



not all realisms

photography, Africa,
and the long 1960s

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SMART MUSEUM OF ART
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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acknowledgments

After beginning my role as a two-year Curatorial Fellow for Diversity in the Arts at the Smart Museum of Art in 2019, I immediately took notice of four photographs in the museum's collection made by African photographers. Acquired through the bequest of Lester and Betty Guttman in 2014, there was a print by the Malian photographer Malick Sidibé: his much-celebrated photograph of a pair of young dancers at a party in Bamako in 1963. And there were three photographs by the South African photographer Ernest Cole from the project that became his book, published in 1967, *House of Bondage: A South African Black Man Exposes in His Own Pictures and Words the Bitter Life of His Homeland Today*.

I looked at the works by Sidibé and Cole and thought a lot about the sixties. I thought about the very different spaces and conditions represented by these photographs and the different photographic traditions through which they were made. I thought about how they informed my own imaginings about the sixties, a time that I didn't personally experience but which has felt culturally and politically alive in my life. This came especially through the photographs and stories that my parents share, having immigrated to the United States from Jamaica in that decade, emphatically embracing their lives in Brooklyn, New York—so stylish and so engaged. And I thought about the ways that the work of photographers like Sidibé and Cole have circulated, creating complex and enduring influences on art and visual culture.

I had the chance to expand my research into those dynamics through the breadth and depth of the Melville

J. Herskovits Library of African Studies at Northwestern University. I am so grateful to Esmeralda Kale, Crystal Martin, and Gene Kannenberg for their incredible support and true collaboration in research. I am appreciative for the skill and generosity of Susan Russick, Lindsay Williams, and Benn Joseph, also at Northwestern, in shepherding the loans and making it possible for us to present these materials with so much care. My time in the Herskovits collection was deeply informed by my research at the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand. Looking closely at the Ernest Cole papers and the mix of government pamphlets, popular magazines, academic journals, and handwritten notes contained therein that was especially revealing of the complex interplay of materials that informed Cole's work and those of his contemporaries. My thanks to Gabriele Mohale and Elizabeth Marima for their assistance in accessing that collection at Wits.

I am also deeply indebted to the efforts and generosity of the team at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library and the Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, especially Nancy Spiegel, Patti Gibbons, and Samuel Brown, and the University of Chicago Library Map Collection. And I am grateful for the assistance of Bridget Madden, Allie Scholten, and the Visual Resources Center in the Department of Art History.

Through the amazing support of The Paul and Miriam Kirkley Fund for Acquisitions and The Ziegler-Orloff Family Fund, the Smart Museum acquired eleven photographs by the Ghanaian photographer James Barnor in 2021. It is thrilling for all of these works to be on view in this exhibition.

This show is indebted to its generous lenders: Art Institute of Chicago; The University of Chicago Booth School of Business Art Collection with the kind support of Canice Pendergast; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum with the kind support of Jeffrey Warda; International Center of Photography; Philadelphia Museum of Art with the kind support of Peter Barberie; Janis Mendelsohn; Milwaukee Art Museum; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Northwestern University Library; Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College with the kind support of Rachel Seligman and Rebecca McNamara; Goodman Gallery with the kind support of Justin Davy, Rebecca Wengrowe, Alex Leite-Pinheiro, and Lucas Gabellini-Fava; Liza Essers; Ernest Cole Foundation; Sam Nhlengethwa; and the University of Chicago Library.

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Thank you Unyimeabasi Udoh for being more than a designer on this project. You have been a true collaborator, and I am so glad that we could build a vision for this project together.

And thank you so much Lillien Waller for the attention, care, and patience that you have extended to this project as its editor. I am grateful for your attentive reading and our dialogue.

I am beyond grateful to the team at the Smart Museum of Art and the greater University of Chicago community for supporting this thinking and the exhibition that it has generated in the form of *not all realisms: photography, Africa, and the long 1960s*. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to radically reshape time around the globe, I have needed to rethink the scope and checklist of this project multiple times. Negotiating those fits and starts, this exhibition is coming to fruition two years after the end of my fellowship. And I am deeply appreciative for the opportunity to see that through with the enthusiastic support of the Smart's Dana Feitler Director, Dr. Vanja Malloy. This project has also been shepherded by the invaluable encouragement and suggestions of Stephanie Smith, Amina Dickerson, Bill Michel, and Jill Sterrett. And I am truly thankful to Ali Gass, Melissa Gilliam, and Issa Lampe for their collective vision for the Curatorial Fellowship that made it possible for me to embark on this project. The Feitler Center has been steadfast in supporting the completion of this endeavor.

Manifesting this project would have been impossible without the tremendous efforts of coordinating curator Berit Ness and exhibition and publication manager Gail Ana Gomez. Thank you so much for doing the most—always—to corral an unwieldy checklist and my unwieldy schedule. Your belief in seeing this through and all of the energy that you put into making it happen have carried this project. I am sincerely grateful to Emily Edwards for bringing all of the pieces together with a blend of positivity, grit, and hustle. And Ray Klemchuk and Derek Ernster: thank you for your tremendous patience, humor, and skill to build this show so thoughtfully.

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I am also grateful for the feedback I received from students at Bard College when I presented material early in this project's development.

My thanks go to colleagues and friends at Purchase College, State University of New York, who were supportive of the leave that I took to embark on this project and the ways that it informed my teaching there: Elizabeth Guffey, Paul Kaplan, Jane Kromm, Aviva Taubenfeld, Sarah Warren, and Jonah Westerman. And I extend deepest thanks to my colleagues at the Art Institute of Chicago for their support and encouragement to complete this project: Jill Bugajski, Rachel Echiverri Rowland, and Sarah Guernsey.

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Leslie M. Wilson

Curator of *not all realisms: photography, Africa, and the long 1960s*

introduction

Leslie M. Wilson

For many parts of Africa, to refer to the 1960s is to gesture broadly toward a time of great transformation: the postcolonial turn. That decade's beginning marks a wave of national independence movements coming to fruition in all parts of the continent with far-reaching consequences around the globe. But it marks an era of sweeping change bound up in a chain of events long preceding the neat demarcations of a watershed decade—1960 to 1970—with ramifications that reach potently into our present. Moreover, any discussions merely offering a colonial/postcolonial dichotomy or framed through the nation-state betray the far more complex collective and individual experiences of that time and the visual representations taking place within it.

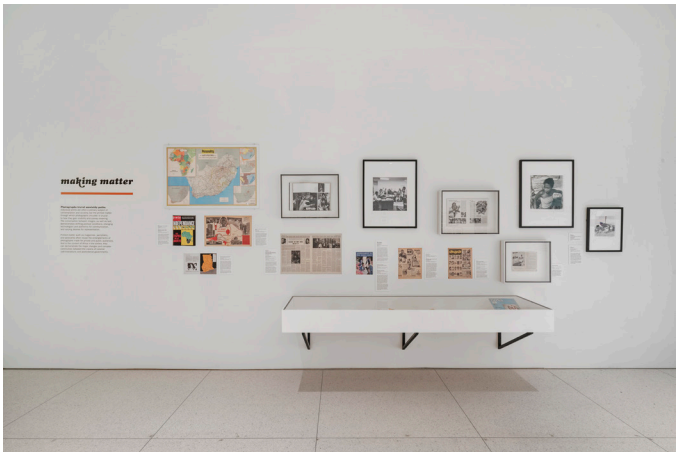
The sixties were a long time coming. The sixties keep coming back.

Often the words “euphoria” and “zeal” find their way into descriptions of the 1960s, specifically tied to the immediate time of independence. These words are then typically followed by mention of joy that was short-lived, interrupted, and/or upended amid new political contests and instability. In that sense, the sixties not only mark new beginnings but also suggest unfinished business, a time not truly over, their imagery frequently revived, their nostalgia pervasive. The art historian and curator James Meyer has described the “long 1960s” as “an ideological notion,” one that accounts for about a twenty-five-year span of time in which “old regimes of oppression—colonialism, segregation, patriarchy,

and heteronormativity—were challenged or collapsed outright.”¹ Meyer associates the long 1960s not only with nostalgia (and its rejection, a kind of anti-nostalgia for the sixties’ quixotic tendencies) but also with the desire for a chance to become new. Against other constructions of the sixties as “decadal,” firmly delimited by calendar time, or oriented around “sixty-eight” as apex or dénouement, Meyer characterizes the long 1960s as “perpetually deferred, forever unfulfilled,” and, especially for the purposes of this exhibition, they represent a refusal to end.² The sixties hold a promise as yet to be delivered, and are, therefore, far more expansive than a mere ten years.

not all realisms: photography, Africa, and the long 1960s reaches back to the 1950s and into the present to examine photography in Ghana, Mali, and South Africa in the long 1960s. In centering the matter of “realisms,” this exhibition departs from the frequent impulse to treat a diverse body of photography—ranging from studio portraits and magazine photo essays to tourist snapshots and book-length photographic studies—as a window through which to read people and places. That impulse is often undergirded by a profound—almost irresistible—desire to find evidence of independence, assertive cosmopolitanisms, and new solidarities.

So much of the African studio and event photography associated in the present day with the decadal 1960s and the more expansive notion of the sixties that reaches before and after them, returned or was altogether introduced to public consciousness in the 1990s. At first couched in the language of (re-)discovery by curators around the turn of the twenty-first century, the expanded



Installation views of *not all realisms: photography, Africa, and the long 1960s*, Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, 2023.

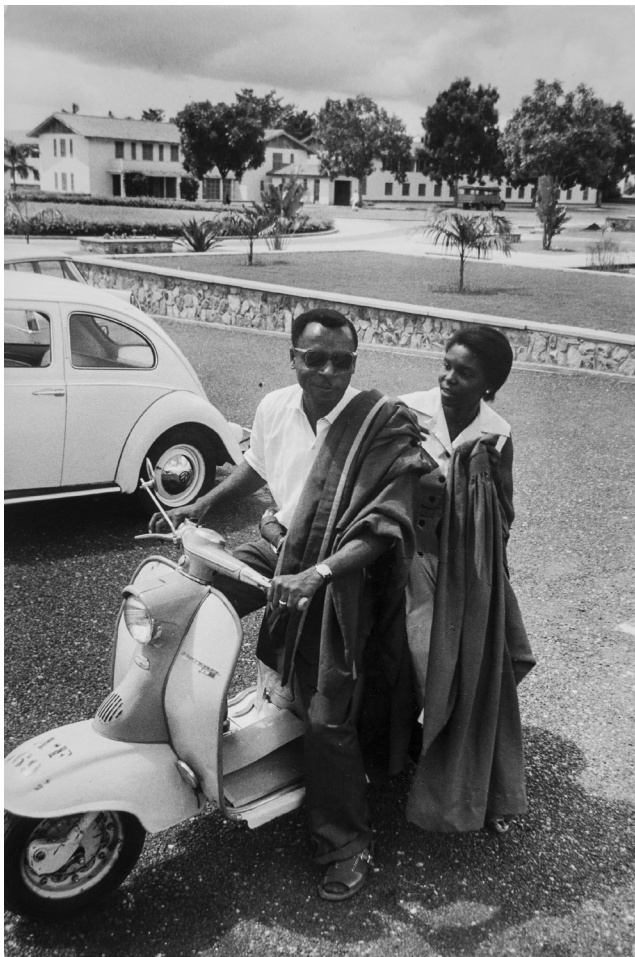
audience and attention for that work demonstrates photography being taken seriously in a new way in local and international institutional contexts, as art, as history, as material. It's a story of business practicalities and government pressures. It's also a story of erasure, delay, forgetting, and becoming.

In this exhibition, the long 1960s is loose, expansive, looping, broken, hiccupping, coughing, singing, dancing. What is photography's capacity to convey what happened? What if the independence sought in that era was far more personal than the emphasis on nationalist and international solidarity movements has let us observe? When can we really mark the beginning and end of a decolonial movement? Is the opposite of post-independence euphoria a coup? How does the time of official apartheid in South Africa connect to a longer history of white supremacist policies, the end of the Union, the beginning of the Republic, the simmering of resistance? Can political movements come of age? Can they lose their innocence? Can they retire, die, be reborn? How does local time connect to national time? To continental time? To global time?

not all realisms looks to photographs, their circulation, their material, and old and new claims about them to consider the realisms they construct and convey, as well as those that they challenge and even defy. And with appreciation for the reflections and analysis that follow from University of Chicago faculty and students present in this booklet, it delights in the many narratives that these photographs can spark about an era still coming into view.

notes

- 1** James Meyer, *The Art of Return: The Sixties & Contemporary Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 37.
- 2** Ibid.



