



S A B C A R T

Streetwise: Guy Tillim at STEVENSON Johannesburg

Currently showing at STEVENSON Johannesburg is a new body of work by internationally renowned photographer Guy Tillim, *The Street You're On, The Same One You Know*.

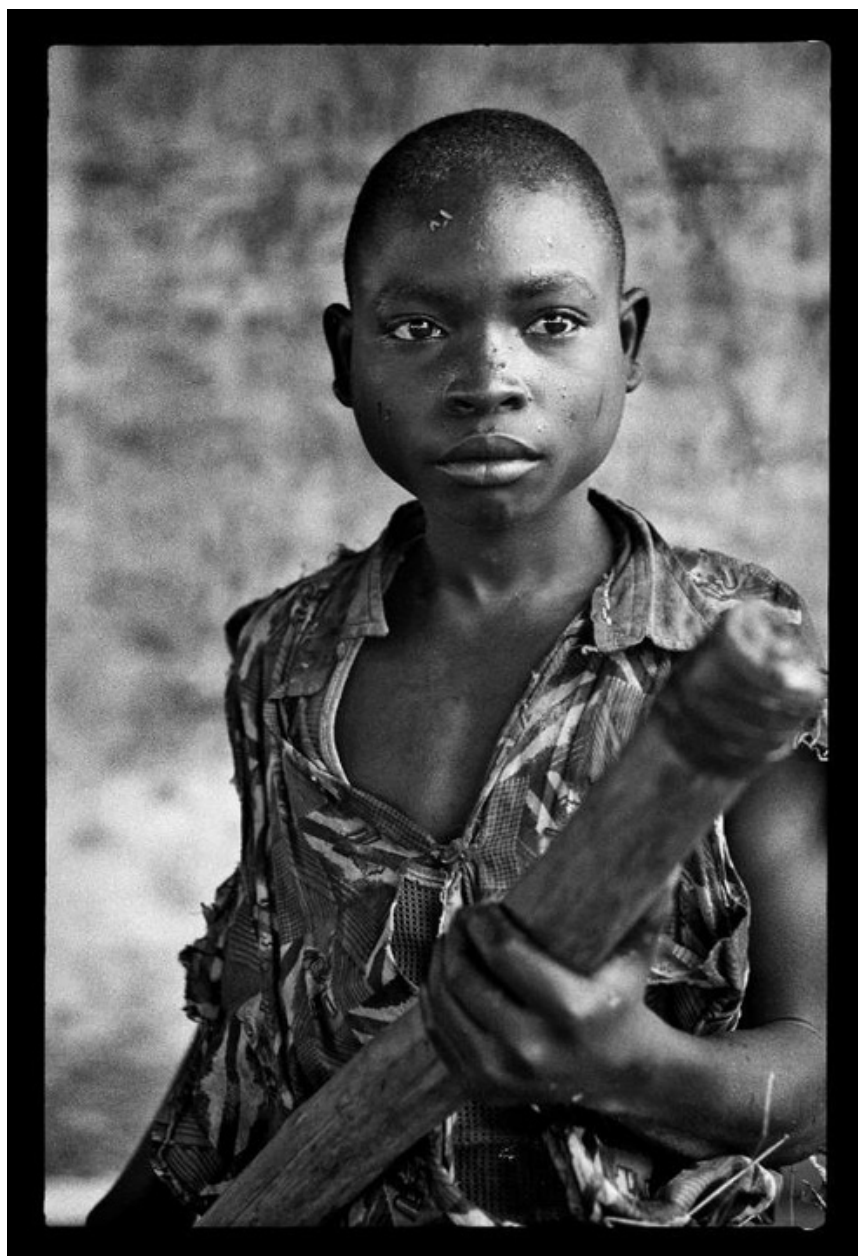
The exhibition features colour as well as black-and-white images of urban spaces and cities including Accra, Dakar, Maputo, Cagliari, Harare, Dar Es Salaam, Berlin and São Paulo, dating from 2007 to 2022.

'The work operates in the register of street photography, however some images are stitched diptychs that create reconstructions of each space, resulting in a composite picture of each locale, while remaining attentive to the specificity of each geography, including landmarks and monuments,' reads the current exhibition statement. 'In some images, elements and figures are inserted and erased.'

The Street That You're On, The Same One You Know is the latest iteration in Tillim's sustained project of 'observing place as a signifier of the logics of power, while affirming the dynamism and endurance of the human lives featured'.

The SABC Art Collection contains a black-and-white portrait by Tillim in its photographic holdings. The Collection also includes images by some of South Africa's great photographers, including David Goldblatt, Santu Mofokeng, Jo Ractliffe, Pieter Hugo, Ken Oosterbroek, Sabelo Mlangeni, Ranjith Kally and Mikhael Subotzky, some of which were recently exhibited as part of *A Selection: The SABC Collection* at the FADA Gallery at the University of Johannesburg.

The portrait by Tillim in the SABC Collection was photographed in 2002 near Benin in the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire). It is a piercing image as it documents a boy in the process of being conscripted into war, raising consciousness of children's involvement as both victims and armed protagonists in intensely violent conflicts between governments, societies and paramilitary groups like mercenaries, insurgents and militias.



Mai Mai Militia 2002, Near Benin, Eastern DRC: Portrait VI 2002

Archival pigment ink on 300g coated cotton paper

1/3

85.5 x 59cm

Mai Mai Militia forms part of a series of eight portraits of child soldiers in training photographed outdoors by Tillim in 2002 during his travels in the eastern Congo, by which time he had spent more than a decade photographing in the DRC. At the time that Tillim photographed the boys, they were not being deployed as a traditional defence militia but were being drafted into one of the rebel factions in the battle for the mineral riches of east Congo.

This series was included in Tillim's exhibition and book with author Adam Hochschild, *Leopold and Mobutu* (Filigranes, 2004), a poignant reflection on the similarities between colonial powers and the African dictators empowered by them. Hochschild is the author of *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999), a history of the conquest of the Congo by King Leopold II of Belgium, and of the atrocities that were committed under his rule. 'Carrying out a genocidal plundering of the Congo, he looted its rubber, brutalised its people, and ultimately slashed its population by ten million – all the while shrewdly cultivating his reputation as a great humanitarian,' reads a summary of Hochschild's book. – Alexandra Dodd

Tillim is showing concurrently with Thato Toebe until 30 June 2023.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Johannesburg in 1962, Guy Tillim lives in Vermaaklikheid in South Africa. He started photographing professionally in 1986, working with the Afrapix collective until 1990. His work as a freelance photographer for the local and foreign media included positions with Reuters between 1986 and 1988, and Agence France Presse in 1993 and 1994.

Tillim has received many awards, including the 2004 DaimlerChrysler Award for South African photography; the Leica Oskar Barnack Award in 2005; the first Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography from the Peabody Museum at Harvard University in 2006; the Quai Branly Photography Residency in 2015, and the HCB Award in 2017.

He has had solo exhibitions at the Centre Photographique d'Île-de-France, Paris; Huis Marseille Museum of Photography, Amsterdam; Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris; Museu Serralves, Porto; The Peabody Museum, Harvard, Cambridge; FOAM Fotografiemusuem, Amsterdam; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, amongst others. His work was included in Documenta12 in 2007, the São Paulo Biennale in 2006 and the touring exhibition *Africa Remix* (2004–2007).

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