

Press release



The World's Premier
Photographic Award
in Sustainability

Water crisis in Bangladesh highlighted at launch of Prix Pictet 2009
The world's first photography award focusing on sustainability

Munem Wasif

Salt Water Tears: Lives left behind in Satkhira, Bangladesh

9 – 21 March 2009

London, 5 February 2009 - Photographs by **Munem Wasif** revealing the daily impact of the scarcity of clean, safe water on the people of Bangladesh go on display for the first time from 9 March at the Mall Galleries, London. Wasif was one of eighteen leading international photographers shortlisted for the 2008 Prix Pictet.

On 11 March there will be a reception at the Mall Galleries to launch the **Prix Pictet 2009**. This is the second year of the world's only annual photography award to focus on sustainability, supported by Pictet & Cie.

In 2008 the theme of the Prize was 'water'. For the 2009 prize, over seventy nominators from six continents have begun the search to identify the image, or set of images, that will have the power and artistic quality to convey this year's theme of 'earth'. 'Earth' refers to the planet and the soil beneath our feet, and to the marks that man makes on the face of the land - either directly by creating mines, toxic waste, vast refuse dumps and blasted desert landscapes; or indirectly, through the scars left by fire, flood or famine and to the impact of natural disasters: earthquakes, landslides and volcanoes.

Awarding the inaugural Prix Pictet to Canadian photographer Benoit Aquin last October, **Kofi Annan**, Prix Pictet's Honorary President, said: 'It is my hope that the Prix Pictet will help to deepen understanding of the changes taking place in our world and raise public awareness about the urgency of taking preventative action.'

In 2008 Pictet & Cie supported the UK charity WaterAid, which manages projects in the developing world that help communities gain access to clean, safe water, sanitation and hygiene education. In addition to the CHF100,000 (£60,000) first prize awarded to Aquin for his Chinese Dust Bowl series, shortlisted artist Munem Wasif was commissioned to document an area of Bangladesh where there are severe water issues. WaterAid is currently working with people in the Satkhira region of south-west Bangladesh and will shortly introduce water and sanitation facilities to the area of Shyamnagar Upazilla, within that region, where Wasif took many of the images in the exhibition.

Honorary President
Kofi Annan

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In his photographs we see, where once there was fertile grazing, cows swim through inundated land in search of food. A woman scoops water from a contaminated pond into a drinking pot. Twice a day she makes the hour-long journey to the pond, the closest water source to her home. Changes in the environment now mean that villagers are forced to venture deeper into the forest to make their living, resulting in an increase in people killed by the few remaining Bengal tigers. Sorifa Khatin (30), pictured here cradling one of her seven children, lost her husband in one such attack. Many people here have poor health and suffer serious disease. Amer Chan (60) whose liver cancer is fast spreading throughout his body, is photographed days before he lost his life; another image shows a mother holding her young child soon to die of a brain tumour.

Ivan Pictet, managing partner of Pictet & Cie said: 'Pictet & Cie is committed to sustainability in all its forms, from reducing the environmental and social impact of our activities to making carefully selected philanthropic contributions. Pictet & Cie supported WaterAid in 2008 because of their sustainable approach to alleviating water shortages, water contamination and lack of sanitation faced by millions of people around the globe.'

Barbara Frost, chief executive of WaterAid said: 'WaterAid's work reaches some of the most marginalized people in the developing world, enabling communities in geographically hard to reach locations to get access to clean and safe water. With the support of Pictet & Cie, Munem Wasif's photographs will help WaterAid to raise awareness of the world's water crisis, where one in eight people do not have safe water to drink.'

Munem Wasif's exhibition launches Prix Pictet 2009 when this year's judges will be announced.

They include:

- **Benoit Aquin, photographer and winner of the Prix Pictet 2008**
- **Jan Dalley**, Financial Times arts editor
- **Fumio Nanjo**, director of The Mori Art Museum
- **Loa Haagen Pictet**, Danish art historian and curator of the Pictet & Cie collection of Swiss art
- **Francis Hodgson**, head of the photographs department at Sotheby's, London
- **Sir David King**, former chief scientific adviser to the UK Government, director of the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at the University of Oxford.

The shortlist of artists for Prix Pictet 2009 will be announced on 9 July at the Rencontres d'Arles in France and an exhibition of their work will be shown at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, where the award will be presented in October.

Visitor information

Munem Wasif - Salt Water Tears: Lives left behind in Satkhira, Bangladesh

The Mall Galleries
The Mall, London SW1

9 - 21 March 2009
Open daily 10am - 5pm

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www.mallgalleries.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

1. Munem Wasif was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1983 and is a documentary photographer whose photographs have been published in national and international publications throughout the world. He is a member of photographers' agency Agence VU' who represent his works worldwide. Details of the publications, awards that Munem Wasif has received and exhibitions and festivals in which he has taken part can be found in an extended biography on the Prix Pictet website:

<http://www.prixpictet.com/artists/view/168>

2. **Bangladesh** is one of the world's poorest countries. Millions of people lack access to essential water and sanitation services. Without these basic resources, hundreds of people die of easily preventable water-related diseases. In the Satkhira district, where the Shyamnagar Upazilla project is located, many water sources are contaminated by naturally occurring arsenic or saline water. As a result of climate change and unplanned shrimp farming, the area is experiencing a gradual increase in the salinity of the water, frequent natural disasters and erratic rainfall.

