

Images shortlisted for world's first photography prize for environmental sustainability unveiled in London

Work by twelve of the world's leading photographers, one of whom will receive this year's prestigious **Prix Pictet photography prize for environmental sustainability** will go on display for the first time at Purdy Hicks Gallery, London from 5 to 10 October.

The Prix Pictet is an annual search for photographs that communicate powerful messages of global environmental significance under a broad theme. This year that theme is 'earth'.

Photographers shortlisted for the £60,000 (CHF100,000) prize are Darren Almond, Christopher Anderson, Sammy Balaji, Edward Burtynsky, Andreas Gursky, Naoya Hatakeyama, Nadav Kander, Ed Kashi, Abbas Kowsari, Yao Lu, Edgar Martins and Chris Steele-Perkins.

This London preview is two weeks in advance of the prize announcement and exhibition opening at the Passage de Retz in Paris on 22 October and a world tour of the exhibition. It marks the launch of *Earth*, the book of the 2009 prize and the announcement of Pictet & Cie's support for Azafady, a UK-based charity and Malagasy-registered NGO. Each year Pictet & Cie supports the work of a charity whose work mirrors the theme of the prize.

Kofi Annan, honorary president of Prix Pictet said: 'In just a few weeks time, world leaders will meet in **Copenhagen** for the **UN Climate Change Conference**. We know that there is a huge amount at stake. Experts warn of the potentially catastrophic costs including the spread of famine, disease and conflict unless we first halt and, eventually, reverse the changes we are causing to our atmosphere. The photographs nominated for the Prix Pictet make a compelling case to all of us – countries, businesses and individuals – to live in a more sustainable way. But there is an extra responsibility on those of us privileged to live in clean and healthy environments: to act to help those who do not. I congratulate all the artists who have been shortlisted for the 2009 prize. They have met their challenge. It is now up to the rest of us to do the same.'

For 2009 Pictet & Cie will support Azafady's Voly Hazo project that aims to preserve the earth from degradation and the eventual desertification that is seen so widely in Madagascar with a programme of tree planting and preservation of the natural forest. One of the photographers shortlisted for the Prix Pictet will be commissioned to visit Madagascar with the Azafady team in order to produce a series of photographs that will highlight many of the issues that Azafady are focusing on in this unique and endangered environment. An exhibition of that work will launch the 2010 prize in the Spring 2010.

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Nicolas Pictet, Partner of Pictet & Cie said 'Sustainability lies at the heart of Pictet & Cie's business ethos. We are committed to minimising the environmental and social impact of our activities and making carefully chosen philanthropic contributions. In 2009 Pictet & Cie is proud to support the work of the sustainable development charity Azafady who enable the poorest communities in Madagascar to develop sustainable ways of living and to increase local access to health care and education.'

Mark Jacobs, Director of Azafady UK said 'Madagascar's extraordinary biodiversity stems from the island's long isolation from other landmasses. With over 80 per cent of its plant and animal wildlife found only on this island it is as important as more well known and protected areas like the Galapagos Islands. But the unique ecosystem of Madagascar is under threat and poverty is playing a large part in the destruction of the country's natural environment. While international attention often focuses on the needs of mainland Africa, the island of Madagascar is rarely thought of. We are therefore delighted that Pictet & Cie have decided to support our work in particular that aimed at alleviating the pressures that are put on the land through unsustainable uses in the region of Anosy Region of Madagascar.'

An independent jury of seven leading figures from the worlds of the visual arts and the environment, chaired by the Financial Times photography critic, Francis Hodgson, made the shortlist selection from over 300 nominations put forward by the seventy Prix Pictet nominators – a group that includes leading critics, practitioners and curators.

Francis Hodgson, chair of the judges said 'The artistic and technical quality of the entries from photographers around the world has been quite exceptional and the power of the messages the photographers have been able to communicate is extraordinary. The brief - to communicate sustainability issues through photography, with particular reference to this year's theme of 'earth' - has been interpreted with tremendous variety and vigour. Whether reporting in detail on development or aiming more broadly to stimulate thought, the photographers have achieved a very high level of impact. I and the other members of the panel look forward with keen anticipation to selecting the winner of this exciting and prestigious prize.'

