

Madagascar: uncovering the forgotten land

Prix Pictet 2009 Commission exhibition: Ed Kashi's photographs reveal the ecological plight of Madagascar

Diemar / Noble Photography
66/67 Wells Street, London W1T 3PY
20 April to 1 May 2010

London, 24 February 2010 **Prix Pictet 2009 Commission winner Ed Kashi will show his photographs from Madagascar at London's Diemar / Noble Photography gallery, London 20 April - 1 May 2010.**

Kashi was one of twelve leading international photographers shortlisted for the 2009 Prix Pictet, the world's only major annual photography award to focus on sustainability.

Nadav Kander, the 2009 Prix Pictet winner, received the CHF100,000 award from Kofi Annan, honorary president of the Prix Pictet, in October 2009. At the same time Kashi was invited to produce a portfolio of images from Madagascar, where Pictet & Cie had decided to support a sustainability programme relating to 'Earth', the theme of the 2009 award.

Pictet chose to support the work of Azafady, a UK charity and Malagasy-registered NGO that helps the poorest communities in Madagascar develop sustainable ways of living and increase local access to healthcare and education.

Pictet made a specific commitment to Azafady's Voly Hazo project. This project aims, through tree planting and preservation of the natural forest, both to preserve the soil from degradation and to halt the harmful progress of desertification.

Madagascar is classified as one of the world's top three "hotspots" for biodiversity; yet it is also one of the poorest and most environmentally challenged countries in the world. Through Kashi's pictures, we see the compromised beauty of this threatened island which has been described as follows: 'The island should be thickly covered with trees. But instead of the living green of vegetation, the land is pitilessly scoured. ... This is not from commercial logging. The trees fall at the hands of poverty-stricken Malagasy, who need to feed their children. It's one of the most massive modern ecological disasters yet catalogued, and it has unfolded mostly over the past thirty years.' (Alanna Mitchell, *Dancing at the Dead Sea: Tracking the World's Environmental Hotspots*)

Kashi, who travelled to Madagascar in January 2010 said, "My work has led me to many places on this earth and it's critically clear our world is under tremendous stress. The relationship we hold as human beings with the earth, and the issues that are raised with regard to how we go about conducting this vital relationship, have developed into core themes within my work. Nowhere are the effects of this dysfunctional relationship more evident than in Madagascar."

He added, "This Commission for the Prix Pictet is in direct response to the global cry to stop and take responsibility, seen through the dignified and vibrant people of south east Madagascar, in a cross-examination of the intricate ties that bind them to the earth."

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Mark Jacobs, Director of Azafady UK, said “Ed’s sensitivity to this subject has been remarkable. Within a few days he managed to capture the essence of our work here. The photographs brilliantly capture the daily struggle against drought, failed crops and sand encroachment. ”

Images from the series that Kashi presented for the Prix Pictet shortlist, “Curse of the Black Gold: 50 years of oil in the Niger Delta”, will be shown at Host Gallery, London 8 March - 3 April 2010. Kashi’s work will also be included in an exhibition of past Prix Pictet winners at the Musée d’Elysée, Lausanne, June 2010.

The theme and cycle for Prix Pictet III will be announced at the annual photography festival in France, Les Rencontres d’Arles, 8 July 2010.

Ends

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Images - a selection of the images that Ed Kashi made in Madagascar can be viewed and downloaded from www.theresasimon.com/press

Select Prix Pictet from the list of projects. No password is required. Further images are available on request.

Visitor information for Prix Pictet 2009 Commission Exhibition

Exhibition: Prix Pictet 2009 Commission

Diemar/Noble Photography | 66/67 Wells Street | London W1T 3PY

20 April to 1 May 2010

Tuesday - Saturday: 11am - 6pm

+44 (0) 207 636 5375 | enquiries@diemarnoble.com | diemarnoblephotography.com | prixpictet.com

For details of 2010 international touring venues visit prixpictet.com

Notes to Editors

1. 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 2009 award generated entries from 270 photographers, nominated by over seventy art specialists from six continents. Prix Pictet’s honorary president **Kofi Annan**, presented **Nadav Kander**, with a prize of £60,000 in October 2009 for his series of photographs documenting the rapidly changing landscape and communities of China’s Yangtze River. **Ed Kashi** was awarded a commission to document an area of Madagascar in which Pictet & Cie’s supported charity for 2009, **Azafady**, is working.

2. Prix Pictet – Themes

Prix Pictet 2009's theme was '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 of the 2008 prize was 'Water'.

3. 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 Madagascan environment and the Malagasy people and 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.

4. Diemar/Noble Photography - diemarnoblephotography.com

The Diemar/Noble Photography gallery is situated in London's West End and specialises in stocking and exhibiting photographic work from the medium's early masters to current and cutting-edge contemporary work.

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

The Prix Pictet Executive is: Stephen Barber, Group Managing Director, Pictet & Cie - Director, Prix Pictet; Michael Benson, Director, Candlestar. The London based cultural consultancy **Candlestar Ltd** is the Secretariat for the Prix Pictet and the Prix Pictet Ltd. Candlestar manages the administrative, artistic, logistical and production aspects of the Prix Pictet award and its global tour.

6. The Prix Pictet Tour

Work by the artists shortlisted for the 2008 Prix Pictet is currently touring the world. It has so far been at the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography and the The Empty Quarter, Dubai. In March it will be at the Technical University, Eindhoven and the Dublin Museum of Photography. It will also visit The Hague, Lausanne, Geneva, Delhi and Moscow and discussions are continuing with a number of other venues worldwide.

7. 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

7. Prix Pictet 2009 - Shortlist

Darren Almond, UK; **Christopher Anderson**, Canada; **Sammy Baloji**, Congo; **Edward Burtynsky**, Canada; **Andreas Gursky**, Germany; **Naoya Hatakeyama**, Japan; **Nadav Kander**, South Africa; **Ed Kashi**, USA; **Abbas Kowsari**, Iran; **Yao Lu**, China; **Edgar Martins**, Portugal; and **Chris Steele-Perkins**, UK.