

THIRD PRIX PICTET COMMISSION UNVEILED

Chris Jordan's powerful Northern Kenya series to be previewed in London

The Third Prix Pictet Commission, a major new body of work by US photographer Chris Jordan, entitled *Ushirikiano*, will be unveiled at Diemar/Noble Photography, London on Thursday 6 October 2011. (**Press Preview: Wednesday 5 October, 6.30-8.30pm**)

The Commission, a series of 31 photographs, documents Chris Jordan's field trip to Northern Kenya where Pictet & Cie is contributing to the establishment of the Nakuprat-Gotu Conservancy, a new community-led initiative, supported by the Tusk Trust and overseen by the Northern Rangelands Trust.

Chris Jordan's photographs draw attention to the issues that face the politically and socially marginalised communities in the region: climate change; drought; conflict caused by competition for scarce resources – livestock, pasture and water; and an increase in pressure from expanding human populations – exemplifying the theme of this third cycle of the Prix Pictet: "Growth". Violence between competing communities in the area, known as "bandit country", has had a disastrous impact on tourism. The area also suffers from chronic game-meat and elephant poaching and a visceral group of images documenting the horror of elephant poaching lies at the heart of the series.

Ushirikiano also illustrates a more hopeful future, with photographs portraying new security provision, water tanks, biodiversity conservation, schools, women's enterprise projects and the different tribes, Borana, Turkana and Samburu, encouraged to live and work alongside each other in a spirit of collaboration. The Nakuprat-Gotu Conservancy aims to improve human, habitat and wildlife security, and establish income-generating activities including tourism ventures and livestock marketing, and so create a sustainable model for future economic development.

The Prix Pictet, launched in 2008 by the Geneva-based private bank Pictet & Cie, has rapidly established an international reputation. It has a unique mandate: to use the power of world-class photography to raise awareness with a global audience of the social and environmental challenges of the new millennium.

Prix Pictet Commission: Chris Jordan

Ushirikiano

Building a sustainable future in Kenya's Northern Rangelands

Diemar /Noble Photography

66/67 Wells Street, London W1T 3PY

6 -29 October 2011

[**Ushirikiano*: noun (Swahili): partnership, collaboration, or community of shared interest.]

www.prixpictet.com

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. 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. In line with the theme of the third Prix Pictet, Growth, Pictet & Cie has supported the work of the Tusk Trust in Africa for the Third Commission. Tusk Trust is responsible for the development of forty different programmes of conservation and sustainable community development in seventeen African countries. The aim of the Trust is to create a link between the preservation of Africa's natural heritage and the future of its land, culture and people. www.tusk.org

CHRIS JORDAN – ARTIST'S STATEMENT

'This year I was honoured to receive the Prix Pictet Commission, which took me on a thousand-mile behind-the-scenes photo documentary safari in Kenya's northern rangelands. There I encountered a confederation of NGOs working closely with local indigenous tribes to create a sustainable way of life based on principles of environmental stewardship, wildlife conservation, and peace. Despite enormous adversity and the dubious intrusions of first-world religious, commercial, and educational culture, this quiet mini-revolution—led by a council of tribal elders—is bringing peace and stability to a huge area of Kenya. I found the process heartening, especially considering that it is happening in a resource-poor part of the world that is being ravaged by the effects of global climate change. Throughout our two-week expedition across a stunningly wild landscape, I found myself constantly humbled by the grace, dignity, and spirit of the ancient tribal people I had the privilege of encountering there. I hope my photographs convey a small fragment of the complex and inspiring story of Ushirikiano that is emerging in this remote part of Africa.*

The phenomenon of elephant poaching strikes me as profoundly symbolic. As the largest animal to walk the Earth, the elephant is one of our planet's most sentient beings, with a brain about four times the size of ours, equal or greater in intelligence to dolphins and higher-order primates. Elephants are one of the few creatures who grieve their dead in community, and this kind of mourning is one of the characteristics that anthropologists use to define the line between early humans and pre-human apes. In my view, our elephant populations—along with the ecosystems they inhabit—should be revered and preserved as sacred planetary treasures. Hopefully these photos can serve as a visual reminder of the trail of destruction we leave, and the damage we do to our own spirits, when we forget our relationship with nature and our connection with the higher purposes of our life and our own human dignity.'

CHRIS JORDAN (USA, 1963) – BIOGRAPHY

Chris Jordan is a corporate lawyer turned photographic artist based in Seattle, USA, whose work explores the 'detritus' of mass culture. He was shortlisted for the Prix Pictet for his series *Midway: Message from the Gyre*, images of the plastic-filled carcasses of dead baby albatrosses on Midway Atoll in the Pacific, a richly symbolic environmental tragedy. The completely undoctored images draw the viewer intimately into the horrors of global mass-consumerism, reminding us that the consequences of our unchecked growth extend to every corner of the globe. In 2007 Jordan was invited to participate in the Envisioning Change exhibition at the Nobel Peace Centre, Norway where he also won a Green Leaf Award.