

Two hours of toil to have a glass of water? Artist **BAPTIST COELHO** highlights the plight of our soldiers in Siachen through his art project in the city, reports **RIDDHI DOSHI**

Reality in SIACHEN

It would be very hard for people living in a metropolis, or any hospitable part of the country for that matter to even imagine doing this — toiling for almost two hours to get a glass of portable water. But this is a reality that our soldiers in Siachen, a zone that faces temperature of minus 50 degree celsius have to go through almost everyday. Artist Baptist Coelho has captured this and various other nuances of living and surviving in these bone chilling temperature in his art project titled 'You Can't Afford to Have Emotions Out There.'

Talking about the interesting project Coelho says, "It is impossible for a civilian to go there, but I spent considerable time in Ladakh and spoke to many military men as well porters that help the military guys and the others and found out from them that what life in Siachen is all about." He adds, "This area is so sensitive that at one point of time I thought I was being followed by intelligence personnel and that got me more determined to complete the project."

This project includes photographs, videos and also an installation made of various articles available in Siachen, (torn uniforms of Indian soldiers, dung of yaks and others) and will be shown in



Seen here, Coelho's video instalations

Baptist Coelho
"If I could only see..." 2010
Installation - running time: 3 minutes 00 seconds



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Baptist Coelho
Artist

Mumbai at Project 88 from August 5 to 26. Baptist says, "Everything that I learnt



there was like an eye opener. I learnt that most soldiers who stay there for long durations are disillusioned. Most of them claim to have seen a ghost up there. There is definitely no ghost, but the mind plays games on you there because it is a very difficult and a lonely terrain." He adds, "Through my project I have tried to seek answers to questions like, 'why do we subject our soldiers to such atrocities?' 'Why can't we regulate permanent peace and order?' And 'why do we have to subject any human to such hostility?'"

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Seen here (and right) photographs by Coelho

