

pumphousegallery

Exhibition Guide for:

Social States

Baptist Coelho & Nadia Kaabi-Linke

15 March - 20 May 2012

In Partnership with:

Delfina Foundation and Creative India Foundation

For this exhibition **Social States**, Delfina Foundation and the Pump House Gallery, in partnership with The Creative India Foundation, invited two artists to London to develop new artworks. Although every artistic practice and every artwork aims to display a unique and original insight into society, they are always bound together through a shared commitment to achieve this result. In this sense understanding what is shared between artists can offer insights into their artwork whilst at the same time helping to recognise and reconcile the differences they expose.

Nadia Kaabi-Linke and Baptist Coelho arrived in London in October 2011. Both artists had been selected for residencies of three months with Delfina Foundation based upon having established artistic practices that can be described as socially engaged, or participatory. The artists displayed an exceptional history of making artworks in response to their surroundings, engaging the public in the processes of making their artwork as well as creating physical relationships with the public through their use of specific locations and the methods of their artwork's exhibition. The works made by each artist exhibited here at the Pump House Gallery can be observed in a variety of different ways. From the perspective of the shared experiences of the artists, or the shared situations of the gallery space and Delfina Foundation; to the different forms of social engagement both artist has explored with the public, and the alternative experiences, journeys and collaborations each artist has generated in creating their artwork. What has transpired over this period of time has been a continuous arrangement of identifying social conflicts, interactions and resolutions. Amongst the

wide variety of differing responses Coelho's and Kaabi-Linke's artwork will undoubtedly generate there is also an opportunity to recognise the shared social situations that define our relationships with society and how it is portrayed historically.

The title of the exhibition is therefore one that deliberately sits open to interpretation. **Social States** can imply a personal, individual and psychological relationship. It can be associated with the many different states a single individual can occupy, historically, mentally, physically. It also alludes to forms of state apparatus, forms of governance and ideology. The large all encompassing systems and institutions of which we are a part, that define our social consciousness, and with which we can take issue, struggle against and overturn. The social state of the artist is exceptional in how it can collaborate with groups and individuals to reinterpret deeply personal experiences, whilst challenging the imposed systems and methods of their interpretation. Throughout this exhibition both Baptist Coelho and Nadia Kaabi-Linke continuously move us from personal perceptions or experiences to the contradictions and antagonisms of a larger societal and historical situation. **Baptist Coelho** has achieved this through an exploration of the public's perception of the military, the soldier, and the recording of historical events. Coelho has utilised performative actions at specific sites in Battersea Park to explore the individual conditions of being a soldier whilst at the same time exploring the conditions that surround a soldier's loss of autonomy and their perception as a representation of state ideology, security and force. **Nadia Kaabi-Linke**, during her time in residency with the Delfina

Foundation, has collaborated with people who have experienced domestic violence. Working intimately and sensitively with their individual experiences, Kaabi-Linke's artwork presents a collective societal failure; a deep, socially complex, and often imperceptible, form of conflict. Both artists make work that confronts the psychology of experience, of violence and of reconciliation and healing over time. In doing so these artworks move us between different interpretations of varied and overlapping social states. Between the public and the individual, between personal relationships and their rendering in history.



Baptist Coelho, *Stand at ease*, 2011-12,
detail of installation consisting of photograph and leather boots

On the ground floor of the Pump House Gallery **Baptist Coelho** has installed the artwork ***Eight Pauses***. Comprising of eight photographs

and a video, *Eight Pauses* is the outcome of a series of performative actions Coelho conducted in Battersea Park. Coelho began researching the history of Battersea Park at the start of his residency at Delfina Foundation, with the generous support of The Creative India Foundation, and soon began to explore the park's historical significance during the Second World War. *Eight Pauses*, as well as Coelho's other artworks produced during his residency, continue his interest in the nature and identity of the soldier. This theme has been prevalent in Coelho's practice since his 2009 project *You can't afford to have emotions out there...* conducted in the area of the Siachen Glacier in India, one of the most remote battlegrounds in the world. For *Eight Pauses* Coelho worked in the locality of the Pump House Gallery to locate the sites where bombs fell during the war. Dressed in military uniform, and camouflaged amid the greenery of Battersea Park, Coelho is seen in the "Stand at Ease" pose at each of these sites. Passers-by who spotted him were encouraged to record their thoughts upon witnessing his presence in the park. Displaying both the written thoughts of passers-by alongside photo-documentation of himself in the park Coelho introduces unique perceptions of the soldier, drawing out the contradictions that occur in their identification. Both familiar, offering security, and often invisible to the public, the soldier is also at the same time impersonal and indicative of massive potential force and violence. Coelho creates an alternative historical connection to these sites of extreme violence and destruction. By tying together these once random locations *Eight Pauses* offers a moment to contemplate the contradictions that surround the presence of a soldier and poses questions concerning the apparent randomness of military events and their

