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ART & DESIGN

An Irish Photographer's Images of Refugee Camps Win the Prix Pictet

By ROSLYN SULCAS   MAY 4, 2017

LONDON — The Irish photographer Richard Mosse has won this year's Prix Pictet for photography, for "Heat Maps 2016-17," a series of panoramic images of refugee camps across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, created using a military-grade thermal camera that can detect body heat from a distance of 18 miles.

The award was announced on Thursday by Kofi Annan, the former secretary general of the United Nations and the honorary president of the prize, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where an exhibition of work by the 12 finalists runs through May 28. (It will then go on tour to Zurich, Tokyo, Moscow, Brussels, San Diego and Rome.)

The Prix Pictet was started in 2008 by the Pictet Group, an asset management company in Geneva. It has a focus on sustainability, and offers an annual prize of 100,000 Swiss francs (about $100,000). This year, photographers were asked to submit work on the theme of space.

Among the other submissions on the shortlist were Mandy Barker's images of plastic particles suspended in water drops; Sergey Ponomarev's photographs of migrants at sea; Benny Lam's pictures of Hong Kong residents crammed into tiny living spaces; and Michael Wolf's images of Tokyo commuters packed into subway carriages. Saskia Groneberg, Beate Gütschow, Rinko Kawauchi, Sohei Nishino, Thomas Ruff, Munem Wasif and Pavel Wolberg were the other finalists.

Mr. Mosse was chosen by an international jury of nine that included last year's winner, the French photographer Valérie Belin. Mr. Annan said that the images on the shortlist displayed "visions of people carrying on against what are frequently dreadful odds," but added that the works perhaps offered hope that "it is not too late for us to reverse the damage we have done."