

Thames
&Hudson



Todd Webb in Africa

Outside the Frame

Aimée Bessire and Erin Hyde Nolan

A photographic journey by one of the 20th century's great photographers through eight African countries on the cusp of independence post World War II

200 illustrations

29.8 x 24.8cm

208pp

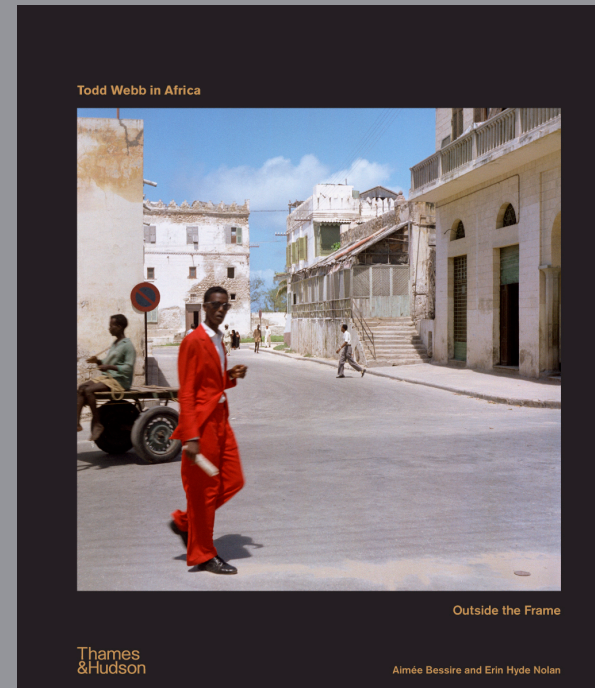
ISBN 9780500545393

BIC Individual photographers

Hardback without jacket

£40

January 2021

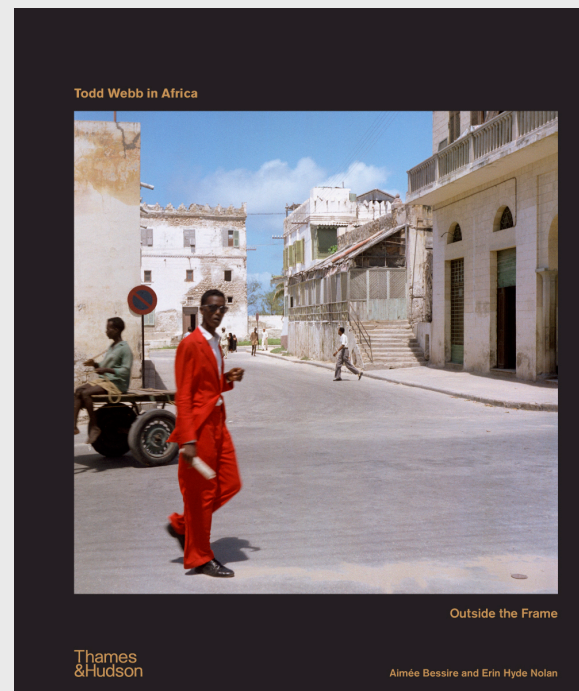


A4

Book

Key Sales Points

- Presents previously unseen colour work from Webb's UN assignment to Africa in the 1950s, all taken from an archive lost for over 50 years.
- A unique colour portrait of eight countries in Africa at a critical point in their history.
- Accompanied by a travelling exhibition in the United States.
- Includes essays by African scholars and artists, giving readers an opportunity to revisit 1950s Africa from today's perspective.





Todd Webb in Africa

Outside the Frame

Aimée Bessire and Erin Hyde Nolan





Todd Webb, On Site # 44 (in 72-16-042), Togoland (Togo), 1956
Loading people and goods at some harbor.

TOGOLAND

(TOGO)



Todd Webb, *Untitled* (44UN-7925-070), Togoland (Togo), 1958
Waving a United Nations flag on election day, April 27.



Todd Webb, *Untitled* (44UN-7915-365), Togoland (Togo), 1958
Crowds on election day, April 27.