Earth is published by teNeues and includes the work of the 12 shortlisted artists and others nominated for the 2009 prize. All speak of the harmful and often irreversible effects of exploiting the earth's resources and reflect on the immediate and long-term impact of unsustainable development on communities across the globe.

The full portfolios of each shortlisted artist will be shown at the *Passage de Retz* gallery in Paris from 23 October to 24 November, following the announcement of the winner and Azafady commission by Kofi Annan on 22 October.

The Prix Pictet will tour to further international venues from late 2009 to early 2010. Venues confirmed for the tour include: the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, The Empty Quarter Gallery in Dubai and the Eindhoven University of Technology. The Prix Pictet Secretariat is currently reviewing proposals from several major international galleries.

Prix Pictet will collaborate with **FIAC** (22 - 25 October), Paris' major international contemporary and modern art fair, and **Paris Photo**, the world's leading event for photography (19 - 22 November).

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Visitor information for Prix Pictet 2009

Exhibition: Prix Pictet 2009: Earth (London preview)

Purdy Hicks Gallery | 65 Hopton Street | Bankside | London SE1 9GZ

5 to 10 October 2009: 10am - 6pm

+44 (0) 20 7401 9229 | contact@purdyhicks.com | purdyhicks.com | prixpictet.com | madagascar.co.uk

Exhibition: Prix Pictet 2009: Earth

Passage de Retz | 9 rue Charlot | 75003 Paris

23 October to 24 November 2009

Monday - Friday: 10am - 7pm | Saturday & Sunday: 10am - 8pm

+33 (0) 1 48 04 37 99 | jfk.retz@wanadoo.fr | passagederetz.com | prixpictet.com

For details of 2010 international touring venues visit prixpictet.com

Press and VIP preview events

6 October 'Earth' book launch and Azafady charity announcement at Purdy Hicks Gallery, London

22 October Prix Pictet prize announcement, Passage de Retz, Paris

To express an interest in attending either of these events, please contact Theresa Simon & Partners.

Fairs and festivals

FIAC | fiac.com | 22 to 25 October 2009

Paris Photo | parisphoto.fr | 19 to 22 November 2009

Notes to Editors

1. About Azafady - madagascar.co.uk

Azafady is an award winning registered charity in England & Wales number 1079121, partnered to an independently registered Malagasy Non-Governmental Organisation. They work on a wide range of projects in the Anosy and Androy regions of southeast Madagascar. Founded in 1994, they work with over 80 rural communities and within the urban centre of Fort Dauphin. Azafady is a development organisation that aims to: raise awareness about the plight of the Malagasy environment and the Malagasy people; to empower Malagasy people to improve their own lives and provide support to communities and threatened environments. The charity works for a better future for people, communities and the environments in which they live.

2. Prix Pictet - History

Established in 2008 by Swiss private bank **Pictet & Cie**, the Prix Pictet is run by an independent company, Prix Pictet Ltd. The 2008 award generated entries from over 200 photographers from 43 countries. Prix Pictet's honorary president **Kofi Annan**, presented photographer, **Benoit Aquin**, with a prize of £60,000 in October 2008 for his series of photographs on desertification in China. **Munem Wasif** was awarded a commission to document an area of Bangladesh in which Prix Pictet's supported charity for 2008, **WaterAid**, was working. This work was first shown in London in March 2009. Exhibitions from the 2008 shortlist toured to Dubai, Thessaloniki, Hong Kong, Eindhoven, Dresden, Geneva and Bonn. The book, 'Water', is available from prixpictet.com and other outlets.

3. Prix Pictet 2009 – Earth

Prix Pictet 2009's theme is 'earth', which refers to the planet, the soil beneath our feet, the marks that man makes on the face of the land - directly through the creation of mines, toxic waste, broken urban waste lands, vast refuse dumps and blasted desert landscapes or indirectly, through the scars left by fire, flood or famine - natural disasters: earthquakes, landslides and volcanoes and the migration of displaced people. The theme last year's prize was 'water'.

