weft: a set of horizontal threads to form fabric. Creating textiles is a fundamental human interaction and one of the oldest surviving crafts.

This work begins to explore the corporeality of the Siachen soldier's body when confronted with the intricate relations of the psyche; where fingers, toes, hands, legs and other parts desperately attempt to weave and interlock; forming its own composition of twisted and tense shapes. This interaction between the warp and weft of mind and body implies a deeper psychological understanding; where the soldier seeks his own personal resolve; often unconsciously weaving a mesh that would psychologically hold, protect and contain.

- *Davide Allison*



View



View



Digital prints



Digital prints





Digital prints



Press

Art Radar

King's College London

Ran Dian

'Attempts to Contain': India's Baptist Coelho, winner of 2016 Sovereign Asian Art Prize - artist profile
by Lily Tekseng, Art Radar (Hong Kong, 23 Aug, 2016)



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'Attempts to Contain': India's Baptist Coelho, winner of 2016 Sovereign Asian Art Prize – artist profile

Posted on 23/08/2016

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Baptist Coelho's artistic meditations on the Siachen Glacier won him the 2016 Sovereign Asian Art Prize.

Sovereign Asian Art Prize winner Baptist Coelho's "Siachen Glacier Project" is an ongoing decade-long exploration of nation-states, boundaries, the military and what unfolds in sites of conflict. *Art Radar* profiles the artist and his work.



Baptist Coelho, '537', 2007, 537 white gauze bandages. Approximate dimensions: 110 x 21 x 85 cm.
Image courtesy the artist and Project 88, Mumbai; LAMO, Leh.

Indian artist **Baptist Coelho** may have only recently won the 2016 **Sovereign Asian Art Prize**, Asia's most prestigious contemporary art prize, but he has been studiously thinking about ideas of 'nation-state' and boundaries, its traditional arm of influence, i.e., the military, and sites of conflict since as early as 2006, when he began his research for "Siachen Glacier Project". A year later, in 2007, he produced his first work for the project entitled 537.

It is an installation made with the titular 537 white gauze bandages, stacked on top of each other roughly in the shape of two white mountains. 537 perhaps still has the most pertinent thing to say about the situation at Siachen: an appeal for peace given the futility of the conflicting nationalisms.

PDF link:
http://baptistcoelho.com/download_files/79_BCoelho_ArtRadar_2016.pdf

'Artist in Residence, Baptist Coelho, wins Sovereign Asian Art Prize', King's College London (UK, 13 June, 2016)



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NEWS

Artist in Residence, Baptist Coelho, wins Sovereign Asian Art Prize

Posted on 13/06/2016



The Department of War Studies is pleased to announce that Baptist Coelho, the Leverhulme Artist in Residence has won the 12th annual Sovereign Asian Art Prize for this artwork, *Attempts to contain*, 2015. The award is Asia's longest established prize in the arts given by the Sovereign Art Foundation, Hong Kong. Baptist Coelho was in in Hong Kong to receive a trophy and a cash prize. [More details here](#)

Attempts to contain, consists of 8 photographs that explore how the body responds to the physical and psychological need to protect itself by forming a mesh of interlocking body parts. The work takes inspiration from Baptist's on-going research about the Siachen Glacier, a conflict zone between Indian and Pakistan since 1984.

Baptist Coelho says, "The award comes at a very poignant stage of my art practise and I am very grateful to the Sovereign Art Foundation for their support and to all who have been part of my journey. It was a pleasure to be part of the competition and to be a finalist amongst a group of such diverse and talented artists."

Curator, Cécile Bourne-Farrell commented, "This prize is a fantastic gift for Baptist Coelho to dedicate himself deeper into his research and artistic practices in a turning point of his career."

Baptist Coelho's contribution to the Department of War Studies will provide an aesthetic perspective on the intersection of everyday life with war, culminating in an exhibition entitled, *Traces of War*. Working with Professor Vivienne Jabri and Curator Cécile Bourne-Farrell, Baptist Coelho's work will make an invaluable contribution to the exploration and conceptualisation of the intersection of the everyday and the routine with the time of war, how the material, discursive, and psychological dimensions of one temporality come to permeate and affect the other.

The exhibition, running from 26th October to he 18th December in the Inigo Rooms, Somerset House East Wing, brings together three outstanding and internationally renowned artists, [Jananne Al-Ani](#), [Baptist Coelho](#) and [Shaun Gladwell](#).

