

Baptist Coelho

thread by thread

(Solo Exhibition)

Curator Monisha Ahmed

1 May - 25 June 2015

Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO),

Leh, India

9 - 24 October 2015

Goethe-Zentrum, Hyderabad, India

Supported by Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan;

LAMO, Leh; Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation &

Project 88, Mumbai

www.baptistcoelho.com

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Exhibition Invite



thread by thread
Baptist Coelho

1 May - 15 June 2015

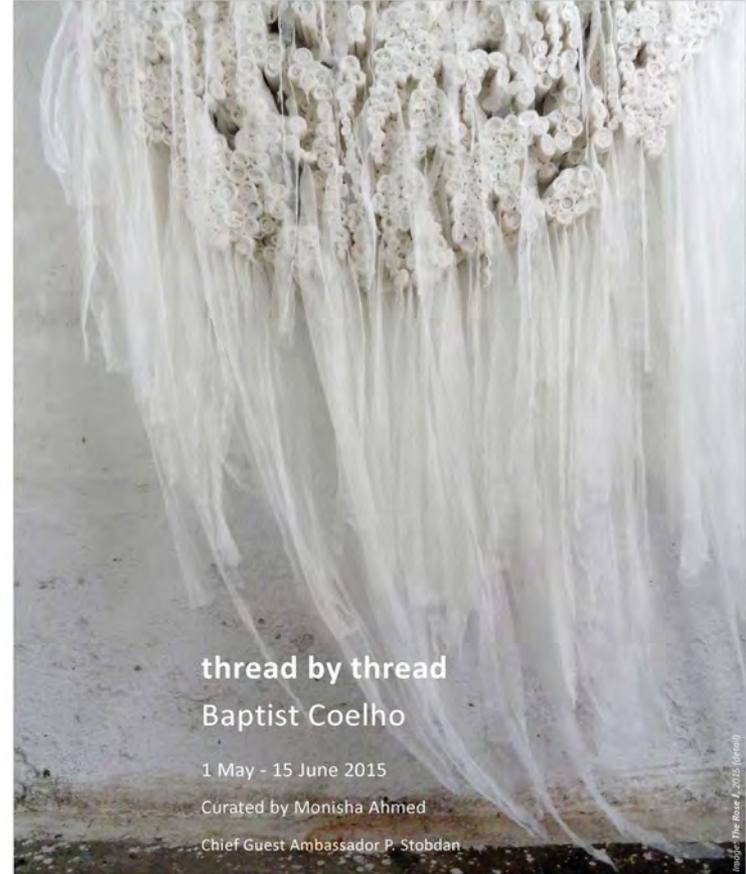
Curated by Monisha Ahmed

Image: Ekhanov / 2015 (detail)

Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO), is pleased to invite you for the opening of **thread by thread**, a solo exhibition by Baptist Coelho, curated by Monisha Ahmed, on 1st May, 2015, from 5:00 p.m. onwards. The opening will be followed by a walk-through with the artist and a moderated panel discussion. The exhibition runs through 15th June, 2015, 11 am to 5 pm, Sundays closed.

Venue: The LAMO Centre, Below Leh Palace, Old Town, Leh, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, India.
Off. 01982-251554. Media Officer +91 8492832909. www.lamo.org.in

The exhibition is supported by LAMO; Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, India and Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation



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Chief Guest Ambassador P. Stobdan

Image: Ekhanov / 2015 (detail)

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Invites

Exhibition Note

“I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to colleagues, which they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives.”

- Leo Tolstoy, “What is Art?”(1897)

The title of the exhibition, **thread by thread**, is taken from an essay by the Russian writer and philosopher Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910). The quote informs Baptist Coelho's practice, which attempts to reveal and understand conflict and war through observations and conversations that have been woven into the fabric of the lives of people, whether directly or indirectly affected.

Since 1984, India and Pakistan have been zealously guarding their territories on the Siachen Glacier. Beyond the complexities and politics of war, Coelho draws his inspiration from the soldiers posted in this icy terrain, who at 17,000 feet serve their three-month terms on one of the highest battlefields of the world. These works reveal their challenges and valour, but also the paradox of heroism, confronted by brutal cold and the perils of a high altitude on an uncertain terrain, more lives are lost due to the weather than fighting.

In 2006, Coelho began researching life on the Siachen Glacier; in 2009 he presented new works in **"You can't afford to have emotions out there..."**, a solo exhibition in Delhi and Mumbai. This project focused on the life of the soldier not as a machine of war but as a man with emotions and vulnerabilities. Continuing with his research over the years, he has now created six new works that draw their strength and inspiration from the various fabrics and materials used by the Siachen soldiers. These and earlier works comprise the exhibition at the Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO), located below Leh Palace in two restored historic houses dating to the 17th century. Creating this exhibition in Ladakh, positioned high in the mountains of northern India, at an altitude of 11,500 feet, allows Baptist to situate his project within the landscape that it is derived from. At the same time, it raises the possibility of interchange with army personnel including the Ladakhis, who as porters, soldiers and officers, have all contributed to life on the Siachen Glacier.