3. 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. The **Prix Pictet 2009 exhibition** of work by shortlisted artists will be at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris in October and selected works will tour international venues prior to the launch of the 2010 award. Images from the 2008 award have been shown at exhibitions in Dubai, Thessaloniki, Hong Kong, Eindhoven and Dresden.
www.prixpictet.com

4. Over 70 leading experts in the visual arts from six continents, from directors and curators of major museums and galleries to journalists and critics, will propose a maximum of ten photographers each from which the jury will select the final shortlist and winner of Prix Pictet 2009.

The list of nominators for the Prix Pictet 2009 follow the notes to editors.

5. **WaterAid** is a UK charity that enables the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education. These basic human rights underpin health, education and livelihoods and form the first, essential step in overcoming poverty. WaterAid works with local partners who understand local issues and provides them with the skills and support needed to help communities set up and manage practical and sustainable projects that meet real needs. WaterAid campaigns locally and internationally to change policy and practice and ensure that water and sanitation's vital role in reducing poverty is recognised. WaterAid's registered charity numbers are 288701 (England and Wales) and SC039479 (Scotland). **www.wateraid.org**

6. The London based cultural consultancy **Candlestar Ltd** is the Secretariat for the Prix Pictet and the Prix Pictet Ltd. Candlestar manages all of the administrative, artistic, logistical and production aspects of the Prix Pictet award and the global exhibition tour. **www.candlestar.co.uk**

Prix Pictet 2009 - Nominators

North America

William Hunt, Owner, Hasted Hunt Gallery
Anne Kennedy, Partner, Art and Commerce
Stephen Mayes, Managing Director, VII Photo
David Pratt, Editor, The Globe and Mail

South America

Alejandro Castellote, Photography Curator
Hollman Morris, Journalist
John Mraz, Professor, Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

Australasia

Sandra Byron, Director, Sandra Byron Gallery
Naomi Cass, Director of the Centre for Contemporary Photography
Isobel Crombie, Senior Curator of Photography, The National Gallery of Victoria
John Elliott, Photographer/Highlife magazine
Linda Groom, Curator of the National Library of Australia's Pictures Collection
Gael Newton, Senior Curator of photography, National Gallery of Australia
Russell Storer, Curator Sydney Museum of Contemporary art
John B. Turner, Senior Lecturer, Elam School of Fine Arts

Europe

Regina Maria Anzenberger, Founder and Director Anzenberger Agency
Gerry Badger, Photographer and photographic critic
Maria Baibakova, Collector and Curator
Simon Bainbridge, Editor, British Journal of Photography
Christine Barthe, Scientific Director, Musée du quai Branly
Sheyi Bankale, Editor, Next Level
Ami Barak, Curator and Critic
Enrico Bossan, Director, Colors Magazine and Fabrica
Chiara Capodici, Curator, Extraspaio
Zelda Cheatle, Portfolio manager, WMG Photography Fund
William Ewing, Director, Musée d'Elysee Lausanne
Jean-Paul Felley, Director, Centre culturel suisse de Paris
Valerie Fougeirol, Director, Magnum Gallery
Olivier Kaeser, Centre culturel suisse de Paris
Antonin Kratochvil, Photojournalist
Farah Rahim Ismail, Specialist in Modern & Contemporary Indian Art, Christie's
Vangelis Ioakimidis, Director, Thessaloniki Museum of Photography
Olga Korsunova, Curator
Vicky Long, Project Director, Cape Farewell
Tim Marlow, Head of Exhibitions, White Cube

Philippa Neave, Art Consultant
Michael Neff, Photographer
Sylvia Ospina, Director, Flowers East
November Paynter, Director, Artist Pension Trust and Independent Curator
Angelica Pediconi, Director Art and Ethics
Timothy Person, Director, Taik Gallery
Maarten Pieterse, Director of the arts and culture, University of Technology Eindhoven
Julian Rodriguez, Dean of the School of Media, London College of Communication
Mario Rotllant, Collector
Olivia Maria Rubio, Director, Fabrica
Eugen Viehof, Collector
Brigitte von Ribbentrop-Trotha, Consultant and Writer
Marc-Olivier Wahler, Director, Palais de Tokyo
Jean Wainwright, Art historian and critic
Jeni Walwin, independent curator, writer and public art consultant

Africa

Diomansi Bomboté, Journalist
François Bambou, Editor in Chief Delegate, La Nouvelle Expression
Jeany Lungembo, Assistant Editor, Magazine d'Enquetes Okapi Action, Radio Okapi / Kinshasa
Simon Njami, Curator and Editor, Revue Noire
Sylvia Smith, Freelance Journalist
Guy Tillim, Photographer

Asia Pacific

Joselina Cruz, Independent Curator
Salima Hashmi, Dean of Visual Arts, Beaconhouse National University
Michiko Kasahara, Chief curator, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography
Nicolette Kwok, Founder and Director of the Red Mansion Foundation
Jiyeon Lee, Independent curator, writer and advisor
Szewan Leung, Co-founder and Artistic Director of MOCA China
Mathew Ngui, Curator
Magnus Renfrew, Director, Hong Kong Art Fair
Farah Siddiqui, Founder and Director, Farah Siddiqui Contemporary Art
Mariko Takeuchi, Photography critic and curator

Middle East

Elie Domit, Creative Director, The Empty Quarter
Ali Khadra, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Mixed Media Publishing
Alireza Samiazar, Architect and Art Critic
Suha Shoman, Founder, Darat Al Funun
Eli Zagury, Director, Arad Collection