The Department of War Studies is home to a newly established hub that provides a focal point for work exploring the relationship between the arts and conflict, including visual arts, dance, music, theatre and film. The hub aims to bring artists and scholars together to share their work and ideas fostering a space for creative collaboration, opening new dialogues and engaging new audiences. Find out more about the [Arts & Conflict events](#).

Photo credit: Sovereign Art Foundation, Hong Kong

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'Baptist Coelho wins Sovereign Art Prize', Ran Dian (Hong Kong, 3 Jun 2016)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS 2016.06.05 Sun, by Ran Dian

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2016.06.05 Sun, by Ran Dian

Baptist Coelho wins Sovereign Art Prize

[Press Release]

The Sovereign Art Foundation is delighted to announce that artist Baptist Coelho, of India, has won the 12th annual Sovereign Asian Art Prize. The prize is Asia's longest established and most prestigious prize in the arts and the winner receives not only the respected title but also a trophy and US\$30,000. Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, of the Philippines, won the Public Vote Prize and US\$1,000 for their piece *Left Wing*.

Attempts to Contain, 2015 by Baptist Coelho (Grand Prize Winner 2016)

Baptist impressed the panel of judges with his artwork *Attempts to contain, 2015* – a piece consisting of 8 photographs on archival paper that explore how the body responds to the physical and psychological need to protect itself by forming a mesh of interlocking body parts.



[See all photos \(2\)](#)