1: Marc Riboud, *Two students arrive at the University of Accra with academic gowns, Ghana, circa 1960*, gelatin silver print.

decolonization through multiple lenses

Adom Getachew

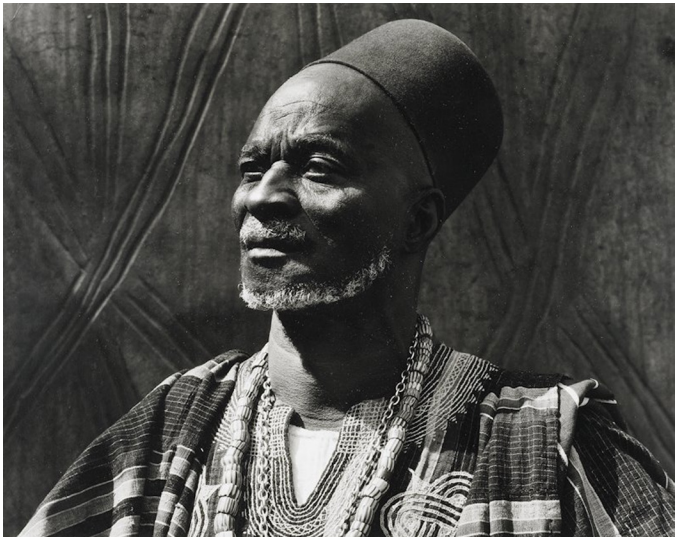
The struggle for national independence across Africa sharply foregrounded the deep connection between political and cultural representation. Nationalist movements like Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP), which swept to power in the 1950s and led Ghana to independence in 1957, sutured its vision of a developmental state to images of a new Ghana on the make. This was a youthful Ghana that eschewed traditional authority and norms to embrace modernization. Two images by the French photographer Marc Riboud are representative of this narrative: *Two students arrive at the University of Accra with academic gowns* and the young woman whose image is labelled *Army, Navy, and Airforce* [figs. 1 and 2]. Education and gender equality featured prominently in the Nkrumahist vision of modern Ghana. The University of Ghana, which started at the University College of the Gold Coast, a branch of the University of London, was renamed University College of Ghana at independence and achieved full university status four years later in 1961. The students are pictured just before this transformation, but they are likely to have felt the energy and enthusiasm that surrounded the making of a new postcolonial university. Arriving on a moped (perhaps a little late), the students exude a cool, a nonchalance, a confidence that links them to their peers around the world who ushered in the revolutions of the 1960s. The woman pictured here, like the woman in the image of the armed forces, is likely to have been amongst a small minority of women attending the university. Though

celebrated as marking a new era of gender equality, these pioneering women would have likely found themselves experiencing persistent forms of sexism and gendered hierarchy within the modernizing Ghana.

Because Nkrumah's vision of decolonization ultimately prevailed, we forget that the developmental, centralized and modernizing state was not the only vision of independent Ghana. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Nkrumah's CPP contended with rival conceptions of post-colonial politics. The most sustained and consequential challenge came from native authorities or chieftaincies who sought to sustain their customary rights and privileges and articulated a vision of federation. Nkrumah and his allies were quick to dismiss the demands of chiefs and their supporters as vestiges of an aristocratic past



2: Marc Riboud, *Army Navy and Airforce, Ghana*, 1960, gelatin silver print.



3: Paul Strand, *Awoleba Adda, the Navropio of Navrongo, Ghana*, 1963, gelatin silver print.

that should have no claim on a modern and democratic nation. But this was too simple a dichotomy for the complex relationship between chieftaincy and the emerging postcolonial politics of the era. On the one hand, the CPP relied in certain instances on support from chiefs and never fully implemented its project of undoing chieftaincy as the party had promised. On the other hand, chiefs that opposed the CPP proved equally adept at deploying the technologies of modern politics from the political party to mass mobilization.

Paul Strand's *Awoleba Adda, the Navropio of Navrongo, Ghana* [fig. 3], pictures the chief of Navrongo, located in

the northeast region of Ghana. The Navropio was a CPP supporter. Strand pictures him here as a statesman. He uses a similar bust-length, side profile for a picture of Nkrumah, found elsewhere in his book *Ghana: An African Portrait*, suggesting a parallelism between the two figures. But where Nkrumah appears in a simple

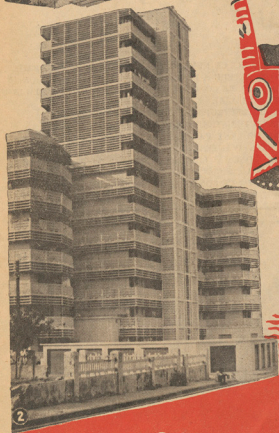


4: James Barnor, *National Liberation Movement Political Rally, Ghana, Kumasi*, 1956 printed 2017, enlarged silver print from original negative.

button-down white shirt, the Navropio appears decked out and invested with more than earthly political authority.

The picture of a National Liberation Movement (NLM) rally [fig. 4] by James Barnor gives yet another window into the politics of chieftaincy. NLM emerged in 1954 from Asante dissatisfaction with Nkrumah's centralized vision of the state and advocated for a federated structure that secured Asante autonomy. In elections two years later, the NLM won twelve of the 104 parliamentary seats. In this picture we cannot see the size of the crowd, but something appears to have captured the attention of the photo's primary subject. Moreover, this person has been so moved to inscribe the letters NLM on their body. The nationalist struggle for independence that Nkrumah led had depended on precisely these kinds of mass mobilizations and this kind of popular investment. But as the NLM made clear, no one vision or leader had a monopoly on the political imagination of the emerging postcolonial nation.

Decolonization, independence, and anti-apartheid struggle mark the long 1960s in Africa, but through these photos we might come to understand the multiplicity and contestation that characterized these political projects.



LE MALI INDEPENDANT



"le mali indépendant" in bingo magazine

Emily Lynn Osborn



LEGENDES

- 1.—VUE PARTIELLE DE DAKAR PLATEAU;
- 2.—IMMEUBLE ADMINISTRATIF DE LA PLACE DE L'ETOILE;
- 3.—CASES AIR-FORM;
- 4.—CHUTES DE GOUNA SUR LE SENEGAL AUX ENVIRONS DE KAYES;
- 5.—ENTREE DE LA MOSQUEE DE DJENNE;
- 6.—MARCHE DE BAMAKO.

LE premier Mali était, en l'an 1000, un terroir d'environ 50 kilomètres de rayon, à quelques heures du confluent du Sankarani et du Niger, en amont de l'actuel Bamako (qui n'existait pas encore). C'est de ce minuscule royaume que devait naître le plus grand empire africain, comme la France est née elle-même de la petite Ile de France. Son créateur fut l'empereur Soundiata (1230-1255). Il était le fils de Maré Famakhon Konaté, roi du Mali (1218-1230) et de Soungouloun Khoutouma.

Le « Nini », cette rhapsodie légendaire du Mali, analogue à l'Illiade d'Homère chante ses hauts faits où le courage s'allie à la sagesse et l'expérience à la magie. Il commença par battre l'ennemi héréditaire du Mali, le Roi Soumangourou qui tentait de se tailler un empire dans les territoires de l'ancien royaume du Ghana. Il le vainquit un peu grâce à sa sœur, la belle Djégué Miniamba Souko qui partagea, une nuit, la couche de Soumangourou et à laquelle, dans une crise d'amour, celui-ci confia : Je

(VOIR PAGE SUIVANTE)

previous: Spread from “Le Mali Indépendant,” *Bingo*, July 1960.

As numbered on the two-page spread, from upper left and down, and then from upper right, and down.

1. Dakar Plateau
2. Administration Building
3. Air-form Houses
4. Gouina Falls, on the Senegal River in Mali
5. Mosque of Djenné
6. Bamako Market

In June 1960, the West African colonies of Senegal and French Sudan gained independence from France and joined together in a political federation. Dakar-based *Bingo* magazine celebrated this new era in July of that year with a two-page spread. But the Senegal-Mali federation did not endure. By the very next month, in August, it had cracked under the colliding ambitions and apprehensions of its two leaders, Léopold Senghor of Senegal and Modibo Keita of Mali. The moment of political partnership was, thus, a fleeting one, but *Bingo* nonetheless visually inscribed the possibilities of this political entity: the collapsing of colonial borders, the melding of “tradition” and modernity, and the deployment of natural and human resources to achieve a new future.

The graphic feature—“LE MALI INDÉPENDANT”—is divided roughly in half, with the images on the left pointing to an urban, modern future, and those on the right referring to foundational forms. On the upper left is Dakar’s Plateau neighborhood, once the seat of French colonial rule and the epicenter of white segregationist housing practices [1]. Now, *Bingo* implies, its long avenues, public squares, and modern high-rises—an example of which is illuminated by the close-up, below, of a glass and concrete administrative building—will serve the leaders and peoples of the new federation [2].

The accessibility of pathways to a modern, urban life is further signaled by the picture, in the lower left corner, of the “Cases Air-form,” also known as Air-form or Bubble houses [3]. In the face of housing shortages after World War II, French colonial urban planners turned to Wallace Neff, an American architect who built the earliest prototypes of the Bubble House in southern California. Housing-hungry countries around the world then took up the design, from South America to Africa to the Middle East. Made entirely of concrete, Bubble houses could be constructed cheaply and quickly. In Dakar, the French colonial government commissioned more than one thousand such houses in a planned community designed for members of Senegal’s growing middle class. The homes were completed in the early 1950s but, unfortunately, they failed to deliver. They leaked, retained heat, and proved difficult to outfit with running water and electricity. In Dakar, the inhabitants of Bubble houses proved as eager to move out of them as they had been to move in.¹ But the significance of Dakar’s Bubble houses—and the reason they were likely included in this particular montage—does not lie solely in their connection to a post-war global housing movement. With their slender doors, small windows, and circular footprint, the Bubble houses invoke an aesthetic similar to the round, mud brick, thatch-roofed, one-room structures that are commonplace in West Africa. The Bubble house design offers an urban, visual blend of tradition and modernity.

Moving to the right half of the spread, themes of regional forms and practices come into sharp focus. A Bamako market, built in Sudanese style, attracts crowds of people, engaged in commercial transactions [6]. A red

text box in the lower right corner delves into the long history of autonomous self-rule in West Africa's savannas, referencing the Mali Empire and its thirteenth-century founder, Sundiata Keita. Above that is a close-up of the Mosque at Djenné, serving adherents of Islam, the dominant spiritual faith of the federation [5]. Its adobe walls, pointed towers, and jutting wooden beams present a classic example of Sudanese architecture. Two graphic representations of masks interspersed through the spread—one with long horns and angular designs, the other studded by pointed tips—remind the viewer that, in this part of the world, Islam operates within a complex cosmological and spiritual landscape.

Continuing to the top of the page brings the viewer to the Chutes de Gouina [4]. These waterfalls are located on the Senegal River in Mali. Their powerful cascades invite awe and admiration, as well as consideration of how this ancient, basic resource could help to advance development within the federation, from agricultural production and transportation to hydroelectric power. That the Senegal River flows effortlessly through the former colonial territories of Mali into Senegal helps make the case for the territorial integrity of the new federation. That point is reinforced by the map at the center of the spread. In it, the historic, colonial border that divides the two territories is rendered as a light, dashed line, while the railroad boldly connects the two capital cities of Dakar and Bamako. The railroad that links these capitals together was built by the colonial state and is but one example of the way the sinews of so-called French rule persist and entwine the project of independence. That theme lurks through the collage, but it is not, unsurprisingly, emphasized.

At the center of the feature is the face of a Black, West African young woman: a confident smile, eyes sparkling with optimism, her head held firmly forward. Her origin, ethnic group, maternal language, and spiritual practice are left unnoted—a refreshing departure from the conventions of colonial portraiture which consistently described and designated individuals as representative types. It is, moreover, no coincidence that a young woman serves as the face of the federation. As elsewhere in the world, the idioms of 1960s independence movements positioned the contributions of men and women in neat, gendered lines. Men shouldered the responsibilities of politics and leadership, while women promoted the nation through their domestic, familial roles: by being good wives and mothers and by raising children to be good citizens. The political importance of women's productive and reproductive capacities is artfully described in Mariama Bâ's famous novel, *So Long a Letter*, which unfolds against the backdrop of Senegalese independence. In this poignant story of love, loss, and hope, one of the male characters declares: "Women are the nation's primary, fundamental root, from which all else grows and blossoms."²

The young woman at the center of this *Bingo* feature seems positioned to do just that. She is Malian. She is Senegalese. She is the federation. She is a bridge from past to future, from tradition to modernity. She embodies and emanates a bright, beautiful promise of what is to come and what can be.

notes

- 1** For more on Wallace Neff's Bubble houses in Dakar, see Gregory Valdespino, "At Home in Empire: The Politics of Dwelling in France and Senegal, 1914–1974," PhD diss., (University of Chicago, 2022), 233-37.
- 2** Mariama Bâ, *So Long a Letter*, trans. by Modupé Bodé-Thomas (1981; Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2012), 64.

ernest cole's hats and men

Kathryn Takabvirwa

On October 4, 1965, a train derailed near Durban. The *New York Times* reported that “[a]t least 100 Africans were feared killed and several hundred injured... when three coaches of a crowded passenger train were derailed.”¹ In Ernest Cole’s *Hats and Men Cram onto Train No. 3*, a crowd throngs around a train door. The pressures of life under apartheid propel them forward. To miss the train is to flinch as the *baas* calls you “boy,” slaps you hard across the face, and fires you. The colonial government dislocated black people to areas far removed from urban centers, racially segregating South Africa.² Trains were necessary for the crossing, for moving people as laborers into town and back.

What we see in the photo calls our attention to what we cannot see: the families people leave behind to go to work, the *dompas*—passbook—in each of their pockets.³ Passbooks dictated where they could go, authorizing them to work only for that *baas* to whom the train conveys them. Beyond the edges of the frame, the rest of the crowd gathered on the tracks or platform await their chance to squeeze into the photograph and onto the train. Those on the outer edges, yet to press into the throng, are countable, their faces visible. Cole’s contrast between the sun-lit people outside the train and the darkened interior into which they step reminds the viewer of other containers of apartheid infrastructure that converted people into masses: rows upon rows of township housing, hostels, prisons, Bantustans.



Ernest Cole, *Hats and Men Cram onto Train No. 3*, circa 1965, gelatin silver print.

