

Press Release

Zurich, 26. November 2010

TIINA ITKONEN – AVANNAA

16 December 2010 – 18 February 2011



Ikerasak (2009), 70 x 200 cm, c-print, Edition 7

Tiina Itkonen (born in 1968) is part of the generation of young Finnish photographers, who graduated from the renowned University of Art and Design in Helsinki, which has also become known as the „Helsinki School.“ Galerie Kashya Hildebrand presents the award-winning photographer Tiina Itkonen in another solo show four years after first introducing her to Zurich.

The arctic landscape and Greenland have fascinated generations of explorers, adventurers, merchants and whalers. Since 1990 Tiina Itkonen has also been drawn to the north-west of Greenland to Qaanaaq and Siorapaluk, some of the most northern settlements in the world, where she spends several weeks, sometimes several months a year. She has become friends with the local Inuit population and has found a second home in this isolated and barren landscape. The majestic icebergs, the amazing light, the vast landscapes and the peaceful lifestyle of the Inuit have cast a spell on the photographer and make her feel homesick for Greenland whenever she is back in Helsinki. She longs for the Inuits' way of life without haste and the silence and beauty of Northern Greenland. The most recent works which are part of this exhibition belong to a series of projects which she has been working on for several years.

Itkonen has chosen the rather unusual large-scale panorama format for most of her new works as they allow her to capture the vastness of these landscapes much better than other traditional formats. Reoccurring motifs such as the Ilulissat icefjord, which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004, or the village of Qaanaaq convey the stillness and breathtaking beauty of Greenland even to those of us who have never been there. Stoic and majestic white icebergs, whose sharp jagged contours emerge from the dark sea, or drifting icebergs which seem to dissolve in the mist are contrasted with colourful small houses dotting the vast snowy landscapes. Itkonen keeps returning to the same places immersing herself in the changing light conditions during the day but also capturing the special glow of the midnight sun at night-time. Itkonen is fascinated by the phenomenon that like a

diamond, ice absorbs a wide spectrum of colour nuances; from cristall-clear to matte grey, and all shades of white and shimmering blues.

Despite the timeless beauty captured in these photographs, there is also a subliminal awareness of the threat to the environment due to global warming. Through stories told by the local Inuit hunters, but also having observed the effects of the climate change herself over the past decade, Tiina Itkonen is very much concerned about these effects on people and landscape. The artist believes that the fragile beauty and the tranquility portrayed in her photographs not only allow the viewers to appreciate the aesthetics of the artwork but also to make people think about their own contribution to the fight against this universal threat.

Tiina Itkonen was chosen as the ‚Young Photographer of the Year‘ in Finland in 2003, was twice amongst the ‚Fotofinlandia Finalists‘ and was awarded the William Thuring Prize in 2009. Her works have been included in many important exhibitions on the Helsinki School of photography all around the world: the Kitzbühl Museum in 2008; the FOAM Amsterdam, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, the Nationales Fotomuseum Kopenhagen and the Shiseido Gallery in Tokyo in 2009; and she was represented at the Sydney Biennale earlier this year.

Opening in the presence of the artist:

Thursday, 16 December 2010, 6–8 pm

Opening hours: Monday to Friday | 1–6.30 pm, Saturday | 2–4pm or by appointment

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Kontakt für weitere Informationen oder zusätzliches Bildmaterial:

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