

A Decade of Photoworks (1998-2008)



Talwar Gallery

The four series comprising this excellent exhibition – “UFO”, “Lost Pictures”, “Divine” and “Threshold” – pay tribute to ten years worth of work by photographer

Allan deSouza. His peripatetic background (he was born in Kenya to Indian parents, was educated in England and now lives and works in California) and experimental techniques are highlighted in the images on display.

“Threshold” comprises photographs taken in empty airports and bus, railway and metro stations that are devoid of life, people and activity. Rather than capturing them as places of transit and travel, they take on a cold, menacing air of impending danger. The vast sweeping spaces, although beautiful, may be used as sites of terror and destruction. The aspect of travel is also present in “Divine”; these photographs are aerial views of land, water and sky that are joined to their mirror images, creating striking pictures that resemble apparitions of gods and perhaps even demons. The effect is alarming and apocalyptic in tone.

“UFO” uses a similar technique to create figures of what look like missiles or rocket ships ready to take off into space. The individual images, spliced and placed together, are of aeroplane parts, runways and road demarcations, mundane things that are rendered unfamiliar

and hostile to the viewer.

The “Lost Pictures” series, worked on after his mother’s death, is very different and intensely personal. These large-size photographs of his family in Kenya were taken in his home, particularly in places most often used, such as the bathroom and kitchen. They capture the wear and tear of daily life: of tea stains, hair, bodily fluids and food; of places gradually worn away by the pressure of dishes, feet and hands. On display, they take on a ghostly transparency, as though pulled out from another lifetime; faces are sometimes barely recognisable and landscapes blurred, yet the pictures of his mother stand in clear, stark contrast to the others.

A Decade of Photoworks has over 60 photographs on display and provides a comprehensive and insightful look at Allan’s brilliantly innovative work. *JP*
See Exhibitions.