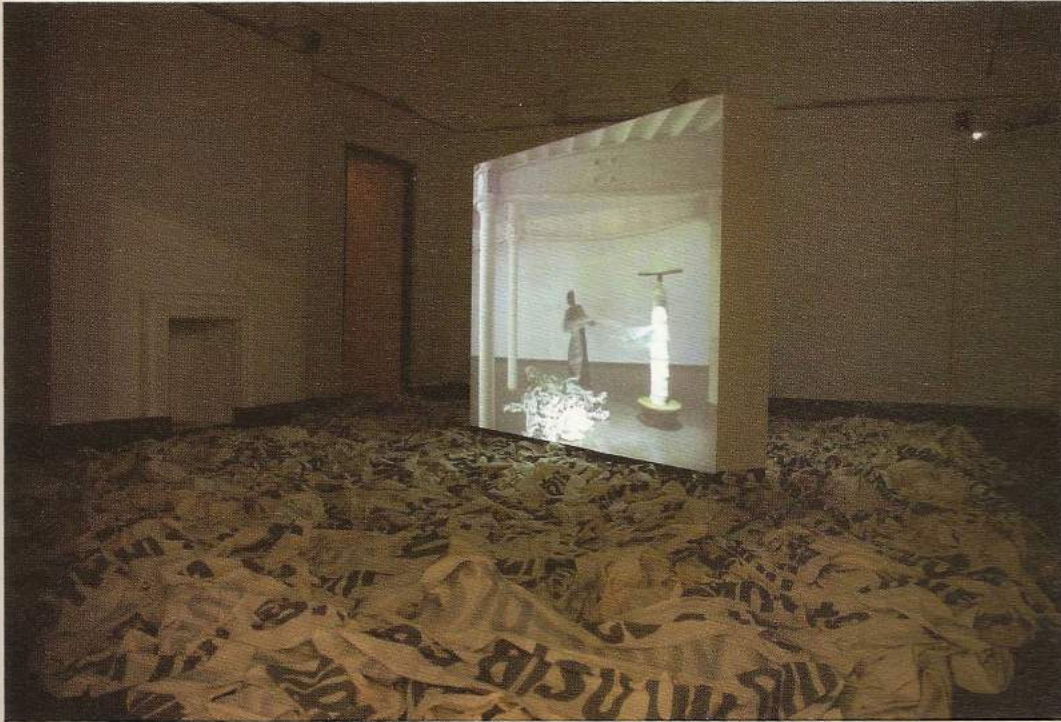


**EMERGING
ASIAN ARTISTS**

Artist: Baptist Coelho
How to be yourself
(Chapter 02—You Get Dressed, 2008), 2008
2 channel video installation
Each: 5 min 33 sec loop
Dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist



Photography may be a scientific and testimonial tool for providing evidence of the real, but it cannot portray life and death more aesthetically than painting. If the painting *The Dear of Marat* (1793) by Jaques-Louis David were produced as a photograph, viewers would not be moved as deeply and emotionally as they are today. There is a big difference between evidence-based realism and aesthetic realism, and the difference is not based on value or quality but on the purpose to which they are put.

Mathew Brady, the American Civil War photographer, known for his photographers of Lincoln, once said that “the camera is the eye of history.” He presented Gettysburg in photographs with dramatically staged scenes of the War and used photographs to secure political legitimacy. Viewers of his photographs are fascinated by the truthfulness of the images and rarely think that the scenes could have been staged. Susan Sontag points out that photo images whose truthfulness is in doubt were made from the very beginning of the history of photography, and this was particularly so in the case of war photographs.⁵ Thus the Utopian thinking that attributes truthfulness

5 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003), p.53.

language of power, struggle and triumph." The artist attributes political statements to the contemporary discord of human experiences in various regions through the flow of images and news through the media. Referring to painting as the most constructive way to engage with and respond to society, Jalaja's works stress on global issues of race, culture, ethnicity and discrimination in dramatic compositions.