It is 1965, ten years since the signing of the Freedom Charter cast a vision of what anti-apartheid fighters were seeking. The Freedom Charter declared that South Africa belonged “to all who live in it.”⁴ The people in the hats would have to wait almost thirty years before that vision could begin to be realized. Meanwhile, trains remained segregated by law, as provided by the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953. Outside of the photograph’s frame, we are invited to picture the unrushed, unpressed, uncongested white passengers, luxuriating in an abundance of space in their segregated carriages. The hardened body of the train cutting across the top of the photo, and the hands and arms of the passengers trying to hoist themselves in recall other hands: hands that made the train and laid the tracks, that cleared the land and shoveled the coal. Hands that welded, dug, shoveled, and bled.

Hats and Men Cram onto Train No. 3. I count seven hats with brims. I count six women. Two in berets, their pointy tips centered in the folded rounds. Two with no hats. And two with *doeks* tied around their heads.⁵ Men and women cram onto train number three. The year before this photo was taken, Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte released a cover of Basin Blue’s “*Wenyuk’umbombela*.”⁶ The train song. They sing of the early morning train ever threatening to leave you. The need to board that black box that can derail. One of the men in the photo holds what looks like a newspaper. One can almost hear the prayer to arrive safely, to disembark, to re-embark another day, to fight for freedom.

notes

- 1** “South Africa Crash Kills at Least 60,” *New York Times*, October 5, 1965. <https://www.nytimes.com/1965/10/05/archives/south-africa-crash-kills-at-least-60.html>. Accessed November 2, 2020.
- 2** Legislation such as the Native Reserve Location Act of 1902 and the Group Areas Act of 1950 was central to this displacement and segregation.
- 3** Under colonial rule, black people were required to carry passes, restricting their movement in South Africa. “Dompas” is a term they used to refer to the hated passes.
- 4** “The Freedom Charter: Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955.” Department of Education, and South African History Online, 2005. https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/publications/history_freedomcharter.pdf. Accessed January 12, 2023.
- 5** “Doek” is an Afrikaans word for a headwrap. It is pronounced /dook/. Versions of the term are used in other languages in Southern Africa. For example, in Shona, a headwrap is called a “dhuku” (pronounced /doo-koo/).
- 6** Thram, Diane. 2018. “Jazz in Service of the Struggle: The New Brighton Story,” *African Music: Journal of the International Library of African Music* 10 (4): 67–102. See p. 84.

state capture now what?

Natacha Nsabimana

“State Capture Now What?” reads the title of the South African daily *Citizen* in the right foreground of Sam Nhlengethwa’s 2018 work *Inspired by Romare Bearden and Ernest Cole*. The vibrant street scene could be in 2018 or decades prior. The state has, indeed, been captured. Apartheid officially ended in 1990. Four years later, Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress won South Africa’s first elections by universal suffrage becoming the first Black president. Four ANC led Black presidents have since presided over a post-apartheid free South Africa. “Now What?” the *Citizen* promptly asks.

The street scene is defiantly Johannesburg—downtown Jozi most probably, given the array of Black characters populating it and the distinctive high-rises in the background. Though perhaps not. The racially ambiguous woman figure with a yellow coat and red brimmed hat walking near a fruit and vegetable stand and a halLOWed priest complicates the scene. If she is white, and it is indeed 2018, she would likely not be caught walking solo in downtown Joburg, even in broad daylight. What was once a space protected exclusively for whites under apartheid is now the land of Blacks from South Africa to the DRC, to Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, and other parts of Africa. Perhaps she is herself Black, or Colored, or even Indian, in which case, this, indeed, could be downtown Jozi.

High-rises, phallic figures, indelible signs of infra-structural development dominate the canvas, towering over the Black characters in the street. In the building





Sam Nhlengethwa, *Inspired by Romare Bearden and Ernest Cole*, 2018, mixed media on canvas.



detail: Sam Nhlengethwa, *Inspired by Romare Bearden and Ernest Cole*, 2018, mixed media on canvas.

on the far left of the scene is a young Nelson Mandela in a fighter stance, a souvenir from his boxing days in 1950s Soweto. Perhaps it is an invitation to keep fighting, to take the boxer's stance for a different kind of fight. Racial segregation and white rule ended, political freedom for all South Africans regardless of race was gained, and the state captured. "Now What?" This is the perennial postcolonial question in South Africa and beyond. Is liberation still the project? Is it ever finished?

Among the other figures in Nhlengethwa's magnificent piece are Joburg's notorious waste pickers: men hurling loads of recycling garbage to be sold for a pittance. They are painted in, as are the Black women figures sprinkled throughout, some wearing the infamous

maid uniforms recaptured and monumentalized beautifully by South African multimedia artist Mary Sibande in works such as the 2008 *They Don't Make Them like They Used To*. On the bottom right front panel collaged in—an ode to Bearden—are two dapper men in suits and fedoras, reminiscent of other equally dapped men in Ernest Cole's *Hats and Men Cram onto Train No. 3*, an homage to the other artist in the title.

Sam Nhlengethwa's street scene, like Bearden's monumental urban scene in *The Block* (1971) or Cole's photographic depictions of South African life during apartheid, is multi-layered. Nhlengethwa weaves between different techniques: collage, painting, and photography. But the piece is layered temporally too: is it 2018 or 1994 or 1964? Or some time in between? The work is also spatially layered: people and objects at different heights compete for the audience's attention. Each an invitation to linger, to think about continuities and discontinuities between past, present, and political futures. The state has long been captured. Now what?

THE CLASSIC

QUARTERLY, VOLUME THREE, NUMBER ONE, 1968 : PRICE 35 CENTS



1: Cover of *The Classic*, volume 3, number 1, 1968. Johannesburg: The Classic Magazine Trust Fund.

nothing & everything

Leslie M. Wilson

“There’s just nothing happening in this country anymore.”¹

Journalist and activist Joyce Sikakane recounted this remark from Peter Magubane in a profile she wrote about the photographer for a 1968 issue of the South African literary and visual arts journal *The Classic*.² Renowned for his work in publications like *Drum* magazine and coverage of harrowing events like the massacre at Sharpeville in 1960, which marked a bloody start to the decade, Magubane made the following darkly comic lament in 1968, a year of major mass mobilizations and protest movements around the globe: “We only take portraits of policemen receiving awards for bravery.”³ Of course, the police were at the crux of the lull—the agents of making sure there was “nothing happening.”

The police were on apartheid’s frontline, enforcing its policies of racial separation in everyday life and suppressing the activity that photographers like Magubane covered in the fifties. “Those were the years when African women burnt passes,” Magubane told Sikakane. “There were mass protests against the arrest of political leaders and the banning of political organisations [sic]. People were being removed from Sophiatown and other places. Some were living in notorious slums like Cato Manor and the Shanty town.”⁴ The police not only suppressed the visual acts of protest that Magubane made his subject but they also harassed, and eventually imprisoned and banned, Magubane for his work. But, in 1968, despite declaring, “There is no scope in this country for a good

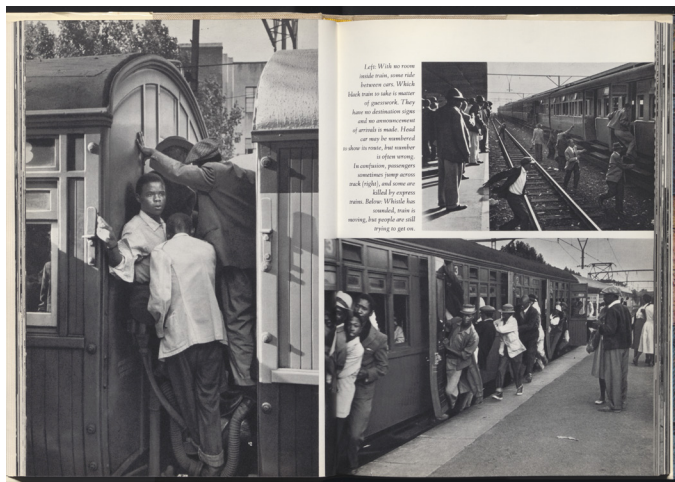
photographer, black or white,” Magubane continued making photographs.⁵

The “Art Section” of that issue of *The Classic* featured a range of Magubane’s photographs of carefully observed scenes of daily life in Black communities, including the cover image [fig. 1] of a woman’s hard-worked hands threading a needle, a baby crying with arms outstretched at a crèche in Soweto⁶ [fig. 2], the aftermath of a fire in Pimville⁷ [fig. 3], and cats napping on a set of stairs [fig. 4]. These images showed sensitivity, tenderness, and occasional humor. Those qualities made evident through Magubane’s “camera-clicking,” as Sikakane called it, produced a moment of revelation for her. Sikakane recounts that she and Magubane went on a three-day assignment together to Edenvale Location⁸ for the *Rand Daily Mail* newspaper, after which she wrote a feature story. But when Magubane showed her the photographs he’d made to accompany the article, Sikakane lied to him, denying that she had finished it. After he left, she scrapped what she had written and began again. “He had discovered hope in a people, a situation, I found lifeless and depressing,” Sikakane revealed. She added later: “In Peter’s pictures I saw the real story. I sat down and wrote it.”⁹

In 1966, just two years before Magubane’s lament about the police, the South African photographer Ernest Cole fled to Europe and then the United States to get away from the mounting difficulties he faced for insisting on his work. Confronting increased pressure from the police while making the photographs that became his seminal book documenting Black life under apartheid, *House of Bondage: A South African Black Man Exposes*



2, 3, & 4: Peter Magubane, **(top)** *Crèche in Soweto, South Africa, 1962*, **(left)** *Fire in Pimville*, and **(right)** *Cat Nap*; as included in *The Classic*, volume 3, number 1, 1968. Johannesburg: The Classic Magazine Trust Fund.



5: “Nightmare Rides,” spread from *House of Bondage: A South African Black Man Exposes in His Own Pictures and Words the Bitter Life of His Homeland Today* by Ernest Cole, New York: Random House, 1967.

in *His Own Pictures and Words the Bitter Life of His Homeland Today*, Cole packed up his photographs determined to complete his project.

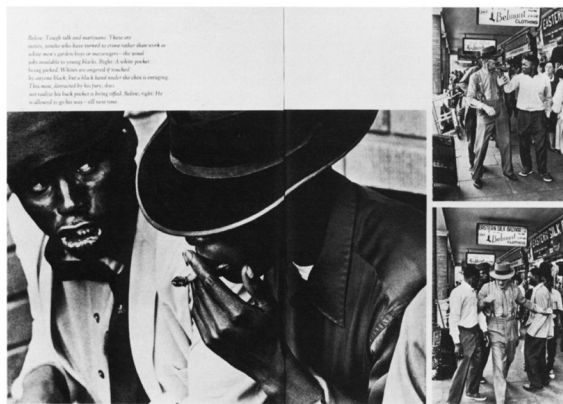
Beginning in the 1950s, Cole freelanced for publications including *Drum* and the *Rand Daily Mail* but still longed for the autonomy and depth that a book could offer, especially as he sought to reveal “the quality of repression” in South Africa.¹⁰ Each chapter of *House of Bondage* scrutinized an aspect of how the state enforced apartheid and its impact on the lives of Black people, focusing on themes such as surveillance in “Police & Passes,” transport in “Nightmare Rides,” [fig. 5] and poverty in “Beyond Subsistence.” In order to circumvent

the limits placed on his ability to move freely through the country as a Black man—limits that challenged his ability to tell these stories—Cole made the complicated decision to petition to have his racial identity reclassified as Coloured. This was a challenging process deeply revealing of the absurd and degrading tactics the state used to mark racial distinctions, from evaluating hair texture to language to physical gestures.¹¹ Cole circumvented the state's restrictions by using elements of its bureaucracy against itself, contorting himself to fit another official racial category by changing the spelling of his name (from Kole to Cole) and giving the correct answers to official questionnaires.

It was Cole's savvy in outwitting state bureaucrats, paired with his book's photographic achievement, that the American photographer and photo theorist Allan Sekula examined at the end of his influential 1986 essay "The Body and the Archive" [fig. 6]. In that essay, which deals largely with examples from North American and European contexts, Sekula proposed that photography offers a "double system" of representation that operates "both *honorifically* and *repressively*."¹² As an honorific, such as the representation of a person through a portrait with its ceremonial and romantic aspects, the photograph can present and celebrate "the bourgeois self." In its repressive forms, however, such as the mugshot or medical illustration, the photograph of an individual has the effect of othering the subject and facilitating the work of surveillance. In the case of apartheid-era South Africa, which Sekula turns to at the very end of his essay, the repressive photographs par excellence were arguably the photographs in passbooks and identity cards—tethered

graphic practice engaged in from below, a photographic practice on ground patrolled by the police. In 1967, a young Black South African photographer named Ernest Cole published a book in the United States called *House of Bondage*. Cole's book and his story are remarkable. In order to photograph a broad range of South African society, Cole had first to change his racial classification from black to colored, no mean feat in a world of multiple bureaus of identity, staffed by officials who have mastered a subtle bureaucratic taxonomy of even the offhand gestures of the different racial and ethnic groups. He countered this apparatus, probably the last *physiognomic* system of domination in the world, with a descriptive strategy of his own, mapping out the various checkpoints in the multiple channels of apartheid.

Cole photographed during a period of relative political "calm" in South Africa, midway between the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and the Soweto students' revolt of 1976. At a time when black resistance was fragmented and subterranean in the wake of the banning of the main opposition groups, he discovered a limited, and by his own account problematic, figure of resistance in young black toughs, or *tsotsis*, who lived lives of petty criminality. Cole photo-



From Ernest Cole, *House of Bondage*, 1967.