Baptist's practice has been influenced by Louise Bourgeois who once described clothing as "an exercise of memory. It makes me explore... like little signposts in the search for the past." As the central focus of this exhibition, Baptist has re-appropriated the soldier's clothing and discarded materials associated with the Glacier to explore untold stories. Powerful in their own right for their inventiveness and strength, these assemblages take on new meanings when juxtaposed with other materials. These works are emblematic of certain themes: humanity, relationships, survival, history, honour and perseverance. This focus results in work of intense psychological complexity, exposing relationships and hierarchies that occur during war.

thread by thread resonates with the progression of time, to the years of conflict that have passed on the Glacier. Threads collectively add greater strength and endurance to fabric, and Coelho uses weaving and stitching metaphorically, to reflect on the soldiers who have joined together to strengthen forces. The soldiers' clothing, made from both natural and synthetic fibers, is technically sophisticated, insulating them from sub-zero temperatures (which fall as low as -60°C). They are thus more functional than aesthetic: camouflage, protection and durability are all crucial. Obvious signs of mending and repairing on the soldiers' clothes reveal the need to recycle and extend the life of each garment, reminding us of broken political borders in need of repair. Baptist's stitched and constructed three-dimensional sculptures are both symbolic and psychological: they evoke the corporeality of the body, yet are ghostly in their absence of the user.

Nowhere but here consists of thermal shirts and pants that have been stitched together to form the actual size of the canopy of an army-supply parachute, symbolizing solidarity among the soldiers. **Ribbons I** depicts six individual bars made of various clothing worn on the glacier. The patchwork of fabric is inspired by actual award ribbons given to soldiers and questions the relevance of these honours within the context of the army. **The Rose I** creates an association with the American painter Cy Twombly's work and the roses that grow wild around the base camp of the Siachen Glacier; from which the glacier derives its name. The rose shaped sculpture consists of white gauze bandages that reveal how a fragile material can also protect and heal. **Dream Speech** consists of five sleeping bags, each with an audio track that intimately narrates the dreams of four soldiers and an officer; expressing their anxiety and vulnerability while sleeping in an army shelter. **Attempts to contain** is a study of how the mental state affects the body in the absence of clothing. A series of photographs illustrates the warp and weft of the body as a way to contain and protect itself. **No one knows where or when** refers to the fear of the unknown crevasses found on the icy terrains. The suspended work is fashioned out of bitumen felt, an industrial material that forms the negative space of a crevasse and attempts to construct the visible and disturbing void encountered by soldiers.

Baptist's fabric collages and assemblages, with their many disparate pieces assembled and sewn together, attest to the conceptual and psychological connotations associated with cutting, weaving, stitching, and mending. Textiles speak to us in many ways, but as narratives on life, they encapsulate experience and memory. While Baptist explores the textiles that protect the soldiers, he brings a new perspective to the understanding of what it means to live and fight on the Glacier.

- *Monisha Ahmed*

Artworks Images and Notes

Nowhere but here, 2015

Ribbons I, 2015

The Rose I, 2015

Dream Speech, 2015

Attempts to contain, 2015

No one knows where or when, 2015

537, 2007

“Beneath it all... I am human...”, 2009

“If it would only end...”, 2009

“I’m not sure if I will return...”, 2009

“Altitude Sickness, Frostbite, Chilblains, Arterial Hypertension, Deep Vein Thrombosis, Snowblindness, Hypothermia, High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema, High Altitude Cerebral Oedema...”, 2009

(un)identified #2, 2009

Nowhere but here, 2015

Siachen thermal shirts and pants, nylon cords
and metal rings

Parachute's canopy dimensions: 320 inches

Display dimensions: variable

Nowhere but here, takes its starting point from the artist's large scale installation, "**We waited for days but no sign of hope...**", 2009, which consisted of a large army-supply parachute juxtaposed between an intimidating barricade of sand-filled nylon bags.

Nowhere but here continues to explore the use of the parachute as a metaphor for conflict. The work seems to be an abandoned military parachute that has fallen out of place, but the soft sculpture has actually been fabricated from soldiers' thermal clothing stitched together to form the canopy. Nylon cords and metal rings, attached to this parachute, connect to the supply box and are essential in order to carry life-sustaining goods to the soldiers. The supply parachute is also constructed with a vent in the canopy which allows for a slower and more controlled descent. However, due to sudden changes in wind patterns, these parachutes drift from their targets and often become abandoned in the landscape or suspended from cliffs. If retrievable, it takes days for soldiers to locate them.

The thermal clothing, used to form the canopy of the parachute, metaphorically draws a connection to the thermal currents of hot air which a parachute interacts with while descending toward its hopeful destination. The stitching together of the clothing represents the solidarity and strength of the soldiers during this endless struggle under freezing weather conditions. As part of the barren and isolated world of the soldier, the supply parachute is also seen as a symbol of hope and connection to the outside world. During these unstable times, when destinations are often unclear, a soldier's survival depends on the immediacy of each task and his awareness of being nowhere but here.

- *Davide Allison*



Detail



Details



Detail



Detail

Ribbons I, 2015

6 bars made of various Siachen soldier's clothing, sponge and wood

Single bar dimensions: L 72 X B 9.5 X D 1 inches

Approximate display dimensions:

L 70 X B 68 X D 22 inches

Ribbons I consists of 6 vertical forms 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.

