

# The Hindu

## Moving stills!

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**PHOTOGRAPHY** "Escape", British photographer Tim Hall's recent exhibition in New Delhi, used mountains, deserts and coasts as his palette.

**SWATI DAFTUAR**

**T**im Hall believes in the ever-growing need to simplify life and bring it closer to the natural world. All his photographs displayed in the exhibition in New Delhi recently, reflected this connection with nature. Every picture, large and minimalistic, underlined his need to go beyond just the literal image.

Presented by Tasveer Arts, India's only gallery dedicated to photography, "Escape", on till March 9, was an exhibition of Tim Hall's works. An organisation that has been promoting and showcasing contemporary photography, Tasveer Arts has chosen to bring to India the works of Hall, a British Fine Arts photographer with over 20 years of experience. Hall's work is usually conceived as a series, exhibited as a collective body and he has been deeply inspired by painters such as Mark Rotho, 19th Century travellers and more recently, National Geographic photographers.

In the photographs displayed, Hall used mountains, deserts and coasts as his palette, blurring the lines between photography and paintings. The grainy quality to some of the pictures made this blurring much more pronounced. The humans in the pictures, though present, were dwarfed by the hugely magnificent quality of the canvas, with towering mountains and endless waters. This juxtaposition that re-established the primacy of nature over man, was at once humbling and inspiring, making their presence



**ARID BEAUTY** A photograph by Tim Hall.

even more deeply felt.

The idea of using art as a tool for meditation was present in all of Hall's photographs. Each picture was comfortably serene, and the line of the horizon that was so pronounced in some photographs, created a sort of vast stillness, representing nature as something unencumbered and endless.

### Sensual and poetic

Hall's photographs were at once sensual and poetic, as well as abstract. The undulating curves of the landscape, with the sunlight playing a game of shadows, lent the pictures a strangely seductive and haunting quality.

The landscapes of Hall's photographs took on personalities of their own, and the ocean, represented as vast and calm, the mountains as steadfast and ma-

jestic, the dunes as soulful, began to reflect the viewer's own emotions.

Hall believes in the minimalist tradition, stressing the fact that the simpler an image is, the more powerful it can be. He created a sense of balance in his photographs, and usually, each photograph had not more than three elements in it. While he has moved from depicting different cultures and races to shooting the natural environment, and there was a sort of diminishing presence of humans within his frames, hall said his pictures "have themselves become more humanised".

With these images, Hall hoped to take his viewers beyond the physical and literal image, inspiring them to "reflect upon their place in the universe and to be aware of the creative force of the earth".