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Exhibitions

Four Seasons Hotel

The Rotunda

The James Christie Room



The Four Seasons Hotel, Hong Kong, 3 June 2016

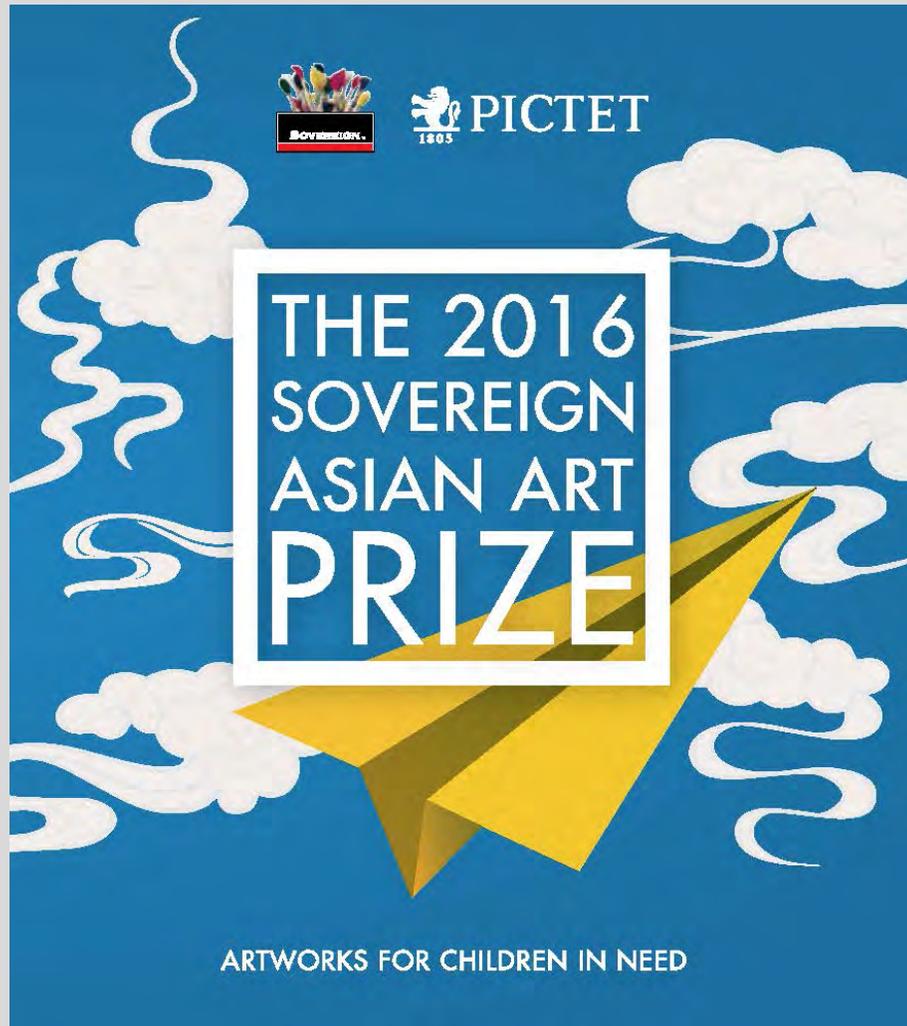


The Rotunda, One Square Exchange, Hong Kong, 21 - 31 May 2016

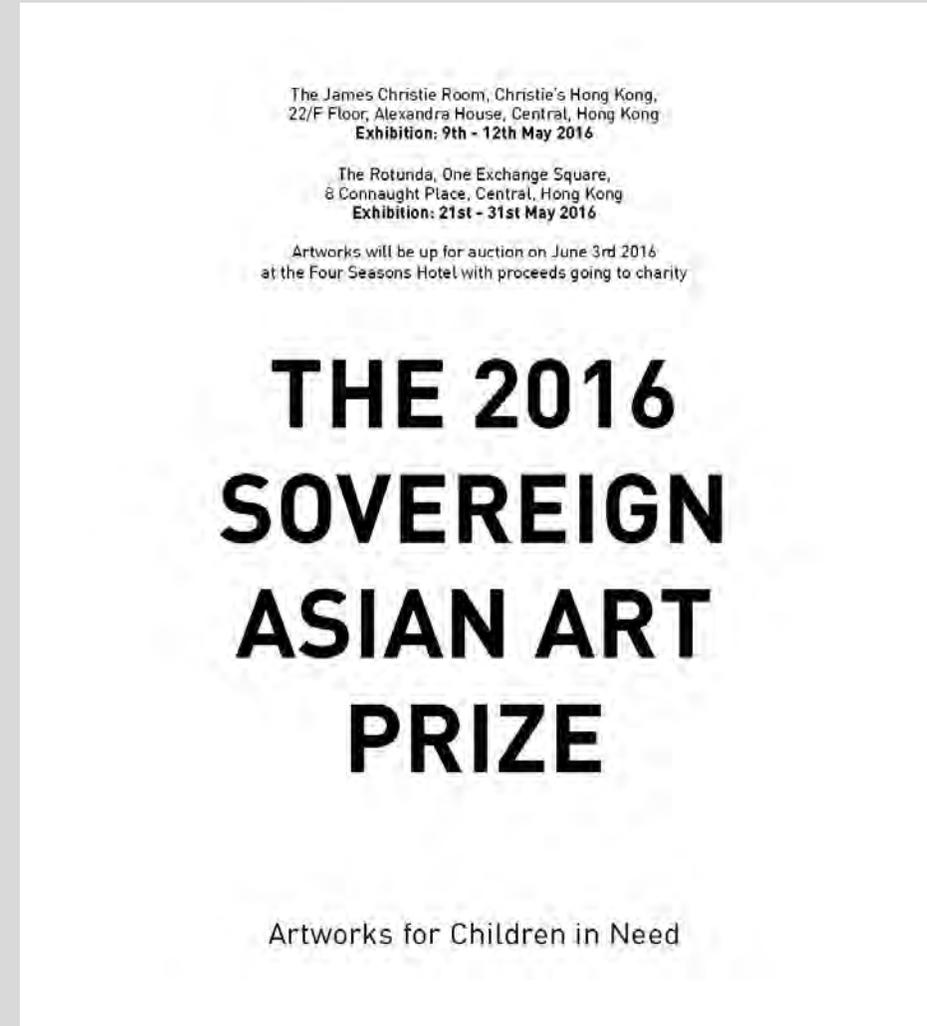


The James Christie Room, Christie's Hong Kong, 9 - 12 May 2016

Exhibition Catalogue (Selected Pages)



Cover



Selected pages PDF link: <http://baptistcoelho.com/fileupload/files/BCoelho-2016SovereignAsianArtPrize-SelectedPages.pdf>

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Lot 17 | Silent Auction

Attempts to contain, 2015

150 x 150 x 5cm – ten photographs
on archival paper

Estimate: USD 4,000

Nominated by Brian Curtin

Baptist Coelho

India

Born in India in 1977, Baptist Coelho frequently merges personal research with collaborations from various cultures, geographies and histories. In 2006, Baptist received his Masters of Arts from the Birmingham Institute of Art & Design (BIAD), UK.