The clothing, which was worn to protect the soldiers from the inhospitable temperatures (which drop to as low as -60 °Celsius), has been transformed into an award of valour. Ribbons and other such awards are part of a political and social system that support the act of heroism. These decorative, multi-coloured, ribbons raise several questions about the meaning of such an award within the context of the army and whether this external display of bravery can actually reflect a soldier's honour and his personal struggle between aggression and protection.

- *Davide Allison*



View



Details



Views and detail

The Rose I, 2015

White gauze bandages, MDF plywood and synthetic resin adhesive

Rose Dimensions: L 60 X B 50 X D 6 inches

Display dimensions: L 100 X B 50 X D 6 inches

The symbol of the rose has been immortalized in literature and history from ancient mythology to modern times. This work was initially inspired by *Untitled* (Blue Roses), a 2008 painting by the American artist Cy Twombly (1928-2011). That work is one of eleven large-scale paintings of roses that belong to a two-part series. The painting includes multi-layered swirls and drips of vibrant blue and purple colours, and a two-columned excerpt inscribed and layered like a palimpsest from 'Borrowed Time,' a poem by the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann.

**In the Storm of Roses
Wherever we turn in the Storm
of Roses**

**The night is lit up by thorns
and thunder
rumbling at our heels**

Coelho's work focuses on the word *Siachen*, a Balti term (this is Tibetan language spoken in the Baltistan Division in Gilgit-Baltistan, a part of Pakistan which adjoins parts of Ladakh). *Sia* refers to the genera of roses which widely grow in the region and *chen* refers to any object found in abundance: *Siachen* is thus a land of many roses. However, this terrain is mainly known for the endless conflict between India and Pakistan, where many lives have been sacrificed for national pride. **The Rose I** is constructed of white gauze bandages of various sizes; grouped next to each other to form one of the four roses from Twombly's painting.

The fragile white gauze bandages, collectively placed, echo 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.

- Davide Allison

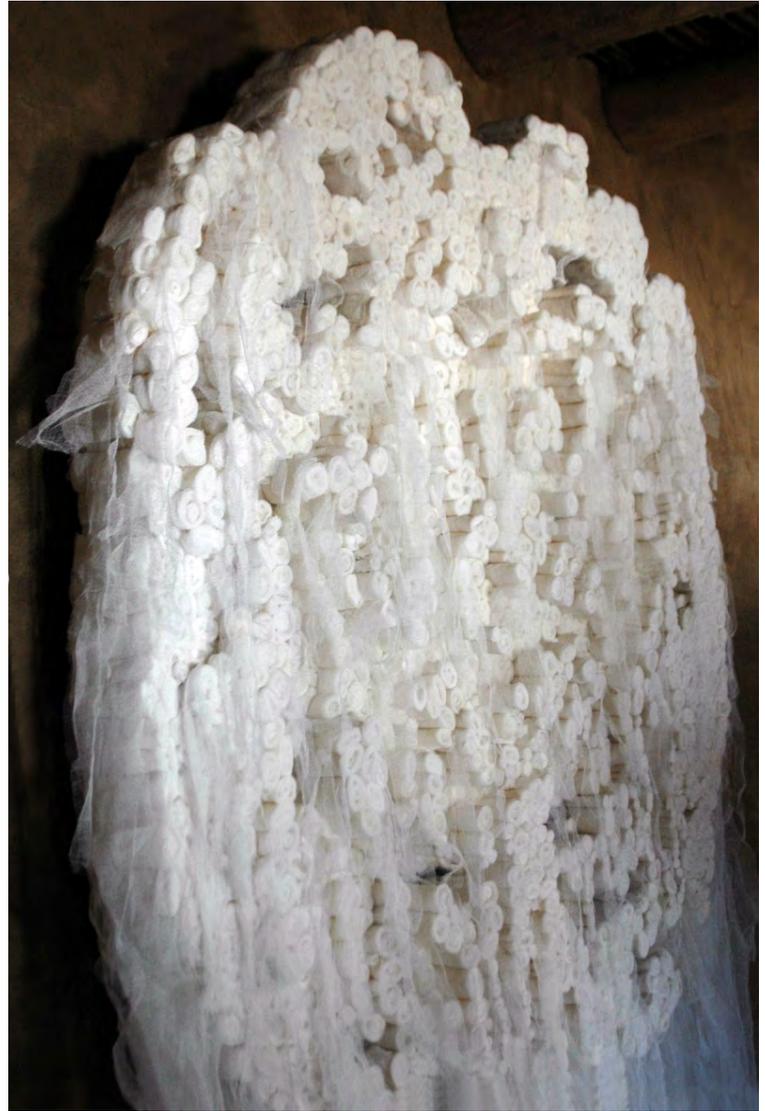


View



Details





View and detail

Dream Speech, 2015

Installation with five Siachen sleeping bags,
five headphones and audio

Approximate installation dimensions:

L 94 X B 65 inches

5 channel audio running time:

29 minutes 58 seconds loop

Audio running time: 21 minutes 8 seconds

loop

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

Complete audio:

<https://vimeo.com/134809188>

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on it, then please copy and paste it into
your browser*

Dream Speech consists of five sleeping bags that have been placed adjacent to each other and were used by soldiers on the Siachen Glacier. This installation includes a five-channel audio with voices of four soldiers and an officer who appear to be communicating with each other through a dream. The Siachen Glacier lies at an altitude of 5,753 meters above sea level. The lack of oxygen disrupts the sleeping patterns of the soldiers; often making their dreams even more vivid. The artist reflects on the dream state of these soldiers and how they might communicate with each other through a subconscious medium.

