

JOËL TETTAMANTI

## COMPASS POINTS

February 15 - August 31, 2013

KURTZ GALLERY  
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY,  
MIT MUSEUM

Cambridge, Massachusetts



Joël Tettamanti, Qaqortoq, Greenland, 2004

**MIT Museum Presents First US Exhibition By Photographer Joël Tettamanti**  
***Compass Points: Joël Tettamanti* on view February 15 through August 31, 2013**

Media contacts:

Leah Talatinian: [leaht@mit.edu](mailto:leaht@mit.edu) / 617-253-5351

Josie Patterson: [josiep@mit.edu](mailto:josiep@mit.edu) / 617-253-4422

Opening reception at the MIT Museum on February 14 from 6-8pm. Open to the public.

**Cambridge, MA, February 14, 2013** - The MIT Museum presents [\*Compass Points: Joël Tettamanti\*](#). The exhibition in the Kurtz Gallery for Photography at the MIT Museum features over 70 works by the contemporary photographer in his first US exhibition, on view February 15 through August 31, 2013. This exhibition, curated by Gary Van Zante, MIT Museum Curator of Architecture and Design, is sponsored by Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council, and swissnex Boston.

The Swiss photographer Tettamanti creates works that focus on the impact of human settlement on the landscape, from Asia to the Arctic Circle. The images are often without people, examining instead the contradiction of human frailty and resilience, and the relationships people form with the land. His work is a vast archive of the structures, villages, and cities people create, and of the landforms and climates that shape them.

Like many photographers who have been drawn to archive the world, Tettamanti's interest lies beyond collecting artifacts of the human imprint on the land. The questions he asks of a place – why things look the way they do, and how they came about – lead to profoundly social narratives about the people who are uplifted and sometimes defeated by the land they inhabit.

Tettamanti gravitates toward inhospitable environments where these relationships play out in spectacle: the juxtaposition of sublime natural beauty and buildings of startling banality, or ingenuity, or of land seemingly without limit and the meager architecture put upon it. The story can be one of use and misuse, where urban sprawl or industrial incursions have degraded the land and corrupted its beauty, as well as one of human adaptability and resourcefulness. The land is shaped by people as much as it shapes them.

His quest as an artist recalls the expeditionary photography of the American West in the nineteenth century, when territories previously unexplored by Americans were opened to visual imagination by the camera. Today, when technology and globalization make distant cultures accessible, there is still a sense of revelation in Tettamanti's work. For this artist, much like the nineteenth-century pioneers of the medium, photography remains a means of understanding the world, and retains the power to astonish with images of places that exist beyond the imagination.

### **About the artist**

Joël Tettamanti was born in 1977 in Efoek, Cameroon, and grew up in Lesotho and Switzerland. He studied photography at ECAL, Lausanne, where his teachers were Pierre Fantys and Nicolas Faure. Following his studies, he worked as an assistant to the photographer Guido Mocafico in Paris. Tettamanti is established as a commercial and media photographer for clients such as Wallpaper\*, Kvadrat, and international architects. His work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Europe, and has been the subject of several monographs, including *Local Studies* (2007) and *Davos* (2009). He lives in Lausanne.



Joël Tettamanti, Seoul, South Korea, 2011

### **Events with the artist**

Gallery tours with Joël Tettamanti

Saturday, February 16, 2013

11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

MIT Museum

*Free with Museum admission.* Tickets required for the limited capacity tours (available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning half an hour before each tour).

### *Contemporary Photography of Place: A Roundtable Discussion*

Tuesday, April 23, 2013

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

swissnex Boston | Consulate of Switzerland

420 Broadway, Cambridge MA

Panel members:

Edie Bresler, Simmons College

Kristen Gresh, Museum of Fine Arts

Jan Howard, RISD Museum

Joanne Lukitsh, Massachusetts College of Art and Design

Margaret Morton, Cooper Union, New York

Kim Sichel, Boston University

Joël Tettamanti, ECAL, Lausanne

Gary Van Zante, MIT Museum

### **About the Curator**

Gary Van Zante is the MIT Museum's Curator of Architecture and Design and interim Director of Exhibitions and Gallery Planning. He has curated over fifty exhibitions ranging from Renaissance architectural graphics to contemporary design practice and photography. His photographic exhibitions at MIT have featured the work of photographers Berenice Abbott, Gabrielle Basilico, Margaret Morton, and Cervin Robinson, among others. He is the author of a recent study of nineteenth century urban photography.

## **About the MIT Museum**

The MIT Museum's mission is to engage the wider community with MIT's science, technology and other areas of scholarship in ways that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century. The Museum features two floors filled with ongoing and changing exhibitions, currently with an emphasis on robotics, photography and holography, MIT history, and current MIT research. The Museum presents monthly programs that appeal to middle school students and older, and presents the annual Cambridge Science Festival in late April.

## **About the Arts at MIT**

The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. They are rooted in experimentation, risk-taking and imaginative problem-solving. The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human, and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify our motto - *mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century. <http://arts.mit.edu>

## **Visitor Information**

MIT Museum

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

265 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02139 USA

P: 617.253.5927 | [museuminfo@mit.edu](mailto:museuminfo@mit.edu) | <http://web.mit.edu/museum/>

Open Daily 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Closed major holidays

General admission, \$8.50 for adults; Youth under 18, students, seniors: \$4

Free Admission:

- All MIT ID Holders
- Children under 5 (does not apply to groups)
- Sundays 10 a.m. - noon
- 2nd Friday of each month, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Subway, bus and parking:

Red Line T to Central Square or Kendall Square; #1 Bus

Parking is available at the MIT Visitor Lot on the corner of Vassar Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

Paid parking on weekdays until 5, free after 5pm weekdays and weekends.

Metered street parking is also available.

###