

PRESS RELEASE

Minneapolis Institute of Art Opens 'Todd Webb in Africa: Outside the Frame'

New exhibition presents rediscovered color photographs of nine different African nations in 1958



Todd Webb. American, 1905-2000. *Untitled (44UN-7930-609), Somaliland (Somalia), 1958* (detail). Archival pigment print. 20x20 inches (image). 22x22 inches (sheet). © Todd Webb Archive. L2020.85.81.

Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 Third Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
artsmia.org

MINNEAPOLIS—January 21, 2021—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) today announced the opening of "Todd Webb in Africa: Outside the Frame," an exhibition of more than 80 photographs taken by celebrated photographer Todd Webb as part of a diplomatic assignment for the United Nations in 1958. Through nine thematic sections, the exhibition presents a photographic series only recently recovered by Betsy Evans Hunt of the Todd Webb Archive and co-organized by Casey Riley, curator and head of Photography and New Media at Mia; Jan-Lodewijk Grootaers, curator and head of Arts of Africa and the Americas; Aimée Bessire, lecturer in Art and Visual Culture at Bates College; and Erin Hyde Nolan, visiting assistant professor at the Maine College of Art. Accompanying the exhibition is a 256-page book published by Thames & Hudson (January 2021) and edited by Aimée Bessire and Erin Hyde Nolan, with contributions from Ali Jimale Ahmed, James Barnor, Rehema Chachage, Emmanuel Iduma, Christraud M. Geary, Jan-Lodewijk Grootaers, Betsy Evans Hunt, Casey Riley, and Gary van Wyk.

Commissioned by the United Nations to document emerging industries and technologies in Ghana, Kenya, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Somalia, Sudan, Togoland (now Togo), and Tanganyika and Zanzibar (both now Tanzania), Webb's early color photographs went largely unused by the U.N.'s publications.

The underutilization of the commission after 1958 is vital to the show's critical lens. "The neglect or suppression of Webb's photographs by the United Nations mandates a closer investigation, and animates our interpretation of the images, as well as our attempts to understand his intentions in creating them," Riley said. "I'm delighted to open the conversation surrounding these complicated works in Minneapolis and look forward to learning from community discussions of them."

Webb's photographs present an outsider's view onto the social, political, and cultural dynamics on the continent at a critical period between colonialism and independence. Resisting stereotypical or exoticizing frameworks, Webb created images of countries on the cusp of change. At the same time, his photographs raise important questions concerning photographic agency and power, racial and national privilege, and the ways in which Euro-Americans conceived of modernization at a crucial period in Africa's history.

Mia

An online exhibition accompanying the show is featured on Mia's website and may be viewed here:
<https://collections.artsmia.org/exhibitions/2830/todd-webb-in-africa>

Installation photographs may be viewed here:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/k7euhq8pfeqvuid/AACX5L8xZinA6Hzk_PsSFeoXa/FullJPEGs?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1

Press Contacts

Michaela Baltasar-Feyen
+1 612 870 3280
mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org

About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours

Thursday-Sunday	10am–5pm
Monday-Wednesday	Closed

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org

Mia