

## 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

Galerie Kashya Hildebrand presents the award-winning photographer Tiina Itkonen in another solo show four years after first introducing her to Zurich. 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."

The Arctic landscape of Greenland has fascinated generations of explorers, adventurers, merchants and whalers. Since 1990, 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 and 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 expansive landscapes and the peaceful lifestyle of the Inuit have cast a spell on the photographer, making her homesick for Greenland whenever she is back in Helsinki. She longs for the Inuit way of life, one without feverish haste, and for the silence and beauty of Northern Greenland. Her most recent works, which are part of this exhibition, belong to a series of projects that she has been working on for several years.

Itkonen has chosen the rather unusual large-scale panorama format for many of her new works as they allow her to capture the vastness of these landscapes much better than other traditional formats. Recurring motifs such as the Ilulissat icefjord, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004, or the village of Qaanaaq convey the stillness and breathtaking beauty of Greenland. Grand white icebergs, whose sharp, jagged contours emerge from the dark sea, or drifting icebergs that seem to dissolve in the mist are contrasted with colourful small houses dotting the immense 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. Itkonen is fascinated by the phenomenon where, like a diamond, ice absorbs a wide spectrum of colour nuances from crystal clear to matte grey, and all shades of white and shimmering blues.

Despite the timeless beauty [recorded](#) in these photographs, there is also [an implicit](#) awareness of the threat to the environment due to global warming. [Having heard](#) stories told by the local Inuit hunters, but also having observed the effects of climate change herself over the past decade, Itkonen is very much concerned about these effects on [the](#) people and [on the](#) 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 [encourage them to reflect on](#) 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: in 2008, the Kitzbühl Museum; in 2009, the FOAM Amsterdam, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, the Nationales Fotomuseum Kopenhagen and the Shiseido Gallery in Tokyo; and, earlier this year, she was represented at the Sydney Biennale.

### Opening in the presence of the artist:

Thursday, 16 December 2010, 6–8 pm

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 11–6.30 pm, Saturday 12–4pm or by appointment

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### For further information please contact:

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