6: Spread from "The Body and the Archive" by Allan Sekula. *October*, vol. 39, The MIT Press, 1986.

to rigid racial classifications—which reinforced the strict contours of the lives people could live.

Cole's photographs suggested to Sekula—writing in 1986, twenty years after *House of Bondage* was published and at a time when apartheid was still officially in place in South Africa—a way of potentially turning photography's repressive functions against itself. Reflecting on Cole's work, Sekula declares in his essay's final paragraph, "Not all realisms necessarily play into the hands of the police, despite Theodor Adorno's remark, designed to lampoon a Leninist epistemology once and for all, that 'knowledge has not, like the state police, a rogues' gallery of its objects.'"¹³ Against the repressive tendencies of photography and its archives that he outlined for over sixty pages, Sekula ends his essay by making an exception.

By holding the door open to the possibility that "not all realisms necessarily play into the hands of the police," Sekula suggests that photographs can convey aspects of lived experience, of places, of systems toward politically transformative ends. However, photographs cannot do that work on their own. For Sekula, the ultimate responsibility falls on audiences to uplift realisms, especially connected to a "photographic practice engaged in from below, a photographic practice on ground patrolled by the police." He identifies the need for people and institutions to hold space for Cole's work to speak. Sekula writes, "If we are to listen to, and act in solidarity with, the polyphonic testimony of the oppressed and exploited, we should recognize that some of this testimony, like Cole's, will take the ambiguous form of visual documents, documents of the 'microphysics' of barbarism."¹⁴ To make that

case, Sekula reaches far outside of the North American context—to South Africa—for an example of testimony that might withstand the pressures of the “police and their intellectual apologists.” Perhaps that distance helped to open up the space for exception.

Reflecting on Sekula’s essay and the legacies of sixties-era images by South African photographers like Ernest Cole and Peter Magubane, I began turning over in my mind the phrase “not all realisms...” I did it enough that I found myself starting to read it through the anachronism of hashtag logic. “Not all realisms necessarily play into the hands of the police...” became *#notallrealisms*. This follows the shorthand largely used satirically on social media to point to arguments countering movements perceived—by the implicated—to be unfairly generalizing. For instance, when people express outrage and concern about toxic masculinity in the aftermath of acts of violence directed at women or the revelations about harassment central to the *#metoo* movement, many have responded on social media that not all men do, think, or behave in these ways. In short: *#notallmen*. That hashtag sums up a defensive position, one that evinces a refusal to engage with a critique of systems and structures.

Through the drastic oversimplification that is *#notallrealisms*, I performed a facetious reading of Sekula’s phrase. I said: “I know realisms can be problematic and that I shouldn’t trust photographs and the ways that people and systems use them, but not *all* realisms are bad.” Or, “I know some really great realisms.” Far from a spirit of mockery, this play was my attempt to understand the space that Sekula carves out around some realisms at the end of his essay and how Cole’s work factors into

that argument. Perhaps, the exception Sekula made wasn't so exceptional. Maybe it calls attention to how people make deals with the photographs in which they put their trust, believing their representative fidelity to things in the world. Maybe this is fundamental to how people make, use, and relate to photographs. It speaks to the hope that so many—myself included—have for what we can do with photographs, why we return to them even when they let us down, when they announce their insufficiencies, susceptibilities, and frailties. For Sekula, *House of Bondage's* photographs join together as “testimony” that requires support, platforms, and defense. If that is the case, then so much is alive in that exception. The hope for what photographs can be and do—in spite of the risks and pitfalls, in spite of powerful structures and systems—is at the crux of how people engage the medium on a daily basis.

not all realisms: photography, Africa, and the long 1960s considers photography's associations with directness, authenticity, truth, and narrative. While it focuses on Ghana, Mali, and South Africa to explore photography's use as everything from reportage to treasured keepsake to perfunctory document, it necessarily reaches beyond these national boundaries and these functions to engage the networks of circulation and influence critical to those practices. And it attends to how the identities of those nations were in significant flux during that time.

In the context of Africa's “long 1960s”—the sixties as more than a delimited decade, the sixties as an expansive idea—*not all realisms* looks at the primary vehicles for photography's circulation, the visibility of different types of photography, and the cultivation of photographic

audiences. Thinking with James Meyer's framing of "the long Sixties," a period that "dips deep into the Fifties and extends into the Seventies," this exhibition feels around through that period to consider the arcs, fits, starts, and stoppages of projects, movements, and scenes.¹⁵ It explores the visions and occasional interplay between publications with broad international audiences like *Drum*, *Bona*, *Bingo*, *Jeune Afrique*, and *Life*, and through formats including postcards, pamphlets, and posters.

While I had been interested in examining such printed matter as I began to develop this exhibition, the restrictions and changes wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic shifted my attention there even more emphatically. I began work on this project just before Covid-19 spread globally, sickening and killing so many and changing so much about daily life. In March 2020, ahead of entering lockdown, I was on a research trip to Johannesburg where I spent time with Ernest Cole's papers in the Historical Papers Research Archive at Wits University. Cole's exhaustive research in support of *House of Bondage* is evident in his extensive notes and his collection of booklets, magazines, newspapers, and more. Cole annotated many of these texts, including a booklet issued by the Pretoria City Council's Department of Non-European Affairs in 1965 titled *Bantu Residential Areas in Pretoria*. Next to the local government's captions accompanying photographs touting the quality of services such as transport and healthcare, the provision of housing, and conditions for jobs, Cole writes his own comments refuting the Council's claims. Following a caption about the work of Black clerks employed in municipal offices, he adds the phrase, "who earn next to nothing" [fig. 7].

On the opposite page, a color photograph of a house with a tidy garden speaks to a caption about the homes that wealthier Black residents built. However, Cole adds, “but they can’t own the ground on which the house is built.” Throughout, Cole amends the Council’s claims to speak to dispossession and exploitation. That work of refutation demonstrates Cole’s thinking toward constructing a narrative of his own—photographic and textual—about apartheid’s realities.

That booklet is not present in the exhibition, but it was at the forefront of my mind as I went into lockdown and contemplated a project in which reaching to collections beyond the Chicago area might not have been possible given the pandemic’s endurance. And so, I went further into libraries. I turned my attention to the vertical files collection at Northwestern University’s Herskovits Library, which contains many booklets produced by government and non-governmental organizations. As I looked through materials produced during colonial and postcolonial eras, these publications were especially revealing of how institutions large and small shared their vision for political and social transformation through photographic layouts and the combination of text and image. But, they are also sites for us to imagine the annotation and refutation of official accounts. *not all realisms* seeks to consider how photographers like Cole, Magubane, and many others, worked to build counternarratives—to create critical visual and textual practices—deeply informed by their personal experiences.

Under the heading “Making Matter,” the exhibition begins with thinking about interconnections and dialogues across printed matter. It then looks at the

The clerical and administrative work in the municipal offices in the Bantu residential areas is done by Bantu clerks under the supervision of Whites. Apart from the cashiers, clerks and bookkeepers the City Council also employs Bantu social workers, crèche teachers, nurses and other trained personnel. *who earn next to nothing.*





Many of the wealthier Bantu prefer to have their own houses built. Most of these are attractive homes which compare favourably with houses elsewhere in Pretoria - as this house in Mamelodi proves.

But they can't even find the ground on which the house is built.

13

7: A spread from *Bantu Residential Areas in Pretoria* showing Ernest Cole's annotations. Pretoria: Department of Non-European Affairs, 1965.

question of how photographs show change under the theme of “Before & After,” considering how juxtaposition, layout, color, and other strategies are used to show transformation. Next, borrowing a phrase from the Malian filmmaker and writer Manthia Diawara, the theme of “Us & Not-Us” examines portraiture with deliberate, overwhelming unwieldiness to look at individuals, families, and communities, as well as local, national, continental, and diasporic spaces, systems, and conditions. Here the real and ideal, the faithful and fanciful, push and pull. And lastly, *not all realisms* looks to how the photography of the 1960s continues to expand its reach, reshaping understandings of that era and its lasting significance “Again & Again.” What follows speaks to some of the stories weaving through the exhibition.

making matter

DRUM, we send you fraternal greetings.
Our magazine, “Bingo,” which is for French-speaking Africans published a picture of the DRUM staff recently, and, in exchange, we wish you would publish this photograph of Mademoiselle Yolande Trama. She was posing with “Bingo” for the photographer Moussa Sako.

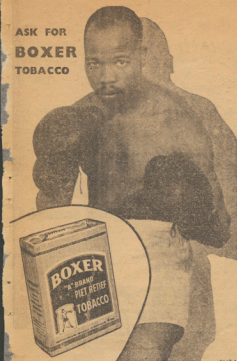
This cordial request from the staff of the Dakar-based *Bingo* magazine appears in the “Write to Drum” section of *Drum*’s January 1956 issue [fig. 8]. In response to *Bingo*’s appeal, *Drum* included an image of the young French actress, Yolande Trama, standing beachside in a stylish bikini holding up an issue of *Bingo*—the kind of

photograph that might have easily made *Drum*'s cover.¹⁶ *Drum*'s editor at that time, Sylvester Stein, followed up the photograph's inclusion with an inquiry of his own: "Pleasure Monsieur Bingo! Now what say we exchange the whole DRUM staff for Mademoiselle Yolande?"

Beyond demonstrating their casual sexism,¹⁷ the exchange between these two magazines—one Anglophone and headquartered in South Africa, one Francophone and based in Senegal—suggests the far-reaching ambitions of both publications to find audiences far beyond their immediate environs. The photograph of Trama, made on the beach at Cannes, France, first appeared in a September 1955 issue of *Bingo* in a spread featuring happy vacationing beauties titled "Soleil, ciel bleu... vacances Heureuses" ("Sun, Blue Sky... Happy Vacations") [fig. 9]. Not only was Trama holding up an issue of *Bingo*, but in a photograph to her right, one of *Drum*'s popular cover girls, Priscilla Mtimkulu, lays poolside at the recently constructed Huddleston Bath in Soweto's Orlando West.¹⁸ Mtimkulu flips through the pages of *Drum* while a row of young men (boys?) ogle her. In each instance, from France to South Africa, the magazines present the young women as both the ideal promoters and consumers of these publications.¹⁹ And, although originating from very different contexts and having very distinct characteristics, these two magazines convey their mutual admiration and interconnectivity through this playful exchange.²⁰

So-called bathing beauties notwithstanding, "les amis de Bingo" ("the friends of *Bingo*") ranged broadly, with individuals, young couples, and members of the military featured regularly. In a November 1955 issue, members of the French colonial military stationed in

ASK FOR
BOXER
TOBACCO



WRITE to DRUM!

HEY, BINGO!

DRUM, we send you fraternal greetings.
Our magazine, "Bingo," which is for French-speaking Africans published a picture of the DRUM staff recently, and, in exchange, we wish you would publish this photograph



Yolande... fair exchange.

of Mademoiselle Yolande Traza. She was posing with "Bingo" for the photographer Moussa Sako.

EDITOR, BINGO,
Dakar, North Africa,

(Pleasure Monsieur Bingo! Now what say we exchange the whole DRUM staff for Mademoiselle Yolande?—Ed.)

WOLF!

A MAN here in Durban came to me the other day, said that he liked my figure, and that he wanted to publish pictures of me in DRUM, as he is a representative of your magazine in Durban. He made an appointment with me, but he did not turn up. I did not trust him. Please

(Turn over)

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QUICKER!
CLEANER!**
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- ★ LIGHTING
- ★ HEATING



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cleaner
teeth...
KOLYNOS
Toothpaste
WHITE OR GREEN

8: "Write to Drum!" in Drum, January 1956.

SOLEIL, CIEL BLEU... VACANCES HEUREUSES



Yolande Trama, part pour la plage, mais n'a pas oublié « son » Bingo.
(Photo Sako - Cannes).

A cette époque de l'année chacun goûte aux plaisirs des vacances : joie de plonger dans l'eau fraîche ou de s'allonger sur le sable tiède ; pour tous c'est la bienfaisante détente.

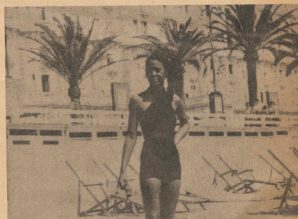
Les plages de la métropole sont littéralement envahies par une foule d'estivants avides de baignade, se bousculant gaiement pour entrer dans l'eau.

Voyant cela, Lamine, Djibril et moi rêvons à nos plages interminables et calmes où l'air est si doux... et nos pensées volent vers Assatou ou Fatoumata, amies très chères ou camarades de jeux laissées au « pays », qui, à la même heure peut être, après de joyeux ébats dans l'onde pure, offrent leur corps de bronze à la caresse du vent...

MOUSSA



Les sportifs d'Huddleston Bath ne cachent pas leur admiration pour la gracieuse Priscilla Msimkulu, d'Orlando, populaire cover-girl de notre confrère "Drum", pour laquelle la natation n'a plus de secret. Comme nous les comprenons ! (Photo "Drum").



Notre photographe a surpris sur la plage de Cannes Miss Guinivier journaliste américaine.

9: "Soleil, ciel bleu... Vacances heureuses" ("Sun, Blue Sky... Happy Vacations"), in *Bingo*, September 1955.

Côte d’Azur and hailing from French Sudan (now Mali) and Madagascar, showed off copies of *Bingo* for the photographer Moussa Sako. The readers were invited to become sellers, too, and many of the photographs of readers submitted to the magazine were those of “dépositaires,” newsagents and shop owners who sold *Bingo*.

