

Hong Hao, Chinese, b. 1965

My Things

'This is a project I started in 2001. It's a series created by scanning objects. I've been working on it for 12 years. In Chinese tradition, 12 years represents the period of transmigration between cycles of fate and destiny. Day by day I put the objects I consumed into a scanner. Piece by piece they became a visual diary. After scanning the original objects I saved them digitally and then categorised the digital files into different folders on my PC to make a collage of them later on. This task, like a yogi's daily practice, has become my daily habit, as well as a tool to observe the human condition in contemporary consumer society.'

Right: "Book-keeping of 2007 B", 2008, Beijing



PLANET OVERLOAD

On May 21, the winner of the Prix Pictet, the global award for photography and sustainability, will be announced in London on the eve of an exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum. The theme of this, the fifth cycle of the prize, is 'Consumption'. On the following pages, we preview works from the 11 shortlisted artists



▲ **Boris Mikhailov, Ukrainian, b. 1938**
Tea, Coffee & Cappuccino

'These photographs, taken over 10 years, chronicle the dramatic changes that have taken place in my home town of Kharkiv since the consumer invasion of western capitalism. It is everywhere in the huge colourful banners and billboards, but the promises of the Orange Revolution seem to have been fulfilled for only a

few. A new age of business has arrived. Everything can be bought and sold – even children. We see change in the smallest detail. Whereas waiters used to offer the straight choice between tea and coffee, old women have started wheeling round trolleys of commodities, calling out "Tea, coffee, cappuccino", the "perambulatory product" of the age. The influx of cheap commodities has created a colourful new plastic reality.'

▼ **Mishka Henner, British, b. 1976**
Beef & Oil

'These large-scale prints show landscapes carved by the extraordinary consumer demand for two of North America's most precious commodities: beef and oil. Almost all the beef consumed in the United States will have been finished in a feedlot: a vast empire of pens and troughs where up to 100,000 steers at a time spend the last three to six months of their

short lives gaining up to 4lb a day on a diet of corn, protein supplements and antibiotics. Everything on these farms is calculated to maximise meat yield: from the mixture in each animal's feed to the size of run-off channels carrying the animal's waste into giant toxic lagoons. The source imagery for the pictures was gathered from publicly available satellite imaging applications online.'

Above: "Untitled", 2000-2010, Kharkiv, Ukraine.
Below: "Black Diamond Feeders Inc, Herington Air Base, Kansas", 2013.
Opposite: "The Love Doll/Day 26 (Shoes)", 2010, Cornwall, Connecticut



Laurie Simmons, ► American, b. 1949
The Love Doll

'In 2009 I began a new chapter of my work and ordered a custom, high-end "Love Doll" from Japan. I was fascinated and disturbed by the idea that a life-size, lifelike body could be bought and arrive packaged in a box, entering your home as a commodity to be used and fetishised. As the series progressed, the first days of formal and shy poses gave way to an increasing familiarity. We see the doll enacting and indulging fantasies of unnecessary excess in western culture – naively relishing 20lbs of costume jewellery while seeming to be trapped and engulfed in so much material waste, dressed in brand-name fashion or surrounded by enormous amounts of candy. It's as if she is discovering, and perhaps becoming nauseated by, her own purpose – a surrogate body for desire – through her interactions with material goods.'





▲ **Adam Bartos, American, b. 1953**
Yard Sale
 'I am preoccupied, without sentimentality, by how the passage of time affects our perceptions of our built environment and seemingly mundane objects. Yard sales, with their shifting still lifes of everyday items, recycle essential household goods and clothing within an affordable range. In this way they significantly extend the life of objects, helping to regulate consumption and reduce waste. This form of localised business has grown during the

recession. The yard-sale economy contrasts starkly with the "Walmartisation" of America, which relies heavily on the rapid exploitation of natural resources and employs fossil-fuel-intensive processes to enable the global manufacture and transport of new goods to market.'