Dreams are an outlet to express our subconscious thoughts. Our dreams are endless even though we may not remember them; in fact during a lifetime we spend an average of six years dreaming. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian neurologist, theorized that the content of dreams is shaped by an unconscious wish fulfillment. The title of the artwork is taken from the writing of Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926); a German psychiatrist who developed the important concept of "dream speech", (originally written in German as *Traumsprache*), which describes the internal speech that occurs during a dream.

Dream Speech facilitates a personal conversation between four soldiers and an officer while they are sleeping. After a typical day of rigid military protocol, the soldiers find solace in their dreams, often expressing their feelings of anxiety, vulnerability and repression; sometimes with a sense of humour, from the confinement of their sleeping bags. The durable fabric of the sleeping bag is crucial to a soldier for his comfort and protection. This envelope of security that surrounds him while he sleeps represents the intimate inner world of the soldier and the safeguard of his ominous dreams.

A dedicated head phone is attached to each sleeping bag, where the viewer is only able to listen to one soldier's voice at a time. The participant could attempt to piece together the fragments of the narrative by individually listening to the audio tracks of all five headphones. The silent pauses between words and sentences allow the participants to include their own subliminal thoughts about the soldiers' dreams. The intimate narrative developed by the artist uses references from various literary sources about war; as well as personal recorded conversations that he has conducted with various army personnel since 2007.

- *Davide Allison*



Installation view



Installation details

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



Digital prints



Digital prints





Digital prints



No one knows where or when, 2015

Installation with bitumen felt, mica chips, cotton & nylon thread and industrial adhesive

Approximate installation dimensions: B 57 X H 93 X D 34 inches

No one knows where or when refers to the fear of encountering unknown crevasses, when soldiers navigate the icy terrains of the Siachen Glacier. The work consists of various thick layers of bitumen felt (*tar patra in Hindi*), that have been bound together with industrial adhesive and suspended from the ceiling by nylon wire. Exploring the notion that context-dependent stimuli can cause behavioral responses, the artist used tangible material to convey psychological changes of vulnerability, fear and anxiety experienced on these hostile landscapes.

The sculptural work takes the shape of the negative space which defines a crevasse; a deep, hollow, crack with almost vertical walls. These formations are one of the most feared natural obstacles on the glacier. The crevasses are formed as a result of stress between two semi-rigid pieces of ice. The intensity of this shear stress causes deep fissures in the ice which often are concealed by blankets of snow.

Bitumen, which has been impregnated with petroleum residues, is commonly used as roofing and insulation for the shelters on the Siachen Glacier and provides protection against severe weather conditions. These silver-grey sheets are commonly used for construction because of their stability and adhesive properties. The surface of the felt is coarse due to the mica mineral chips that cover the sheets, which inhibits them from sticking together. When the mica chips shimmer in the light, it is reminiscent of the sun striking snow crystals on the glacier.

Petroleum has been used by the artist in a previous work titled **14th July 2012**, 2012-13 which explores the concept of fear through the stimulus of smell. In **No one knows where or when** Coelho revisits this concept through the use of petroleum residues in the bitumen felt; which is paradoxically a flammable material. The looming mass of suspended felt attempts to construct the visible and emotional void encountered by soldiers on the glacier and questions if fear is discrete or dimensional.

- Davide Allison



Installation view



Installation details



537, 2007

Installation with 537 white gauze bandages

Approximate installation dimensions:

L 85 X B 110 X H 21 centimetres

537 is an entreaty for peace, a call to end the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan, who have been fighting for control over the Siachen Glacier for the last several decades. Coelho has used gauze fabric as a metaphor for the care, protection and healing of the many lives lost during the conflict. The white bandages, which have been rolled and assembled together, add up to a total length of one mile and represent the Siachen Glacier, which is 47 miles long. This was the first artwork created for the Siachen Glacier Project and has continued to inspire the development of new works.

- Davide Allison



Installation view



Installation views and detail

“Beneath it all... I am human...”, 2009

Audio/video running time:

11 minutes 5 seconds loop

Audio/video extract:

<https://vimeo.com/69136182>

Complete audio/video:

<https://vimeo.com/69135736>

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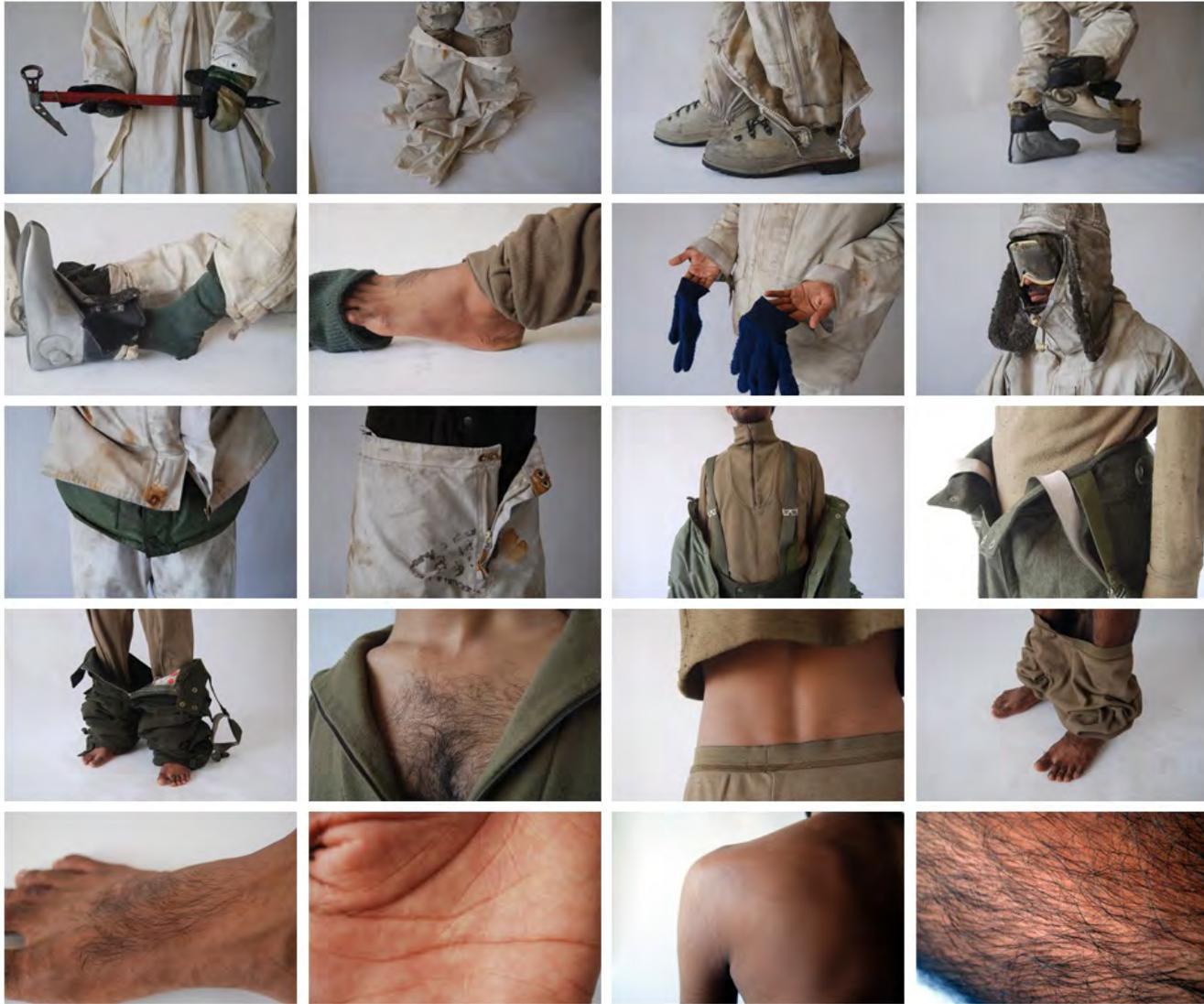
“Beneath it all... I am human...” explores the notion that what is concealed is often revealed. This video depicts a Siachen soldier’s clothing being systematically and mysteriously removed to reveal the nature and physical body of a man. This act reminds us that beneath the protective fabric there exists the vulnerable inner-layer of the human body and psyche.

The meticulous unzipping and unbuttoning is reminiscent of the laborious task that the soldiers endure daily, in a climate where the brutal weather conditions are often life-threatening. In conclusion of this undressing, detail of the soldier’s body is exposed which appears to liberate him from the conflict and his identity as a soldier. These contrasts are not without peril: as an exposed body would soon perish in the cold.

- Davide Allison



View



DVD stills

"If it would only end...", 2009

Audio/video running time:

3 minutes 50 seconds loop

Audio/video extract:

<https://vimeo.com/69134925>

Complete audio/video:

<https://vimeo.com/69134778>

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The struggle over the ownership of the Siachen Glacier, between India and Pakistan, continues to this day. The video **"If it would only end..."** explores the past 25 years of this war through the fabric and goods that the soldiers have worn and consumed, as well as how these commodities have affected them. In the video, personal possessions that reflect life on the glacier appear to mysteriously move in a controlled formation. The saga persists and the constant accumulation appears to be without end. Nevertheless, the work raises hope that somehow, there might one day be an end to this conflict.
- Davide Allison



View



DVD stills

"I'm not sure if I will return...", 2009

Digital print on archival paper

Print dimension: L 32.25 X B 43 inches

Archival Paper: Epson Premium Semi
Matt, 260 gsm

Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 11880

In the life of every fearless soldier there comes a time when he faces the uncertainties regarding his own life. **"I'm not sure if I will return..."** reflects on a soldier's thoughts concerning the return to his family. The construction material used in the fabrication of the army shelter is in stark contrast to the hand which appears from a small window. Doubts about survival can weaken a soldier's resolve to continue the fight and yet at times the thought of family gives him hope and strength to survive; to move past fear itself and accomplish heroic acts.