4. Prix Pictet – Executive and Secretariat - candlestar.co.uk

The Prix Pictet Secretariat is Stephen Barber, Group Managing Director, Pictet & Cie and Director, Prix Pictet and Michael Benson, Director, Candlestar – Prize Administration and Company Secretary Prix Pictet Ltd. The London based cultural consultancy **Candlestar Ltd** is the Secretariat for the Prix Pictet and the Prix Pictet Ltd. Candlestar manage the administrative, artistic, logistical and production aspects of the Prix Pictet award and its global tour.

5. Prix Pictet 2009 – Jury

Benoit Aquin, photographer and winner of the Prix Pictet 2008

Jan Dalley, Financial Times, Arts Editor

Loa Haagen Pictet, Danish art historian and curator of the Pictet & Cie collection of Swiss art.

Zaha Hadid, Founding Partner of Zaha Hadid Architects

Francis Hodgson, Photography Critic, Financial Times and former Head of Photography, Sotheby's

Sir David King, former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government and Director of the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Oxford University

Fumio Nanjo, Director, The Mori Art Museum

The 2009 Prix Pictet Short list

Darren Almond (UK, 1971)

Nominated for Fullmoon, 2008–09



Almond uses the moon as his only source of light and an extensive exposure time of 15 minutes or more, to turn night into day. He creates meditative landscapes that have a unique and mysterious quality and often depicts remote geographical locations. For this series, he was especially drawn to the Yellow Mountain range, known as Xihai or Huang Shan in the Anhui province of China. The region has magnificent peaks and canyons, as well as extraordinary natural sites of Chinese spiritualism. Almond is a London-based international artist who was nominated for The Turner Prize in 2005 and is represented by the White Cube, London.

Christopher Anderson (Canada, 1970)

Nominated for Capitolio, 2008



Anderson explores the cycle of consumption, destruction, violence and political turmoil that ebbs and flows with the price of oil in Venezuela where the entire economy is built around the ever-expanding exploitation of the earth's resources. However, there is little local food available to most of the population and while a few get rich the majority are desperately poor. Anderson began his career as a war photographer. His work appears in publications as diverse as National Geographic and the fashion magazine, V. Anderson has won a Robert Capa Gold Medal and received a Pulitzer Prize nomination. He joined Magnum Photos in 2005 and is based in New York.

Sammy Baloji (Democratic Republic of Congo, 1978)

Nominated for Memory, 2006



Baloji superimposes colonial black and white archive photos, from the once Belgian run mines of Katanga in Congo, with his own colour images of today's mines and neglected infrastructure. The work references the lucrative industrial past of the area that benefited the Belgian colonizers, while its people were forced into slavery. Merging past and present Baloji exposes the cruelty of the colonial years as well as current abuses both of power and of the earth's natural resources. In 2008, Baloji participated in PICHA! (meaning 'image' in Swahili), a project that facilitated local communities' understanding of their history through archive images and contemporary photos.

Edward Burtynsky (Canada, 1955)

Nominated for Quarries, 1991-2006



Burtynsky looks at landscape as architecture in a series of active and abandoned quarries across America, Europe and India. We are surrounded by consumer goods, and yet we are profoundly detached from their sources. Our lifestyles are made possible by industries all around the world that we take for granted and that become merely background to our existence. Burtynsky aims to show those places that are normally outside our experience but very much a part of our everyday lives. Edward Burtynsky is one of Canada's most distinguished photographers. His remarkable depictions of global industrial landscapes are in the collections of over fifty major museums.

Andreas Gursky (Germany, 1955)

Nominated for Untitled XIII, 2002

Gursky confronts the viewer with an apparently infinite landscape of garbage. From a distance this work appears abstract and colourful recalling a Jackson Pollock drip painting. Closer inspection reveals small figures desperately searching a dump in Chimalhuacán, Mexico City. Gursky often concentrates on sites of commerce and tourism, making work that draws attention to today's burgeoning high-tech industry and global markets. His subject matter ranges from the vast, anonymous architecture of modern day hotel lobbies, apartment buildings and warehouses to stock exchanges and parliaments across the globe. In contrast the people in these images eek out a living from their finds in order to survive each day. Andreas Gursky is a major artist of international standing.