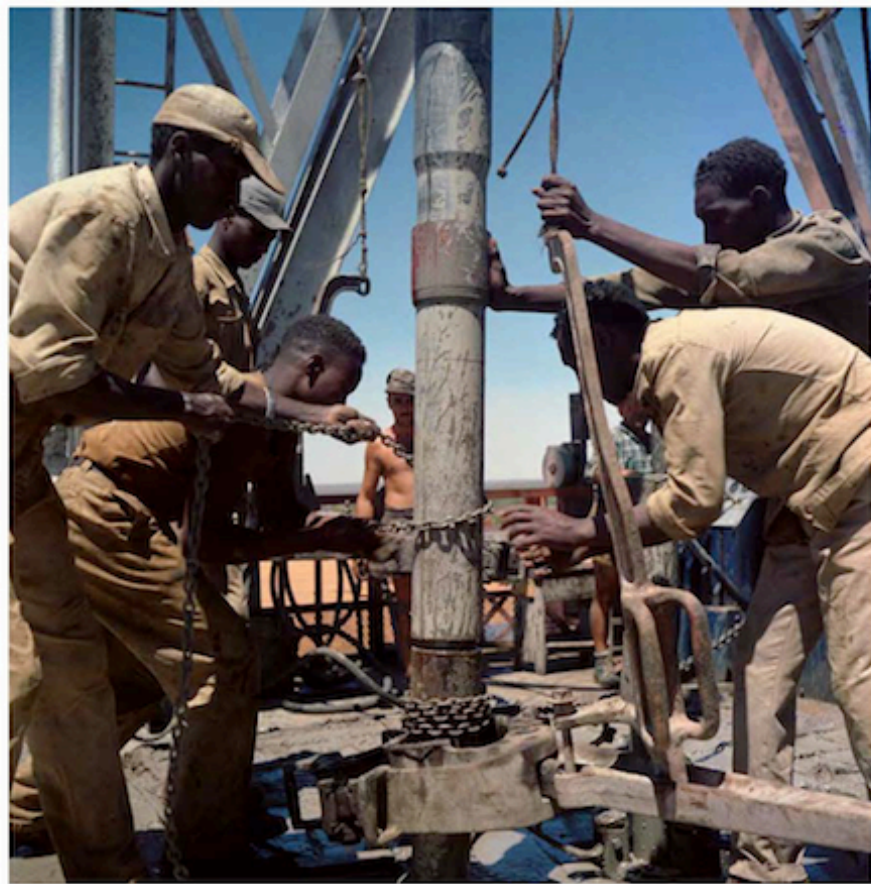
unexpected images of industry and modernization. "The African book is often a picture book—too expensive and limited by its interest in economics. I think they are wrong—I have an idea that they want a picture book full of Watutsi [sic], Pigmya [sic], Ma[?]ai, Lions and women with exposed breasts!" Webb understood the larger context of what an American publisher wanted to show of Africa—an exoticized and primitivized lens focused on cultural difference, part of what had perhaps informed his initial constructions of the continent. But this was oppositional to how the UN wanted to frame the countries Webb visited. Webb's images of the continent helped the UN construct and illustrate their story of a "changing Africa" at the decisive juncture between colonialism and independence in many of the nations. The images, aestheticizing modernization and industry, not only contradicted the 1950s "idea" of Africa, including Webb's own preconceived notions, they also reflected the work of a photographer negotiating multiple narratives during a critical moment in African history. It is ironic that while Webb followed his assignment to document "modernity" at the cusp of postcoloniality, he fell into the trap of defining what was "African" and "unAfrican" based on a dichotomy between his own constructions of the "modern" and so-called "traditional." In many ways, the photographs counter Webb's own early perceptions of the continent.

Today the images tell many stories. They provide insight into this pivotal moment of history in 1958 and exist as important visual documents of the UN's desire to shift dominant narratives of how Africa was perceived. They also highlight Todd Webb's subjectivities, and in many ways, how his understanding of the continent evolved through his visual journey. Above all, the photographs are a reminder of the complicated, multi-dimensional power of the visual to create or destroy the "inversions" of Africa in the imagination.



Top: Todd Webb, Unfiled (44)IN 7917-200, Harare, 1958
Joseph (Shona) National Park Ranger standing next to "Savannah of Lions" sign, White Grass Ridge, near Murchison National Park.

Below: Unknown photographer (possibly a Murchison National Park Ranger), Unfiled (44)IN 7705-020, Harare, 1958
Todd Webb standing next to "Savannah of Lions" sign, White Grass Ridge, near Murchison National Park.



Todd Webb, Unfiled (44)IN 7920-080, Trust Territory of Somaliland (Somalia), 1958
Men working on an oil rig.

Todd Webb, *Unfiled* (44LN-7959-579), Sudan, 1958
Nomadic tents in the desert, Kassala.

Todd Webb, *Journal Entry, May 27, 1958*

"Kassala is most interesting—the most exciting place I have seen in Sudan. It is a meeting place for the nomad camel-raising tribes of the desert and with its mountain background it has color."





Todd Webb, UNRWA 04/06/2017 407s and 407s1, Sudan, 10/16
Epiphany Day 16 of the train station.





Todd Waiss, Childs' (LACN 8007 28 9), Trust Territory of Somaliland (Somali), 1958
Cinema Hamam, Magdicha.



Todd Waiss, Childs' (LACN 7907 142), Trust Territory of Somaliland (Somali), 1958
Worker using machinery at the factory.



Todd Webb, *Untitled* (44UN-7980-211), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1958
Women walking along a sidewalk colonnade, Bulawayo.



Todd Webb, *Untitled* (44UN-7980-212), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1958
Pedestrians walking past SAR Travel Bureau, Truworths, and other shops, Bulawayo.