- *Davide Allison*



View



© Baptist Coelho

Digital print

“Altitude Sickness, Frostbite, Chilblains, Arterial Hypertension, Deep Vein Thrombosis, Snow-blindness, Hypothermia, High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema, High Altitude Cerebral Oedema...”, 2009

Digital print on archival paper

Print dimension: L 32.25 X B 43 inches

Archival Paper: Epson Premium Semi Matt, 260 gsm

Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 11880

Altitude Sickness, Frostbite, Chilblains, Arterial Hypertension, Deep Vein Thrombosis, Snow-blindness, Hypothermia, High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema, High Altitude Cerebral Oedema... refers to the fatal illnesses that might befall soldiers during their posting on the Siachen Glacier. These illnesses contrast sharply with the bandages which have been abandoned in the snow. The discarded white fabric is camouflaged against the harsh reality of the cold and unforgiving environment. This work reflects on the casualties of conflict and how the memory of a soldier's pain are easily forgotten.

- Davide Allison



View



Digital print

(un)identified #2, 2009

Digital print on archival paper

Print dimension: L 32.25 X B 43 inches

Archival Paper: Epson Premium Semi
Matt, 260 gsm

Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 11880

(un)identified #2 is part of a multi-disciplinary series which focuses on personal objects and protective fabric which have been abandoned during war and have often mysteriously resurfaced on the hostile terrain of the Siachen Glacier. The stories relating directly to these objects have been lost, but what remains is a ghostly reminder of the warfare that so many soldiers have endured. The cropping of this image allows the viewer to question the outcome of these objects or complete the story of what has transpired.

- *Davide Allison*



View

© Baptist Coelho



Digital print

Press

Stawa

Reach Ladakh

Elle Decor



■ Rinchen Dolkar holds a postgraduate degree from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and is currently associated with the NGO, Student's Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh

Artist Baptist Coelho's exhibition 'thread by thread' has been on display at the LAMO Centre in Leh since 1 May 2015. The exhibition touches on various aspects of the lives of soldiers posted on the border, especially on the Siachen Glacier. The exhibition is a unique display of unseen connections between the lives of Ladakhis, their families and soldiers in the army.

My brother is in the army and was once posted on the Glacier. I did not know anything about the challenges he faced during this posting. The exhibition was thus a very personal journey for me to understand his experiences and that of countless soldiers like him.

The artist's use of fabric as well as different materials allows a unique peek into the private lives of soldiers, their feelings and emotions. The use of different media—objects, audio-visuals, photographs—also goes beyond the conventional idea of art being wood carvings, stone sculptures, and paintings. It's refreshing to see an artist use everyday items from the lives of soldiers, including threads and clothes that he has imaginatively stitched together to compose unique installation pieces. In this regard, 'thread by thread' is a welcome trend of modern art exhibitions in Ladakh.

The exhibited artefacts, especially the photographs, seem to be carefully chosen to give a sense of the pressure and the daily physical and mental stress experienced by soldiers. The use of sleeping bags



and the audio recordings provide an intimate connection between the viewer and the soldiers, while the parachute made with inners used by soldiers fuses the basic human need for warmth and the will to survive.

Another exhibit is about crevasses that are held together by thin, almost invisible threads, which capture the unseen and unknown factors that impact a person's life. At the same time, it also depicts how people are connected with each other, with the connecting threads supporting and holding together the lives and well being of each person.

The exhibition is a powerful expression of the human face of soldiers, which makes them more accessible to civilians. The artist makes interesting use of different media to confront us with the experience and understanding of the lives of other people, which challenges our preconceived experiences of soldiers as cold, heartless men.

In addition, the exhibition also helps expand the idea of art in Ladakh. While there is a rich tradition of art and culture in Ladakh, this exhibition opens a new space to engage with contemporary experiences in Ladakh. In 2014, LAMO held an exhibition of Ladakhi artists, which underlined the depth of talent in Ladakh. It would be exciting to see how Ladakhi artists use different media to engage with the issues and questions of our everyday lives, like Chimet Dorje did with the lives of *reda-pas* (water suppliers) in 2013. ■



'Thread by Thread' exhibition by Baptist Coelho



Hajira Bano Balkhang

Left: Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO) held an exhibition 'thread by thread' by artist Baptist Coelho and curated by Monisha Ahmed, Executive Director LAMO, on the life of soldiers at Siachen Glacier. Ambassador P. Stobdan was the chief guest on the inaugural function that was held on 1 May and the exhibition will last till June 15.

Through these pictures, the artist Baptist Coelho attempts to reveal and understand conflict and war through observations and conversations that have been

woven into the fabric of the lives of people. Through his photography, Coelho expresses the complexities and politics of war and drew his inspiration from the soldiers posted in the icy terrain at 17000 feet, one of the highest battlefields of the world for three months. His work revealed their challenges being faced by the soldiers.

Baptist has re-appropriated the soldier's clothing and discarded materials associated with the Glaciers to explore untold stories. His works are emblematic of certain themes like humanity, relationship, survival, history,

honour and perseverance.

In his art thread by the 'thread by thread', Coelho uses weaving and stitching to reflect on the soldiers who have joined together to strengthen forces.