Jitish Kallat, based in Mumbai, says that he finds Nicholas Bourriaud's description of the artist as a "semionaut", making connections in this world of proliferating signs, a rather useful way to describe his processes. Kallat's montage of artworks, range from paintings and photography to large scale sculptures and installations. The theme of morality and survival of the individual are embedded in his works which draw inspiration from personal experiences, flickering television screens, popular culture, mass-media and the large billboards around the city. Within Kallat's *Public Notice* series, historical speeches from crucial events are the centre of the work. The first *Public Notice* comprise of India's first Prime Minister - Jawaharlal Nehru - on the midnight of India's independence. While reading this text, the viewer is faced with a warped image of themselves in the background of the words on a melted mirror's surface. *Public Notice-2* is so huge that it dwarfs the viewer with its rows of bone-shaped alphabets resembling "discarded relics". Together, these words form Gandhi's speech on the eve of the historical *Dandi March* held for complete *Civil Disobedience*, through peace and non-violence. *Public Notice -3*, which the artist is currently working on is a speech on anti fanaticism and fundamentalism, by an Indian spiritual leader and reformer - Swami Vivekananda - delivered on 9/11 1893, exactly 108 years before the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. Terror, weapons, security threats have become a universal global fear. The subject of terrorism has become a very sensitive issue not only in the Middle - East, but also in Pakistan and India.

A twenty-five year long conflict between India and Pakistan on the highest battlefield in the world (Siachen) is translated through **Baptist Coelho's** photographs to symbolise family bonds, patriotic soldiers pining for peace, daily objects, struggle for life, issues of identity and motives for survival. There is a loss of personal identity to achieve a national one. Coelho's photograph *If only I could see my children...* conveys the most powerful bond of a soldier's willingness to survive their term in Siachen. Survival doubts are battled with the only motive of hope and survival - family. His art is grounded in the reality of experiences and though they are the artists', the audience is not alienated from them. Coelho's works can be viewed as art outside politics, in a context of the humane.

Driven by contemporary political issues around the world, **Riyas Komu** expresses his concerns through a repertoire of paintings, sculpture, photography and installations.

BAPTIST COELHO

b. 1977 (India)
lives and works in Mumbai, India

Baptist Coelho holds a Diploma in Applied Art and a certificate for Photography from L.S. Raheja School of Art in Mumbai, India. He completed his MA from Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, UK.

Select Solo Exhibitions

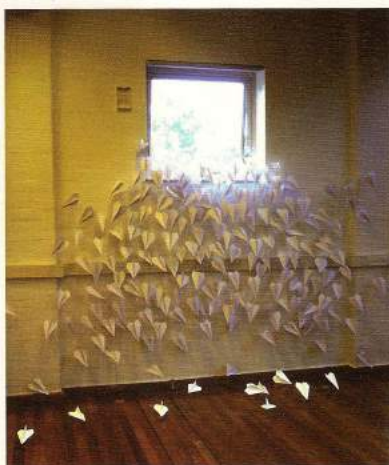
2009
Mapping(Thoughts) Grand Palais, Bern, Switzerland
You can't afford to have emotions out there...(Part I), The Visual Arts Gallery, Delhi
You can't afford to have emotions out there...(Part II), Project 88, Mumbai

2006
air(edge)air BIAD Gallery, UK

Select Group Exhibitions

2010
The Flower of May, Gwangju Museum of Art and Kuntshalle Gwangju, South Korea

2009
Lo Real Maravilloso: Marvelous Reality, Lalit Kala Akademi by Gallery Espace, Delhi, Curator: Sunil Mehra
Living off the Grid, Anant Art, Noida, Curator: Meera Menezes
Re-visioning Materiality-II, Gallery Espace, Delhi
Immersion - The White Cube Project, Anant Art, Delhi
Saturday Is Cleaning Day, The Loft, Mumbai



Re (Wind), 2006
Site-specific installation
with paper airplanes, metal
wire and adhesive tape
Variable
courtesy the artist



Air(Travel), 2010, South Korea – Gwangju
140 glass bottles with metal & plastic lids
containing leaves, various objects and air
along with notes on paper, 182 X 609 X
360, courtesy the artist



We waited for days, but no sign of hope...
2009, 240 x 240 x 84
courtesy of the artist

How to be your self
(Chapter 02 - You Get Dressed, 2008)
courtesy of the artist

