

## Press release

International photography exhibition confronting global environmental issues comes to Hong Kong with Prix Pictet - the world's first photography award focusing on sustainability

### **Prix Pictet 2008**

The Rotunda, Exchange Square, Central, Hong Kong

Exhibition 12 to 19 March, free

[www.prixpictet.com](http://www.prixpictet.com)

Photographs of the Chinese 'dust bowl', the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and evidence of global warming in Antarctica were among the images shortlisted for the Prix Pictet 2008 – the first photography prize to focus on the issue of sustainability. A selection of the works from the prize will be on display at Exchange Square Central, Hong Kong from 12 March 2009.

Awarding the inaugural Prix Pictet to Canadian photographer Benoit Aquin, **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.' Aquin was awarded the first prize of US\$ 85,000 for his series of photographs on the desertification of farmland in China.

The Prix Pictet aims to use the power of photography to communicate vital messages to a global audience, confronting the social and environmental challenges faced by humanity in the early 21st century. Each year the Prix Pictet, which is supported by Pictet & Cie, addresses a distinct sustainability theme. The theme for 2008 was water. It is through water that we will see the earliest and most devastating manifestations of climate change: threats to our food supply, to our health, to fragile ecosystems, to the ground on which we live and even our peace and security. The exhibition is accompanied by *Water*, a book containing photographs by the 18 shortlisted artists.

Entry to the Prix Pictet is by nomination only and, in its first year, over 200 photographers from 43 countries were nominated. Eighteen of the world's finest photographers were shortlisted for the prize. They were: Benoit Aquin, Edward Burtynsky, Jesús Abad Colorado, Thomas Joshua Cooper, Sebastian Copeland, Christian Cravo, Lynn Davis, Reza Deghati, Susan Derges, Malcolm Hutcheson, Chris Jordan, Carl De Keyzer, David Maisel, Mary Mattingly, Robert Polidori, Roman Signer, Jules Spinatsch, Munem Wasif.

Nicolas Pictet, 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. It is a great pleasure to be able to show people in Hong Kong a selection of the shortlisted works from Prix Pictet 2008.'

Images from the 2008 award have been shown at exhibitions in Dubai, Thessaloniki, Hong Kong, Eindhoven and Dresden. 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 US\$85,000 first prize awarded to Aquin for his series 'The Chinese Dust Bowl', shortlisted artist Munem Wasif was commissioned to document an area of Bangladesh where there are severe water issues and where WaterAid will shortly introduce water and sanitation facilities. An exhibition of these works will launch The Prix Pictet 2009 in London on 11 March.

For the 2009 prize, over seventy nominators from six continents have already 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'. In China they include Magnus Renfrew, director, Hong Kong Art Fair and Szewan Leung, Co-founder and artistic director of MOCA China.

'Earth' refers not only to the planet and the soil beneath our feet, but also 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. It also refers to the impact of natural disasters: earthquakes, landslides and volcanoes.

The shortlist of artists for Prix Pictet 2009 will be announced on 9 July at the Rencontres des 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

#### **Prix Pictet 2008 at The Rotunda, Exchange Square, Central, Hong Kong**

12 - 19 March 2009

[www.prixpictet.com](http://www.prixpictet.com)

### Press contact information

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### Notes to Editors

1. Established in 2008 by Swiss private bank Pictet & Cie, the Prix Pictet is run by an independent company, Prix Pictet Ltd. The Prix Pictet 2008 book, *Water*, is published and distributed worldwide by teNeues. [www.prixpictet.com](http://www.prixpictet.com). Over 40 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 jury for 2009 includes **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 and **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.