'Nowhere but here' consists of thermal shirts that have been stitched together to form the actual size of the canopy of an army supply parachute, symbolizing solidarity among the soldiers.

'Ribbon I' depicts six individual bars made of various clothing worn on the glacier. The patchwork of the fabric was inspired by actual awards given to a soldier.

'Dream speech' consist of five sleeping bags each with an audio track that intimately narrates the dreams of four soldiers and an officer; expressing their anxiety and vulnerability while sleeping in an army shelter.

'Attempts to contain' is the study of how the mental state affects the body in the absence of clothing.

'No one knows where or when' refers to the fear of the unknown crevasses found on the icy terrain.

Baptist Coelho received his Masters from Birmingham Institute of Art and Design- BIAD, UK (2006). He has received various awards and exhibited internationally in the museum, galler-

ies and film screening. Coelho has participated in various artist residencies; as well as conducted workshops, artist talks and panel discussion in Asia, Europe and South Africa.

During the event, a panel discussion was held between Ambassador P. Stobdan, Monisha Ahmed, Baptist Coelho, Tsewang Rigzin, Councillor Khardong and Porter Stanzin Letak.

During the discussion, former Ambassador P. Stobdan said that through the pictures of Baptist he has understood the human aspect of war. His pictures re-

fleet the inner struggle and the emotional conflict a soldier goes through his tenure. He further talked about the importance of recognizing the role of the porters at Siachen glacier and the nomads of Changthang area. "The people of Changthang have been the real guardians of our borders, they have been patrolling that area. Since last six months, 17 square kilometer of land has been captured by the Chinese troupe in the Demjok area. If the government does not take the necessary steps then we might lose it permanently", he said.

Tsewang Rigzin said that most of the youth of khardong become porter that has a great impact on the traditional agricultural system as youth do not take an interest in agriculture. "I fear if the troops are withdrawn from glaciers, lots of youth will become jobless. Army is linked with the sustainability of Nubra.

Baptist Coelho expressed his inspiration behind choosing the life of soldiers for this exhibition.

Porter Stanzin also shared his experiences as a porter since last seven years.

D. D. Enterprises

PHILIPS

For details contact M.C. Complex- Balkhang Chowk
Main Bazar Leh Ladakh. Mob: 09622957240, 9622985566

PDF link: http://baptistcoelho.com/download_files/52A_BCoelho_ReachLadakh_2015.pdf

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'Three Artists to follow', Elle Decor (India, Aug-Sept 2015)



THREE ARTISTS TO FOLLOW

1. Fabien Charuau
The photographer's solo show consists of three different projects: A Thousand Kisses Deep, Being Seen Trying and Send Some Candid; all part of his experiment to reveal that images carry a spiritual charge. *When Aug 13-20 Sept, 2015*
Where Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai Website www.fabiencharuau.com

2. Freddy Birdy
His American Icon series of paintings are a visual commentary on the Western nation's celebrity culture that rules the world thanks to rampant social media explosion.
Email freddybirdy@gmail.com

3. Baptist Coelho
Held at Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO) earlier this year, his showcase Thread by Thread was about the Siachen Glacier conflict. In 2017, he plans to continue research with a focus on Siachen Porters, people from the Nubra Valley in Ladakh. *Website www.baptistcoelho.com*

1. "Being Seen Trying", a room-sized video installation 2. "The only thing that stands between you and total happiness is reality" painting 3. View of "The Rose I" made of white gauze bandages, MDF plywood and synthetic resin adhesive

STOP AND STARE

3

105

PDF link: http://baptistcoelho.com/download_files/62_BCoelho_ElleDecor_2015.pdf

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Exhibition Views



Artworks Left to Right: (un)identified #2, No one knows where or when, "I'm not sure if I will return..."

Space 1



Artwork: **Ribbons I**

Space 1



Artworks Left to Right: **Attempts to contain, Dream Speech**

Space 2



Artworks Left to Right: **Attempts to contain**, **Dream Speech**

Space 2



Artwork: **“Beneath it all... I am human...”**

Passageway between spaces 2 & 3



Artwork: "If it would only end..."

Ladakhi kitchen



Artwork: 537

Passageway between spaces 2 & 3



Artwork: “**Altitude Sickness, Frostbite, Chilblains, Arterial Hypertension, Deep Vein Thrombosis, Snow-blindness, Hypothermia, High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema, High Altitude Cerebral Oedema...**”

Passageway between spaces 2 & 3



Artwork: **The Rose I**

Space 3



Artwork: **Nowhere but here**

Library (ground floor)



Artwork: **Nowhere but here**

Library (first floor)

Panel Discussion

Topic:

Border stories and the role of fabric

Panellists:

Phuntsog Stobdan (*Former Indian Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan*)

Tsewang Rigzin (*Journalist and former Councillor of LAHDC*)

Stanzin Nyetak (*Thangka painter and former Siachen porter*)

Baptist Coelho (*Visual Artist*)

Moderator:

Monisha Ahmed (*Anthropologist and co-founder of LAMO*)



Panel discussion



Panel discussion

Parachute Project

Parachute Project

Interactive workshop with 10 children of Druk Padma Karpo School, Shey; 10 children of Islamia Public School, Leh, 10 children of Lamdon Model School, Leh & 3 children of Moravian Mission School, Leh, 2015

Facilitator: Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation, LAMO

The **Parachute Project** is an interactive workshop developed to encourage children to create and collaborate while recycling found objects. This workshop is inspired by Baptist Coelho's work entitled, **Nowhere but here**, 2015, which is a large abandoned military supply parachute. This soft sculptural work is fabricated from soldiers' thermal shirts and pants, which are stitched together to form the canopy of the parachute.

