

# ARTnews

## Reviews: New York

### Subhankar Banerjee

Gerald Peters

Subhankar Banerjee's expansive, crystalline views of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge first got wide public exposure in 2003, when Senator Barbara Boxer (D.-Calif.) used them to argue

ing, silently refuted the government's stance that this terrain is a "flat white nothingness." —Hilarie M. Sheets



Subhankar Banerjee, *Bear Den I*, 2002, ultrachrome print, 30" x 40".  
Gerald Peters.

effectively against drilling for oil in northeastern Alaska. These powerful photographs were shown here in Banerjee's first solo gallery show.

Born in India, the self-taught artist began as a scientist before switching to art. The 30 large-format, unmanipulated photographs on view here vividly document an arduous two-year, 4,000-mile journey begun in 2001 in which Banerjee traveled with a native guide.

To capture *Bear Den I*, an image of a tunnel freshly dug out of gleaming snow surrounded by big and little polar-bear paw prints on a luminous frosty plain, Banerjee spent 28 days in a tent in minus-70-degree weather waiting for the mother and her cub to leave.

More typical were broad aerial shots of mountains, rivers, lakes, and plains undergoing seasonal changes. Some were punctuated by migrating snow geese or caribou that, from a soaring vantage point, read more as abstract patterns against the ground. The vivid colors were a surprise—whether the tangerine sky of a sunrise in an ice fog over grazing musk ox or the saturated blue water splicing burnt terra-cotta swirls of land in an abstracted composition evocative of paintings by Antoni Tàpies. These images, summoning a sense of the sublime in the tradition of 19th-century American landscape paint-