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The striking works of the Prix Pictet shortlist

From Siân Davey to Gauri Gill, the photographers competing for the prestigious award are deeply impressive.

By Gerry Brakus



From 'The Garden' by Siân Davey

Every July, the global photography community descends on Arles for what is arguably Europe's most important photo festival, Les Rencontres d'Arles. This Roman town in the south of France – with its churches, galleries and cobbled streets – offers a striking backdrop for exhibitions, parties, and the unveiling of the photographers shortlisted for the prestigious Prix Pictet award.

The Prix Pictet, founded in 2008, draws attention to social and environmental issues with themes such as “Water”, “Growth” and, this year, “Human”. The breadth of these subjects means they can be interpreted using different forms, from photojournalism to fine art. “Human” seems to have resonated with photographers: the shortlist is impressive, and includes works by Yael Martínez, Vasantha Yogananthan and Vanessa Winship.



From Luciérnaga (Firefly) by Yael Martínez



From *Sweet Nothings*: Schoolgirls from the Borderlands of Eastern Anatolia by Vanessa Winship

A personal favourite (main image) is Siân Davey's *The Garden*. It was inspired by her son, who suggested during the pandemic that they open

the abandoned back garden of their rented family home on the estate of Dartington Hall. The pair brought in native flowers, new soil and biodiversity, and sourced organic local seeds. “As the flowers opened, we called in the community; the mothers and daughters, grandparents, the lonely, the marginalised, teenagers, new lovers, the heartbroken,” writes Davey.



From *Paths of Desperate Hope* by Federico Ríos Escobar



From Notes from the Desert by Gauri Gill

Other entries include Gauri Gill's striking black and white images of people in a desert landscape in Rajasthan, and Hoda Afshar's colourful pictures exploring the complex history of a set of islands on the southern coast of Iran.

Works by the 12 artists will be presented at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, where the winner will be revealed on 28 September.