

Baptist Coelho

Between here and there

13 Aug to 19 Sep 2015

Project 88, Mumbai

Project 88 is pleased to announce, *Between here and there*, Baptist Coelho's second solo exhibition at the gallery. The title of the exhibition comes from Coelho's installation, *Dream Speech*, a five-channel audio with voices of four soldiers and an officer who appear to be communicating with each other through a dream within the setting of five military sleeping bags. The "here and there" refers to varied cultural, historical and psychological occurrences that can exist between two or more points of interaction. These resonate with recurring themes in the artist's practice, such as random thought, conflict and corporeality, and attempts to reveal the human condition through observations and conversations.

The works in the exhibition include various objects displaced physically from their original settings and conceptually intertwined with new contexts that extend his research. Objects such as: a pair of boots, an aluminum coin, bottles of air and notes from seventy-three countries, sleeping bags, gauze bandages, award ribbons and photographs of the human body, become the focus for Baptist Coelho to uncover stories - connected to geography, history, community, or an individual persona. The juxtaposition of these objects creates residues, which connect the present with the past. They become symbols filtered from vast tracts of research and oral history that were garnered from conversations in diverse parts of the world.

In his works, Coelho explores themes of conflict, discord, war and its aftermath. He engages his subject matter collaboratively by inviting people to participate which create random scenarios that often form layers of meaning to reveal the life and memory of the participants. Various sites of public engagement encompass these exhibited works such as the munitions factories of St. Denis in France, Battersea Park in England, the Siachen Glacier in the Himalayas, and other locations. Diverse questions surface from these works, which seem to emerge from a given space and time, found between here and there.

Coelho received his Masters of Arts from Birmingham Institute of Art & Design - BIAD, UK (2006). His works have been exhibited at Jönköpings Läns Museum, Sweden; CASS Sculpture Foundation, Goodwood; MAC, Lyon and MAXXI, Rome amongst others. He is the 2015-16 Leverhulme Artist-in-Residence at the Department of War Studies, King's College London. An exhibition arising from the residency is scheduled to take place at King's in the autumn of 2016. The artist lives and works in Mumbai.

Brief Artwork Notes



Air(Travel), 2006-2015

This project is a selection from 448* glass and plastic bottles with corresponding paper notes and photographs, which were collected during a ten year period by various individuals from 96 countries (including the Arctic Circle and the Antarctic). The project draws an ethereal connection between the collected air and private thoughts of people. As the collection of time capsules developed, social and cultural connections, depicting similarities and differences, began to surface.

**updated on 8th August 2015*



Dream Speech, 2015

The installation includes five army sleeping bags and a five-channel audio track with voices of four Siachen soldiers and an officer who appear to be communicating with each other through a dream. After a typical day of rigid military protocol, the soldiers find solace in their dreams, expressing their feelings of anxiety, vulnerability and repression from the confinement of their sleeping bags inside an army shelter.

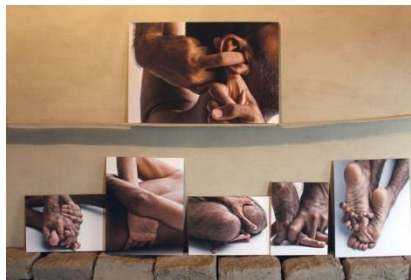
Audio extract: <https://vimeo.com/134809563>

Complete audio: <https://vimeo.com/134809188> (please request for the password)



Ribbons I, 2015

The artwork consists of 6 vertical bars in which different colors, textures, and patterns create intricate geometric compositions. Made from pants, jackets, socks, blankets and other articles used by soldiers posted on the glacier, they were inspired by the service ribbons worn by a Siachen officer. Each bar consists of 4 different awards which have a unique design that represents bravery and an achievement of service that would have been presented to a soldier during his service in the Indian Army.



Attempts to contain, 2015

The installation is a series of ten 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 fabri



The Rose I, 2015

The artwork creates an association between the painting titled, *Untitled (Blue Roses)*, 2008, by Cy Twombly and the roses that grow wild around the base camp of the Siachen Glacier, from which the glacier derives its name. The large rose-shaped sculptural relief, constructed of fragile gauze bandages, echos the shape of the brushstrokes, drips and finger prints of the colossal flower by Twombly. The bandages transform the meaning of this work to one of healing and protection under the soldiers' collective solidarity.



Une pièce de monnaie de Monsieur Risso, 2012-13

Audio/video running time: 14 minutes 38 seconds loop

This video takes its starting point from an aluminum coin given to the Artist by Mr. Pierre Risso, (born 1928), who lives in St. Denis, a northern suburb of Paris. As the video's narrative unfolds, the coin embarks on an animated journey to discover its identity; coming in contact with people from various places such as: a Flea Market, Church, Public Garden, History Museum and Public Library, which are located within the département of Seine-Saint-Denis. The story does not arrive at a final conclusion; but rather more questions emerge when the coin finds itself in a Public Library and is confronted with various interpretations of its origin.

Audio/video extract: <https://vimeo.com/84537717>

Complete audio/video with english subtitles: <https://vimeo.com/134806993>

(Please request for the password)



Stand at ease, 2012

The installation consists of a pair of black leather boots and a photograph depicting the Artist's palms placed one over the other. The work explores the military formal position of "standing at ease" and questions the kind of "ease" that a soldier experiences when working under the strict regimes of the army. The black and white photograph, placed above army boots that face into the wall, explores the anonymity of a soldier and captures a social commentary portrayed as part of his duty during military service.