Naoya Hatakeyama (Japan, 1958)

Nominated for three series: Blast, River and Tunnel

Hatakeyama's submission for Prix Pictet features underground waterways in Paris and Tokyo and a Japanese lime works. He examines the city, its past, present and future, in order to reflect on the relationship between people and their environment. In many of the works he shows hidden city spaces that are alien to most city-dwellers. By capturing the symmetry of angular reflections in dirty water, he makes the waterways beneath and on the edge of the city seem beautiful. Hatakeyama, a student of Kiyoji Otsuji, graduated from Tsukuba University in 1984. As well as participating in numerous solo and group exhibitions, Hatakeyama's photographs are found in public collections from the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo to the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



Nadav Kander (Israel, 1961)

Nominated for Yangtze, The Long River Series, 2006-07

Kandar has documented the rapidly changing landscape and communities of China's Yangtze River, from its mouth to source. More people live on the river's 6500km of banks than in America. However, China's current programme of development is also destroying the country's heritage and displacing many of its people. Kander is a regular contributor to many international publications, including The New York Times Magazine, for whom he recently documented 'Obama's People'. His many international awards and nominations include most recently the Silver Photographer of the Year Award at the Lianzhou International Photo Festival 08 in China.



Ed Kashi (USA, 1957)

Nominated for Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta, 2004-06

Kashi presents a graphic look at the profound cost of oil exploitation in West Africa. His work traces the fifty-year impact of Nigeria's relationship to oil and the resulting environmental degradation and community conflicts that have plagued the region. Kashi is a photojournalist, filmmaker and educator dedicated to documenting the social and political issues that define our times. Kashi's complex imagery has been recognized for its compelling rendering of the human condition, revealing his sensitive eye and an intimate relationship to his subjects.



Abbas Kowsari (Iran, 1970)

Nominated for Shade of Earth, 2007-08



Kowsari documents the annual New Year (Noruz) pilgrimage of hundreds of thousands of Iranians to the fronts of the eight-year long Iran-Iraq war. The pilgrims, often family members of the half a million soldiers who died, travel by bus from all over the country to where the fighting was the heaviest, a journey known as Rahian-e Noor or Caravan of Light. Kowsari is the senior photo editor for E'temad newspaper in Tehran. He has worked for over ten Iranian leading newspapers since graduating. Most have been closed down by the authorities and banned from publishing again. His work has appeared in several international publications including Paris Match and Der Spiegel and he has

exhibited in Tehran and the French Embassy in Damascus.

Yao Lu (China, 1967)

Nominated for Mountain and Water, 2006-07



Lu's images of lush mountainous vistas swamped in mist and surrounded by sea are not what they seem. The peaks rising from the water that dwarf the tiny speck-sized boats are in fact gargantuan piles of rubbish and construction waste, by-products of China's building development, shrouded in miles of green netting. Lu uses photography to both distort the truth and represent reality while also taking the viewer back in time to when the landscape was a fertile and untouched area. Lu studied at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing and received a Masters of Visual Arts in photography at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia in 2000.

Edgar Martins (Portugal, 1977)

Nominated for The Diminishing Present, 2005 & 2008



In this series of photographs, Martins captures the progress of advancing forest fires in Portugal. The beautiful, painterly images show the vivid greens of vegetation about to be consumed by flames and the charred land left in their wake. The fires of 2005 and 2008 followed an extended period of drought and extreme heat that many believed to be a result of global climate change. They were also considered evidence of environmental mismanagement; much of the forest was eucalyptus, a fast-growing but extremely flammable tree that is frequently planted in reforestation projects. Martins studied photography and fine art at the Royal College of Art. He has exhibited extensively throughout Asia, America and Europe and received

awards for photography and writing.

Chris Steele-Perkins (Burma, 1947)

Nominated for Mount Fuji, 2000-01



Perkins has spent much of the decade documenting Mount Fuji, an iconic symbol of Japan that has inspired many Japanese artists, most notably Utagawa Hiroshige, for his iconic series of woodblocks, *36 Views of Mount Fuji*. Mount Fuji is a national park but the surrounding area is now dominated by golf courses, resorts and scrap yards and has been used as a military testing ground. The work can be seen as a commentary on modern Japan and the erosion of natural beauty in the name of progress. Steele-Perkins is a documentary photographer who has worked in the developing world and in Britain for nearly 40 years, focusing on areas of urban poverty or sub-culture.