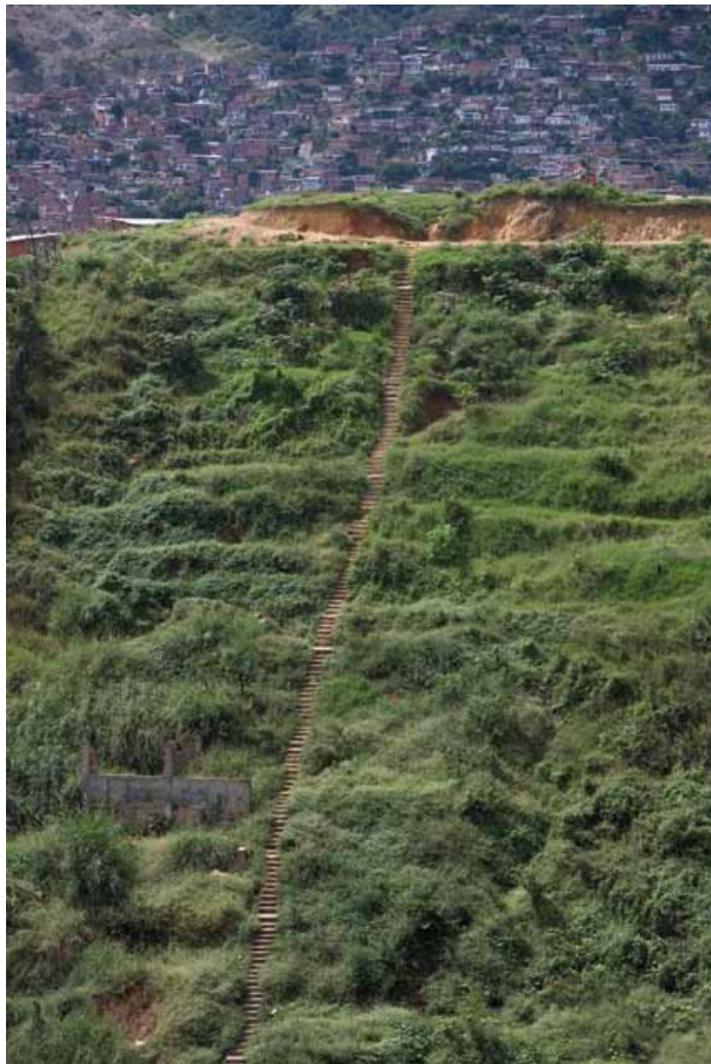
▶ **Abraham Oghobase, Nigerian, b. 1979**
Untitled 2012
 'Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria, is a city of over 10 million people where the daily struggle for space extends from accommodation to advertising (and everything in between). Every available surface, from signboards to the sides of buildings, is plastered with hundreds of handbills, posters and scrawled texts advertising the many and diverse services offered by the city's enterprising residents, drivers of a large, robust, informal economy. Validating the authenticity of the information in these ads is a complex task for the consumer, due to the disorganised mode of presentation and often incomplete details. My engagement with a wall of "classifieds" serves to question the effectiveness of this guerilla marketing.'



Left, top: "Ernie & Mattress", 2008, New York State; left, "Vacuum", 2006, New York State. Opposite, top: "Untitled", 2012, Lagos. Right: "Lebensmittel", 2006-2010



◀ **Michael Schmidt, German, b. 1945**
Lebensmittel (Food)
 In this examination of industrialised food production, Michael Schmidt covers the entire cycle from cultivation and production, to processing, packaging, distribution and sale. He travelled to fields, factories, farms, warehouses and supermarkets across Europe but none of the locations is identified, a decision which serves to emphasise the standardised procedures that deliver so much of what we find on our supermarket shelves.



Above left: "Itinerarios 2", 2009; right, "Central Aisle", 2008, Medellín, Colombia

◀ **Juan Fernando Herrán,** Colombian, b. 1963
Escalas (Steps)
 'What happens to people who can barely participate in consumer society? This series was made in Medellín, Colombia's second most important city, where new groups are settling in the boundary zone between the urban and rural areas, turning it into a territory linked to the concept of the city more by an imaginary belonging than

any real participation. As the borders of the city expand, the rural environment is consumed and the space between the two becomes a hybrid, indeterminate and ambiguous. Paths and architecture have to be rethought. Materials reflect the demands of a sustainable way of life – perhaps also a more democratic one. Nothing to throw away, nothing to exchange; dreams and work aligned in pursuit of the most basic needs.'



Below: "Leiden March 14 1994"; "Leidschendam June 25 2003"; "March 24 2007"

▶ **Motoyuki Daifu,** Japanese, b. 1985
Project Family
 'My mother sleeps every day. My dad does chores. My brothers fight. There are trash bags all over the place. Half-eaten dinners, cat poop, mountains of clothes; this is my lovable daily life, and a lovable Japan.'



Above: "Project Family #07", 2007, Kanagawa, Japan. Below: "Hammerhead crane, American President Lines terminal", 1992, San Pedro, California

The Prix Pictet exhibition runs from May 22 to June 14 at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan will announce the winner on May 21. "Prix Pictet in Conversation", an evening of public discussion with critics, artists and curators on the subject of consumption, will be held at the V&A on May 22; tickets from vam.ac.uk



◀ **Rineke Dijkstra,** Dutch, b. 1959
Almerisa
 Rineke Dijkstra first met Almerisa in 1994 at a refugee centre in the Netherlands. She was five years old and had just arrived with her family from Bosnia. Over the next 14 years, Dijkstra photographed Almerisa one or two years apart, and each portrait shows how her appearance changes as she adjusts to Dutch culture. From a shy Bosnian girl she grows up to be a young western woman wearing the right-branded clothes and fashionable make-up. She is building up her image, just as she sees everyone else doing around her. In the last portrait in the series (not shown), Almerisa has a child of her own.

▶ **Allan Sekula,** American, 1951–2013
Fish Story
 In July 1989 the last unionised shipyard in Los Angeles harbour closed. Although the city now handles the largest volume of maritime trade of any port in the Americas, ships are no longer built there. Most of the giant container ships, stacked high with the uniform metal boxes that give this trade the appearance of a purely abstract movement of goods, are built by the underpaid, overworked and increasingly militant welders and shipwrights of South Korea. The abandoned shipyards of Los Angeles and San Francisco now come to life briefly as sets for Hollywood movies.

