



eva

2008 - too early for vacation



Allan deSouza

Born in Kenya, based in California, with family ties in Donegal. He received a BA from Bath Academy of Art, and an MFA from UCLA. Solo exhibitions in 2008 include: Talwar Gallery, New York and Delhi; University of Arizona, Tucson. Group shows in 2008 include Gwangju Biennale, and the touring exhibitions *The Emergency Biennale* and *Snap Judgments*. His writings have appeared in numerous catalogues and journals and anthologies. He is an assistant professor at the San Francisco Art Institute. ■ adesouza@sfa.edu



Allan deSouza uses visual jokes and sleight-of-vision to undermine the viewer's easy acceptance of photographic truth. He wants us to look, but also to question what we see or think we see, since what he presents is rarely what it appears to be. His destabilisation of the photograph re-stages the experience of being diasporic, of how we are framed and transformed by culture, and how our bodies and imaginations are marked by those transitions. In his UFO Series, each panel is composed of photographs taken through airplane windows of the runway while the plane is taxiing either before take-off or after landing. On one such flight, a fellow passenger – clearly profiling deSouza as a potential terrorist – tried to stop him photographing, reacting partly because there didn't appear to be anything to photograph – certainly not the scenic or what the tourist would photograph. While that exchange set a political context for deSouza's continued taking of photographs, raising questions of public safety versus individual liberties, as well as what it means for someone brown-skinned like deSouza to be photographing in public spaces, the images themselves would appear to have no such implication. For deSouza, it is the ordinariness of the scenes photographed that forms his subject matter. He takes these moments of overlooked familiarity to return us to fears of what defies immediate explanation. The resultant images appear to be more like missiles, spaceships or insect bodies than what they actually are, though what they are is apparently equally threatening.

— Moi Tsien, March 2008



UFO Series I-VI

2007, photographs, 6 panels, each 150 x 45 cm

(courtesy Talwar Gallery, New York)

City Hall