The audiences cultivated for magazines like *Bingo* and *Drum* were also ones that many readers themselves hoped they could reach directly. Beyond letters to the editor, a regular feature on the pages of *Bingo* included portrait photographs submitted by the audience.²¹ In some cases, readers simply hoped to have their image published; in others, they wanted to connect to a pen-pal or promote their own businesses, such as photographers like Zachée Ibüh Lappée (a.k.a. De Zibla) [fig. 10] in Eséka, Cameroon, in *Bingo*’s November 1956 issue. The pages of *Bingo* suggest that while the studio may have been the setting for a more personal photograph intended for oneself or one’s family or local community, the studio photograph also offered a means to be widely seen and to potentially forge a new community spanning French West Africa (pre-independence), the continent, and more.²²

Submission pages like “Nos abonnées se retrouvent” (“Our Subscribers Meet Up”) could bring together disparate photographs to represent a family or married couple, such as the singular headshots—likely to have been identification photographs—of Mr. and Mrs. Diallo in an August 1957 issue [fig. 11].²³ Readers readily repurposed official identification photographs—the ostensibly impersonal personal image—to affirm their relationships and show themselves off to a much wider world. And still other photos submitted by readers were made outside of a studio,

AVIS A NOS LECTEURS

Seules les photos comportant collée au dos une vignette numérotée sont assurées de publication.

NOS LECTEURS SE RETROUVENT



★ Notre ami Wasi Lodi, auxiliaire de gendarmerie, lors de son mariage à Porto-Novo (Dahomey).



★ Roul B. Lassana, originaire du Dahomey, est employé au service de comptabilité de l'U. A. T. à Douala (Cameroun).



★ Zachée Ibuk Loppé dit « De Zibé » s'est spécialisé dans la photographie (Eschra).



★ Gwono Henri a épousé à Yaoundé (Cameroun), Mlle. Mbella Zézane Brigitte.



★ Cinq amis de Kindia (Guinée): Touré Nouch; N'Diaye Moustapha; Diakité Mamadou; Duck John; Bualée.

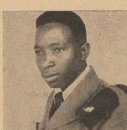


★ Zao Elingno Thomas, adjoint administratif des Services civils et financiers à son bureau (Ngoulmalang).

NOS AMIS DE L'ARMÉE



★ Le soldat Batimbo Marcel prend un message sous la surveillance du Caporal Gaius Koussi.



★ Momo Saline, précédemment en service aux P. T. T. à Grand-Espoir, est actuellement sous les drapeaux.



★ Les sergents Coulibaly Bakary et Mariba Diakité, tous deux de Swedan, sont en service en Algérie.



★ Le Caporal-chef Dilla Simon Pierre, originaire de Garoua (Cameroun), sort actuellement en Tunisie.



★ Guer Gabriel, qui sert à Casablanca (Maroc), est d'origine tchadienne.



★ Le Caporal-chef Barry Abdoulaye est en service en Afrique du Nord.



★ Le Soldat Konaté Fassily sort à Oujda (Maroc).



★ Trois soldats en Algérie: Moussa Kenouté, Camara Mary, Joseph.

10: "Nos lecteurs se retrouvent" ("Our Readers Meet Up"), in *Bingo*, November 1956.

NOS ABONNES SE RETROUVENT



1. TIMMOCK KONARE - 2^e Cie 1/23^e RIC AMEUR-EL-AIN - A.F.N. - originaire du Sénégal
2. DIALLO DOUBAYBOU - 1^{er} Cie - SP 87326 - A.F.N.
3. Pierre MEYER - SP 2019 - DAKAR.
4. Caporal-chef ROUSSEAU Gabriel et son épouse SADIA - 6^e RTS - CICR Méditerranée - MAROC
5. Caporal SIDIBE ALPHA - SP 87417 avec CAMARA SIDIKI - originaires du SEYLA.
6. SONINA MAMADY LENO - SP 86160 A.F.N. - originaire du Haut-Guinea, Président du Syndicat des Etudiants Caraïbes de HONGKONG (Royaume-Uni).
7. Sirene YACOUBOU MAMAN, 6^e Mélière, matif du DJOUGOU (Dahomey) - SP 86225 - A.F.N.
8. Caporal RIAN Robert - originaire du MAN - SP 87427 - A.F.N.
9. GOUAGNON Gaston - CCAS - 2/23^e RIC - BOSSO (Mauritanie).
10. M. et Mme OUYO Lamine du SNIP - CAMÉDOUN.
11. Sirene YOHANNO Michel - originaire du NIGERKOKI - SP 86770 - A.F.N.
12. Le sergent FAMA MAMADOU - SP 87427 et son épouse HAMISSA MAMA et NAOUA - Infanterie à BORDA.
13. Mendiakou-Louys CAMARA TENGOU - originaire du Guinea - SP 86216 - A.F.N.
14. Le Caporal-chef DIALLO Terno-Karouma - originaire du Guinea avec sa femme et leur enfant - SP 86220 - A.F.N.
15. KELLY Alphonse - employé aux Ets Guineville - BOUAKE - trésorier de la JOC.
16. DIOP SAOUDU - CCAS - SP 87553 A.F.N.
17. SETAYE BONFILS - originaire de la Côte-d'Ivoire - SP 87455 A.F.N.
18. KROTON, Jeanne - Maître tailleur originaire du Dahomey - SP 87329.
19. Parachutiste GOUNEIA ISSA - d'origine sénégalaise - 6^e RTS - Méditerranée - MAROC.
20. DIARRA Ali - chauffeur à SIGOU.
21. OUMAROU CAMARA - né en 1931 à PETY-BOWE (GAOUAL) - SP 86572 A.F.N.
22. ELABTE BAI LANSERI - Agent d'Affaires à KOUTALA.
23. M. SEYOU TROUP - Hurler à MOPTI.
24. M. KITA SEYOU - originaire de Mopti, avec Mlle SINDY DIA DIALLO et KANY.
25. DIALLO de MOPTI.
26. M. DIALLO OLAN BAÏLO - SP 86462 et Mme DIALLO FATOU NIATA SIRA.
27. THOMAS STALE KOFFI - originaire d'Adéma, Justicié de paix - MARADI.
28. Le jeune Lili DIAROKHTE FODDAH Albert - SP 86776.
29. SIRENE SECK MOHAMED - chef du Parti révolutionnaire à MACENTA.
30. CAMARA FAMA - SP 87218 - A.F.N.

dans la note de Paris

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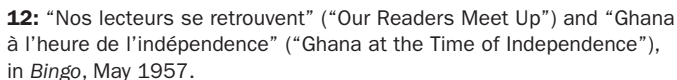
11: "Nos abonnés se retrouvent" ("Our Subscribers Meet Up"), in *Bingo*, August 1957.

showing friends at small gatherings, a new vehicle, target practice, or simply the delight of lounging alone on a patch of grass while leafing through an issue of the magazine.

Magazine layouts also offered opportunities for readers' portraits to be placed adjacent to the photographs of leaders of governments, celebrities, and major events. In a May 1957 issue of *Bingo*, the first page of an article titled "Ghana à l'heure de l'indépendance" ("Ghana at the time of independence") that features an official portrait of independent Ghana's first leader Kwame Nkrumah appears opposite ten entries comprising the section titled "Nos lecteurs se retrouvent" ("Our Readers Meet Up") [fig. 12].²⁴ Headshots of readers from places like Dimbokro, Conakry, and Casablanca suggest the range of subscribers to *Bingo*, while also representing a public asserting its connections to the African continent.

In stark contrast to the staging of ideal readers of photo-driven magazines as part of a continent creating new models of solidarity and liberation as seen in *Bingo* and *Drum*, in 1965, the South African government's Bantu Affairs Commission staged a magazine reader in service of performing the supposed contentment of Black people with the government's social schemes under apartheid—a trope repeated in many such publications. In the booklet, *Domestic Servants in Urban Areas*, a Black woman holds open an issue of the magazine *Huisgenoot* (*House Companion*), a popular Afrikaans-language general interest magazine targeted at white audiences [fig. 13]. Still wearing her uniform, she is identified by the following caption: "A domestic servant relaxes in approved quarters on her employer's premises." But while she holds the magazine open, she directs her gaze not at the

Booklets produced by state agencies often use photographs in this way: to make a case for their policies, their efficacy at correcting problems, their grand plans for transformation, and the relative happiness of the people



involved. The social concerns of the British colonial government were evidenced in booklets such as *The Problem Children of the Gold Coast* (1955), that directed attention at youth “who haunt the Cinemas, get into trouble at school, wander about the streets and frequent bars and dance halls.”²⁵ While it aimed to use photographs to illustrate delinquency, the images are replete with possibility and fun—it isn’t clear, for instance, what the kids looking up at the prints of film stills and posters might do next [fig. 14]. The supposed threat seems to begin with the capacity to imagine and the hiddenness of that imagining in the darkness of a theater.



A domestic servant relaxes in approved quarters on her employer's premises. Today an increasing number of servants are accommodated in their own homes in urban Bantu residential areas.

- (c) the contract of employment is not *bona fide*;
- (d) the Bantu is not permitted to be in the area in question;
- (e) the Bantu refuses to undergo vaccination or medical examination, or has not been passed as fit, or is suffering from any ailment or

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disease which, in the opinion of the Medical Officer, is dangerous to public health;

- (f) the employment is considered to impair public order or the safety of the State;
- (g) the Bantu has been ordered to leave the area in terms of an order of removal;
- (h) in the case of a female from outside the urban area, no accommodation is available for her in the urban township or in a hostel, or if she is not in possession of a certificate of approval from
 - (i) the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in her home district;
 - (ii) the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in the prescribed area and
 - (iii) her parent or guardian consenting to her residence in the prescribed area.

14. MONTHLY SIGNING OF REFERENCE BOOK

An employer, or his agent, must sign the employee's reference book in the appropriate column before the seventh day of each month. This procedure serves a dual purpose namely (a) to prove that the Bantu is lawfully in the area and (b) a guarantee that the employee will not be engaged by somebody else unless the contract of service has been cancelled.

15. INTRODUCTION OF WORKERS FROM OTHER AREAS

Any person who wishes to engage a Bantu male or female from outside the prescribed area may apply to the labour bureau on the relative form and may be called upon to furnish security for the repatriation of the Bantu to his/her home area on the termination of the employment. The application will be considered on its merits, and having regard to availability of local labour, and must be approved by the regional labour bureau.

No such application will be refused in the case of a Bantu who wishes to return to a prescribed area to take up employment with his last legal employer in that area, provided he has not been absent for more than a year.

If the employer concerned no longer requires his services the Bantu may be permitted by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner to take up employment with another employer in the prescribed area.

16. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

On termination of employment — for any reason — the employer must make an appropriate endorsement, including the date, in section “B” of the Bantu's reference book. He must also inform the labour bureau in writing accordingly within three days of the termination

13

13: Spread from *Domestic Servants in Urban Areas*. Johannesburg: Bantu Affairs Commission, April 8, 1965.

The British Information Services put out a series of publications, such as *Achievement in the Gold Coast* (1951), the same year as the nation's first general elections and Nkrumah's triumphant release from prison. Its color cover image, made by the Australian photographer Noel Rubie,²⁶ shows undergraduates at the new University College seated outside in their robes [fig. 15]—a far cry from the Gold Coast's "problem children." An engine for creating such presentations of ideal citizens, the Information Services also published *Advance of a Technique* (1955) [fig. 16], outlining the motivations and structures for its informational efforts and featuring images from the Volta River Traveling Exhibition propelled by then-Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. Many of the government informational techniques described therein were incorporated into the post-independence administration.

Booklets made around the time of independence in Ghana and Mali reveal an effort to announce their new governments' intentions. In Ghana, an accordion book outlining *The Volta River Project* (1955) uses a mix of photographs, drawings, and text in English and Ewe to convey the government's ambitious plans for a major hydroelectric development project to audiences with varied literacies. Meanwhile, booklets like *Knowing Ourselves* [fig. 17] introduced people to the reasoning behind and process for the 1960 census.

Publications produced by Mali's government followed a similar impetus, as booklets like *Le Mali en Marche* (*Mali on the Move*) (1962) used the work of young journalists to affirm the nation's transformation into a robust socialist state focused on education, development of



Outside the Cinema.

14: "Outside the Cinema," in *Problem Children of the Gold Coast*, Accra: Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, 1955.

ACHIEVEMENT IN THE GOLD COAST



15: Cover of *Achievement in the Gold Coast*, Accra: Gold Coast Public Relations Department, 1951.

Putting the People in the Picture in the Picture



People portraits are taken

The Department's staff of nine photographers is divided between photo- and cinematography. Between them are available for training all types of photographic equipment, and a wide variety of subjects of interest to the general public. The Department's staff of nine photographers is divided between photo- and cinematography. Between them are available for training all types of photographic equipment, and a wide variety of subjects of interest to the general public. The Department's staff of nine photographers is divided between photo- and cinematography. Between them are available for training all types of photographic equipment, and a wide variety of subjects of interest to the general public.



There is a special unit for the use of cameras in the Gold Coast subjects.



Students are given instruction

Press and Publications

Relations between the Department and the Press have been a matter of some importance. The Department has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press. It has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press. It has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press. It has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press.



The Department produces a wide variety of publications from which the public can obtain information. These include the Gold Coast Weekly Bulletin, the Gold Coast Yearbook, and the Gold Coast Yearbook.

