

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Prix Pictet 'Growth'
Location: Ayyam Gallery, Beirut
Opening: Thursday March 8 at 7PM
Exhibition Dates: March 8 – March 30



Ayyam Gallery, Beirut is pleased to host Prix Pictet's forthcoming exhibition 'Growth' from March 8 – 30, 2012.

The Prix Pictet harnesses the power of photography to communicate vital messages to a global audience. Established in 2008, it is now recognized as the world's leading prize in photography and sustainability. The theme for the third cycle of the Prix Pictet, which ends with this first exhibition in Beirut, was Growth.

From the dizzying expansion of our cities with their ever increasing dependency on scarce natural resources to the relentless growth of population, Growth is both a blessing and a curse. Societal growth and expansion is perhaps the most significant challenge facing humanity in the early decades of the 21st century. We face a global crisis in land use and agriculture that threatens to undermine the very health, security, and sustainability of our civilization. These issues and many more are addressed with vitality and insight by the photographers nominated for Growth.

The twelve outstanding artists shortlisted for the award were: **Christian Als**, Denmark; **Edward Burtynsky**, Canada; **Stéphane Couturier**, France; **Mitch Epstein**, USA (Winner); **Chris Jordan**, USA (Commission); **Yeondoo Jung**, South Korea; **Vera Lutter**, Germany; **Nyaba Leon Ouedrago**, Burkina Faso; **Taryn Simon**, USA; **Thomas Struth**, Germany; **Guy Tillim**, South Africa and **Michael Wolf**, Germany.

The exhibition of work by these artists has been touring since in March 2011, when the prize was presented to the American photographer, Mitch Epstein, for his series *American Power*. In making the award, Kofi Annan, Honorary President of the Prix Pictet, said:

'These extraordinary photographs, and those of the other finalists, show us why a new economic model is needed - one that is global, inclusive, cooperative, environmentally aware and science-based.'

Commenting on the forthcoming exhibition at Ayyam Gallery, Jacques de Saussure, Managing Partner of Pictet & Cie, said:

'The exhibition of photographs by the artists shortlisted for the Prix Pictet is in great demand from museums and galleries throughout the world. Such is the quality of the work, we have found it impossible to satisfy every request. Because the Prix Pictet is a global prize that addresses global issues, it is important that we reflect this in the geographical spread of our exhibitions. For this reason we were delighted to accept the invitation from the Ayyam Gallery to exhibit the Prix Pictet in Beirut for the first time. I am sure we shall return.'

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Prix Pictet

The Prix Pictet, launched in 2008, is the world's leading prize in photography and sustainability and has as its mission a search for outstanding photographic series that communicate messages of global environmental significance. Entry is by nomination only, through one of the Prix Pictet's **200-strong global network of nominators**, comprising curators, critics, museum directors and other acknowledged experts in the field of visual arts.

The Prix Pictet has two elements: the **Prize of CHF 100,000** awarded to the photographer who, in the opinion of the **independent jury**, has produced a series of work that speaks most powerfully to the theme of the award (*Growth* winner: Mitch Epstein); and the **Prix Pictet Commission**, awarded by the Partners of Pictet & Cie, in which a shortlisted photographer is invited to undertake a field trip to a region where the Bank is supporting a sustainability project. American photographer Chris Jordan was invited to undertake the Third Prix Pictet Commission.

2. Exhibition and Tour

A selection of works from the portfolios of each artist shortlisted for *Growth* have so far toured to Paris (*Filles du Calvaire* and *Passage de Retz*), Thessaloniki (*Museum of Photography*), Zurich (*Christophe Guye Gallery*), Milan (*Galleria Carla Sozzani*), Dusseldorf (*Arteversum*), Madrid (*Jardín Botánico*), Washington (*Corcoran Gallery of Art*) and Dublin (*Gallery of Photography*). Further international venues include Beirut (*Ayyam Gallery*), and Eindhoven (*University of Technology*). Further proposals from major international galleries are currently under consideration.

3. Book

Growth, the book of the third prize, is published by teNeues and includes the work of the 12 shortlisted artists and others nominated for the third Prix Pictet. teNeues have also published *Ushirikiano – Building a Sustainable Future in Kenya's Northern Rangelands*, a monograph of the third Commission by Chris Jordan. *Growth* and *Ushirikiano* are available from the teNeues website, gallery bookshops and other outlets worldwide.

4. Commission

In line with the theme of the third Prix Pictet, *Growth*, Pictet & Cie supported the work of the Tusk Trust in Africa for the Third Commission. Tusk Trust is responsible for the development of over forty different programs of conservation and sustainable community development in seventeen African countries. In July 2011 Chris Jordan visited Kenya's Northern Rangelands and produced a series of photographs under the title *Ushirikiano*. These images document Tusk-led initiatives to build a sustainable future for communities in a region where conflict over scarce resources between human and wildlife populations exemplify the theme of the Third Prix Pictet. The series was previewed at *Diemar/Noble Photography* in London in October 2011.

For further information, please visit: www.prixpictet.com or contact Ayyam Gallery, Beirut at +961 | 374450, or email beirut@ayyamgallery.com.