historical representation.

Alternative portrayals of the soldier and the history of violent military events are visible throughout Coelho's works and installations over three floors of the Pump House Gallery. On the top floor of the gallery sits the lone artwork, *Stand at ease* whilst on the first floor two of Coelho's artworks have been installed. ***Display #1 (Battersea Park, London)***, the outcome of another series of performative actions, and ***I thought I had forgotten about it...***, the performative actions that comprise *Display #1 (Battersea Park, London)* took place inside the Pump House Gallery. Visitors were invited into a quiet, private environment where Coelho, again dressed as a soldier, and impersonating a soldier's movements, would wash the feet of each visitor. Alongside the objects and ephemera associated with the washing process, such as the water, the towels, the enamel basin and the soap, visitors were invited to write their thoughts as he was washing their feet. Displayed here and mimicking a form of museological display, the combination of objects and media create a historical assortment of different types of information. Full of conflicting personal responses from each of the participants the scenario created by Coelho's performative actions questions the methods and processes through which individual stories and artefacts from historical events are interpreted and presented. The monitor shows a video of swirling water filled with the motion of the soap and the dirt & grime collected by the process of washing people's feet. The apparently random movements of the dirt refers again to the process of historical recollection and its continual disruption and disturbance over time.

This questioning of what is lost or forgotten and what is recorded from personal experiences continues in the artwork *I thought I had forgotten about it...* In discussing and researching the history of London's bombing during the Second World War one specific individual from the Battersea area spoke to Coelho about how he came to terms with the memory of a highly traumatic experience. As a young child the man recalls hiding underneath a table as bombs fell and struck the neighbouring buildings of his family home. The personal memories, the story of the violence and the random fortune of survival, are in stark contrast to the efficient and bureaucratic method of documenting the bombings, as seen in the incident report forms written at the time these events took place. Four of these forms have been kindly loaned to the artist for display in the exhibition and Coelho has applied their style and format to the table-top of the artwork he has created. Using words and sentences on its surface Coelho presents an extract from the traumatic story that was recalled to him. Coelho merges these widely differing formats used to document history, and utilises the object of the memory, the table, to again shift the past into new forms of recollection and recording.

Nadia Kaabi-Linke worked during her residency in London, with the support of Delfina Foundation and Wandsworth Council, to meet and collaborate with victims of domestic violence. Kaabi-Linke's artwork *Impunities* is an ongoing, international art project, an expanding project, with installations of an archive created from her meeting with people from different countries and cities around the world. This installation at the Pump House Gallery forms the first chapter of the

another enters into view. The combined effect is one that highlights the ongoing struggle to address a form of violence that is both difficult to detect and difficult to offer justice and reconciliation to the victims. In society it is often the case that only one surface at a time is visible, a facade that obscures and hides from view the multiple layers and complexities that both comprise its appearance and present it as reality. By reducing these complexities and filtering the information being communicated Kaabi-Linke's archive generates a unified, clear and transparent surface on which to present the most complex social events and experiences. In this state the broader and more profound issues are able to be addressed. In the case of *Impunities* it becomes clear that domestic violence is a global issue, affecting every society and every culture.