RAPID RISE OF BROADCASTING

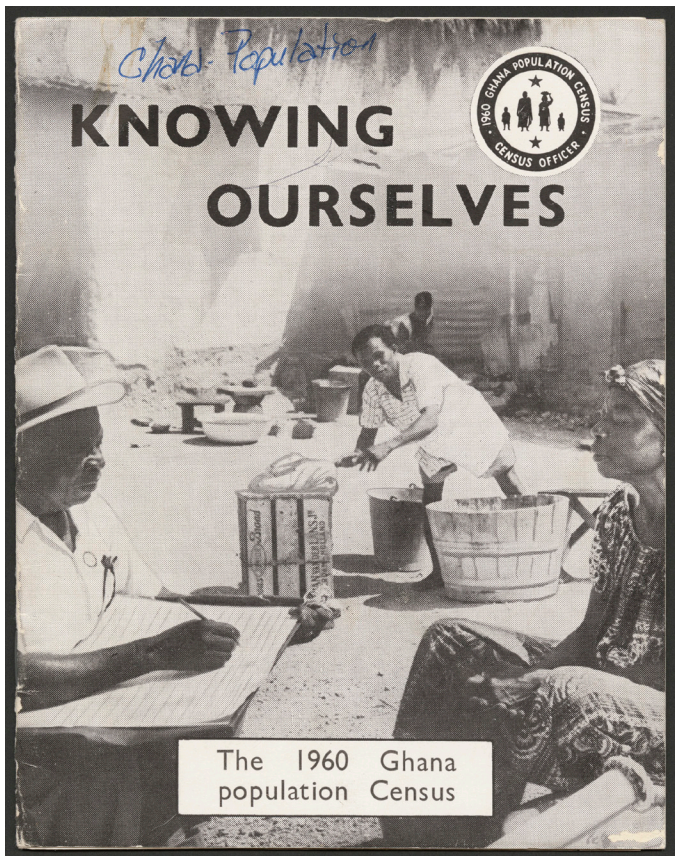
Responsibility for broadcasting in the Gold Coast has been a matter of some importance. The Department has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press. It has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press. It has been successful in a number of ways in its relations with the Press.



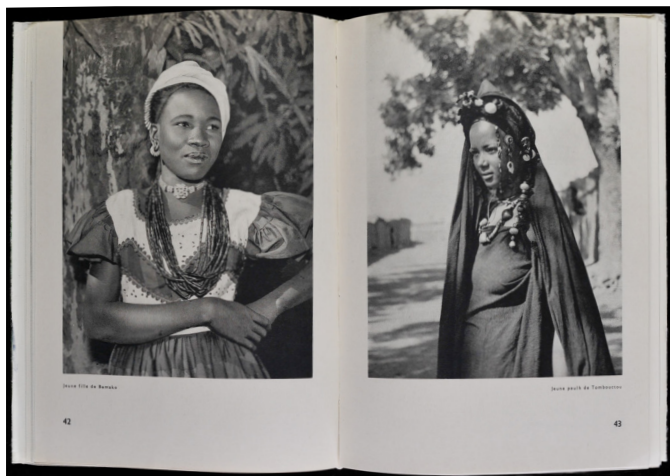
The Gold Coast Weekly Bulletin "has a run of 4,000 copies per issue. These pictures show the office and the Department's Section at work."

16: "Putting the People in the Picture," spread from *Advance of a Technique: Information Services in the Gold Coast*. Accra: Department of Information Services, 1956.

infrastructure, and support for rural agriculture, while *Connaissance de la République du Mali* (*Knowing the Republic of Mali*) sought tourism to the region. Inviting readers to get to know the people of Mali, that booklet used ethnographic photographs, models of representation that were developed and popularized in the colonial era. The photographs show "Les groupes humains" ("Human Groups") residing in Mali in three-quarter-view portraits through the upper torso to demonstrate not only facial features but also aspects of clothing, adornment, and physiognomy. Captioned as "Jeune fille de Bamako" and "Jeune peulh de Tombouctou" [fig. 18], these photographs demonstrate that using photography to delineate ethnicities was a strategy that the new government



17: Cover of *Knowing Ourselves: The 1960 Ghana Population Census*. Accra: Ghana Information Services on behalf of the Ghana Census Office, 1960.



18: Spread from *Connaissance de la République du Mali* (*Knowing the Republic of Mali*). Bamako: Secrétariat d'état à l'information et au tourisme, 1960.

continued to use. But these booklets also open out to national stories that address rural life in ways often missing in city-focused publications like *Bingo*.

all the time in the world

The virtuosic work of photographers like Seydou Keïta and Malick Sidibé from Mali, and James Barnor from Ghana in the fifties, sixties, and seventies celebrates the style and sensibility of their patrons—with Sidibé's and Barnor's work extending well beyond the studio. In recent decades, as that work, and increasingly the work of their contemporaries, has reached wider global audiences, it has stoked nostalgia and activated a profound sense

of identification, embraced by a younger generation of artists like Njideka Akunyili Crosby. Born in Nigeria and currently based in Los Angeles, Crosby finds profound points of identification and recognition across the continent and diaspora in her work. “Once I started looking at Sidibé and Keïta, it was a feeling of spontaneous recognition: ‘I know this,’” Crosby has said. She continued:

I grew up with photographs similar to this in my grandmother’s house. Pictures of my grandparents, their kids, their cousins, their relatives. I know these pictures. I’ve seen my own version of them multiple times. Seeing Sidibé really made me think more about making work out of that space that I know and I recognized. Making work about a life I’ve lived, about people I grew up with, what images from my life look like.²⁷

While Sidibé was a giant of both event and studio-based photography, adding his own twist and flair, Crosby points to the shared styles and themes of photography from that era that circulated widely through Africa and its diaspora. As new musical styles and fashions flowed internationally from the sounds and attitudes of James Brown, Miriam Makeba, E.T. Mensah, and many others, photography showcased the celebration of that creativity.

Sharing its title with that of a song by the Nigerian musician William Onyeabor, Njideka Akunyili Crosby’s large-scale painting *When the Going Is Smooth and Good* (2017) [fig. 19] activates the dancing pair in Malick Sidibé’s iconic 1963 photograph *Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)* [see page 77], heightening their scale and presenting them in bold color in the context of a party. Amidst foliage,



19: Njideka Akunyili Crosby, *When the Going Is Smooth and Good*, 2017, acrylic, colored pencil, charcoal, and collage on paper.

pictures on the wall, and a veritable sea of photographic transfers (many images dating back to the mid-to-late twentieth century), the artist places likenesses of herself and her husband into the center of the work. This scene blends past and present, while also drawing broadly from photo culture across West Africa and the diaspora. In bringing all of these references together—including Onyeabor’s eighties electro-funk—Crosby’s painting suggests that the disruption of time and space itself might be a cause to celebrate, making friends out of the past and with the past. It prompts viewers to consider: how are pasts carried forward? What care might we still extend to what came before? What untruths might still need refuting? What is next?

notes

- 1** Joyce Sikakane, “Pete Magubane,” *The Classic* 3, no. 1 (1968): 31.
- 2** Novel among South African journals, *The Classic* published photography as art alongside poetry, short fiction, and non-fiction from a multi-racial group of visual artists, musicians, and writers, including Nat Nakasa, Can Themba, Nadine Gordimer, Athol Fugard, and Barney Simon. The journal’s embrace of photography suggests the particular role that documentary-style photography came to have in South Africa as a dominant mode of photography from the mid-twentieth century to today.
- 3** Sikakane, “Pete Magubane,” 31.
- 4** *Ibid.*
- 5** In the year that followed, the police arrested

- Magubane and placed him in solitary confinement for almost two years, after which he faced a banning order that prevented him from working as a photojournalist for five years and placed further restrictions on where he could go.
- 6** A print of this work from 1963, held in the International Center of Photography's collection, goes by the title *Baby Preaches, Soweto, South Africa*, suggesting that Magubane had a more humorous take on the scene than the photograph might suggest on its own.
 - 7** Pimville is an area within the township of Soweto located about a thirty-minute drive southwest of downtown Johannesburg.
 - 8** Edenvale is a town located about a twenty-minute drive northeast of downtown Johannesburg. "Location," like "township," describes an area historically designated for people classified as Black, Coloured, and Indian under South Africa's system of apartheid.
 - 9** Sikakane, "Pete Magubane," 31.
 - 10** Ernest Cole, *House of Bondage: A South African Black Man Exposes in His Own Pictures and Words the Bitter Life of His Homeland Today* (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 20–21.
 - 11** Joseph Lelyveld shares details from Cole's approach to negotiating the process of racial reclassification in the "Introduction" to the first edition of *House of Bondage*. In 2022, Aperture published a new edition of *House of Bondage* featuring a never-before-published chapter, "Black Ingenuity," and new analysis of the book and reflections on its legacies with essays by Mongane Wally Serote, Oluremi C. Onabanjo, and James Sanders.

- 12** Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 6.
- 13** Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 64.
- 14** *Ibid.*
- 15** James Meyer, *The Art of Return: The Sixties & Contemporary Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 37.
- 16** Trama later appeared on the cover of *Bingo* and was the subject of a feature article in a November 1957 issue, "Yolande Trama future star de cinéma a déjà tourné 4 films" ("Yolande Trama, future cinema star, has already appeared in four films"), *Bingo*, November 1957, 15–16.
- 17** For more on women photographers in Africa and magazines, see: Marie Meyerding, "'Africa's First Woman Press Photographer': Mabel Cetu's Photographs in Zonk!" *African Arts* 55, no. 3, (Autumn 2022): 54–69;
- Mabel Cetu, *Centring Silences: The Elusive Photographic Archive of Mabel Cetu*, edited by Stefanie Jason, (2020); Darren Newbury, Lorena Rizzo, and Kylie Thomas, *Women and Photography in Africa: Creative Practices and Feminist Challenges*, (London: Routledge, 2020).
- 18** Beyond the photograph of Priscilla Mtimkulu, the photo spread "Qui dit mieux?" in the October 1955 issue of *Bingo* features photographs from *Drum*, including one image of *Drum*'s Associate Editor Can Themba appearing in awe of a policeman breaking a brick with his bare hand.
- 19** Covers also featured women as eager magazine readers, such as an April 1959 issue of *Bingo* featuring the actress Marpessa Dawn reading the magazine's February 1959 issue. The American performer Lena Horne holds open

the April 1954 issue of *Drum* on the cover of the magazine's October 1954 issue. The role of women ambassadors/cover girls/celebrities publicizing *Bingo* is discussed in Louise Sineux, "Renouveaux médiatiques, figures féminines et images de la modernité : étude de deux magazines sénégalais entre les années 1950 et 1970 (*Bingo*, AWA)," *Histoire* (2021), dumas-03477930. Men were also readers on the cover. Emphasizing sport, the middleweight boxing champion Michel Diouf and his manager, Assane Diouf, appear on the cover of the December 1959 issue of *Bingo* reading a previous issue of the magazine.

- 20** While *Bingo* and *Drum* were major photo-driven magazines staffed locally and directed at African audiences, there were significant differences between the publications

in terms of political content, context, production, and audience engagement. In addition to examining those nuances, beyond *Life* and *Picture Post* as key international touchstones, scholars Tsitsi Ella Jaji and Jennifer Bajorek have also addressed the significance of *Ebony* as another influential model for magazine production in Africa. See: Tsitsi Ella Jaji, *Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Jennifer Bajorek, *Unfixed: Photography and Decolonial Imagination in West Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020). *Bingo* covers the visit of M. M'Bow, Senegal's Minister of Education, to *Ebony*'s Chicago headquarters in 1958. "M. M'Bow en visite chez "EBONY" à Chicago," *Bingo* 71 (December 1958), 25.

- 21** A similar feature ran in many magazines and newspapers across the continent, examples include publications that bridged colonial to postcolonial transitions, such as the “Tribune de Lecteurs” in *Envol* magazine published in what is now the Republic of Congo, and “Nos Abonnes” in *La Voix du Congolais* and “Photos de nos abonnes” in *Congo Magazine*, both produced in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 22** Jennifer Bajorek’s book *Unfixed: Photography and Decolonial Imagination* in West Africa provides a rich account of *Bingo*’s use of reader-submitted photographs and demonstrates how these shifted over time to reflect greater access and use of studio photography beyond official state photography. Tobias Warner has examined the reader of *Bingo* in its pages as well as reader photo submissions through the compelling lens of hospitality. “On the Hospitality of Print: Ousmane Socé’s *Bingo* and Its Publics,” *Research in African Literatures* 51, no. 1 (Spring 2020), doi: 10.2979/reaseaf-rilite.51.1.03: 21–44. Edited by Ruth Bush and Claire Ducournau, in that same issue of *Research in African Literatures* 51, no. 1 (Spring 2020), see also: Ruth Bush and Claire Ducournau, “‘Small Readers’ and Big Magazines: Reading Publics in *Bingo*, *La Vie Africaine*, and *Awa: la revue de la femme noire*,” 45–69 for a careful account of not only the founding of these publications but also their readerships.
- 23** “Nos abonnes se retrouvent,” *Bingo* 55, August 1957, 24.
- 24** Like *Drum*, *Bingo*’s coverage of Nkrumah was extensive. For examples,

see also: “Kwame N’krumah, Premier Ministre de Gold Coast,” *Bingo* 35, December 1955, 21. “La Visite en Guinée du Président N’Krumah,” *Bingo* 78, July 1959, 30–31.

- 25** *Problem Children of the Gold Coast*, Accra: Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, 1955, 1.
- 26** In addition to Rubie’s color photographs, monochrome photographs included in the booklet were attributed to African staff photographers of

the Public Relations Department in Accra. Rubie visited West Africa in 1951 photographing extensively on his trip, and his assessment of the beauty of women in the Gold Coast is repeated on the pages of *Jet* magazine in 1952.