As part of the workshop, children use old clothes which they bring from home. These garments are then cut and machined stitched to form the canopies of miniature parachutes. Each child also attaches to their parachutes a personal message which is written to someone who would eventually receive the descending parachute. The notion of random messages is often explored by the artist within his practice. The construction of these small parachutes encourage children to delve into ideas about creative play, which is a universal symbol for children to interact and interact.



Children with their completed parachutes



Children constructing their parachutes



Children constructing their parachutes



Completed parachutes



Details of completed parachutes

Through this i am sending a message to his holiness. We are here everyday praying for your long life and may Tibet get freed from Chinese invasion soon.

Army Officer of India;
Dearest Pakistan officer,
we are neighbour each other. I want to say that we Indian are ready to live the glacier. Please live the glacier and its is for India and Pakistan only.

Dear,
Army of India and Pakistan
My name is Rigzin Angmo we are a neighbours we don't have to fight with each other for sinchen glacier. and in fight their will be dead of many people so my's that don't fight.
message

Dear sister.
How are you, I hope ur fine
Do you know about my friends where are they. Are they good.
~~Message~~ All the family members are good. Are they missing me. (cry)

Messages by children

Exhibition Walkthroughs



Exhibition walkthrough with general public



Exhibition walkthrough with general public



Exhibition walkthrough with school children



Exhibition walkthrough with school children



Exhibition walkthrough with school children



Exhibition walkthrough with school children

Exhibition Preview



Exhibition preview



Exhibition preview



Exhibition preview

About

Baptist Coelho

Monisha Ahmed

LAMO

Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan

Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation

Project 88

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, 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, Europe and South Africa. The artist lives and works in Mumbai, India. www.baptistcoelho.com

Monisha Ahmed is an independent researcher whose work focuses on art practices and material culture in Ladakh. Her doctoral degree from Oxford University developed into the book *Living fabric - Weaving among the Nomads of Ladakh Himalaya* (Orchid Press 2002), which received the Textile Society of America's R L Shep Award in 2003. She has published several articles on textile arts of the Western Himalayan World, including four in *The Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion* (Berg Publishers, Oxford, 2010). She has also written on textiles in other areas of India including a chapter on textiles for *The Arts and Interiors of Rashtrapati Bhavan – Lutyens and Beyond* (Rashtrapati Bhavan 2016). She co-edited *Ladakh – Culture at the Crossroads* (Marg Publications 2005). More recently she was advisor for the Bhau Daji Lad Museum's online exhibit *We wear Culture* for the Google Cultural Institute. Formerly Associate Editor of Marg, she is co-founder and Executive Director of the Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO).

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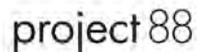
Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO) is a public charitable trust established to articulate an alternative vision for the arts and media in Ladakh. The LAMO Centre was set up in two historical houses in Old Town Leh that were restored and are today some of the best remaining examples of domestic vernacular architecture of the 17th century. The Centre is designed to conduct outreach programs, lectures, film screenings, research and documentation projects, workshops and exhibitions that showcase Ladakh's material and visual culture, performing arts and literature. For more information: www.lamo.org.in



The **Goethe-Institut** is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. We promote knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive picture of Germany by providing information on Germany's cultural, social and political life. Through our network of Goethe-Institutes, Goethe Centres, cultural societies and reading rooms, alongside our examination and language learning centres, we perform the principal tasks of cultural and educational policy abroad. We work in partnership with public and private cultural bodies, the German federal states and municipalities, and the corporate sector. For more information: <http://www.goethe.de/ins/in/en/lp.html>



The **Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation** was previously called The Inlaks Foundation and was created by Mr. Indoo Shivdasani in 1976 and registered as a Charitable Trust in Liechtenstein in the same year. The Foundation was created to incorporate the existing philanthropic work of the founder, and to provide a permanent independent body for the expansion of these activities. The major objective of the Foundation is to identify exceptionally talented young Indian students and support them financially to develop their special skill and talents to the maximum. Over the last three decades, more than 350 scholars have benefited from these scholarships. For more information: <http://www.inlaksfoundation.org/default.aspx>



Project 88 inhabits 4000 square feet of what was formerly a century old metal printing press in Colaba, Mumbai, with a roster of some of the most thoughtful and exciting artists working in the Indian subcontinent today. From its inception in 2006 and under the adventurous directorship of Sree Goswami, Project 88 has developed a context for the exhibition of experimental and ambitious work in all media by artists whose practice have strong conceptual foundations. For more information: <http://www.project88.in/index.php>

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Leh Palace (17th century)



View from Leh Polo Ground

Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO)



Top view of LAMO, overlooking the city of Leh



Entrance to LAMO