Since April 13, 1984, the endless conflict between India and Pakistan over the ownership of the Siachen Glacier has been fought at an altitude of around 18,000 feet, which is the highest battlefield on earth. Bitter cold temperatures reaching -60° Celsius make living conditions unbearable for the soldiers. In *Attempts to contain, 2015*, Baptist explores how the body responds to the physical and psychological need to protect by forming a mesh of interlocking body parts. The body of a soldier can be safeguarded by clothing and armour, but beneath the fabrics there is always vulnerable human flesh. Here, the artist illustrates the trajectory of various attempts at weaving and intertwining the

human body in order to provide its own layer of protection. The work draws similarities to the act of weaving, which involves interlinking the warp, a set of vertical threads, with the weft, a set of horizontal threads, to form fabric. Creating textiles is a fundamental human interaction and one of the oldest surviving crafts.

Baptist has exhibited in numerous solo and group shows since 2006, both domestically and internationally. He was awarded the 'Façade Video Award' (2011) by Art Today Association, Plovdiv-Bulgaria; 'Promising Artist Award' (2007) by Art India & India Habitat Centre, Delhi-India and 'Johnson Prize Fund' (2006) by BIAD, UK. Solo Exhibitions include, Project 88, Mumbai-India (2015); Ladakh Arts and Media Organization in Leh-India (2015); Pump House Gallery, London-UK (2012); Grand Palais, Bern-Switzerland (2009); Project 88, Mumbai-India (2009); Visual Arts Gallery, Delhi-India (2009) and BIAD, UK (2006).



About

Baptist Coelho

The Sovereign Art Foundation

Sovereign Asian Art Prize

Baptist Coelho received his Masters of Arts from Birmingham Institute of Art & Design - BIAD, UK (2006). He was awarded the 'Sovereign Asian Art Prize' (2016) by The Sovereign Art Foundation, Hong Kong; 'Façade Video Award' (2011) by Art Today Association, Plovdiv-Bulgaria; 'Promising Artist Award' (2007) by Art India & India Habitat Centre, Delhi-India and 'Johnson Prize Fund' (2006) by BIAD, UK. Solo Exhibitions include, Somerset House, London-UK (2016); Goethe-Zentrum, Hyderabad-India (2015); Project 88, Mumbai-India (2015); Ladakh Arts and Media Organization in Leh-India (2015); Pump House Gallery, London-UK (2012); Grand Palais, Bern-Switzerland (2009); Project 88, Mumbai-India (2009); Visual Arts Gallery, Delhi-India (2009) and BIAD, UK (2006). He has exhibited internationally in museums, galleries and film screenings. Coelho has participated in various artist residencies; as well as conducted workshops, artist talks and panel discussions in Asia, UAE, South Africa, UK and Europe. The artist lives and works in Mumbai, India. www.baptistcoelho.com

The Sovereign Art Foundation (SAF) was established in 2003 with a well-defined twin focus: to recognise the growing wealth of contemporary art talent in Asia, and bring the proven benefits of expressive arts to underprivileged children. The beauty of our model is that we are able to achieve both goals in an eminently sustainable way. The Sovereign Asian Art Prize, now recognised as the most prestigious prize in its field and region, raises funds by auctioning those artworks that reach the final stage of the competition. The proceeds are then shared equally between the artists and the Foundation, to be used for our charitable projects across Asia. To find out more about our charity programmes see our 'Who We Help' section of the website. <https://www.sovereignartfoundation.com/about-us/who-we-are/>

Held annually, the **Sovereign Asian Art Prize** invites mid-career contemporary artists - nominated by a carefully selected board of independent art experts from the region - to enter up to three artworks online. Entries are then shortlisted by a small judging panel consisting of world-class art specialists, who select the best 30 artworks from a range of digital images. These 30 artworks are exhibited in a prominent public space in Hong Kong, where the pieces are judged a second time, in person. The Grand Prize winner is revealed at the annual sell-out Gala Dinner in Hong Kong. The winning artist receives US\$30,000, along with the coveted award. All artworks are then auctioned to the public - with the exception of the winning entry, which becomes the property of the Foundation and is used to further its charitable aims. The announcement of the Public Prize winner is also made at the Gala Dinner. The Public Prize (also known as the Schoeni Prize) includes an award of US\$1,000 and is presented to the artist whose artwork receives the most votes from the public - either those who attend the exhibition, or cast a vote through the Foundation's website or Facebook voting app. <https://www.sovereignartfoundation.com/prize/sovereign-asian-art-prize/>

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