

# *Pentti Sammallahti*

Pentti Sammallahti is one of Finland's most important photographers. He was a teacher...

...at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki before obtaining, in 1991, a grant from the Finnish government, which allowed him to give up teaching and concentrate entirely on his work. Sammallahti works within the classical black-and-white tradition of photography.

As a photographer he is not interested in events but, rather, in the places to which he travels and the people whom he encounters. His approach is influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson, from whose work he adopted the idea of the decisive moment, meaning the ability of photography to capture a unique

moment in the flux of time, and the importance of harmony and balance in the composition of a picture. Recording his surroundings, he has traveled through countries like Iceland, Lapland, Russia, Nepal, or Japan, favoring those with cool climates similar to Finland.

As a photographic globetrotter, Sammallahti leaves the beaten track in order to photograph remote locations, places where people still live in close contact with nature. While maintaining a distance which is both respectful of his subjects and necessary in order to capture any given scene, Sammallahti succeeds in imbuing his photographs with a sense of lyrical intimacy.

Possessed of a profound sense of humor, he is fond of taking pictures of animals with comical behaviors or in amusing situations. Sammallahti has a special relation to man's best friend and many of his photographs are extremely entertaining pictures of dogs engaged in living out their doggie lives.

A great lover of nature, Sammallahti often combines the landscape with his portraits of people and animals. But he also pays tribute to nature's beauty in remarkable, highly contemplative landscape photographs. > *Pentti Sammallahti was born in 1950 in Helsinki, Finland. He was a teacher of*

*photography at the University of Art and Design Helsinki from 1974 to 1991.*