

URBAN

**10 ML OF CONTEMPORARY
NEEDED!**

10

"The power of a text is different when it is read from when it is copied out. Only the copied text thus commands the soul of him who is occupied with it..... because the reader follows the movement of his mind in the free flight of day-dreaming, whereas the copier submits it to command." - Walter Benjamin

The 'visual fables' generated by Abhishek Hazra through weaving together fictitious narratives, foregrounds the use of text, in the form of short commentaries interspersed with abstracted computer generated graphics. In the *ebayday-Communist Manifesto*, the text is both the identity of the 'anonymous author who is steadfast in his communist beliefs' and the object of art itself. The work's original domain on the world-wide-web, I imagine, would have constructed a different meta-narrative from what is being formulated here in the gallery space. In *Dweposit* Abhishek employs the deconstructivist reading of the text, and looks for the rupture in language at the points when the text begins to contradict itself. The contradiction is more definite, reference more direct and language more pronounced in Baptist Coelho's *HOW TO BE YOUR SELF*, as he draws parallels from Candace Simpson-Gile's book "How to be a Lady". The "copying" of the text happens as he engages with the women who recite the text. With the same ease he borrows/copies from the narrative of *Draupadi's Cheera-Hara*, in Mahabharat, to generate his critical narrative on the patriarchal society in *Chapter 02: You Get Dressed*. The text becomes that medium that allows him to traverse through and across the local and global. The text and the narrative become most pertinent in the work of Lavanya Mani as she builds a compelling colonial critique, drawing references for her images from history books and colonial records. Through the act of weaving a parallel and fragmented narrative she dissects the 'grand narrative'. In her titling of the works like *Madder Route* one sees how she uses the text for its essential linguist form as she plays with words – 'social fabric', 'route-root' and 'weaving a story'. The narrative reads more like a map, through which the traveler can choose to journey, taking any "route" he/she desires.

Employing the Metaphor

The other pervasive element in the works of these artists is

Artist **A** here uses the communist manifesto as commodity for sale on eBay. "The main armature of the work was based on a 'classic' deconstructive reading of the text. I attempted to locate those precise points where the text begins to contradict itself," says **A**, about the work. **A** conjures with a logocentric (in a modernist sense) contention an imaginary character who is an ardent communist and is putting the manifesto for auction anonymously, tunes a paradox of orderly-disorder in both the structure and the content of the work.

B speaks about the works "Many of us live out our defining stories without being able to articulate them. This notion has been the driving force for myself: to conjure meaning out of raw experience and highlight the unspoken stories which need to be heard in our society. My performances, installations, videos and photographs contend with time and history, with memory, place, culture and gender."

For artist **B** the compulsion is to transgress the predecessor's bequeath and ultimate bemusement during the process of production by the access to enormous economic, societal and cultural prerogatives. This in turn has let into a form, which speaks about repetitive statements, those that are not so new anymore to the culturally elite. This at the same time possesses a potential of impossibility of formal closure.

It is for artist **C**, it is about the memory and baggage of convention and an effort to absorb and overcome it, in order to parade with the present and expose a humane vulnerability. This might well be the humility to accept limitations paired with a desperate compromise for accentuation.

C talks somewhere, on realisations about art and life as "There are so many situations when one can't be true self. Even if I wish to tell you something I'll have to do the 'do to a person as if you were in his place' act."

▶ No. 23

Abhishek Hazra	▶ 01
Baptist Coelho	▶ 02
Chinmoy Pramanick	▶ 03
Dilip Chobisa	▶ 04
Lavanya Mani	▶ 05
Rajesh Ram	▶ 06
Reji Arackal	▶ 07
Sakshi Gupta	▶ 08
Sisir Thapa	▶ 09
Veel Prakash Gupta	▶ 10



HOW TO BE YOURSELF

(Chapter 02 - You Get Dressed, 2008)

Installation with cotton fabric (dimensions: L 354 meters X B 13 inches),
emulsion paint, iron spool, leather apron and audio/video

2 channel audio/video running time: 5 minutes 33 seconds loop each

Dimensions variable

Ed 1/3

Baptist Coelho

b.1977

Education

Master of Arts (MA), Birmingham Institute of Art & Design (BIAD) at University of Central England in Birmingham, UK, 2006
Photography, L. S. Raheja School of Art, Bandra, Mumbai, 2001
Applied Art, L. S. Raheja School of Art, Worli, Mumbai, 1997

Exhibitions

Click! Contemporary Photography in India, curated by Sunil Gupta and Radhika Singh (travelling exhibition):
Vadehra Art Gallery, Delhi and Grosvenor Vadehra Gallery, London, 2008
Urban Changes, curated by Andrea Kuenzиг (travelling exhibition): Pune, Delhi, Karachi, Bangalore, Hyderabad,
Chennai, Kolkata and Dhaka. (forthcoming)
Urban Changes, curated by Andrea Kuenzиг (travelling exhibition): Mumbai, 2007
Autoportraits - Queering The Lens, The Attic, Delhi. Curated by Sunil Gupta, 2007
The Peace Project, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Colorado. Curated by Judy Hussie, 2007
air(ed)geair (solo show), BIAD Gallery, UK, 2006

Awards, Grants & Workshops

Promising Artist Award by ART India and the Visual Arts Gallery (India Habitat Centre), India, 2007
Grant for 60x60 Secs by Motiroi, London, 2007
Looking at a Place Video Editing Workshop conducted by Sharmila Samant of Open Circle, Mumbai, 2007
Urban Changes Photography Workshop conducted by Andrea Kuenzиг for Goethe-Institut, Mumbai
Johnson Prize Fund by BIAD, UK, 2006

Baptist also has several ongoing photography projects and community art projects.

Baptist lives and works in Mumbai, India.

Workshop Series	—
Baptist Coelho	—
Chapters	—
01 - Chapter 01	—
02 - Chapter 02	—
03 - Chapter 03	—
04 - Chapter 04	—
05 - Chapter 05	—
06 - Chapter 06	—
07 - Chapter 07	—
08 - Chapter 08	—
09 - Chapter 09	—
10 - Chapter 10	—
11 - Chapter 11	—
12 - Chapter 12	—
13 - Chapter 13	—
14 - Chapter 14	—
15 - Chapter 15	—
16 - Chapter 16	—
17 - Chapter 17	—
18 - Chapter 18	—
19 - Chapter 19	—
20 - Chapter 20	—
21 - Chapter 21	—
22 - Chapter 22	—
23 - Chapter 23	—
24 - Chapter 24	—
25 - Chapter 25	—
26 - Chapter 26	—
27 - Chapter 27	—
28 - Chapter 28	—
29 - Chapter 29	—
30 - Chapter 30	—
31 - Chapter 31	—
32 - Chapter 32	—
33 - Chapter 33	—
34 - Chapter 34	—
35 - Chapter 35	—
36 - Chapter 36	—
37 - Chapter 37	—
38 - Chapter 38	—
39 - Chapter 39	—
40 - Chapter 40	—
41 - Chapter 41	—
42 - Chapter 42	—
43 - Chapter 43	—
44 - Chapter 44	—
45 - Chapter 45	—
46 - Chapter 46	—
47 - Chapter 47	—
48 - Chapter 48	—
49 - Chapter 49	—
50 - Chapter 50	—