The artworks in **Social States** offer a broad platform on which to consider and contemplate individual events and actions. Both artists share social and political inclinations through the manner in which they engage in close interpersonal research and collaborations. As a consequence the artworks made engage psychologically with the unique history of events and provide an identity and a face for their effective representation. In the case of Baptist Coelho this process can be summed up by his artwork *Stand at ease*. Alone at the top of the gallery the artwork presents Coelho's own personal efforts taken to understand the conditions of being a soldier, to the extent of training with former military personnel to best attain an accurate representation of a soldier's movements and physical attitude. Harder to represent through movement and physicality is the anonymous and personal characteristics and identities of each and every individual

soldier. Coelho's understated photograph, placed above a pair of boots that face into the wall, capture this struggle in representation between a person, a soldier and the state. A similar conflict underpins Nadia Kaabi-Linke's *Impunities* in presenting both individual acts of violence whilst demonstrating the hidden societal problems in attaining any justice. In numbering each pane in the installation, the passing of time, both through the continued failure to attain justice and in the reparative processes of healing, creates a latent archive of crimes. By archiving these crimes Kaabi-Linke makes visible the conflicts created by these events and the difficulties in achieving a form of resolution.

Text by George Unsworth, who assisted the artists in realising their exhibition.

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ARTWORKS

Ground floor:

Baptist Coelho

Eight Pauses

2011-12

Installation with 8 photographs on archival paper and video

Single print dimensions: L 25.4 X B 33.8 centimeters

Archival Paper: Hahemühle Photo Rag, 188 gsm, acid-free

Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 11880

Approximate installation dimensions: L 378.3 X B 60 X D 28.5 centimeters

Video running time: 05 minutes 21 seconds loop

First floor:

I thought I had forgotten about it...

2011-2012

Raster engraving on veneered MDF and wooden table

Dimensions: L 183 x B 76 X H 77 centimeters

Display #1 (Battersea Park - London)

2011-12

Installation with 29 glass bottles, water, soapy water, 29 towels, 29 notes on paper, 2 enamel basins, 2 enamel jugs, 1 soap, 1 porcelain saucer, various soldier gear, MDF shelves, metal brackets and video

Approximate installation dimensions: L 254 X B 263 centimeters

Video running time: 07 minutes 04 seconds loop

Incident report forms kindly loaned by Wandsworth Heritage Service

Second floor:

Nadia Kaabi-Linke

Impunities

2012

twenty-six glass panel installation

each panel 22.5 x 16.5 x 1 cm

courtesy the artist and Green Cardamom

Third floor:

Baptist Coelho

Stand at ease

2011-12

Installation with 1 photograph on archival paper and leather boots

Print dimensions: L 24.1 X B 15.4 centimeters

Archival Paper: Hahemühle Photo Rag, 188 gsm, acid-free

Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 11880

Approximate installation dimensions: L 50 X D 35 X H 95 centimeters

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Monthly Do: ***Why am I here?***

Sunday 18 March 2012, 11am – 3pm

Join artist Baptist Coelho in this workshop inspired by one of his artworks in the exhibition 'Social States'. The workshop reverses the usual system of camouflage using participants existing clothing as a starting point, to create a patterned, camouflaged environment around them. The more colours and patterns you turn up in, the more interesting the resulting art work!

FREE ADMISSION, this is a drop in event so booking is not necessary

Visit www.pumphousegallery.org.uk for up-to-date info on events.

The artists in the exhibition would like to thank:

The individuals who have participated in the *Impunities* project

All who participated in Baptist Coelho's research

Diana Campbell of The Creative India Foundation

Aaron Cezar, Miranda Sharp, Sarah Dwider and Irene Lopez Arnaiz of the Delfina Foundation

Laura Eldret, Nick Kaplony, Sinead McCarthy, Egle Vaituleviciute, Ceyln Eberneezer, Helen Renwick and Jack Adams of the Pump House Gallery

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Timo Kaabi-Linke and Mr Thomas Rippe of Glassystem
John Gibbs, Jo Gibbs, George Unsworth, Ruth Mcleod, Gregg Williams, Christopher Simpson, Anna Dorofeeva, Sergio Sardo, Smudger of The Outdoors Green Cardamon, Imperial War Museum, National Army Museum, Science Museum, Wandsworth Museum, Wandsworth Heritage Service

Impunities was made in collaboration with graffhic designer Benji Wiedemann from the A+B studio

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Baptist Coelho (b. 1977, India) frequently merges personal research with collaborations from various cultures, geographies and histories. His work begins to take the form of human-shaped media-landscapes which often contend with history, the environment, conflict, emotion and randomness. As part of his practice, Coelho incorporates installation, video, sound, photography, found objects, site-specific works and public-art projects.