- 27** “Njideka Akunyili Crosby on Malick Sidibé,” interview by Ian Berry in *Accelerate: Access & Inclusion at The Tang Teaching Museum 2* (2018): 13.

nuit de Noël (happy club)

Daisy Coates

In *Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)*, Malick Sidibé captures a late-night moment at an outdoor venue, surrounded by trees and chairs pushed to the outer ring to expand the dance floor. Nearly symmetrical, the center of the photo features a brother and sister, framed by foliage, experiencing a spontaneous, energetic moment. The subjects' close kinship is apparent, their heads are centimeters apart, their bodies angled inwards toward each other. The two sit slightly to the right of the frame, allowing just enough room for the sight of a solitary woman whose eyes lead off frame. Alone on the dance floor, the pair attract the focus of the viewer, the action of the photo contained. The bright flash brings vibrancy and warmth to the setting, reflecting off of their clothing. Viewers can observe details of the texture of their outfits: the grain in the stripes on the young girl's dress, threads and wrinkles in the suit the young man wears, as new fashions and musical styles became part of popular culture in a newly independent Mali.

Sidibé's framing of this scene tells us so much about this night. A record player sits on the table connected to a speaker suspended in the trees. Bottles sit under tables and chairs, abandoned presumably by people who left them for the worn dance floor, tired from nights of energy and party. This produces a story about long nights of celebration and joy; everything apparent in the dancers' faces is also corroborated by the atmosphere.

Sidibé originally presented photographs such as this one in chemises, folders of multiple photographs;



Malick Sidibé, *Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)*, 1963, gelatin silver print.

typically, one chemise included photos from the whole night. Prints of the individual photos were souvenirs that subjects of the photo could purchase, memorializing their experiences the next day. The photo *Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)* belongs to Sidibé's chemise: Les "Happy-Boys," dated February 25, 1963.¹ The chemise features twenty-three photos from the same night with the subjects of this photo appearing in other prints, some on the dance floor and others as posed group shots. A note on the

chemise indicates this date as “Veille du Ramadan” or “Eve of Ramadan.” Together, the photos in the chemise place *Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)* within the context of the celebration and rhythmic freedom of that holiday. Sidibé developed the print in the Smart Museum’s collection in 2002 from the photograph taken in 1963 and at a much larger scale than the photographs in the chemise, allowing for closer study of the moment.

This photo is one of thousands that Sidibé took in Mali from the 1960s to 1980s depicting popular clubs and fashion fads. Together, they offer a chronological narrative as he documented events and offered visions of the ever-changing realm of photography and culture. His photography functioned as a backdrop for Malian society, as evidenced by clothing and media from the African diaspora, as products shaped by colonial encounters that have forever impacted the landscape of popular culture. The effects of colonialism continued into the post-colonial landscape, as the relationship of objects to the cultures shifted, as teens from different countries in the sixties were listening to the same music or experiencing similar fashion fads. Photos like *Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)* feel authentic and faithful to the subjects and society, as they give glimpses into real situations of a time and place. Sidibé’s photos convey an appreciation of the moment; they are from a place and depict scenes of which he was a part. Sidibé joined in these dances and events and was invited to observe and seize something significant.

- 1 Images of this chemise and others can be seen in *Malick Sidibé: Mali Twist* (Paris: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain / Editions Xavier Barral, 2017).



untitled (woman seated on bench in moscow subway station)

Daisy Coates

In *Untitled (Woman Seated on Bench in Moscow Subway Station)*, a mother and her child sit in an empty subway station enveloped by walls adorned with detailed reliefs of a crowd adoring Joseph Stalin, former premier of the Soviet Union. The architecture of the subway station looms over the pair, with its grand arches, marble and granite walls. Henri Cartier-Bresson's photograph assigns the viewer the role of another subway rider, one who is simply passing through and seeing the "real" Russia, untouched. This work was from a series that he made in Russia in 1955 in which he "tried to get a direct image of the people going about their daily life" at a time when the country's enigmatic nature preoccupied the world.¹ His documentation was meant to fill the gaps of knowledge about Russia and circumvent its highly propagandized images and writings.

While a subway station is a zone of transition, here it is a setting of repose. In a quiet area—lacking movement and the bodies that typically fill a subway station with noise and fast-paced passage—a woman and her baby close their eyes as they take a break. The woman sits in the foreground, largely obscuring her young child, whose head is just visible beside her. There is no separation between the bodies; they flow into each other. The mother's

left: Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Untitled (Woman Seated on Bench in Moscow Subway Station)*, circa 1954, gelatin silver print.

body appears tense, seemingly still protective over her baby, even in sleep. Positioned left of center and tucked in the corner of this frame, they appear as still as the statues, movement only noted in the blur of the mother's face and the tilt of the frame. The controlled motion in Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment" is emphasized by the titled frame and the blur, as if capturing the motion both before and after he took the photo. Although on a tilted axis, the photo remains balanced, the woman and her child on one side and Stalin and his subjects on the other. The empty space between them contributes to the tranquil setting and simultaneously calls attention to the lack of people. The woman and her child turn away from Stalin as the other subjects, the people in the sculpture on the wall, turn toward Stalin, praising and adoring him with flowers. The subway itself was essentially a monument of Soviet propaganda, with grand detail in the reliefs, extravagant materials used in construction, and all together the conscientious creation of a public service—evidence of the importance the nation placed on architecture and infrastructure.

What appears to be a commonplace scene in a Moscow subway station speaks to the nature of Cartier-Bresson's practice. Cartier-Bresson's individual photos may only represent a split second among many but, as he writes in the book *The People of Moscow* (1955), the series, as a whole, "represents [his] visual discovery faithfully."² The photos reveal his own perspective of Russia, showing the ordinary routines in Russia through a candid lens. Contrary to the use of the camera as a tool for propaganda, Cartier-Bresson uses it instead to capture his observations as he moves through uncharted territory.

The frame extends just far enough to the right that it includes Stalin's whole body, cutting off just beyond his left arm. The photo is positioned at eye level, as if the viewer is witnessing it themselves, and shows Stalin positioned high above the ground, above any onlooker; subway riders must look up to the statue of Stalin, mirroring the people in the sculpture. Cartier-Bresson's idea of "the decisive moment" is to capture what is important and what might reveal the underlying narrative that pre-exists; with or without paired text, the viewer can see their objective and discern from the photo what is significant. In *The Decisive Moment* (1952) Cartier-Bresson writes, "In a photograph, composition is the result of a simultaneous coalition, the organic coordination of elements seen by the eye."³

notes

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Henri Cartier-Bresson, "The People of Russia," <i>Life</i>, January 17, 1955: 16.</p> <p>2 Henri Cartier-Bresson, "Foreword," <i>The People of Moscow</i> (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), n.p.</p> | <p>3 Henri Cartier-Bresson, "The Decisive Moment," in <i>On Photography: A Source Book of Photo History in Facsimile</i>, ed. Beaumont Newhall (Watkins Glen, NY: Century House, 1956), 189.</p> |
|---|---|



Ernest Cole, *From "House of Bondage,"* 1960s, gelatin silver print.

from house of bondage “nightmare rides”

Serin Lee

Several male commuters huddle dangerously between the railcar juncture of a Johannesburg-bound train, as the slight silhouette of a commuter inside the train car underscores the packed interiors that have forced these men outside. The photographed subjects here reflect the commuter culture that apartheid painstakingly forced upon Black South Africans. On a train with too little room, the riders hold onto what narrow hand- and footholds they can. The precariousness and physical calculation of survival on-the-go—features that defined the day-to-day lives of Black people during this era—are on display. These riders were first displaced from their jobs, and then from humane means of getting to them.

Ernest Cole describes his outrage at these “Nightmare Rides” in *House of Bondage*’s eponymous chapter on commuting. This image appears beside text describing the shoddy erraticism of train services that ran to Black townships. Trains came and went in scarce numbers, without marked destinations, following arbitrary if not nonexistent timetables. Cars were usually packed-to-bursting in seconds, and prospective riders would throw themselves between cars or cling to fixtures outside them. This was indisputably risky—close to one hundred riders could be killed riding city trains in a single year—but many did so daily out of the necessity circumscribed by apartheid.

At the same time, the vertical composition of the moment captured in this photograph gives no clear indication of which direction is forwards or backwards. The

image meditates on duration and in-betweenness, both temporally and spatially. The commuters' bodies are sandwiched between the two cars, and one young man looks outwards, his face knitted in thought while his body presses to the speeding car. In that space, he reflects on the past and anticipates his future. The photograph evokes a remarkably felt historical present in its transitional sense—a transition that, in Cole's captured motion, is caught between the moment just past, and the one to come.

But what are these lives moving between the train cars? What is achieved by expanding the “decisiveness”¹ of the photographed moment into the lived time that is ongoing? Insisting in his 1968 letter to Ford Foundation editor Thomas Cooney that “art, like truth, cannot be captured on schedule,”² Cole and his photographic eye buck the photojournalistic tradition of shipping photographers off to train their viewfinders on sites that were not theirs. Approaching the photographed riders with his own years-long memory of their shared “event,” Cole suggests that the eye that has lived the images behind the camera is the one best equipped to create breathing room in their suppressed and perpetuated realities. Cole suspends time for one precariously lived “middle” of so many under apartheid. He expands the photographed moment (a vertically cropped “in medias res”³), and through the young man's expression, captures an intense preoccupation with extending this moment of survival into the next. Yet, in doing so, Cole also points to the futures for Black South Africans and extends them somewhere beyond our view through the gaze of the photograph's central figure.

notes

- 1** “the decisive moment”: A concept introduced in Henri Cartier-Bresson’s book of the same name (1952) describes the moment when visual and emotional elements of an unfolding scene come fleetingly together in a photograph to give life and form to the essence of that situation.
- 2** Correspondence from Ernest Cole to Thomas E. Cooney, Jr., September 17, 1968, Box A3440, Folder A1, Ernest Cole Papers, Historical Papers Research Archive, the Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- 3** *in medias res*: a concept used to describe a narrative that opens in the middle of its plot (in Latin, literally “into the middle of things”).



from house of bondage “black spots”

Serin Lee

A young girl runs down a road alongside a swath of blocky, uniform brick houses, one of the defining features of apartheid's displacement of Black South Africans. Stretching seemingly to infinity, these identical rows marked profound losses for the families forced to fit their lives into them. Once living in richly diverse communities, families were uprooted and relocated based solely on their tribal designation. Moreover, Black South Africans became prohibited from home ownership and, thus, the ability to build their lives on land that belonged to them. These circumstances took them from being kept artificially poor to being made even poorer.

In this photograph from *House of Bondage*'s chapter “Black Spots,” Ernest Cole captures with special acuity the forms of abstraction and erasure of Black lives happening under this forced relocation. Some were sent to destinations so remote, that they weren't even on the map. He does so to counter the state's visual and written narratives that often championed these discriminatory measures as magnanimous social schemes. These were offered through published propaganda advertising the homogenizing and marginalizing developments as altruistic reforms.

The falseness of that rhetoric is contested by Cole's photograph, which offers viewers a different realism. Here, perspective lines dissolve into the unidentifiable mass of houses, further punctuated by utility poles that

left: Ernest Cole, *From “House of Bondage,”* 1960s, gelatin silver print.

crowd the flattened horizon. The roofs similarly catch daylight at harsh angles and push the eye, like so many lights on a landing strip, towards a vanishing that lacks a clear vanishing point. The product of physical displacement that the photograph underscores would be lost against this backdrop alone, as would the people who inhabit its homogenizing spaces—seen hovering by doorways in the back—if not for the young girl running in the foreground from one side of the road to other.

The young girl in a billowing dress, caught in a blur of motion, interjects a shock of white into the grayscale photograph. She is the crux of Cole's photograph. Legs apart in a sweeping stride, her body in motion challenges the buildings' rigidity, while also suggesting the larger image's regulatory function. Her bright spot in this understated photograph shoots new life through the largely-obscured men and women wearing white shirts in the background. On closer observation, they are also moving in spaces of their own.

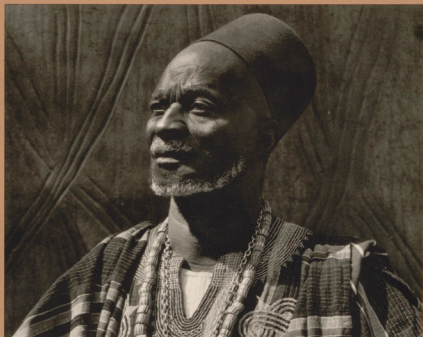
The image's visual composition forces the question: "What *can* Black South Africans own in this moment?" Perhaps a nicer house, as the government assures, but not the land on which it's built. Perhaps the house may contain their household, but family members may be split asunder by taxing commutes and long work hours, required to pay rent and buy overpriced goods. Amidst these conditions, the girl stands out. Launching forward in motion, she calls attention to her presence and that of those around her recorded by the photograph.

On the one hand, Cole's photographic eye seems to reach for ownership of his own dispossession. "At least this, if nothing else," the photograph seems to say, as its

eerily smoothed background gestures at how Black freedoms were vanishing, and thereby at a lived reality in which Black freedoms were missing. On the other hand, the girl provides the point of contrast upon which such revelations can be made. She, and the other people occupying these spaces, do not offer clear representation through the photograph. Cole shows, through the visual trail blazed by this young girl, that a life can and does matter, and that the lives led by Black residents were unwieldy in ways that defied the system's logics.

GHANA:

AN AFRICAN PORTRAIT



COMMENTARY BY BASIL DAVIDSON
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY PAUL STRAND

Cover of *Ghana: An African Portrait* by Paul Strand, Aperture, 1976.

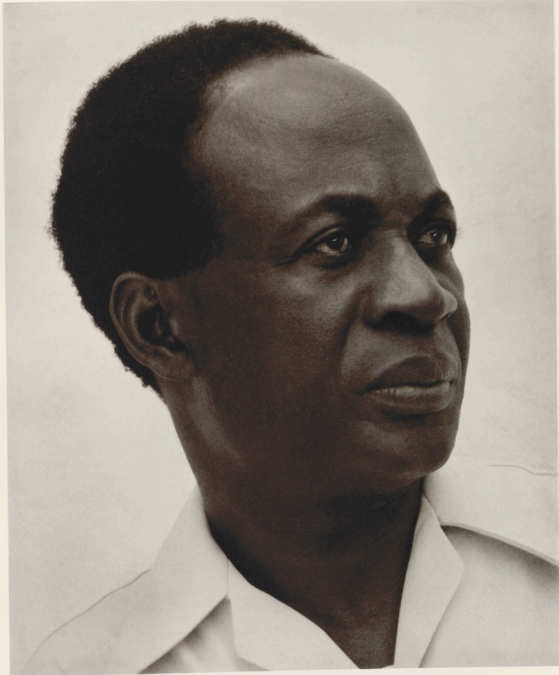
ghana: an african portrait

Mariah A-K Bender

Awoleba Adda, through his stature, gaze, and centrality on the cover of Paul Strand's *Ghana: An African Portrait*, invites readers to view the country through its people. Adda held the navropio chieftaincy in the Navrongo region in Ghana's far north. His portrait, which is bordered by bolded text that reads "Ghana" and subsequently "African," indicates to the reader that the photographs that follow reflect a broader view of a continent in flux. The cover portrait captures Ghana early in its independence and facing a new future.

The light dances across Adda's face, highlighting his cheekbones, eyes, and slightly furrowed brow. Adda's three-quarter profile, traditionally used for official portraiture, conveys his regality as a chief. He wears a patterned *gonja*, a smock woven of thick cotton that covers his chest. His importance as a leader is evident in his traditional ensemble: his *gonja*, *kufi* (a brimless cap), and beads. Adda's hat and the beads layered around his neck suggest the weighty responsibility of his leadership and is part of a leader's required ensemble.¹ The smaller linked necklace is engulfed by the larger cylindrical beads and rest on his neck, accenting the detailed threading on the *gonja* collar. His dress and adornments display power, prestige, and pride—despite only being visible from the shoulder up.

While Strand uses a similar three-quarter style portrait here, as he does in an image later in the book of Ghana's president Kwame Nkrumah, the portraits represent two different visions of leadership. Nkrumah



101

Kwame Nkrumah's portrait in *Ghana: An African Portrait* by Paul Strand, Aperture, 1976.

dons a crisp, Western-style white shirt contrasting Adda's *gonja* and *kufi*. The backgrounds of the portraits further indicate the differing physical locations; Adda's backdrop is an earthen wall with textured carvings and repeating x-like forms carved into its surface, while Nkrumah poses against a sterile white wall. Strand's portraits of Adda and Nkrumah seem to contrast tradition with modernity, the past with the present. It's an invitation for viewers to consider how different forms of leadership would shape Ghana. However, across the book's many scenes—from industry to agriculture to political activism—it is Awoleba Adda's portrait that primes viewers for that journey.

In *Ghana: An African Portrait* the photographs and layout reflect Strand's in-depth documentation of Ghana and his avoidance of what Mark Crinson refers to as "reportage."² The book captures, via Strand's perspective, a new nation establishing itself in the world while confronting questions about how modernization might align with traditional values. Which natural resources and industries should the country prioritize to generate wealth? And which leadership style and form might usher in an era of prosperity?

notes

- 1 Samuel Acquaaah, ERK Amissah, and PG Yankson, "Dress aesthetics of smock in northern Ghana: form, function, and context," *Journal of Textile Engineering & Fashion Technology* 1, Iss. 2 (2017): 68–77, <https://doi.org/10.15406/jteft.2017.01.00013>.
- 2 As Crinson writes, "Strand scrupulously avoided any sense of trophy hunting or heroizing; he wanted his photography to document but not become reportage." Mark Crinson, "Paul Strand's Ghana and Photography after Colonialism," *Art Bulletin* 98, no. 4 (December 2016): 514.

extended captions

Decolonization through Multiple Lenses

1.

Marc Riboud

French, 1923–2016

*Two Students arrive at the
University of Accra with
academic gowns, Ghana*
circa 1960

Gelatin silver print

Image: 8 x 12 inches (20.3 x
30.5 cm)

Purchase, The Paul and
Miriam Kirkley Fund for
Acquisitions and The Ziegler-
Orloff Family Fund
Smart Museum of Art,
The University of Chicago,
2021.14

© Marc Riboud / Fonds Marc
Riboud au MNAAG/Magnum
Photos

2.

Marc Riboud

French, 1923–2016

Army Navy and Airforce, Ghana
1960

Gelatin silver print

Image: 8 x 12 inches (20.3 x
30.5 cm)

Purchase, The Paul and

Miriam Kirkley Fund for
Acquisitions and The Ziegler-
Orloff Family Fund
Smart Museum of Art,
The University of Chicago,
2021.15

© Marc Riboud / Fonds Marc
Riboud au MNAAG/Magnum
Photos

3.

Paul Strand

American, 1890–1976

*Awoleba Adda, the Navropio of
Navrongo, Ghana*
1963

Gelatin silver print

Image: 7 7/16 x 9 3/8 inches
(18.89 x 23.81 cm); sheet: 7
9/16 x 9 9/16 inches (19.21
x 24.29 cm)

Gift of Frederick B. Scheel,
Minneapolis Institute of Art,
2007.35.211

© Aperture Foundation Inc.,
Paul Strand Archive

4.

James Barnor

Ghanaian, born 1929

*National Liberation Movement
Political Rally, Ghana, Kumasi*

1956, printed 2017
Enlarged silver print from
original negative
Image: 14 3/16 x 14 9/16
inches (36 x 37 cm); sheet:
19 1/8 x 22 13/16 inches
(48.5 x 58 cm)
Purchase, The Paul and
Miriam Kirkley Fund for
Acquisitions and The Ziegler-
Orloff Family Fund, 2021.5

© James Barnor / Courtesy
galerie Clémentine de la
Féronnière

**“Le Mali Indépendant” in
*Bingo Magazine***

Spread from “Le Mali
Indépendant”
Bingo, July 1960
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries

Ernest Cole’s *Hats and Men*

Ernest Cole
South African, 1940–1990
Hats and Men Cram onto Train
Gelatin silver print
Image: 9 15/16 x 8 1/8
inches (25.3 x 20.7 cm)
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Purchased with funds provided

by Robin and Sandy Stuart,
2015.194

© Ernest Cole/Magnum Photos

State Capture Now What?

Sam Nhlengethwa
South African, born 1955
*Inspired by Romare Bearden
and Ernest Cole*
2018
Oil and collage on canvas
47 1/5 x 86 3/5 inches (120
x 220 cm)
Courtesy of Liza Essers and
Goodman Gallery

nothing & everything

1.
Cover of *The Classic*, volume
3, number 1, 1968
Johannesburg: The Classic
Magazine Trust Fund Courtesy
of the University of Chicago
Library
2.
Peter Magubane
South African, born 1932
Crèche in Soweto, South Africa,
1962
The Classic, volume 3, number
1, 1968
Johannesburg: The Classic
Magazine Trust Fund

Courtesy of the University of
Chicago Library

3.

Peter Magubane

South African, born 1932

Fire in Pimville

The Classic, volume 3, number
1, 1968

Johannesburg: The Classic

Magazine Trust Fund

Courtesy of the University of
Chicago Library

4.

Peter Magubane

South African, born 1932

Cat Nap

The Classic, volume 3, number
1, 1968

Johannesburg: The Classic

Magazine Trust Fund

Courtesy of the University of
Chicago Library

5.

Ernest Cole

South African, 1940–1990

House of Bondage: A South

African Black Man Exposes in

His Own Pictures and Words

the Bitter Life of His Homeland
Today

New York: Random House,
1967

6.

Spread from “The Body and
the Archive” by Allan Sekula.
October, vol. 39, The MIT
Press, 1986.

7.

Bantu Residential Areas
in Pretoria

Pretoria: Department of Non-
European Affairs, 1965

Ernest Cole Photographic
Collection and Papers,
Historical Papers Research
Archive, University of the
Witwatersrand, South Africa

8.

Drum

January 1956

Courtesy of Melville J.

Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries

9.

Bingo

September 1955

Courtesy of Melville J.

Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries

10.
Bingo
November 1956
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
11.
Bingo
August 1957
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
12.
Bingo
May 1957
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
13.
*Domestic Servants in
Urban Areas*
Johannesburg: Bantu Affairs
Commission, April 8, 1965
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
14.
*Problem Children of the
Gold Coast*
Accra: Department of Social
Welfare and Community
Development, 1955
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
15.
Achievement in the Gold Coast
Accra: Gold Coast Public
Relations Department, 1951
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
16.
*Advance of a Technique:
Information Services in the
Gold Coast*
Accra: Department of
Information Services, 1956
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries
17.
*Knowing Ourselves: The 1960
Ghana Population Census*
Accra: Ghana Information
Services on behalf of the

Ghana Census Office, 1960
Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries

18.

*Connaissance de la
République du Mali (Knowing
the Republic of Mali)*

Bakary Kamian

Bamako: Secrétariat d'état à
l'information et au tourisme,
1960

Courtesy of Melville J.
Herskovits Library of African
Studies, Northwestern
University Libraries

19.

Njideka Akunyili Crosby
Nigerian-American, born 1983
*When the Going Is Smooth
and Good*
2017

Acrylic, colored pencil,
charcoal, and collage on
paper
101 x 83 1/2 inches (256.5 x
212 cm)

Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum, New York

Purchased with funds
contributed by the
International Director's
Council, with additional funds

contributed by Wendy Fisher,
2018, 2018.74

© Njideka Akunyili Crosby
Courtesy of the artist, Victoria
Miro, and David Zwirner

Photo credit:

Fredrik Nilsen Studio

Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)

Malick Sidibé

Malian, 1936–2016

Nuit de Noël (Happy Club)
1963

Gelatin silver print

Image: 18 x 18 inches (45.7
x 45.7 cm); sheet: 20 x 24
inches (50.8 x 61 cm).

Gift of the Estate of Lester
and Betty Guttman
Smart Museum of Art,
The University of Chicago,
2014.720

© Malick Sidibé. Courtesy
the Estate of Malick Sidibé
and Jack Shainman Gallery,
New York

Untitled (Woman Seated on Bench in Moscow Subway Station)

Henri Cartier-Bresson

French, 1908–2004

Untitled (Woman Seated

on Bench in Moscow
Subway Station)
circa 1954
Gelatin silver print
Image: 6 5/8 x 9 7/8 inches
(16.8 x 25.1 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Kingman
Douglass
Smart Museum of Art,
The University of Chicago,
1986.312

© Henri Cartier-Bresson
© Fondation Henri Cartier-
Bresson/Magnum Photos

From House of Bondage
“Nightmare Rides”

Ernest Cole
South African, 1940–1990
From “House of Bondage”
Gelatin silver print
Image: 9 1/2 x 6 3/8 in.
(24.1 x 16.2 cm)
Gift of the Estate of Lester
and Betty Guttman
Smart Museum of Art,
The University of Chicago,
2014.225

© Ernest Cole/Magnum Photos

From House of Bondage
“Black Spots”

Ernest Cole
South African, 1940–1990
1960s
From “House of Bondage”
Gelatin silver print
Image: 6 3/8 x 9 1/2 inches
(16.2 x 24.1 cm)
Gift of the Estate of Lester
and Betty Guttman
Smart Museum of Art,
The University of Chicago,
2014.224

© Ernest Cole/Magnum Photos

Ghana: An African Portrait

Paul Strand
American, 1890–1976
Ghana: An African Portrait
Millerton, New York: Aperture,
1976
Purchase, Feitler Center for
Academic Inquiry

contributor biographies

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Daisy Coates graduated from the University of Chicago in 2022 with a BA in Art History and Cinema/Media Studies. After graduating, she worked in museum education at the Cox Science Center Aquarium and as a research associate for Stephen and Peter Sachs Museum. Currently, she is a festival programming assistant for FACETS film festival.

Adom Getachew is Assistant Professor of Political Science, Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity, and the College at the University of Chicago. She is author of *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* and co-editor, with Jennifer Pitts, of *W. E. B. Du Bois: International Thought*.

Serin Lee graduated from the University of Chicago in 2021 with a BA in English and Creative Writing. She was ALTA's 2021 Emerging Translator mentee in Korean prose, and her work has been published in *The Offing*. Based in New York, Serin currently works as an assistant editor and projects film at Anthology Film Archives.

Natacha Nsabimana is an Assistant Professor in the anthropology department at the University of Chicago. Her research and teaching interests include law and subjectivity, postcolonial critique, musical movements and the cultural and political worlds of African peoples on the continent and the diaspora.

Emily Lynn Osborn is a historian of West Africa and a faculty member in the Department of History at the University of Chicago. She has published on the history of gender and statecraft in Upper Guinea, Guinea-Conakry (*Our New Husbands are Here: Households, Gender, and Politics in a West African State*), as well as a range of other topics: colonial intermediaries; African labor regimes; histories of artisanal production; and the color red in the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans. Osborn is presently serving as Deputy Dean in the College's Office for Research and Teaching Innovation.

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