In 2006, Baptist received his Masters of Arts from the Birmingham Institute of Art & Design (BIAD), UK. Solo Exhibitions have included BIAD, Birmingham (2006); Grand Palais, Bern (2009); Visual Arts Gallery, Delhi (2009) and Project 88, Mumbai (2009). His work has been exhibited at galleries and institutions, including Contemporary Art Centre, Lithuania (2011); Zacheta National Art Gallery, Poland (2011); Essl Museum, Austria (2010); Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea (2010) and Devi Art Foundation, India (2008), amongst others. Coelho's videos have been screened at institutions, including MAXXI, Rome (2011); Swiss Architecture Museum, Basel (2011) MAC, Lyon (2011); Reykjavik Art Museum, Iceland (2010); HEART - Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2010); MuVIM, Valencia (2009), amongst others. He has also participated in artist-in-residence programmes, workshops, panel discussions and artist talks in India, South Korea, Thailand, UK, Switzerland and Poland. Coelho was awarded the "Façade Video Award" (2011) by Art Today Association, Bulgaria; "Promising Artist Award" (2007) by Art India and India Habitat Centre, India and "Johnson Prize Fund" (2006) by BIAD, UK. The artist lives and works in Mumbai, India.

Nadia Kaabi-Linke was born in 1978 in Tunis to a Ukrainian mother and Tunisian father. She studied at the University of Fine Arts in Tunis (1999) before receiving a PhD from the Sorbonne University in Paris (2008). Her installations, objects and pictorial works are embedded in urban contexts, intertwined with memory and geographically and politically constructed identities.

She held her first major solo show, Tatort at Galerie Christian Hosp, Berlin in 2010. She has participated in several international group exhibitions that include Drawn from Life, Green Cardamom (2009 – 10) and Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendall, UK (2011); Split, Darb 1718 Contemporary, Cairo (2010); Aftermath, 25th Alexandria Biennale (2009); 9th Sharjah Biennial (2009); Art Connexions: Arab Contemporary Artists (2008) and Archives des banalities tunisoises (2009) both held at Galerie El Marsa, Tunis, the second was a solo show. In 2009 she was awarded the Jury Prize by the Alexandria Biennale. In 2011, she was the recipient of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize and was part of two group shows; Venice Biennial's "The Future of Promise" and Based in Berlin, Kunst-Werke-Berlin , KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. Kaabi-Linke is represented by Galerie Christian Hosp, Berlin and Green Cardamom, London.

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Delfina Foundation is an independent, non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies, partnerships and public programming, with a special focus on international collaborations with the Greater Middle East & North Africa. Delfina Foundation works through a constantly evolving network of partners. This first-ever collaboration with The Creative India Foundation and the Pump House Gallery saw the first Indian artist-in-residence at Delfina Foundation. In 2013, Delfina Foundation will expand into the building next door in Catherine Place SW1, doubling the number of residencies as well as the size of their exhibition space.

The **Creative India Foundation** was founded in August 2010 to promote awareness of Indian art and culture and enhance its appreciation throughout the world. As its first initiative, The Creative India Foundation has undertaken the task of enhancing the presence of Indian sculptors globally. Although India has one of the world's oldest sculptural traditions, opportunities for contemporary public display and exhibitions of outdoor sculpture are limited. The Creative India Foundation has been creating opportunities for Indian sculptors to explore and push their creative horizons internationally as part of residency programs, exhibitions, and sculpture festivals.

The **Pump House Gallery** is a public contemporary visual arts space on the lakeside in Battersea Park, South London. The gallery is owned, managed and funded by Wandsworth Council and plays a leading role in the cultural life of the borough. It is the highest profile public visual arts space in Wandsworth, attracting over 30,000 visitors a year. Collaborative partnerships are central to Pump House Gallery's future curatorial vision: to create opportunities for artists to explore new modes of practice and enquiry, engage with social and civic spaces, extend the cultural experience of audiences and create catalytic sites for exchange, dialogue and debate.

Social States is a collaboration between:



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has been kindly supported by:



www.pumphousegallery.org.uk